

Project Update: February 2018

As per the schedule of the Project Conservation of Velidab - Biodiversity Heaven in Lake Ohrid (COVEL-BIOHEVLO), the activities are surely approaching their end. In fact, as it has been planned within the timetable of the project, the sampling and analysis for inventory of species in the sampling locality of Velidab at Lake Ohrid was conducted in May and July 2017. The analysis has been conducted during August 2017 and the Inventory of the species has been prepared. Moreover, by the application of the TESSA Toolkit there has been undertaken site valuation of the locality in question. Out of these activities there have been prepared respective reports which have been uploaded to the official website of the project (<http://ekomenlog.mk/activities/>) and you can find them enclosed within this email.

During January and February 2018 there have been numerous meetings with relevant institutions and representatives in Macedonia, whereby we presented the activities within the project and the idea of proclamation of the site as a Strict Nature Reserve (SNR), which has been, in fact the ultimate goal of the project. I must point out that based on the research and our findings the institutions and representatives have shown great interest in continuation with the administrative works for proclamation of Velidab as SNR, which, for sure makes us very happy and satisfied, since this would be the first action of this kind which has been initiated by a CSO and a Rufford financed project.

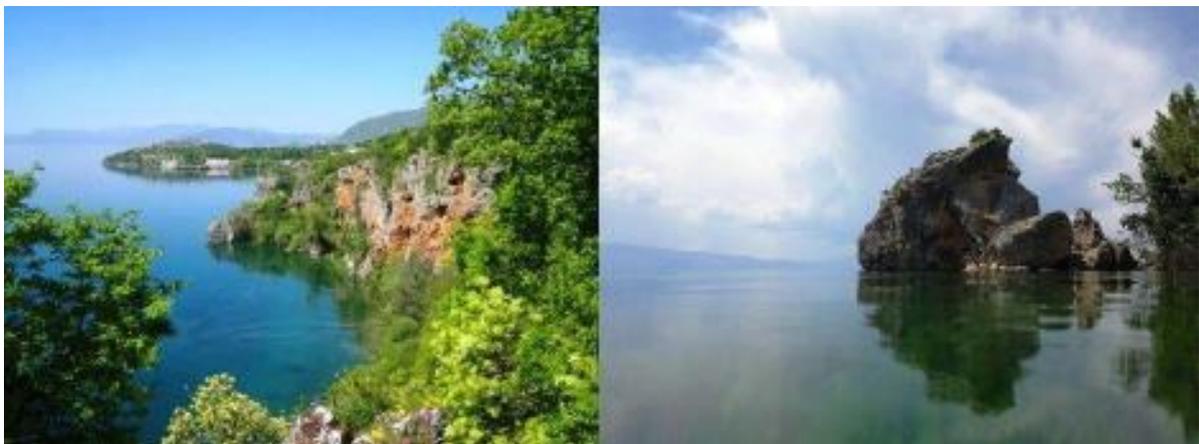
In that context, we have organised meetings with the Mayor of Ohrid, prof. d-r. Jovan Stojanovski, with representatives of the Tourist and Economic Development Unit within the Municipality of Ohrid (Mrs. Gabriela Miloshoska), as well as with the leader of the governing party in Ohrid – the local President of the Social Democratic Party in Ohrid (Mr. Laze Tanevski). All of them have been informed on the findings of the project and have expressed great interest in assisting us with the continuation of the administrative works on proclamation of the Velidab locality a SNR. Moreover, in this period we organised a meeting with the President of the Committee of Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region within the Assembly of Macedonia (H.E. Irena Stefoska and H.E. Maja Morachanin), where we presented the findings of our action and our Initiative for proclamation of the site as SNR. Both of them expressed great support for the Initiative and announced that they will make sure the Initiative will be analysed during some of the next assemblies of the Macedonian Parliament. That's why (and based on our project plan) we have prepared the official initiative (a legal document), which has been delivered to all mentioned institutions.

Based on the findings of the research and in accordance to the plans of the project, there a scientific paper should be published in an international scientific journal. Therefore, based on the information obtained in this project, we have prepared a paper which has been submitted to the Bulgarian scientific journal Acta Zoologica Bulgarica (<http://www.acta-zoologica-bulgarica.eu/>), which has been accepted for publication, and the revisions have been completed. The paper is planned to be published in the supplement of this journal dedicated to the Lake Ohrid, which is going to be published in April 2018. However, we have written confirmation by the editors that the paper is accepted is graded as truthfully rich in information and valuable to the scientific community.

The final meeting is planned to be held on 23rd February 2018 in the facilities of the Hydrobiological Institute in Ohrid with representatives of the Municipality, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders from the region. The outcome of this meeting will be delivered as soon as it ends.



Lake Ohrid.



Velidab.