

Annual report

2023

NGO Eco-team

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ECO-TEAM
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

About us

Mission: The mission of the NGO Eco-team is environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources through public advocacy activities in the development of public policies, education of the public and private sectors, and public involvement in the decision-making process.

Main goal: Ecological, economic and social well-being of Montenegrin society.

Projects:

The non-governmental organization Eco-team has implemented numerous projects through its three programs: (i) environmental protection program, (ii) climate and energy program and (iii) youth empowerment program.. The review of the key conducted activities in 2022. relative to the current and realized projects are given bellow.

Project: Panda Labs Junior for Just Transition

The project aims to empower young people from the coal region, so that they become a significant participant in the transition process towards a sustainable future, where sustainable technologies and production from renewable sources will replace the current fossil-dependent economy.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- The second cycle of the educational program, for the new generation of high school students from the Gymnasium "Tanasije Pejatović" and Professional high school, was realized in the period March - May 2023.



High school students from "Tanasije Pejatović" Gymnasium participate in the educational program, March – May 2023, Pljevlja

- The third hackathon "E-mobiliši se" was held in Nikšić, from April 8-9, 2023. The hackathon's topic was e-mobility. The team "Sunbus" with an idea of the electrifying public transport in the municipality of Pljevlja was rewarded for the best idea proposed;



Members of the winning "Sunbus" team, April 2023, Nikšić

- The fourth hackathon, "Transformiši se" was held in Petrovac from May 26-28. The hackathon's topic was a just transition, and the "Donkeyland" team won first place at the hackathon;



Members of the winning team "Donkeyland", May 2023, Petrovac

- Teams "Sunbus" and "Donkeyland" as the rewarded ones from two previously completed hackathons, participated in a regional conference in Ohrid from June 14-17 in the organization of the Junior Achievement North Macedonia. By participating in the regional conference, youth from Montenegro have had the opportunity to exchange ideas and accomplished knowledge from the recently educational program with their peers from Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Serbia;



Regional conference in Ohrid, June 2023

- The round table "Strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit and greater inclusivity of youth" was organized on July 7 in Pljevlja. The goal of the event was to present ideas from the previously completed hackathons to local decision-makers, representatives of the business community, civil society, and other interested parties, and to initiate a discussion regarding the improvement of the position of young people in Pljevlja;



Round table "Strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit and greater inclusivity of youth", July 2023, Pljevlja

- With the aim of acquaint the high school students with the natural resources of Pljevlja, a one-day trip "Socializing on the upper course of the Ćehotina river" was organized. The excursion on the Ćehotina River contributed to the youth being better informed about the fish species of the Ćehotina River, sports and recreational fishing techniques, as well as techniques and ways of survival in nature;



One-day trip "Socializing on the upper course of the Čehotina river", September 2023, Pljevlja

- In cooperation with Junior Achievement North Macedonia, a two-day, cross-border workshop was held from September 11-12, 2023, in Petrovac. For the workshop's duration,

youth networking sessions were organized with the aim of bringing youth together and cooperating. Also, the activity of simulating a socio-economic council was carried out, where young people were thinking and proposing solutions for mitigating the consequences of climate change.



Simulation of socio-economic council, September 2023, Petrovac

Project: Towards Biodiversity Conservation and Strengthening Protected Area management of Cijevna River

The goal of the project is the preservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources of the Cijevna River through the improvement of management of the protected area, as a prerequisite for a healthy ecosystem.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

-In March, a socio-economic analysis was developed for the "Cijevna Canyon" Nature Monument. The purpose of the socio-economic analysis was to examine the possible social and economic implications of the management of this protected area and offer information that could facilitate the organization of the management of the protected area;

-A round table "Nature monument "Cijevna River Canyon" - an opportunity for nature and people" was organized in the Tuzi municipality in May. During the round table, the socio-economic analysis findings were presented, as well as the so-far realized activities on mapping the habitat of *Pinguicula hirtiflora* and future activities towards its permanent protection, which are being carried out by the project partner, the Montenegrin Society of Ecologists. In addition to the above, the event also enabled the exchange of opinions and views of interested parties, which is of particular importance for the future management process of the Nature Monument "Cijevna Canyon";



Round table "Natural monument "Cijevna River Canyon" - an opportunity for nature and people", May 2023, Tuzi Municipality

-In the days when the "Days of the European Green Belt" were celebrated all over Europe, a one-day trip for journalists was organized in the canyon of the Cijevna River with the aim of presenting the natural, geological, landscape, cultural, touristic, and other values of the Cijevna River, as well as connecting the journalists with these values how they would be able to inform the general public and spread the values of this magnificent ecological spot site.



One-day trip for journalists to the Nature Monument "Cijevna Canyon", September 2023, Tuzi

-The short film "Cijevna, life in stone" was broadcast on the social networks of Eco-team and the project partner, the Montenegrin Ecologists Society. The film is a screening of the natural values of the Cijevna river canyon, cultural heritage, people who live in the vicinity of the canyon, and all the potential that the Cijevna river offers to the local community.

Project: Decreasing of corruption in the field of environmental protection

The project goal is research and analysis of corrupt activities related to environmental protection in Montenegro, as well as promotion of transparency and responsibility in this area. Also, the goal is to raise public awareness of the damage that corruption has on the environment and the importance of fighting against it.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- The analysis of the regulation framework which regulates the implementation of the project environmental impact assessment and the application of the punishment policy, was prepared in the period December 2022 - February 2023. Based on the results of the analysis, the initiative to amend the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, with the aim of improving the punishment policy in the area of environmental impact assessment, was submitted to the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism;

- In total, three educational workshops "Youth for an environment without corruption" were held in three cities in Montenegro. The goal of the workshops was to raise the awareness of public opinion, primarily young people, about the importance of preventing and suppressing corruption in the field of environmental protection;



Educational workshop "Youth for an environment without corruption", March 2023, Podgorica

- An online platform of Ecological black spots was developed, which presents an interactive map of environmental problems such as: illegal landfills, air pollution, wood exploitation, burning tires, etc. Each ecological black spot is accompanied by information such as the cause of the given problem, what are the potential solutions are and whose responsibility it is to solve the given problem. The platform provides the opportunity for citizens to supplement the existing ones and also to inform the creators of the platform about other environmental problems, so that the existing map of ecological black spots is supplemented, and therefore all environmental problems are presented in one place, which achieves transparency and

reduces the possibility of corruption actions. The online platform of Ecological black spots is available through the following link: <https://www.crnetacke.com/>

- The conference "Decreasing of corruption in the area of environmental protection" was organized on July 27 in Podgorica. The aim of the conference was to present the results of the project of the same name, as well as stimulate discussion among the participants about the directions in which to act in order to reduce corruption in the area of environmental protection to a minimum.

Project: A step closer to the European Union (EU)

The goal of the project is to contribute to better quality and faster reforms and the process of integration of Montenegro into the EU, thanks to the strengthened capacities of civil society organizations, media, and active citizens.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- A comprehensive analysis of the strategic legislative framework in the areas relevant to the Green Agenda was developed. The analysis identified the current state of the strategic legislative framework in all areas/sectors related to the Green Agenda - climate action (decarbonization, clean energy, sustainable transport), circular economy, pollution, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity. The main findings of the analysis have been used to make recommendations for improvement of the legislative framework and the state of implementation of the GA.

- The national multi-sectoral conference on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans topic was organized from November 23-24 in Podgorica. The main goal of the conference was the exchange of experiences and challenges in the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans (GA) between different sectors and the creation of a multisectoral dialogue that will facilitate the building of consensus around various issues in relation to the GA. Within the conference, issues related to GA were discussed from different and sometimes opposing angles, with the aim of bringing the various interested parties closer to an environment where mutual understanding can be achieved. The dialogue among relevant stakeholders was made possible by the organization of five panels on several topics over two working days.



Multi-sector national conference on the topic of ZA for the Western Balkans, November 2023, Podgorica

- Two one-day training sessions for civil society organizations (CSOs) from Pljevlja and Kolašin were organized. The first training session was organized on October 17 in Pljevlja, while the second training session was organized on October 31 in Kolašin. The goal of these events was to improve the capacity of CSOs, so that they could monitor and advocate for the implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. A total of 10 representatives of CSOs from Pljevlja and Kolašin attended the trainings.



Training for CSOs from Pljevlja, October 2023, Pljevlja



Training for CSOs from Kolašin, October 2023, Kolašin

- In September, training for the media was organized in Podgorica. The goal of the training was to improve the media's understanding of the Green Agenda in order to contribute to the promotion of its application through improved reporting quality and motivate citizens to participate in the process of implementing the GA.



Training for the media, September 2023, Podgorica

Project: Through energy transition to the accelerated economic and ecological development of Montenegro V

The goal of the project is to contribute to the creation of a public policy for faster decarbonization and energy transition in Montenegro, which should ensure adequate socio-economic development in the municipality of Pljevlja as well as for the whole country.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- In June, the NGO Eco-team, in cooperation with the NGO RERI, submitted an initiative to the Constitutional Court for the evaluation of the constitutionality of the Law on Amendments to

the Law on Industrial Emissions, adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro in December 2022;

- A Roadmap has been prepared for the gradual abandonment of the use of coal in the energy sector in Montenegro. This analysis identified the main problems and obstacles in the decarbonization of the electricity sector. This analysis with recommendations indicates opportunities for resolving conflicting interests between energy security and climate-related aims, and indicates opportunities for its resolving;

- The workshop with the members of the Platform for a Just Transition was held on September 25. Representatives of the General Secretariat of the Government, UNDP, Municipality, EPCG, Thermo Power Plant Pljevlja, Coal Mine, NGOs participated in the event and exchanged their perspectives on the process of just transition in the Pljevlja coal region. Some of the conclusions are that the ecological, demographic and economic challenges in Pljevlja have long imposed the need for economic diversification. Population outflow, negative demographic trends confirm the bad socio-economic situation, and require urgent implementation of activities in the areas of ecology, health and education, as well as economic diversification, which must be imperative for the economic development of Pljevlja.



Workshop with members of the Platform for a Just Transition, September 2023, Pljevlja

- Activities related to the opening of new coal mines in the Pljeval coal region were monitored, including: Surface Mine Potrlica, mine Glisnica, mine Borovica and Mataruško polje.

Project: Carbon pricing as a key tool for decarbonisation of energy sector

The goal of the project is to contribute to the decarbonisation of the energy sector of Montenegro.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- An analysis of carbon pricing instruments was prepared. The analysis provides an overview of the importance of each instrument taking into account the existing practice in the EU, analyzes the EU legislation related to carbon prices and the ETS and the obligations that Montenegro has regarding the necessary alignment with the ETS directive;

- Recommendations for the improvement of the carbon pricing system in Montenegro have been prepared;

- A round table: "Green transition, challenges and opportunities for Montenegro" has been held. The focus of the event was on the further development of the power sector of Montenegro as the largest emitter of CO₂, especially in the context of the preparation of the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), which will have to reflect the new political reality of recent years. The round table brought together representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Capital Investments, the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism, non-governmental organizations, think-tanks and other relevant bodies from the republic level that are responsible for creating policies that should influence carbon pricing policies in Montenegro;



Round table: "Green transition, challenges and opportunities for Montenegro", March 2023, Podgorica

- In order to strengthen the information campaign and improve public awareness and increase the public's interest in energy transition and carbon prices, visuals were developed and shared via social networks.

Project: Youth and climate change

The general goal of the project is to contribute to sustainable development and a climate-resilient community thanks to improved awareness and knowledge of young people about climate change.

Specific goal 1: Education of high school students about climate change, followed by increasing the awareness and knowledge of young people from Podgorica on this topic.

Specific goal 2: Support to high schools by preparing educational material - manuals on the topic of climate change for the education of future generations of high school students.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

-An educational program was implemented in secondary schools in the capital. Lectures were organized in the Gymnasium "Slobodan Škerović", in the Secondary Economic School "Mirko Vešović" and the Secondary Vocational School in Podgorica;



Lecture at the Secondary Economic School in Podgorica, April 2023, Podgorica



Lecture at Vocational High School in Podgorica, May 2023, Podgorica



Lecture at the Gymnasium "Slobodan Škerović; May 2023, Podgorica

- A debate focused on climate change was organized. The best groups of students applied for participation in the knowledge quiz, which was organized on an educational trip to Ivanova korita, National Park Lovcen where the students competed for 3 prizes - 3 bicycles;
- An educational trip was organized as a special type of interactive learning, which was also a type of evaluation of the student's knowledge acquired during the entire education cycle. On the educational excursion, the NGO Eco-team provided two guest lecturers, where young people learned about measures of mitigation and adaptation to climate change using the example of the specific area;



Educational trip, June 2023, Ivanova Korita

- Awarding of prizes to the best ranked students was organized in the courtyard of the Gymnasium "Slobodan Škerović". This was an opportunity for additional motivation for students to continue spreading awareness of environmental challenges in their communities;
- The students were surveyed at the beginning and end of the project. In order to evaluate the achieved results of the project at the beginning and at the end of the implementation of the project in all high schools included in this project, we conducted a survey of students on the topic of climate change. The polls were in printed form, and a total of 70 students from the "Mirko Vešović" High School of Economics, the "Slobodan Škerović" High School and the Vocational High School were surveyed;
- A manual for secondary school teachers was prepared. The manual was distributed in an online format to teachers of secondary schools as a tool for organizing lectures on climate change;

- Educational material developed by education experts, which was used during the implementation of the educational program in schools;
- Conducted public information campaign and improvement of citizens' awareness;

Project: Steps toward a just transition in the Pljevlja region

The aim of the project is to ensure a safe and stable future for Pljevlja thanks to a well-planned, transparent and inclusive process of planning a just transition.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- Activities on the development of the Analysis of transition challenges, the impact of the transition on the climate neutral economy, including social, economic, and environmental protection dimensions have been started. The completion of activities related to the aforementioned analysis is planned for February, 2024;
- Research activities in the form of in-depth interviews with a focus on women with the aim of gathering data on: (i) in which field they would like to find a job and the possibilities of starting their own business; (ii) the main challenges in the development of certain economic branches that have the potential for growth and development in Pljevlja, (iii) proposals for overcoming those problems, and (iv) general familiarity with the term "just transition" has been started. The final report on the conducted research is planned to be done until March, 2024.

Project: Support towards accelerating renewable energy deployment in the Municipality of Nikšić in Montenegro

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- In May, a workshop was organized where the results of mapping the development potential of solar and wind in the territory of Nikšić Municipality were presented;



Workshop on the involvement of interested parties in the process of mapping optimal locations for the construction of renewable energy facilities, May 2023, Nikšić

- In December, a workshop was organized with the aim of identifying potential risks related to the development of renewable energy projects in the territory of the Nikšić municipality. Potential conflicts that the construction of renewable energy sources may have on the environment and society are presented;
- Two reports were prepared on the involvement of interested parties in the process of preparing a study of mapping the solar and wind potential in the territory of the municipality of Nikšić;
- A scenario of low-conflict locations for solar and wind positioning was developed for the municipality of Nikšić;
- Signed Memoranda on cooperation with the Investment Agency of Montenegro in connection with the preparation of the Study on the assessment of the state of the electric power sector, which is a preliminary work for the preparation of the Study on optimal location of solar and wind power plants at the national level;
- Signed Memoranda on cooperation with “EPCG Zeljezara Nikšić” with aim of the preparation of a feasibility study for the development of a thermal energy storage system at the location of the former ironworks in Nikšić.

Project: Making upper part of Zeta River free flowing

The aim of the project is to create favorable conditions for the implementation of the removal of barriers in the upper part of the Zeta river basin.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- An inventory of barriers and other hydromorphological pressures on the upper Zeta basin has been developed, together with a proposal of barriers that are most suitable for removal from an ecological, hydrological and social aspect. 32 barriers have been identified in the entire basin, while six of this number have been proposed for removal (5 on the Sušica River and one on the Rastovac River);



Identified barriers on Gračanica, upper Zeta basin

- A Study of the socio-economic impact of the removal of barriers in the upper Zeta basin was developed;

- In November 2023, a public debate was organized in Nikšić where the main findings of the Inventory of Barriers and the Study of the Socio-Economic Impact of Barrier Removal were presented;

Project: Initiative for the protection of the upper course of the Morača River and its tributary Mrtvica

The goal of the project is to contribute to the establishment of effective protection of the upper course of the Morača and Mrtvica rivers.

During 2023, the following activities are realized:

- Following the previously initiated procedure for the protection of the river Mrtvica and its surroundings, Eco-team continued with public advocacy activities through various events, media appearances, etc.;

- In July 2023, as part of the public debate on the Study of the Protection of the River Mrtvica and the upper course of the River Morača, a round table was organized for representatives of political parties, institutions from the local and state level, non-governmental organizations and the media, with the aim of providing additional information to all interested parties on the procedure of declaring these rivers as protected areas;



Round table, July 2023, Kolašin

- In cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, several field visits to Mrtvica for representatives of institutions and international organizations were organized in 2023;



Field visit to Mrtvica, September 2023, Kolašin

- Within the framework of this project, support was also given to the establishment of the upper course of the Čehotina River as a protected area. In this sense, the Eco-team in partnership with the organization Da zaživi selo from Pljevlja, has created educational brochures on the importance of protecting this river. Brochures were distributed to the local communities. This opportunity was used to provide additional information to the communities in the process of declaring the upper course of the Čehotina river as protected area, as well as all the benefits that protection brings with it.

Membership in working groups

NGO Eco-team is a member of the following working groups:

- Member of the National Council for Sustainable Development;
- Member of the Working Group for Just Transition;
- Member of the Working Group for Sustainable Development;
- Member of the Working Group for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change;
- Working group for the preparation of the "Law on the use of energy from renewable sources";
- Working group for the preparation of the "Law on Protection from the Negative Effects of Climate Change";
- Member of the Working Group for the preparation of the National Climate and Energy Plan;

Projects in 2023.

Project: Panda Labs Junior for Just Transition

Implementation period: 01.10.2021 – 30.09.2023.

Partners: WWF Bulgaria, WWF Adria Serbia, Junior Achievement Bulgaria and Junior Achievement Macedonia

Donor: This project is part of the European Climate Initiative (EUKI)

Total project approved fund (EUR): 118.909,00 €

Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 588.717,00 €

Project: Towards Biodiversity Conservation and Strengthening Protected Area management of Cijevna River

Implementation period: 01.10.2021 – 01.04.2024.

Partners: Montenegrin Ecologists Society

Donor: EuroNatur and EU

Total project approved fund (EUR): 39.825,40 €

Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 17.259,10 €

Project: Decreasing of corruption in the field of environmental protection

Implementation period: 01.11.2022. - 31.08.2023.

Partners: KOD organization, Zumiraj.me, Network for Youth Activism

Donor: National Democratic Institute (NDI)

Total project approved fund (USD): 20.000,00 \$

Total approved fund Eco-team (USD): 5.000,00 \$

Project: A step closer to the European Union (EU)

Implementation period: 01.04.2023 – 30.11.2023.

Partners: NGO Multimedia studio EHO and NGO PV Informer

Donor: EU

Total project approved fund (EUR): 34.253,89€

Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 26.661,89€

Project: Steps toward a just transition in the Pljevlja region

Implementation period: 01.09.2023. - 30.11.2024.

Partners: NGO Better life for a countryside
Donor: EU
Total project approved fund (EUR): 27.890,00 €
Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 19.740,00 €

Project: Carbon pricing as a key tool for decarbonisation of energy sector

Implementation period: 01.01.2023. - 30.09.2023.
Partners: /
Donor: Beyond Fossil Fuels network
Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 10.000,00 €

Project: Through energy transition to the accelerated economic and ecological development of Montenegro V

Implementation period: 01.04.2023. - 31.03.2024.
Partners: /
Donor: European Climate Foundation
Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 39.560,00 €

Project: Support towards accelerating renewable energy deployment in the Municipality of Nikšić in Montenegro

Implementation period: 10.12.2022. - 15.02.2024.
Partners: /
Donor: The Nature Conservancy
Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 25.000,00 €

Project: Youth and climate change

Implementation period: 27.07.2022. - 20.10.2023.
Partners: /
Donor: UNDP
Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 8.150,00 €

Project: Initiative for the protection of the upper course of the Morača River and its tributary Mrtvica

Implementation period: 28.06.2022 – 31.12.2023.

Partners: /

Donor: The Nature Conservancy

Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 53.412,80 USD

Project: Making upper part of Zeta River free flowing

Implementation period: 01.12.2022 – 30.11.2023.

Partners: /

Donor: Open Rivers Programme

Total approved fund Eco-team (EUR): 54.000,00 €

Publications in 2023:

- Book of ideas_Panda Labs Junior for Just Transition, July 2023;
- Socio-economic analysis for the Nature Monument "Cijevna Canyon", March 2023;
- Brochure "Decreasing of corruption in the field of environmental protection", July 2023;
- "Analysis of carbon pricing instruments in Montenegro" August 2023;
- Analysis of "Decarbonisation of the Energy Sector in Montenegro", December 2023;
- Comprehensive analysis of the strategic and legislative framework in the areas relevant to the Green Agenda, June 2023;
- Brochure "Green Agenda for the Western Balkans", June 2023;
- Brochure "Nature Park - The Upper Course of the Ćehotina River"

Video materials in 2023.

- Video about the impressions of young people within the project "Panda Labs Junior for Just Transition"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWkGUB4dzvI>
- Short film "Cijevna, life in stone"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjV7wKHOKGc>
- Video clip about the I pillar of the Green Agenda – Decarbonization
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWNBfwIZOUw>
- Video clip about the II pillar of the Green Agenda - Circular economy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMhbAfhuXWE>

- Video clip about the III pillar of the Green Agenda - Reduction of air, water and soil pollution
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPNaLs1mmv0>
- Video clip about the IV pillar of the Green Agenda - Sustainable agriculture
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx22zLPEwos>
- Video spot about the V pillar of the Green Agenda – Biodiversity
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=trbe7xZGDaY>