

Position: Conservation Partnership Manager – Wild Rivers

1 OBJECTIVE

The object of this role is to lead the operational set-up of the Vjosa Wild River National Park and its future expansions to IUCN Category II standards, as well as plan the roll out of similar national parks in the Balkans. You will also be responsible for working closely with key stakeholders, such as the key representatives acting on behalf of the Holdfast Collective

2 ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Background & context

Patagonia has been involved in the creation of national parks and large-scale land protection for many years via Tompkins Conservation and its 1% for the planet grant giving and campaign work. Peninsula Mitre in Argentina is a recent example of grassroots & campaigning success.

Recently, the Vjosa River in Albania become a national park after 8 years of campaigning and the involvement of Patagonia in a partnership with government and the IUCN. The work has been intense, with Patagonia playing a very hands-on and leadership role in assisting to drive the program as well as providing funding through it's 1% for the Planet grant giving.

Going forward however, the funding and management of the work will evolve. Instead of the funds coming from Patagonia, the grant will now come from the new Holdfast Collective, (where 100% of Patagonia's profits have been re-invested in protecting nature). This significant investment reflects the interest and commitment of the Patagonia Board and CEO Ryan Gellert.

The next stage of work involves supporting the Albanian government in making it a reality on the ground, including assisting in fundraising for the park; hiring experts to develop a 10-year management plan; and planning the potential expansion of the park. In addition, there are plans to scale the model of private-public partnerships for conservation and attract other funders and business involvement.

There is now a need find a consultant who can take over the hands-on and leadership role for the program to ensure the successful launch and operation of the national park..

Key activities:

Leadership

- Leading and coordinating the core project management group and overseeing the project working groups that include the partners (IUCN, Albanian Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE), and the specialist experts. Inspire the expert teams and assist in performance management as required.

- Ensuring the International Coordinator and experts deliver the agreed outputs to quality and on time, including the Integrated Management Plan, proposed boundaries extensions and the stakeholder consultation
- Engaging senior stakeholders as needed and ensuring the VWRNP steering groups is effectively managed. Prepare presentations as required.
- Lead the fundraising and sustainable finance working groups, and work with the communications group to build energy and momentum behind the park launch in 2024.
- Work with the Director of NAPA to ensure the park is properly protected during the transition period, operations are set up and that the necessary legal work can be carried out.
- Regularly inform and engage NGO partners to benefit from their extensive experience and to ensure that the program delivers to the IUCN Cat. II standards and best practice.

Analysis, Financing & Fundraising

- Oversee the contract with the IUCN and the relationship with the Holdfast Collective, to update on progress to enable the release of funds for 2024 and 2025.
- Forecast the budget requirements for 2024 and 2025. Oversee the allocation of the overall budget.
- Support experts to estimate costs, create budgets and submit applications to philanthropic and ODA funders
- Work, alongside the Patagonia CEO, as needed to support the attraction of funding to the VWRNP financially support the projects

Other

- Work with the NGOs and the Patagonia to identify other candidates for wild river national parks and jointly develop a plan as to how to best achieve the objective (s). Set up the new project(s), identifying partners and experts (working with organizations like the IUCN), determine what processes and stakeholder engagement is needed. Capture learnings and best practice.
- Be a key point of contact with the Patagonia team, who can complement and support the work.

Location / Timing

Initially most of the work would be based out of the Balkans. The expectation is that the role will be filled by a consultant who could be based anywhere. There would be travel required to Albania with some regularity and occasional visits to the Patagonia head office in Amsterdam. Occasional trips to other locations in the Balkans are also likely as the aim is to roll the public-private model of national park development to other rivers in the Balkans.

It is estimated that this role will take 3 days a week, though there is flexibility on this. This role can be combined with other roles on the project.

The kick-off expected in May. Contract period expected to be 12 months with possibility of renewal.

Key relationships

The contracting body would be the IUCN. For coaching and support, the expert could turn to Beth Thoren, Director of Environmental Action & Initiatives, EMEA Patagonia, who has been very involved in the development of the park to date.

Most of the interactions will be through the International and National Coordinators of the Vjosa Wild River National Park (VWQRNP) set-up program.

The role will be supported by the Conservation Partnership Project Manager, who is responsible for project managing the program and projects, and for supporting on the administrative aspects of the IUCN contract with the Holdfast Collective.

Deliverables

1. Inception report within 15 days of start – May end (TBC)
2. Deliverables as per the agreed project plan (re-confirmed in May Steering Group) – Integrated Management Plan completion expected Nov 2023 / Park launch Q1 2024
3. Plan for expansion of the model to other rivers – Aug 23 (1 pager) & Feb 24 (confirmed plan)
4. Results of grant provided to Holdfast and new grant negotiated – Jan 24 (results) / Apr 24 (new grant)

3 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE OF THE CONSULTANTS

The qualifications include, as a minimum:

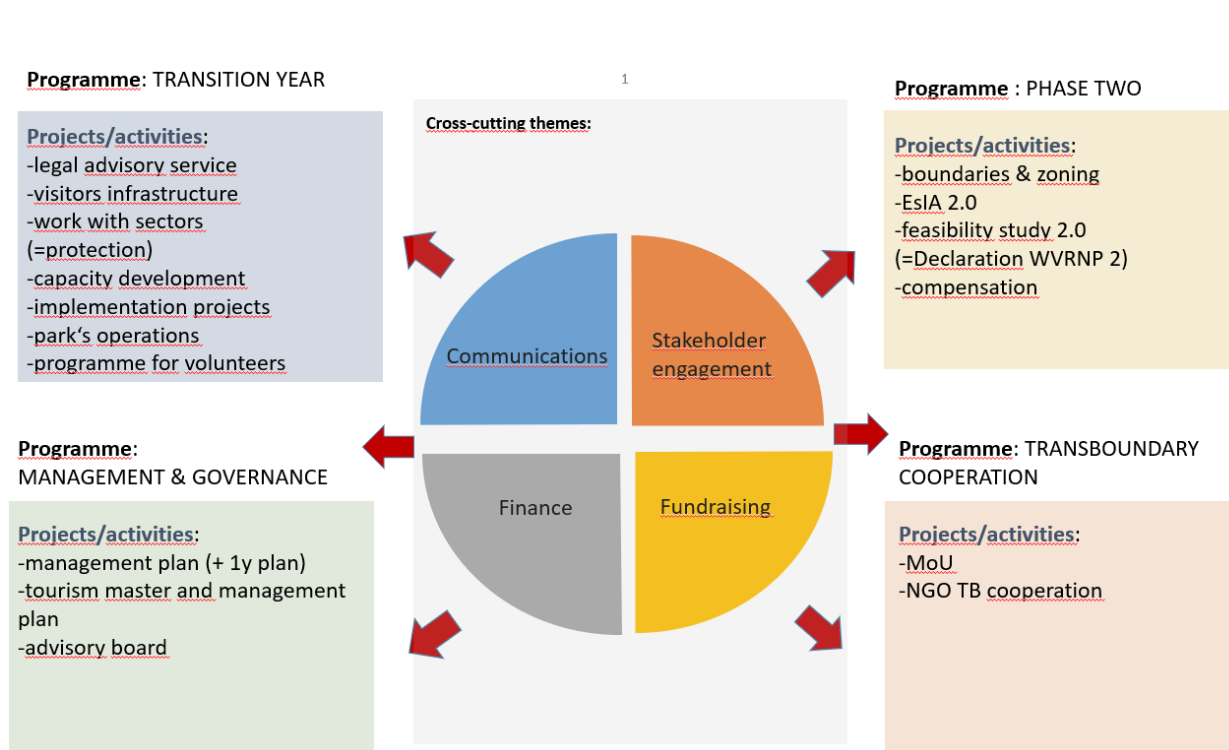
- Experience of leading large multi-stakeholder projects is essential
- Experience of influencing high-level stakeholders in either government or business
- Good understanding of nature protection and landscape scale conservation, ideally with a good understanding of international conservation standards.
- Experience grant-giving mechanisms and campaigning would be an asset
- Knowledge and a passion for the nature and cultural heritage protection and the Vjosa River would be an asset
- Excellent command of written and spoken English language (eligibility criterion),
- University Degree in natural, technical or social sciences, with minimum 10 years' experience,
- Demonstrated experience in developing reports on project, design or management of complex, multi-stakeholder projects, ideally involving scientific or technical studies,
- A passion for the environment

Competencies

- Strong leadership skills, the ability to think strategically and make sound judgements on priorities
- Strong influencing and communications skills, with the ability to work with a diverse range of stakeholders, including the governmental institutions,
- Strong project management skills
- Effective writing and report preparation skills.
- Ability to forecast and work with budgets comfortably

Appendix

Overview of the 2023 work programmes



Useful context: 'The hydropower goldrush': how Europe's first wild river national park saw off the dams

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/22/hydropower-goldrush-europe-first-wild-river-national-park-vjosa-albania-aoe>