



RESTORATION OF THE PRESPA LAKE

photo: UNDP/Ljubo Stefanov

THE CHALLENGE

The Prespa Lakes Basin is over 5 million years old—amongst the most ancient freshwater lakes in the world. The region is home to more than 2,000 species of fish, birds, mammals and plants. Many of these species are unique. And many are in danger of dying out if their habitat is not protected.

The lake has suffered many pressures in the last forty years. These pressures have many harmful effects on the health of the water. One of these effects is a rapid growth of biomass that endangers the endemic species. This process is called eutrophication.

The main causes of the lake's degradation are harmful farming practices, erosion, untreated waste and wastewaters. Over-using fertilizers and pesticides and dumping agricultural waste are particularly harmful.

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WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

UNDP, together with the Swiss Development Corporation and the Global Environment Facility, has been actively supporting the sustainable development of this vulnerable region for almost ten years. Many significant results have been achieved.

- There has been a 30% reduction in the quantity of pesticides used by farmers each season.
- There is much greater environmental awareness amongst the local population.
- Comprehensive plans have been developed for managing the watershed.
- And extensive research has identified the main problems in the region and developed sustainable solutions.



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THE NEW PROJECT "RESTORATION OF THE PRESPA LAKE" WILL BRING MANY BENEFITS FOR THE LOCAL PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT

- By reducing the pressures on the ecosystem from pollution, it will significantly improve the health and resilience of the lake.
- Hundreds of farmers will learn more responsible ways of irrigating and fertilizing their land and disposing of agricultural waste.
- Thousands of trees will be planted to combat the harmful effects of erosion.
- Wastewater management will be improved through nature-based technology upgrades.
- Wetland restoration techniques will be introduced for controlling floods and filtering the water of Lake Prespa's largest tributary - the Golema Reka river.
- Local capacity to manage and monitor the environment will be greatly increased.
- A Lake Monitoring System and Management Service—with an up-to-date laboratory will be introduced for the first time.
- These improvements in agriculture and watershed management will bring eutrophication under control.
- Local people will benefit from cleaner waters.
- Better quality water will help attract more tourists
- Local farmers will benefit from using more sustainable methods and will save money by using organic compost.
- And the many rare and threatened species that live in the lake will have a much better chance of survival.

THE RESTORATION OF THE PRESPA LAKE PROJECT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED OVER THE NEXT SIX-YEARS BY UNDP IN CLOSE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MUNICIPALITY OF RESEN, THANKS TO THE GENEROUS FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE SWISS DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, IN THE AMOUNT OF 5 MILLION SWISS FRANCS.