

“Compagnia dei Parchi” in Albania

July 2008

The project

On November 2006 Albanian Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Albanian Ministry of the Environment, Forest and Water Administration expressed interest to implement a successful strategy for Albanian Park management and development for sustainable tourism initiatives. The overall goal of tourism development in Albania is to increase the quality of life of a significant and increasing number of Albanians. Cultural tourism and eco-tourism are the most important components of the Albanian tourism product and successful elements of the national economy, as well as a real alternative for the improvement of incomes for rural communities.



Following this interest, the “*Compagnia dei Parchi*” innovation was officially presented to the Albanian Authorities on December 2006, by the President of “*Compagnia dei Parchi*” Consortium, Mr. Roberto Di Vincenzo and the President of *Federparchi*, Mr. Matteo Fusilli. In that occasion, a working table was established with the participation of the Albanian Ministries of Tourism and Environment and the interested national and

international actors, in order to explore the way to activate in Albania an innovative tourism product fostering economic local development.

Goals and Impact



The project intends to realize a model of management and development for sustainable tourism initiatives of an Albanian protected area, based on the *Compagnia dei Parchi* methodologies, in order to achieve the following goals:

- Introduce in Albania an innovative system for the management of protected areas;
- Promote and enhance natural environmental and cultural heritage, in the area of the Albanian Alps;
- Facilitate the planning of promotional actions in that area and set up integrated “packages” for sustainable tourism;
- Promote a local sustainable process, by means of tourism promotion, development of new tourist packages and tourist marketing actions, taking into consideration the interaction between public and private subjects;
- Promote the environmental protection of Albanian mountain areas and valleys, introducing sustainability issues in the tourism development process.

Actors involved

- Albanian Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports
- Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration
- UNDP ART GOLD Albania Programme
- Sustainable Development Department, World Bank Albania
- Environment Cluster Programmes, UNDP Albania
- UNDP Albania –Echo and Cultural Tourism Support Programme
- UNDP GEF/SGP Albania
- SNV Albania
- GTZ
- TEULEDA (Local Economic Development Agency of Shkoder)
- Local Authorities of Shkodra Region.
- IDEASS International Programme.

Main activities

On May 24, 2007, the first meeting of the Working Table for the promotion of Sustainable Tourism Initiatives in Albania was organized, with the participation of all the involved actors. The participants agreed to give priority to the Northern area, in the Region of Shkoder, and proposed to realize a collective study field trip to the mountain areas of Thethi and Kelmend.



During the mission, considering the Albanian attention to environmental issues, the President of Federparchi announced to the Government representatives the

participation of Albania as guest of honour in the fifth edition of “Mediterre 2008”, the International Fair of Mediterranean Parks.

A second mission to Albania of the President of “*Compagnia dei Parchi*” Mr. Roberto Di Vincenzo, his staff and the Representative of *Federparchi* Association, Mrs. Stefania Petrosillo, was organized in September 2007. The collective study trip to the Region of Shkoder was held in close collaboration with the local authorities, and it allowed to conduct a feasibility survey, to receive further information about tourism in the selected areas and to study a project for developing and managing the natural protected areas with the CdP’s methodologies. As a consequence, during the following weeks, the CdP and Federparchi experts elaborated a complete strategic document/proposal for the promotion of Sustainable Tourism Initiatives in Albania.



On November 2007, the President of Puglia Region, On. Nichi Vendola, forwarded an official invitation to the Albanian Minister of Tourism, Mr. Ylli Pango, and to the Minister of Environment, Mr. Lufter Xhuveli, for the participation of Albania as guest of honour at “Mediterre 2008”.

The preparatory event “Waiting for Mediterre” was organized in Tirana by Puglia Region on April 18, 2008. The meeting was attended by the president of Puglia Region, the Italian Ambassador in Tirana, the UN Res. Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative in Albania, the Albanian Minister of Environment, the Albanian Minister of European Integration, the Albanian Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, the Albanian Deputy Minister of



Tourism, the Deputy Minister of Environment. The initiatives of the Albanian Government in the field of environmental policy and preservation in protected areas were presented during the meeting, as well as the activity for the implementation of the IDEASS CdP project.

Results

The *Compagnia dei Parchi* and Federparchi experts elaborated the strategic document for the promotion of Sustainable Tourism Initiatives in Albania. The document was forwarded to the Albanian Government by UNDP ART GOLD IDEASS.

In May 2008, Albania participated as “guest of honour” in the fifth edition of “Mediterranean 2008” (at “Fiera del Levante” , Bari, Italy), organized by the council for Ecology of the Puglia Region and the Italian Federation of Parks and Natural Reserves.

During a special session of the event the Albanian high authorities illustrated to the international community the policies for management and promotion of the environment and cultural heritage.

A stand of about 50 square meters, in the Fair premises, was dedicated to Albanian protected areas. The activity carried on in Albania in the framework of the *Compagnia dei Parchi* / IDEASS project was presented during the works.

Perspective

The Albanian Government will develop, on the basis of the strategic document elaborated, an Operational Strategy for sustainable tourism in Northern Albania, which will constitute the basis for the formulation of cooperation projects, to be implemented in collaboration with the *Compagnia dei Parchi* and Federparchi experts and the Albanian national and local authorities.

The project proposals will re-consider the development of mountain tourism as a progress through the time: from self-contained adventure tourism it could pass to a familiar organized tourism, through the increasing of the offer and of the grant quality.

The projects will be implemented through a unitary action of the competent institutions and actors, based on the socio-morphological identity of a European unique area, where the relation man-nature has remained the same for centuries.

