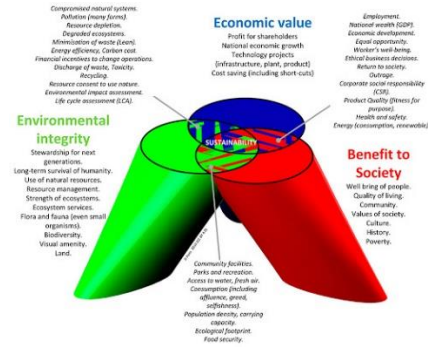




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Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
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Kosovo Environmental Programme

(2016/07076)

Report to Assess Potential for Socio-Economic Development of the National Park "Bjeshkët e Nemuna"

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

A-N

Acronyms	Meaning
AoK	Assembly of Kosovo
BC	Beneficiary Country
BeN	Bjeshkët e Nemuna
BI	Beneficiary Institution
CA	Contracting Authority
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CT	Core Team
CTL	Component Team Leader
CSI	Core Set of Indicators
DoF	Department of Forestry
EC	European Commission
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Information System
EMS	Environmental Monitoring System
EN	Endangered (IUCN threat category)
EoS	Embassy of Sweden
EPWD	Environmental Protection and Water Department
EU	European Union
EUOK	European Union Office in Kosovo
EUR	Euro (European currency)
FA	Framework Agreement
FSP	Framework Service Provider
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoK	Government of Kosovo
GPS	Global Positioning System
GS	General Secretary
ha	Hectare(s)
HCVF	High Conservation Value Forest
HOC	Home Office Coordinator
IBA	Important Bird Area
IMWC	Inter Ministerial Water Council
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISP	Institute for Spatial Planning
IU	Implementation Unit
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KEP	Kosovo Environmental Programme
KEPA	Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency
KEPA	Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency
KINP	Kosovo Institute for Nature Protection
KNPI	Kosovo Nature Protection Institute
LTM	Local Team Manager
MAFRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
MCYS	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport
MESP	Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
MTI	Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Park
NP BeN	National Park "Bjeshkët e Nemuna"
NTPF	Non-Timber Forest Product

P-N

Acronyms	Meaning
PA	Protected Area
PD	Project Director
PDA	Platform for Dialogue and Action
PE	Procurement Expert
PFU	Programme Facilitation Unit
PG	Procurement Guidelines
PM	Project/Programme Management / Programme Manager
PMA	Project monitoring and Audit
PT	Project Team
PTL	Programme Team Leader
RBF	Red Book of Fauna
RBM	Result Based Management
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SC	Steering Committee
SEK	Swedish Krona (Swedish currency)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
STE	Short Term Expert
TA	Technical Assistance
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
WP	Work Plan

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE KOSOVO ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME (KEP)

On 16th June 2016 the Embassy of Sweden (EoS) signed a Framework Agreement with ORGUT Consulting AB, then purchased by FCG Sweden, hereinafter simply called “FCG”, as Framework Service Provider (FSP) in partnership with EPTISA Servicios de Ingenieria (Spain), simply called “EPTISA”, for the implementation of the “**Kosovo Environmental Programme**”, also called “the Programme” or “KEP” (document proposed to EoS on June 2015), reference n.2016/07076, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and agreed with the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Kosovo (MESP). The Framework Agreement formally started on 4th July 2016 with an overall duration of 4 years until 3rd July 2020.

The aim of the Programme is supporting the development of the capacity of the MESP, the Inter-Ministerial Water Council (IMWC), municipalities, and other stakeholders in environmental monitoring and management. More specifically KEP intends to develop the capacity of implementing the environmental legislation in compliance with EU directives and to support the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA) to enhance knowledge, to protect the biodiversity and to improve the management of trans-boundary protected areas, based on the national priorities deriving from the MESP policy documents, including the Kosovo Environmental Strategy (KES) and the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). The Programme aims also at strengthening the knowledge of Kosovo’s water resources improving their management and enhancing resilience to environmental and climate change. To achieve these objectives, KEP has been divided in the following Components:

KEP components
1. Strengthening KEPA’s capacity for environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting
2. Conservation of bio-diversity through Red Book of animal species in Kosovo
3. Strengthening the management of trans-boundary natural areas
4. Establishment of groundwater monitoring network in Kosovo
5. Strengthening capacity for implementation of environmental legislation at central-local level
6 Groundwater investigation in Drini River Basin
7. River basin management plan for Drini River Basin
8. Support to Inter-Ministerial Water Council
9. Provision of Technical Assistance Services to Programme Facilitation Unit (cross-cutting)

The Component 3 of the Programme is mainly focused on the finalisation of at **strengthening the management of transboundary areas** through the implementation of the following main tasks and activities:

A3 Strengthening the management of transboundary natural areas	
A3.01 Development of National Park “Bjeshkët e Nemuna” Management Plan and Regulation Plans for 3rd zones for 2 NPs	
A3.01.01	Engagement and cooperation with local communities, including women and youth, to define NP zoning plan and protection regimes
A3.01.02	Conduction of fieldwork to assess the biodiversity, landscapes and historical sites within the NPs for inventory developing purposes
A3.01.03	Conduction of fieldwork to assess natural resources use and management with roles, and knowledge of persons living in the parks
A3.01.04	Drafting of a Management Plan for National Park “Bjeshkët e Nemeuna” under broad consultation and participation of local communities
A3.01.05	Drafting of 4 Regulation Plans for third zones for both NPs, 2 for National Park “Sharr” and 2 for National Park “Bjeshkët e Nemuna”
A3.02 Strengthening the capacities of National Park Directorates to manage the natural resources	
A3.02.01	Assistance of KEPA in organising 20 workshops and trainings aiming at enhancing the capacities of the two National Park directorates
A3.02.02	Development of plans for regular maintenance of the park’s landscapes, ecosystems, habitats and species and historical sites
A3.02.03	Assistance to MESP/KEPA in developing a strategy to establish operational national park information centres; design of touristic sites, etc.
A3.02.04	Conduction of an analysis of the NPs’ potential for socio-economic development and for developing businesses promoting best practices
A3.02.05	Assistance to MESP in preparing a preliminary plan to organise fairs and promotion of traditional product brands
A3.02.06	Procurement to the organisation of awareness campaigns for preservation of natural values, biodiversity and cultural heritage promotion
A3.03 Enhancement of transboundary cooperation and coordination for nature conservation	
A3.03.01	Assessment of pressures and impacts of human activities on landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage
A3.03.02	Development of the plan and programme of measures to protect and/or restore natural ecosystems, habitats and species
A3.03.03	Organisation of a study tour to neighbouring countries for experience sharing on the management of transboundary protected areas

Report to Assess Potential for Socio-Economic Development of NP BeN

This Report on Potentials for Socio-Economic Development of the National Park “Bjeshkët e Nemuna” is prepared within the activity A3.02.04 and it is also attached as an annex to the Management Plan of the National Park “Bjeshkët e Nemuna”. The management plan with its annexes is one of the deliverables of the third component Enhancing the Management of Transboundary Nature Areas.

Such tasks and activities are implemented from **3 January 2017** to **4 July 2020** and the first draft of the **Report to Assess the Socio-Economic Development of the National Park “Bjeshkët e Nemuna”** was finalised on 31 May 2018 while its final version (this Report), also attached to the related Management Plan, was completed on 30 September 2019. During this period, a multi-disciplinary group of international, regional and Kosovan experts has been engaged to support the staff of KEPA and the related Directorate for National Park Bjeshkët e Nemuna in the finalisation of such Component 3 and in the printing of the related deliverables.

These 5 external experts were:

- Mr. Jorge MALUENDA (International Expert on Natural Park Management Planning);
- Mr. Daniel BOGNER (International Expert on Natural Park Regulatory Planning and Transboundary Cooperation);
- Ms. Pranvera MUCAJ (Kosovan Expert on Urban Planning for NP Sharr);
- Ms Lumnje GASHI SHABANI (Kosovan Expert on Urban Planning for NP BeN);
- Mr. Tomor ÇELA (Kosovan Expert on Urban Planning for NP BeN).

The work of all these Short-Term Experts (STEs) was under the direct coordination and supervision of Mr. Luan NUSHI (initially) and of Mr. Bajram KAFEXHOLLI, Director of the Directorate of the National Park Bjeshkët e Nemuna who worked under the direction of Mr. Ilir MORINA, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency (KEPA) to implement the overall Component 3 of the KEP, with the assistance of 2 Key Experts: Mr. Giuseppe RAZZA, Programme Team Leader and Team Leader of Components 1÷4 of the KEP and Mr. Tush MARKAJ, Local Team Manager of the same Components.

In addition, the staff of the National Parks of Bjeshkët e Nemuna and Sharr, are thanked for their assistance during the realization of some of the field trips in these protected areas.

1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the National Park "Bjeshkët e Nemura" – the population is spread over 47 settlements in five municipalities: Peja, Deçan, Istog, Junik and Gjakova. Out of a total of 47 settlements that this geographic region has, 20 ones are within the boundary of the park, while 27 others are outside the "Bjeshkët e Nemura" National Park. The number of people in this region is 87,800, males are represented by 49.7%, while females reach 44,154 or 50.3%. According to the 2011 census, 54.5% of the total population of settlements within the National Park "Bjeshkët e Nemura" is active population. Agriculture and livestock farming are two primary sectors that deal with the population living in the mentioned settlements. Questionnaire conducted by the Regional Environmental Center, REC - Kosovo office where also involved the communities of the National Park area (Isniq, Bogaj, Kuqishtë, Prejlep, Strelc and Drelaj)¹. To the question of what their main expectations are from the announcement of The National Park has dominated the expectations for tourism development, agriculture and livestock development and investments in road infrastructure.



Fig.1. Investments in the Park

Investments in the construction and regulation of infrastructure within the Park (water, roads and electricity) would create good conditions in this area, as well as investment in the activity and branches that provide high framing and increase of income is necessary in the fields such as: commerce, tourism, orcharding, livestock, beekeeping, handicrafts etc., whereby will be created economic gains and improvement of socio-economic welfare through "tourist products" by offering to local and foreign tourists.

¹Zeqir Veselaj: "Bjeshkët e Nëmura-Kosovo Pearl of Natural" 2010



2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE POPULATION IN THE “BJESHKËT E NEMUNA” NATIONAL PARK

Within the Park area there are 20 settlements and 27 others are located outside of it, but in the vicinity of its borders. Settlements belong to five different municipalities. Most settlements are small villages with less than 100 inhabitants². The main economic activities are agriculture (including the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic herbs), livestock breeding, beekeeping and tourism.

The number of people in this region is 87800³, considering also the data from the last census, it turns out that fewer than 500 people live permanently within the Park, which is a slight decrease compared to about 5,000 residents who had on the census of the year 1981. There is a significant population fluctuation during the year, with more people living in the Park's settlements during the summer months, while many settlements are emptied during the winter season.⁴

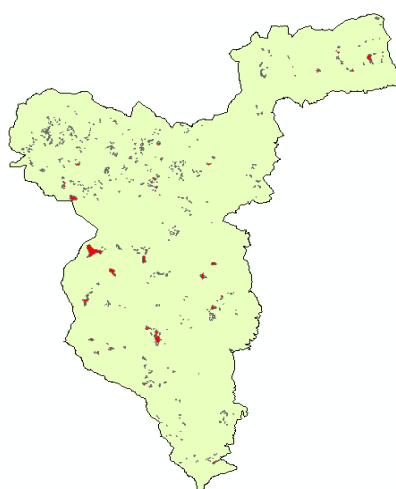


Fig.2. Settlements map within and outside the park

From the data analysis of the settlements that are situated at the border crossing of the Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park and settlements within the park, it turns out that the unemployment rate is widespread in this territory. Data for jobseekers registered at the employment office speak to 13,500 people waiting to find a job. This number does not mean it is real, it may be even higher due to the fact that all unemployed are registered as such.⁵The most pronounced unemployment is in remote rural settlements. One of the consequences of high unemployment is also poverty. The low level of economic development, low educational level, destroying of houses, businesses and enterprises from the last war in Kosovo ('99), detachment from land-processing, etc., have contributed to the increase of poverty⁶.

Poverty is a complex social phenomenon which is difficult to measure. In order to measure poverty, data such as income per capita, level of education, housing conditions, health, etc. are required.⁷The data refer to 2500 families in social assistance. The worst (bad) situation is in the families inside the park, in the remote and hilly - mountainous settlements⁸.

²SEA of SP– UN Habitat

³Spatial Plan - MESP 2016

⁴SEA of SP– UN Habitat

⁵Spatial Plan - MESP 2016

⁶Spatial Plan - MESP 2016

⁷Idem

⁸Idem

The improvement of the socio-economic situation is presented in Fig. 3. It is seen that the inhabitants of the area as first investments, 27.1% of them would suggest a ski center, 25% milk collection plant, 23.6% factory for gathering forest products such as fungus, tea, medicinal plants etc. So, residents support 3 investment directions that are fully in line with the announcement of the National Park⁹.

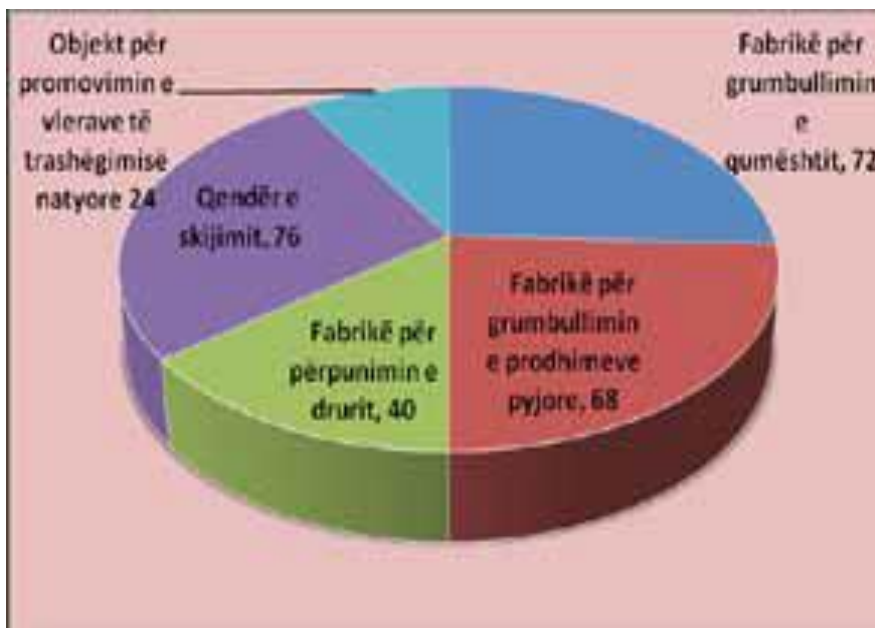


Fig 3. Improvement of the socio-economic situation

⁹Questionnaire conducted by the Regional Environmental Center, REC- Office in Kosovo

3 TOURISTIC POTENTIALS IN THE PARK BY MUNICIPALITIES

The economic development of municipalities that have access to the park has focused their development on the development of tourism. The potential centers for tourism development are concentrated in three regions, completely focusing on the winter tourism:

- **Bjeshka e Belegut Region** at an altitude of 2200-2300m, as a center (with the opportunity to development of skiing with the capacity of visitors of 17000 / per day);
- **Regions of Bjeshka e Lumbardhit, Milishevës dhe livadhet e Tiganëve** in the altitude of 850m, (with a capacity of visitors of 10000/per day);
- **Regions of Bjeshka e Rusolisë, Shtedimi, Hajla dhe Gropa e Madhe**¹⁰.

The development of touristic and recreational activities in these three regions can be developed in three basic forms as follows:

- Stationary,
- Weekend-walks and
- Transit.¹¹

Touristic potentials – The Istog’s part—The mountains of Istog where are situated: Lugu i Butë, Gurrat e bardha, Radusha, Bajsha, etc., are the best places for rest and rehabilitation. There are no service facilities (hotels and the like) in this part of the park, therefore visits are mainly in the form of daily visits. These sites are reached through roads that are difficult to pass, but can be achieved with the "4X4" vehicles. Currently it cannot be said about the number of visitors since the visits are mostly individual and there is no data regarding the number of visitors in this area.

Touristic potentials – The Peja’s part—Rugova is the most frequented center of the Bjeshkëve të Nemuna massif. Year-round activities include: spending time in nature, hunting, fishing, rural tourism, health tourism, rock climbing-alpinism, mountain hiking, cave exploration, mountain biking, snowshoeing, skiing, camping, various adventures, daily and weekly excursions, etc. Visits and staying take place in many localities, especially in Kuqishtë, Liqenas, Shtupeq i Madh, Bogë, Radavc - the Drini i Bardhe spring, Lake Liqenat and some other localities.

Touristic potentials – The Deçan’s part—Deçan tourist area with great natural resources is very interesting for nature lovers and interested explorers of the area. In the mountains there is a large number of springs, rocky lakes known as "Mountain eyes" and Deçan river along the road to Beleg Mountains, providing good conditions for tourism development, while the source of the mineral water and pine trees Deçan, as a rare property with healing characteristic, is used for health tourism.

Touristic potentials – Junik —The most sites visited by the local and foreign tourists in the part of Junik are: Gjeravica Peak with two natural lakes, the Ereniku River, Moronica, towers and mosques, etc. Tourists can find information through the Regional Tourism Center in Junik. The largest number of interested people is to visit the lakes and the Gjeravica Peak, which is reached through two trails (one path is 7.4 km and the other 7.0 km). Paths are equipped with information tables showing: direction, location, drinking water resources, altitude, etc.

Touristic potentials – Gjakova’s part—Localities of the part of Gjakova belonging to the National Park are distinguished by the values of the natural heritage as well as the cultural and historical heritage. Within the National Park - Gjakova Part is the "Battle of Koshare" area, then an important area of historical and cultural heritage (in which we encounter archeological traces of ancient civilization such as the fortress of Jerina etc.)¹²

¹⁰Spatial Plan - MESP 2016

¹¹Zeqir Veselaj: "Bjeshkët e Nëmura-Kosovo Pearl of Natural 2010

¹²Spatial Plan - MESP 2016



4 ANALYSIS AND THE PROPOSED MEASURES (SUGGESTIONS)

- The park, and especially the Rugova area (that represents a small ethno-geographical province), also has a very rich cultural tradition, with unique clothing, habits and dialects. Cultural heritage also includes crafts (architecture) and architecture (traditional houses, towers, water mills). Investment in craft development would make this area stand out with its unique tourist products.¹³
- The park offers a wide range of outdoor recreational activities including climbing to rocks, mountaineering, skiing, exploring caves, hunting, and fishing. To support the civil society, sports society, etc.¹⁴
- The park has a great potential to further develop its offer in nature-based tourism, benefiting from its beauty, variety and uniqueness due to its landscapes.¹⁵
- Loss of the current population is hampering the preservation of traditional land use. This loss is due to the lack of adequate economic opportunities and infrastructure that affect that area. Without the implementation of specific policies, it is likely that the depopulation trend will continue or worsen. Residents of the parks are to be subsidized for the development of intensive agriculture.¹⁶
- Restoration of landscapes affected by human activities through programs tool for vitalization;
- Protection of cultural, historical and architectural heritage as well as traditions through conservation and promotion through investment in cultural programs.
- Transport infrastructure presents a great deal of concern because of its direct and indirect impacts. Direct impacts include soil erosion, landslide impact and rocks, river landscape disruption, and habitat loss. Future projects should consider that the impact on the environment be as small as possible;
- It is recommended that in the design of new linear infrastructures be taken into account the results of biodiversity inventory and maps of strict areas of sites of archaeological value.
- Stricter implementation of building regulations and human activities in the future should at least avoid further damage to landscapes.
- The development of new hydro-power projects should be discouraged as they create cumulative impacts on river systems leading to their destruction. New developments need to seek alternative energy sources, particularly such as solar ones, to meet, at least in part, energy needs.
- Protection of cultural, historical and architectural heritage, including local traditions and ethnographic heritage - Contribute to the preservation of cultural, historical and architectural heritage within the Park¹⁷.

¹³SEA of SP– UN Habitat

¹⁴Idem

¹⁵SEA of SP– UN Habitat

¹⁶Idem,

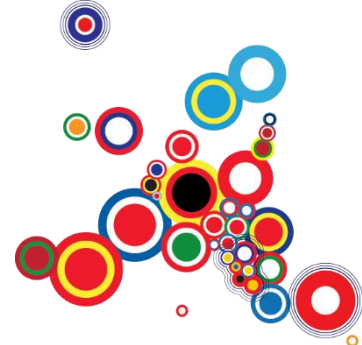
¹⁷Idem,





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