



# POWER MAPPING OF THE ALBANIAN TERRITORY

INSTITUTIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS  
IDENTIFIED IN THE WATER SECTOR

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Tirana, December 2023



# 1. Environmental issues in Albania

Albania is a rich country in freshwater resources, but the quality of water has deteriorated significantly especially over the last several decades. The factors that have caused this deterioration are numerous and of different nature. Probably, the most important one is that there have been significant social changes in Albania in recent years, such as the change of the political regime from a one party communist system to a democratic system, and the severe downturn in economy prior to the fall of communism.

Other important natural and anthropogenic factors are climate, hydrology, vegetation coverage, land use, geology, and topographical characteristics, which have contributed in different ways to the deterioration of the water quality in Albania.

In Albania, there are approximately 150 streams and rivers flowing from east to west. The water of the rivers is used in urban areas, agriculture, aquaculture, recreation, hydropower, and industry. The upper reaches of major rivers flow through steep terrain contributing significantly to erosion in the eastern highland areas and alluvium deposits in the western flat areas. There are a number of deltas, lagoons and wetlands in western Albania, which are critical because of both their tremendous biodiversity and their function as wildlife habitats.

For this reason, the wetlands have both national and international protection status. However, the transport of contaminants and colloids from the eastern part of the country has deleteriously affected these transitional bodies of water at the interface of rivers and seas.

Some environmental issues which were identified in Albania are as follow:

1. Urban waste and wastewater pollution - This category includes pollution from lack of sanitary landfills, lack of wastewater treatment plants and plastics.
2. Marine and terrestrial erosion - Marine erosion is the advancement of the sea towards the land, the erosion caused by the lack of vegetation on the coast, the erosion of rivers in their deltas.
3. Marine and port pollution - hydrocarbon spills, port accidents and pollution at ports as a result of port operations.
4. Destruction of the biodiversity of the Riviera - In this category problems related to illegal activity such as illegal hunting, illegal fishing, pollution from cultivation and, fishing farms or high eutrophication will be analyzed.
5. Coastal development conflicts - In this category the reduction of coastal areas versus urban development is analyzed as well as the reduction of protected areas and the intensity of construction on the coast.

## 2. Stakeholders

Albanian Institutions and stakeholders identified in the **water sector**, including:

- Key governmental institutions (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, national agencies, etc.)
- Private sector
- Civil society

***The Institutions involved in the water sector are:***

- **Ministries**

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Ministry of Tourism and Environment
- Ministry of Finance and Economy
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy

- **Institutions at Central Level**

- Water Resources Management Agency
- Water Basin Councils
- Water Basin Administration Office
- Institute of Geosciences, Energy, Water and Environment
- Water Regulatory Authority/Entity
- National Environmental Agency
- Public Health Institute
- Albanian Geologic Survey
- National Agency of Natural Resources
- State Authority for Geo-Spatial Information
- National Agency on Water Supply, Sewerage and Waste Infrastructure
- National Agency for Information Society
- National Agency of Protected Areas
- Health Service Operator
- State Health Inspectorate

- **Institutions at Local Level**

- The River Basin Councils
- Local Government Units

- **Universities**

- **Private sector**

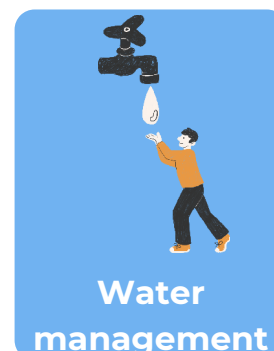
- Water Supply and Sewerage Companies

- **Civil society Organizations**

- *NGOs*
  - REC
  - COSPE
  - Others
- *Non-Formal Group of Activists*
  - RESU-Reinforce Sustainability
  - Group of Rural Activists of Dibra
  - Others

**MINISTRIES INVOLVED IN THE WATER SECTOR** AND THEIR MAIN ROLES ARE PRESENTED AS FOLLOW:

- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)** is responsible for drafting and executing state policies on agriculture and rural development while guaranteeing the sustainable management and the administration of agricultural land and the drainage system, including the preparation of regulatory acts and transposition of respective EU acquis. The mission of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is the implementation of the government program and more specifically in the:



- **Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE).** Based on relevant legislation, the MoTE includes in its area of responsibility the environmental sector including policies, waste treatment standards and the effects on air and environment, air quality, noise, industrial pollution, chemicals, climate change and monitoring of environmental and water quality indicators, impact assessment on the environment. Under the Ministry of Tourism and Environment's dependence operates NEA, NAPA, NAF, etc.
- **Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE)** is responsible for matters relating to economic policy, the central government budget, taxes, banking, security and insurance, international economic work, central, regional and local government. MoFE is responsible for determining subsidies for the water supply and sewerage sector that derive from the state budget. By setting the ceilings for sectorial investments based on budget programs, it realizes financial management as a whole.

- **Ministry of Interior (Mol)** has in its area of responsibility the coordination with LGUs and environmental protection (water included) related to punishment of environmental crimes as foreseen by Criminal Code and respective procedures to be followed.
- **Ministry of Defense (MoD):** It is responsible for regulations designations related to military waste in cooperation with MoTE. MD has the leading role in cases of civil emergencies including those caused by flooding.
- **Ministry of Health and Social Protection** is responsible for the development of national policies and programs aimed at the protection and promotion of health, as well as the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases in the population. It is also responsible for the development of policies aimed at the protection, promotion, integration and continuous improvement of the social welfare of individuals, families and communities in need.
- One of the fundamental elements of the well-being of the citizens is the water supply as a vital element, as well as the guarantee of hygiene and sanitation at the appropriate levels. Under the dependence of this ministry operates the Public Health Institute and the Health Service Operator, institutions that play an important role in guaranteeing the supply of the population with qualitative water and within the parameters for the health of the citizens.
- **Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE)** formulates policies, sectorial strategies, proposes the legal framework, prepares investment programs and subsidy policies, provides and coordinates technical support and monitoring of activities. It also prepares the annual and medium-term (3 year) plan of investments in the water and sewerage sector, which is an important tool for channeling of internal and foreign investment. The MoIE responsibilities are linked to national climate policy and international cooperation on climate change, as well as energy issues, meteorology and national geological surveys, electricity, water, wastewater services and industry in Albania.

**THE CENTRAL INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE WATER SECTOR** AND THEIR MAIN ROLES ARE PRESENTED AS FOLLOWS:

- **Water Resources Management Agency (WRMA)** is responsible for the designation and implementation of policies and strategies that aim for an integrated management of water resources in both aspects, quantitative and qualitative water usage. WRMA is organized at the central and basin levels through the river basin administration offices with the following main competencies:



**Policies  
developing**

Develops and implements policies, strategies, plans, programs and projects aimed at the integrated management of water resources.



**Enforcing  
provisions**

Applies the provisions of international agreements and conventions on water and transboundary waters.



**Concessions  
and permits**

Proposes to the National Water Council the issuance of concessions and permits for the use of water resources, etc.

- **Water Basin Councils (WBCs).** WBCs are responsible for the integrated management of water resources at water basin level.

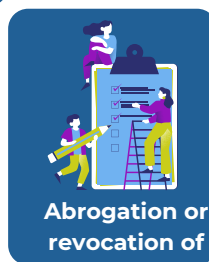
- **Water Basin Administration Office** is responsible for the monitoring of surface and groundwater bodies of water designated for the production of drinking water and carries out the following main duties:



Exercises the functions of the technical secretariat and organizes the meetings of the Water Basin Councils (WBC)



Accepts and reviews technical-legal documentation filed by natural and legal persons that requires decision-making by the WBC and monitors the implementation of these decisions



Proposes to WBC the abrogation or revocation of permits, authorizations, decisions under the legal framework

At basin level and based on law, drafts and updates management plans, inventories of water resources, prepares reports or opinions, assesses the impact of human activity on water status, prepares the economic analysis of use, drafts the program of measures, completes the national register with the issued licenses / authorizations/permits/concessions



Generates and monitors quantitative and qualitative data on water resources through the establishment, management and maintenance of the network of monitoring stations





- **Institute of Geosciences, Energy, Water and Environment (IGEWE)** is responsible for the national monitoring in the field of hydrometeorology and continuous study and monitoring of phenomena and hydrological activity, as well as real-time notification of state bodies responsible for civil and public emergencies for flood risks. According to this order IGEWE is responsible for:



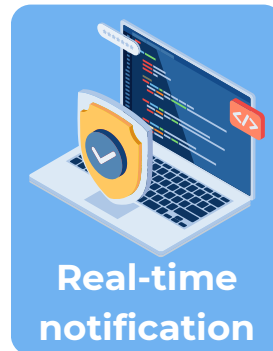
**Monitoring**

Transfer of knowledge and technologies, as well as national monitoring in the fields of seismology, hydrometeorology, natural resources, georisk, geoengineering, geoinformation, climate and environment.



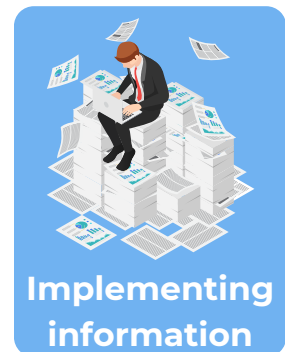
**Studying**

Study of natural hazards (georisk) and those caused by human activity (landslides, erosions, floods, earthquakes, pollution, landfills, mining subsidies, etc.) Studying the state of the natural environment, the level of erosion and the pollution of air and water as a whole, both surface and ground Study and evaluation of mineral resources, building materials, underground resources, energy, underground water resources;



**Real-time notification**

Continuous study and monitoring of hydrological phenomena and activities, as well as real-time notification of the state bodies responsible for civil emergencies and the public of flood hazards.

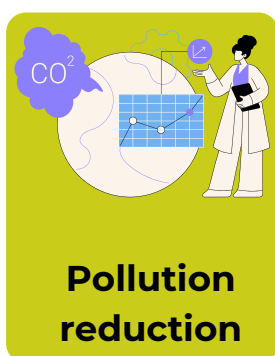


**Implementing information**

Implementation and use of information and telecommunication technologies for the collection, transmission and processing of information of digital systems in the fields of seismology and hydrometeorology.

- **Water Regulatory Authority/Entity (WRA).** The role and functions of WRA relate to the licensing of entities providing water supply and sewerage services, setting service tariffs, controlling customer service and monitoring the performance of operators / companies of water supply and sewerage systems. WRA is an independent public institution responsible for regulating and monitoring the water supply sector, the collecting, disposal and processing of wastewater at the national level.

- **National Environmental Agency (NEA) & Regional Environmental Agencies (REA).** NEA is a central public institution, which extend its jurisdiction throughout the territory of Albania, through the head office and regional branches. NEA provides quality references and laboratory services on the quality of waters. NEA is the competent authority for the management of the National Environmental Monitoring Network, established with the function of monitoring and recording the quality of surface and groundwater. NEA administers the environmental information system including: data on the status of environmental components including water; data on factors such as water discharges. National Environmental Agency and the Regional Environmental Agencies (subordinate agencies of NEA), have the mission of achieving environmental protection objectives that include:



The prevention, control and reduction of pollution of water, air, soil and other pollution of any kind.

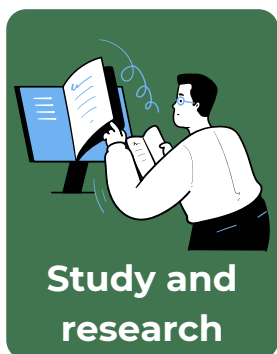


Conservation, protection and improvement of environmental sustainability with public participation.



The sustainable and rational use of nature and its resources, including water as a vital natural resource.

- **Public Health Institute (PHI).** The Institute of Public Health is under the administrative responsibility of the responsible Minister of Health and Social Protection, as a research centre, a reference centre for public health services. Water and Sanitation Section performs these functions:



Conducts studies and research on the assessment of environmental hazards related to water and sanitation and their impact on health.

Conducts studies in water supply, urban and industrial fluids, in wastewater purification technology.



Organizes the technical control of works of sanitary character and the state of the sewerage system.



Prepares the annual report on the quality of drinking water at the national level, based on the annual reports of regional public health structures.

Produces the periodic (monthly) drinking water bulletin.



Organizes and controls the measures for emergencies response in order to prevent epidemics of hydro-origin.



Takes administrative measures for the water utilities when hygienically clean water is not provided to the population.

- **Albanian Geologic Survey (AGS)** has the legal status as an advisory, technical and scientific institution of the state, a public, budgetary legal entity, which performs activities in the field of earth sciences in the territory of the Republic of Albania. The activity of AGS also includes:



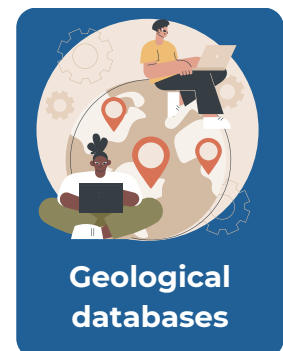
Systematic basic geological studies on land, seas, lakes and rivers in the territory of the Republic of Albania, through complex mapping of different scales for the administration of the territory and minerals.



Hydrogeological studies of water basins, their monitoring and determination of measures for the conservation of groundwater reserves.



Research and evaluation of metallic minerals, hydrocarbons, industrial minerals, groundwater resources, potable and industrial water, mineral and thermal waters.



Creating geological databases, balances of mineral reserves, groundwater reserves, geological hazards and making them available to central and local government institutions, other stakeholders, preparing and publishing information.

- **National Agency of Natural Resources (NANR)** operates as a public institution/entity under the responsible ministry. One of the functions of NANR is to administer all primary hydrocarbon data and data related to mining and post-mining activity, including data on water affected by mining activities, that should be reflected in the water resources cadaster. The National Agency of Natural Resources is responsible for the development, supervision of rational use of natural resources, based on governing policies, and monitoring of their post exploitation in the mining, hydrocarbon and energy sectors.

1. Design and implementation of policies aimed at sustainable support for the growth of agricultural production and farms;
2. Drafting and approximation of legislation in the fields of agriculture and rural development in full coherence with EU requirements;
3. Protecting the health of animals, plants, and ensuring the health of people from diseases that can come from animals and the quality of food;
4. Collection and processing of agricultural information;
5. Sustainable management and management of agricultural land;
6. Providing assistance and information to farmers;
7. Management of the cleaning system and coordination of actions for the management of the irrigation system.

- **State Authority for Geo-Spatial Information (ASIG)** aims to provide an integrated geospatial information and related service to users. This service should enable users to identify and use geospatial or geographic information from various sources, from local to global, interactively. The responsibility area of ASIG includes also the geo-information on water sector.
- **National Agency on Water Supply, Sewerage and Waste Infrastructure (AKUM)**, through its legal and technical authority, coordinates and monitors all sectorial activities of water supply and sewerage, wastewater treatment, territorial planning and waste infrastructure, in cooperation with all institutions of the country, at central and local level. The main functions of AKUM are:



**Improvement  
of the legal  
framework**



**Investments'  
planning**



**Distributing  
subsidies**



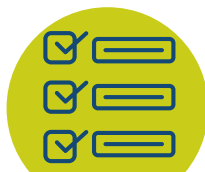
**Monitoring**



**Technical  
guiding**



**Monitoring  
procedures**



**Proposing  
indicators and  
criteria**



**Managing of  
the national  
platform**

1. Proposes the amendment and improvement of the legal and sub-legal framework for the water supply, sanitation and wastewater treatment, territorial planning and waste infrastructure, and contributes in the process of drafting national policies and strategies in these fields;
2. Monitors the implementation of sectorial water supply and sewerage strategies, wastewater treatment, territorial planning and waste infrastructure;
3. Plans the investment needs for the construction / rehabilitation / extension of water supply and sewerage systems, of wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), as well as in terms of territorial planning and waste infrastructure, including their implementation, based on government programs and national sector master plans;
4. Guides from the technical and managerial point of view and contributes/collaborates for all water supply projects, WWTPs, territorial planning and waste infrastructure financed by the state budget, municipality budget, water utility budget, or international financial institutions, in order to guarantee and enforce the technical rules of design, implementation and exploitation, and monitors their performance;
5. Prepares the methodology and distributes subsidies in the water supply and sewerage sector planned in the state budget, in accordance with the applicable law and by-laws;
6. Is responsible for the design and implementation of monitoring procedures and programs for water supply, sewerage, wastewater treatment and waste infrastructure;
7. Proposes the indicators and criteria that each service provider (water utility) in the water supply & sewerage sector should achieve according to the performance contract, which is signed by the parties. These criteria are approved with the guideline of the minister responsible for water supply – sewerage and waste issues;
8. Manages and monitors the implementation of the national water supply and sewerage master plan;
9. Creates and manages the national platform for water supply and sewerage, based on the Geographical Information System (GIS).

- **National Agency for Information Society (NAIS).** The scope of NAIS activity is:



1. The implementation of policies and strategies for the development of the information society sector (IS);
2. Coordination of programs in the field of IS;
3. Promoting investments in the field of IA (Intelligence Augmentation);
4. The promotion of new technologies in the field of IS.

- **National Agency of Protected Areas:** NAPA as one of the subordinate institutions of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment is responsible for managing, protecting, developing, expanding and functioning of protected areas in Albania. NAPA is responsible for drafting and implementing management plans for protected areas, proposing changes and improvements.
- **Health Service Operator (HSO).** The Institute of Public Health and the Health Service Operator have an important role in setting standards and monitoring the quality of drinking water by conducting analyzes and periodic testing at certain points of the water supply network. They also propose measures when they notice pollution or damage to water parameters, or they may halt the supply of water to the population when the water doesn't fulfill quality standards or poses risks for the health.
- **State Health Inspectorate (SHI)** is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and it is the highest authority of sanitary inspection to monitor the quality and quantity of water supplied to consumers. SHI performs sampling and testing and decides whether service providers are in compliance with approved standards. In case of non-compliance with sanitary criteria, the activity of the service provider in the water supply and sanitation sector is suspended or punished.



**THE LOCAL INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE WATER SECTOR** AND THEIR MAIN ROLES ARE PRESENTED AS FOLLOW:

- **The River Basin Councils (RBC)** are responsible bodies at local level for the integrated water resources management in the concerned basin, and it shall ensure the conservation and protection of the water resources, as well as an equal distribution of the water resources within the concerned RB (The structure of the River Basin Administration Office depends on the WRMA. WBCs main duties are:



Ensuring the protection and the rational development of water resources within the boundaries of the relevant water basin;



Guaranteeing the proper distribution of water resources utilization rights within the boundary of the relevant water basin by approving water permits and authorizations, based on legal provisions and water basin management plans, according to the purposes of the use and the principles of effective management of water resources.

Providing protection of water resources from pollution, misuse and damage affecting their quality and quantity



Identifying relevant water bodies that need protection





- **Local Government Units (municipalities):** Municipalities are responsible within their jurisdiction for:



1. Production, treatment, transmission and supply of drinking water;
2. Collection, disposal/removal and treatment of wastewaters.

They also manage water supply and sewerage companies (water utilities) established as commercial shareholders companies under the ownership of municipalities.

**THE PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE WATER SECTOR AND THEIR MAIN ROLES ARE PRESENTED AS FOLLOW:**

- **Universities** are responsible for research conduct related to water supply and sewerage, including studies on technologies for waste water treatment plants.
- **Private sector**, it is considered to be an important stakeholder ensuring its contribution through investment and donations. During the recent years, several investments in hydropower, light industry and mining have been undertaken by the private sector.
- **Water Supply and Sewerage Companies** (water utilities): the main functions of water utilities are:



1. Performing drinkable water supply services for consumers and the sale of water;
2. Maintenance of drinking water supply systems;
3. Production and/or purchase of water to meet customer requirements; wastewater collection, disposal and treatment.

**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS involved in the water sector and their main roles are presented as follow:**

**NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations)**, are typically voluntary groups or institutions with a social mission, that operates independently from the government.

Among the various organizations that deal with the environment in Albania, there are:

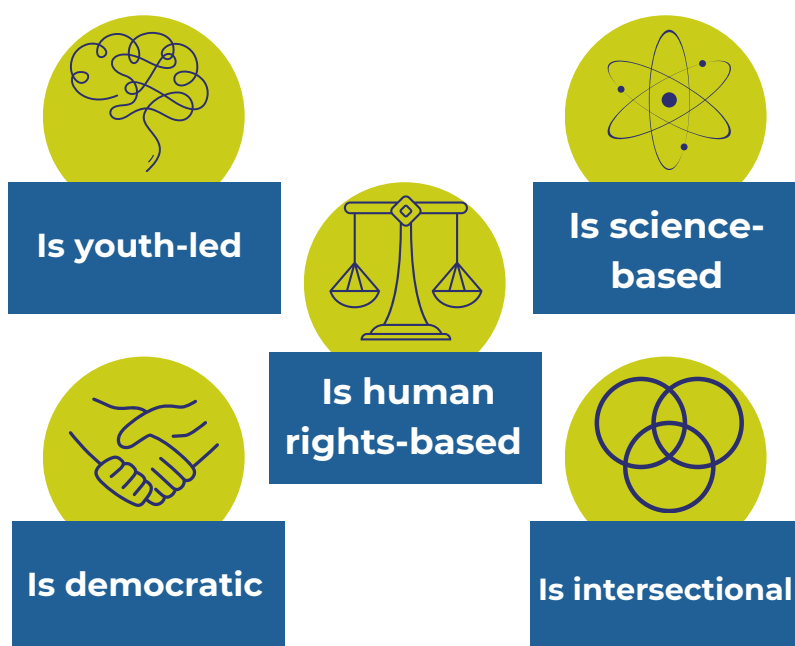
- **REC** - The Resource Environmental Center Albania (REC Albania) is an Albanian NGO, that is engaged to support NGOs, environmental institutions, and stakeholders at a national, regional, and local level. It also promotes participatory processes and exchange of information. REC Albania promotes cooperation among different stakeholder groups, provides professional advice to decision-makers; disseminates knowledge on education for sustainable development policy and tools; develops innovative multimedia tool-kits in both online and printed formats for classroom use; builds the capacities of local, national, and sub-national stakeholders; and facilitates public participation in policy-making.

The Resource Environmental Center Albania as a successor of the Regional Environmental Center has several running programs focusing on:

- Local initiatives and environmental investments
  - Environmental planning and management, and national, regional, and rural development;
  - Environmental education and information;
  - Environmental legislation and the legislative framework;
  - Capacity development and technical assistance;
  - Public participation in environmental matters;
  - Civil society support and assistance;
- **COSPE** was founded in 1983 and is an international, secular, and non-profit cooperation association. It operates in 24 countries alongside civil society and local communities, committed to social justice and peace, in particular supporting marginalized and discriminated groups in their requests for social inclusion, human rights, and democracy. The various projects COSPE carries out in the areas of northern Albania have as a main objective of increasing food sovereignty, promoting sustainable socio-economic development in rural communities, enhancing traditional knowledge, typical local productions, and the role of women within the rural economy. With the **“W.IN: Women Initiative”** project the aim is to strengthen the role of women in civil society in northern Albania, through the improvement of public policies in favor of women's rights and gender equality and through an increase in participation women in political processes at the local level of the municipalities of Puka, Vau Dejes and Tropoja.

Among non-formal groups of activists, the Observatory has identified:

- **RESU-Reinforce Sustainability:** This NGO was funded in 2022, and is led by young people with a group of 15 activists. Their mission is to enhance the skills and broaden the knowledge of new generations on climate change and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. To do this, they work both with other organizations on concrete projects such as cleaning rivers and water basins, and with ministries and various institutions. The organization is based on five principles.



- **Group of Rural Activists of Dibra-GARD,** is an informal group created in 2023 and supported by EED (European Endowment for Democracy), opening the first community Center in the region of Dibra, dedicated to rural areas, as rural areas are the most neglected in Albania. This organization provides the various NGOs with a community center in which to meet and carries out concrete projects mainly aimed at protecting the Drin river in collaboration with other entities. Currently the association has 4 stable members, while around a hundred people gather in their spaces and give life to discussions and ideas. Their main focus are on sustainability, tourism and ecotourism, and empowerment of democracy, law and civic society in Dibra region.

- **Youth group "Youth for air and climate"**, part of EDEN environmental center and supported by UNICEF Albania. This is a group of 225 young people from Shkodra, Tirana, Elbasan, Berati, and Pogradec who are committed to contribute and support the improvement of air quality and reducing the effects of climate change in the country.

This group has been engaged in developing a youth-designed manifesto with proposals on alternative solutions to problems leading to air pollution and environmental degradation, by being actively engaged.

This Youth group has strongly emphasized the alternatives in support of national policies for forest conservation and management, air quality, water resource management, and climate change; as well as in support of some of the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals such as: 3. Good health and well-being; 6. Clean water and public hygiene; 11. Sustainable cities and communities; 13. Climate action; 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions, etc. To follow the recommendation articulated on Youth Manifesto for Air quality and climate change, kindly refer to <https://www.unicef.org/albania/media/5761/file>.