
PROJECT FACT SHEET

Title: LAKE-CARE Project – “Lake Shkodra Community Action for Restoration and Ecosystem Health”

Project Summary:

LAKE-CARE is a replication project for the Albanian part of Lake Shkodra/Skadar, the largest lake in the Balkans, submitted by the Municipality of Shkodër in partnership with the Environmental and Territorial Management Institute (ETMI) under the EUROLakes Replication Call. Building on the EUROLakes measures, the project establishes a Community of Practice (CoP) that brings together local authorities, communities, NGOs and businesses to restore the lake’s ecosystem and strengthen long-term collaboration. Core actions include water quality monitoring, habitat restoration, protection of reed and bird habitats, and nature-based solutions such as eco-trails and birdwatching balconies. Applying the 4 Returns Methodology and its 5 key elements, the project seeks to generate social, natural, financial and inspirational returns, improve the lake’s ecological status, enhance sustainable livelihoods, and strengthen transboundary cooperation with Montenegro.

Scope and objectives of the project

- Establish a Community of Practice (CoP) of key Lake Shkodra stakeholders and formalize their commitment through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- Develop a baseline assessment of the lake’s ecological status and a roadmap of priority restoration actions
- Implement pilot nature-based solutions: shoreline restoration (300 m²), two birdwatching balconies and two kilometers of eco-trails
- Set up structured, citizen-science-supported monitoring (12–15 times per year) of physical, chemical, biological, microbiological and biodiversity indicators
- Strengthen transboundary cooperation and data exchange with Montenegrin authorities for a harmonized assessment of ecological status

Results of the project

- At least one Community of Practice (10 members) established, with a signed MoU and ≥90% active participation
- Water quality parameters meeting national targets in the short term and EU Water Framework Directive targets in the long term
- 30% increase in tourist and birdwatching activities in the short term; 25% increase in annual income for local eco-tourism providers in the long term
- Improved biodiversity indicators: at least 52 fish species, 290 bird species and 1,410 vegetation taxa
- At least one community fair organized to promote local culture and goods (handmade carpets, medicinal plants), held annually in the long term
- A replicable model for integrated, participatory lake restoration contributing to the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters”

Donor: EUROLakes Project, Horizon Europe

Duration: 01.09.2026 – 31.08.2028

Partners:

Shkodra Municipality
ETMI