

## Albania and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Lake Ohrid Conservation Project

GEFID#: 113 GEF Agency Project ID#: P042042; Project Status: Completed



- 1. Maintenance of average lake nutrient concentrations**, particularly phosphorous, below critical levels at which the current oligotrophic state can be sustained
- 2. Reduction in nutrient and microbiological (E-coli) loads in the lake's tributaries and other inflows.**
- 3. Development of capacity of public officials in the Lake Ohrid Watershed to enforce each country's environmental laws, regulations, standards and policies.**

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## PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The project development objective was to conserve and protect the natural resources and biodiversity of Lake Ohrid by developing and supporting an effective cooperation between Albania and FYR of Macedonia for the joint environmental management of the Lake Ohrid watershed.

## RESULTS: PROCESS

**INDICATOR #1: Adoption of recommended changes in legal acts, regulations and policies and more effective enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, standards and policies.** The project assisted in the development of a new “Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Lake Ohrid and its Watershed” which significantly expanded the composition and powers of the Lake Ohrid Management Board comprising representatives from both countries. The project contributed to the process of revising environmental legislation that would regulate environmental assessment of new projects.

**INDICATOR #2: Participatory Watershed Management Committees (PWMC) adopt watershed action plans to promote future targeted and priority activities and programs to protect the Lake and its watershed.** A community awareness program was developed and implemented that helped establish effective WMCs. Comprehensive watershed action plans were completed by the PWMCs and joint action plans were endorsed by the Lake Ohrid Management Board. Priority actions were further endorsed by the government of Macedonia.

## RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION

**INDICATOR#1: Maintain average lake nutrient concentrations, particularly, phosphorous, below critical levels at which its present oligotrophic state can be sustained.** By project end, the monitoring program data indicated that the average lake-wide phosphorous concentration remained below levels usually used to indicate oligotrophic condition; however, some shoreline hotspots reached mesotrophic condition.

**INDICATOR#2: Reduce nutrient (N & P) and microbiological (E-Coli) loads in the lake’s tributaries and other inflows.** Although the amount is unquantified, nutrient loads were reduced due to project activities (through the construction of manure platforms, reforestation activities, etc.) and substantial investments of other donors in wastewater collection and treatment.

## RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

By project-end, it was evident that there was *improved water quality through N and P reductions in project area and an increased number of communities in Lake Ohrid watershed area were adopting measures for nutrient reduction*. However, as pointed out in the Project Implementation Completion Report, a significant weakness of the project was the absence of realistic and measureable indicators of achievements under project activities. As a detailed and quantifiable list of indicators, directly linked to the project, was not developed, assessing the effectiveness of the project and the level of achievement of its global environmental objective, remains problematic.

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