

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
CONVERGENCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Note

Dear readers,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the CEJ Convergence Project Newsletter!

We are proud to share the first updates from the Climate and Environmental Justice Convergence in the Western Balkans, a project funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and implemented by Expertise France (EF). Over the past months, we've laid the groundwork for a regional initiative that aims to make environmental justice more accessible, participatory, and effective, especially in Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro.

In this edition, you'll find highlights from our inception phase, insights from our first assessments of environmental justice systems, and the early steps we've taken to engage communities, local authorities, and civil society organizations. You'll also hear from some of the people at the heart of this work, including advocates, legal experts, and local actors committed to creating fairer, greener societies.

As the project gains momentum, our goal is simple yet ambitious: to help ensure that everyone, especially those most affected by environmental harm, can access justice and have a voice in shaping decisions that impact their health, livelihoods, and environment.

We look forward to continuing this journey together and sharing stories of progress, learning, and impact. Thank you for joining us.

Warm regards,

Entela Pinguli
Project Manager
CEJ Convergence Project



In this issue:

- **Editor's note**
- **Project Highlights**
- **In Focus: CEJ Assessment - Country Snapshots**
 - Albania. Key developments, municipal partnerships, CSO engagement
 - Montenegro. Highlights on public participation initiatives or CSO grant preparations
 - North Macedonia. Results from governance/legal framework assessments
- **Project's Achievements until June 2025**
- **Expert Voices**
- **Knowledge Hub**
- **Looking Ahead**

CEJ Convergence Project Highlights

Highlights from January to June 2025

The first half of 2025 has been a milestone period for CEJ Convergence, setting the stage for impactful work across Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. From launching events to strengthening our operational office based in Tirana, the project has moved from planning to action. Browse through this newsletter to learn more on our work.

Between January and July 2025, CEJ Convergence moved from assessment to implementation across Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. Milestones included country assessment reports, launch events, the first Steering Committee meeting, recruitment of local experts, pilot municipal projects, preparation of the Montenegro National Roundtable, and progress on public participation assessments and CSO coalition grants setting up the next phase.



Validation workshop in Tirana, Albania (left), Podgorica, Montenegro (center), and Skope, North Macedonia

CEJ Convergence milestones: January-July 2025 at a glance

| No. | Month | Activity | Country |
|-----|----------------|--|--|
| 1 | January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment report for three beneficiary countries completed and shared with them | Albania Montenegro North Macedonia |
| 2 | January – June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calls for CSO Coalitions' Grants published in January First selection of grants been settled; six coalitions from Albania and North Macedonia working to write full proposals; One coalition in each country to be the final beneficiary of grants of up to 200,000 EUR. | Albania Montenegro North Macedonia |
| 3 | February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEJ Project launch events held | Albania North Macedonia |
| 4 | February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Steering Committee (SC) meeting held | Albania |
| 5 | April | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the SC meeting decision, MoUs for all countries prepared; The process of signatures initiated but not completed | Albania Montenegro North Macedonia |
| 6 | May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Participation local experts for CEJ Component II for Albania and North Macedonia recruited; Work with two pilot municipalities (Elbasan in Albania and Resen in North Macedonia as selected through an assessment process) started; During May and June all the way to July the project is progressing with the implementation. | Albania North Macedonia |
| 7 | May – June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental legal experts for CEJ Component 1 recruited; Work on preparing for the CEJ Convergence National Roundtable process in Montenegro initiated; Two project missions conducted to meet local stakeholders and work on process ownership. | Albania Montenegro |
| 8 | May – July | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Participation practices assessment for both municipalities in progress | Albania North Macedonia |

■ Three Climate and Environmental Justice Country Assessment Reports

The three CEJ Assessment Reports for Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro provide a comprehensive baseline for advancing environmental justice in the Western Balkans. They identify gaps in legal and institutional frameworks, assess the effectiveness of public participation mechanisms, and evaluate the role of civil society in environmental governance. In Albania, the focus is on strengthening institutional capacity, judicial expertise, and citizen engagement. North Macedonia's findings emphasize aligning EIA and SEA procedures with EU standards, improving transparency, and expanding participatory tools. Montenegro's assessment highlights the need for legal harmonization, inter-institutional cooperation, and more robust civic involvement. Together, these assessments lay the groundwork for targeted reforms, pilot initiatives, and capacity-building actions that will shape the project's implementation in the coming years.



■ Kicking Off with Inception Success

We began the year by finalizing environmental justice assessment reports for all three countries, which provided a clear roadmap for our next steps. February 2025 was a busy month. Tirana and Skopje hosted our official launch events, each bringing together over 60 stakeholders from government, civil society, and international partners. We also held the very first Steering Committee meeting, securing strong political and institutional commitment and initiating the process for country-level MOUs.

■ A New Home for CEJ Convergence Project

In May, we opened our Tirana project office at the ABA Business Center—our operational hub for coordinating work across the region. The office is now fully equipped and functional, supporting our growing team of national and international experts and enabling smoother cross-border collaboration.

■ Managing expertise

During January – June 2025, we successfully advanced with recruitment efforts, engaging both international and national experts in Justice and Environmental Justice across Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. Public Participation Local Experts have been appointed under Component II, with active work underway in the pilot municipalities of Elbasan (Albania) and Resen (North Macedonia), selected as pilot municipalities, focusing on assessing their public participation practices. Simultaneously, Environmental Legal Experts have been recruited under Component I, initiating preparations for the National Workshop in Montenegro and the National Roundtables in Albania and North Macedonia.

■ Advancing Environmental Justice Assessments

In Montenegro, our work came to life in June with the first national workshop on environmental justice, gathering 25 key players to address prosecution, litigation, and rehabilitation of environmental damage. Preparatory missions earlier in May and June helped shape a truly collaborative agenda. Meanwhile, our pilot municipalities, Elbasan in Albania and Resen in North Macedonia, began their public participation assessments. Resen completed its analysis, identifying both barriers and best practices for civic engagement, while Elbasan's work is underway. The call for CSO coalition grants also sparked strong interest, with six coalitions now preparing full proposals for submission in July 2025.

In Focus: CEJ Assessment - Country Snapshots



Albania, Bridging Institutions & Communities for Stronger Environmental Governance

In recent months, Albania has taken steps toward strengthening its environmental governance framework, with a particular focus on capacity building, transparency, and citizen engagement. These advancements are paving the way for more inclusive and effective decision-making processes that bring together government institutions, municipalities, and civil society actors.



Where Albania stands?

- **Enforcement and access to justice.** Environmental crimes account for only 1.4% of nationwide criminal proceedings; illegal logging dominates (47–61% of cases). Investigations and prosecutions are slowed by weak coordination, limited expertise, and few trained prosecutors, yielding uneven deterrence. Problematic legal drafting further blunts enforcement.
- **Legal framework and EU alignment.** The “polluter pays” principle exists in law, but the Environmental Liability Directive (ELD) is only partially operational because essential by-laws and procedures are still missing—leaving gaps in damage assessment, remediation and accountability.
- **Public participation.** Consultations, especially around EIAs, too often become a box-ticking exercise; notices are late, logistics poor, technical language inaccessible, and feedback rarely shapes decisions. Rural and marginalized communities face the steepest barriers; institutions also lack capacity to run quality consultations.
- **Transparency and data.** NEA’s planned Environmental Information System could centralize monitoring data, but it remains nascent with unclear timelines for public access.
- **Strategic assessment.** SEA procedures are participatory by design yet unevenly applied; some major plans were adopted without completing SEA, undermining the tool’s intent.
- **Standing and remedies.** Courts have been inconsistent on NGO standing; only a handful of public-interest cases reached the courts in recent years, reflecting high costs, procedural hurdles and legal uncertainty.

What to do next?

- **Make “polluter pays” real:** Fully transpose and operationalize the ELD: adopt secondary legislation; define standard damage-assessment and remediation methods; create a national registry of environmental harm (with public reporting).
- **Tighten criminal enforcement:** Amend the Criminal Code to clarify offences, raise penalties for severe and repeat crimes, and align with EU standards; pair this with forensic tools and guidance for investigations.
- **Build a pool of environmental magistrates:** Train and certify judges and prosecutors in environmental law (via the School of Magistrates), create a continuing-education track, and network trained magistrates to share practice.
- **Lower barriers to justice:** Introduce collective lawsuit/actio popularis avenues, expand legal aid, and streamline expert-evidence procedures so communities and CSOs can realistically litigate. Make participation meaningful: Mandate early and iterative engagement; use hybrid (in-person + digital) consultations; require clear “you said / we did” reports showing how input shaped decisions; empower municipalities to convene inclusive forums close to affected communities.
- **Equip the system:** Invest in inspectorates’ tools and staffing; institutionalize cross-sector coordination (standing inter-agency meetings and shared action plans); and fund CSO monitoring roles.
- **Open the data:** Launch a searchable online portal with permits, EIAs/SEAs, monitoring/ compliance records, and consultation dossiers; train users and run outreach so the portal is used.
- **Climate-proof decisions:** Require climate-vulnerability assessments for major projects and embed adaptation measures in local plans with clear GHG-accountability frameworks.
- **Roadmap actions you can start now (2024–2026):** Pilot improved participation tools with two municipalities; run targeted capacity-building for legal professionals; and issue grants that enable CSO coalitions to support communities—mainstreaming gender and inclusion.



North Macedonia, Aligning with EU Standards and Empowering Local Voices

North Macedonia is making steady progress in aligning its environmental governance systems with European Union standards, while also deepening cooperation among institutions, municipalities, and civil society. These efforts aim to build a more transparent, participatory, and accountable framework for environmental decision-making.

Where North Macedonia stands?

- **Enforcement capacity is thin.** The State Environmental Inspectorate fills only 65 positions, 8% of systematized posts, limiting oversight despite thousands of inspections annually.

- **Participation on paper, weak in practice.** Although the Law on Environment and the Aarhus Convention require participation in EIA/SEA, hearings are often under-attended; notices and outreach are poor; municipal capacity constraints and unclear terms like “public concerned” limit inclusion. Dissemination is fragmented and reliant on outdated channels, reducing transparency and meaningful input.
- **Access to justice:** progress with gaps. The Criminal Code now criminalizes “ecocide,” but key terms (e.g., “serious,” damage) lack definitions, blurring lines between misdemeanors and crimes and complicating prosecution. Judicial capacity and procedural quality remain uneven.
- **Civil society engagement is inconsistent.** NGO input varies with project type and capacity; cooperation with local government is uneven and needs clear, standardized mechanisms within EIA procedures.
- **EU alignment pressure:** NM needs further alignment with EIA/SEA and environmental-liability requirements; weak enforcement and administration weaken benchmarks and public trust.

What to do next?

- **Strengthen the legal and policy framework:** Harmonize public-participation rules across municipalities with uniform guidelines; Amend environmental/procedural laws to secure broad standing and clear judicial jurisdiction for environment-related human-rights cases.
- **Open up information and modernize access:** Build a centralized, searchable online platform for environmental decisions with alerts and multilingual support; Standardize municipal websites and adopt open-data practices; ensure prompt publication of appealable decisions.
- **Make participation inclusive and early:** Run targeted awareness campaigns; tailor outreach for rural, youth and marginalized groups; combine in-person and digital tools.
- **Build institutions and people:** Regular workshops for municipal officials on designing/closing the loop on consultations (“you said, we did”); National/regional expert debates to clarify interpretations; continuous training for judges and prosecutors in environmental law; Provide predictable funding and technical support for CSOs to act as intermediaries/watchdogs.
- **Prioritize EU-law alignment and enforcement:** Complete alignment of EIA/SEA with Directive 2014/52/EU; strengthen monitoring, enforcement mechanisms; mobilize funding for capacity building.
- **Resource the inspectorates:** Fill SEI posts and equip inspectors; formalize routine inter-agency coordination with prosecutors and municipalities to convert findings into deterrent outcomes.



Montenegro, Strengthening Governance, Transparency, and Civic Participation

Montenegro is taking important strides toward aligning its environmental governance framework with European Union standards, while placing greater emphasis on transparency, local involvement, and the active role of civil society. The recent national assessment and stakeholder workshops have provided a clear roadmap for targeted reforms in law, policy, and practice.

Where Montenegro stands?

- **Rule of law milestones, but justice is slow.** Montenegro secured a positive IBAR on Chapters 23/24, yet case backlogs and long disposition times persist (avg. 309 days at end-2023).
- **Environmental crime profile.** Illegal logging is the dominant offence, with small organized groups especially active near the Albania/Kosovo borders.
- **Court outcomes reveal deterrence gaps.** Most convictions under Chapter XXV (environment & spatial planning) in 2023-2024 ended in suspended sentences; three environmental-pollution cases were dismissed, and judges struggle to establish causal links and tend to apply minimum fines.
- **Participation happens, but often at the legal minimum.** EIA procedures (37 in 2021 → 48 in 2022 → 68 in 2023; 34 by 31 Jul 2024) include formal consultations, yet outreach is limited and often box-ticking. Positive outcomes frequently stem from protests rather than formal consultations.

- **Second-instance corrections are common.** Appeals against EPA decisions are frequently upheld/returned for re-decision (e.g., 2023: 13 EPA decisions cancelled and sent back; 2024 Jan–Sep: 16 annulled/returned across EPA and Inspection).
- **Institutions are stretched and fragmented.** Authorities have mechanisms on paper but lack capacity to follow through; specialized environmental units are limited; ambiguities in punitive provisions complicate enforcement.



What to do next?

- **Clarify the law, close loopholes:** Align Criminal Code provisions with sectoral laws to clearly separate misdemeanors from crimes (e.g., pollution), reduce “blanket” offences, and standardize sanctions. Issue interpretive guidance for prosecutors/judges.
- **Build people-centered enforcement capacity:** Stand up regular coordination among police, inspectorates, prosecutors, EPA and the ministry; create training loops and a knowledge-sharing hub; resource local governments to run quality consultations and follow-up.
- **Legally empower communities and CSOs:** Strengthen standing for NGOs and community actors; support community-based paralegals and strategic legal aid so residents can act earlier and more effectively. Promote ADR where appropriate.
- **Raise the floor on participation - go beyond the minimum:** Notify early, avoid holiday windows, extend comment periods for higher-impact projects, and publish clear “you said / we did” reports. Pair in-person hearings with robust digital channels to reach rural and working populations. (Rationale: outreach is currently limited and poorly timed.)
- **Strengthen first-instance decision quality:** Introduce internal quality checks for EIA/SEA and permitting so fewer decisions are overturned on appeal; track and publish appeal outcomes and reasons to drive learning. (Rationale: high share of annulments/returns.)
- **Make data open and useful:** Publish a searchable portal with EIA/SEA dossiers, permits, monitoring/compliance actions, and appeal decisions; standardize formats and timelines for proactive disclosure. (Addresses current limited proactive outreach.)
- **Improve courtroom results for serious harm:** Develop practical toolkits (charging standards, causation guidance, expert-evidence templates) and targeted training for judges/prosecutors to move beyond suspended sentences in major cases and properly value environmental damage. (Responds to dismissal/minimum-fine pattern.)
- **Mainstream inclusion:** Back Aarhus centres/CSOs to reach marginalized groups; integrate gender-responsive approaches given declining support and persistent gaps.

Project's Achievements until June 2025

In the first half of 2025, the CEJ Convergence Project advanced environmental justice across Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro by completing national assessments, launching the project in Tirana and Skopje, initiating pilot municipal partnerships in Elbasan and Resen, and holding Montenegro's first National Workshop on environmental justice, alongside progress in CSO grant schemes and expert recruitment to strengthen legal, institutional, and public participation capacities.

Component I. Access to Environmental Justice

Albania – Under Component I, Albania finalized and shared its national assessment report on environmental justice, providing the basis for upcoming national roundtable discussions. A Key Expert on Environmental Justice was recruited to work alongside the international team, supporting coordination among justice sector institutions and aligning national practices with EU standards. Preparations began for the organization of the National Roundtable process.

North Macedonia – In North Macedonia, the project completed its national assessment report and appointed a Key Expert on Environmental Justice to lead Component I activities. Assessment findings and recommendations laid the groundwork for national discussions on environmental justice, capacity-building

for justice professionals, and the creation of legal tools to support enforcement. Preparations began for the organization of the National Roundtable process to enhance inter-institutional cooperation and ensure that environmental justice is integrated into legal and judicial practices in line with EU directives.

Montenegro – Building on its assessment phase, Montenegro achieved a key milestone with the preparation and delivery of its first CEJ Convergence National Workshop on environmental justice in June 2025. Led by national and international experts, this event brought together 25 stakeholders from justice, environmental, and civil society sectors to address prosecuting environmental crimes, strengthening litigation and evidence, and rehabilitating environmental damage.



Participants reached a consensus on prioritizing capacity-building measures for both authorities and civil society, recognizing that strong skills and resources are key to delivering effective, participatory, and transparent environmental governance. The workshop strengthened national ownership of the process and provided a platform for aligning Montenegro's practices with EU environmental justice standards.

Component II. Public Participation

■ Albania

In Elbasan, the CEJ Convergence Project initiated collaboration under its public participation component by conducting an introductory mission in April 2025 to outline the cooperation framework and begin assessing the municipality's needs in environmental decision-making. The process involved high-level meetings with the mayor, deputy mayor, and key municipal staff, leading to the identification of a contact point for ongoing work. While progress was slightly delayed due to the national election period and the pending signature of a formal Letter of Intent, the municipality expressed readiness to proceed, and assessment activities were launched in June 2025. These include stakeholder interviews and a planned local SWOT workshop to identify barriers and opportunities for more inclusive participation, with the findings to inform a tailored set of recommendations aimed at strengthening Elbasan's capacity for effective, transparent, and community-driven environmental governance.



■ North Macedonia

In Resen, North Macedonia, the CEJ Convergence Project began work in April 2025 with an introductory mission to present the cooperation framework and initiate a needs assessment on public participation in environmental governance. The municipality quickly formalized the partnership by signing a Letter of Intent on May 12, 2025, enabling smooth implementation. The assessment process included 17 stakeholder interviews and a local SWOT workshop on May 30, engaging municipal officials, CSOs, civic groups, local institutions, and national agencies. Findings highlighted challenges such as symbolic participation, limited access to information for vulnerable groups, low trust, and weak CSO capacity, but also showcased successful local initiatives like the "Rescue Prespa Lake" campaign, protests against harmful industrial projects, and youth-led clean-up actions. These results will inform a tailored Public Participation Toolkit to help Resen strengthen inclusive, transparent, and impactful environmental decision-making.



Component III. Grants enabling Civic Engagement

■ Albania

In Albania, the CEJ Convergence Project launched its civil society grant scheme in January 2025, inviting coalitions of CSOs to submit proposals aimed at enhancing public understanding of environmental rights, promoting women's participation, and enabling legal action against environmental violations. Out of nine coalitions that applied, three were shortlisted following the concept note evaluation in March 2025 and invited to prepare full proposals, due by July 31, 2025. The winning coalition will receive a grant of up to €190,000 to implement activities that strengthen community engagement in environmental governance, improve access to justice, and support local initiatives addressing environmental challenges.

■ North Macedonia

In North Macedonia, the grants process mirrored that of Albania, beginning with the January 2025 call for proposals targeting CSO coalitions committed to advancing environmental justice. Seven coalitions

applied, with three advancing to the full proposal stage after the March 2025 concept note evaluation. The selected coalition will be awarded a grant of up to €187,358.49 to implement initiatives that raise public awareness of the right to participate in environmental decision-making, support community-led legal actions against environmental harm, and promote inclusive participation, particularly by women, in environmental governance.

Expert Voices

Mr. Vincent Delbos, honorary judge, former General Inspector at the French Ministry of Justice



The triple ecological crisis -climate change, biodiversity loss, and escalating pollution-poses existential threats to life on Earth. Public policies to address these challenges create new responsibilities but are increasingly contested as unfair or ineffective. As a result, more individuals, businesses, and civil society organizations are turning to the courts, seeking recognition of rights such as a healthy, sustainable environment and the effective enforcement of existing protective standards. This landscape demands a paradigm shift in justice systems, with specialized legal and technical expertise, stronger coordination, and shared understanding of multifaceted environmental risks. Progress must advance in parallel on prevention, enforcement, and redress. Alignment with advanced European standards, namely the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law and the corresponding EU directive, is essential.

These are the challenges the CEJ project seeks to address in Montenegro, Albania, and North Macedonia, mobilizing the judicial community and engaging all stakeholders to advance environmental justice. To move forward with this phase, following an evaluation phase, roundtables will be held in the coming months in North Macedonia, Albania, and at the regional level (including Montenegro) to convene stakeholders, primarily judicial authorities, and chart a path to strengthen justice-system capacities with operational, sustainable solutions.

Knowledge Hub

■ Publications Produced by CEJ Convergence Project

The CEJ Convergence Project continues to advance environmental governance, public participation, and civil society engagement across the Western Balkans. Recent national assessments in Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro reveal steady progress in aligning with EU environmental standards, strengthening institutional capacity, and creating more transparent, participatory decision-making processes. From legal reforms and municipal partnerships to CSO-led awareness campaigns and pilot projects, each country is charting its own path toward more inclusive and accountable environmental management.

- **Report on Albania**

Albania's assessment highlights progress in building institutional and judicial capacity for environmental governance, with proposals for specialized training in environmental law and the creation of digital platforms for public consultations. Municipalities are playing a greater role in early Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes, bridging central authorities and communities. Civil society, especially Aarhus Centers, is gaining a stronger voice through formalized involvement in decision-making, public monitoring, and joint awareness campaigns.

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- **Report on Montenegro**

Montenegro is reinforcing alignment with EU environmental governance standards, introducing a centralized information system, and enhancing transparency in EIA procedures. Partnerships between municipalities and the Ministry of Ecology are being strengthened, with focal points established to facilitate public engagement. Civil society is increasingly involved in policy consultations and legislative reforms. The assessment identifies legal gaps in EIA/SEA processes and calls for clearer procedures and better public access to data. A national workshop brought together government, local, and CSO stakeholders to agree on follow-up actions and capacity-building priorities.

[English version](#)

[Montenegrin version](#)



- **Report on North Macedonia**

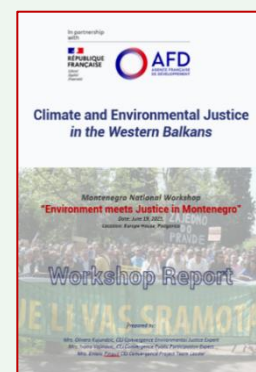
North Macedonia is aligning EIA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedures with EU directives, increasing transparency through online publication of documentation and developing centralized permit databases. Municipalities are actively engaged in project scoping and environmental monitoring, working closely with the Ministry of Environment. Civil society organizations have an expanded role via advisory platforms and awareness campaigns, while new initiatives—such as public participation campaigns, small CSO grant schemes, and participatory budgeting—are deepening citizen involvement in environmental decisions.

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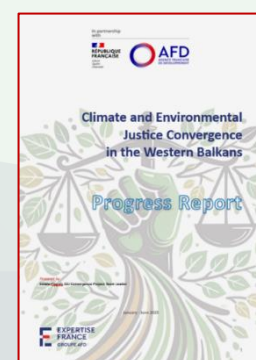
- **Montenegro National Workshop Report**

The Montenegro National Workshop Report captures the outcomes of the “Environment Meets Justice” event held in Podgorica on June 19, 2025, under the CEJ Convergence Project. The report captures key lessons, identifies several legal gaps in the country’s environmental legislation, particularly in the areas of EIA and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) processes and provides actionable recommendations that call for harmonizing national laws with the EU environmental acquis, streamlining procedural timelines, and expanding public access to environmental data. The report also delineates a roadmap for improving enforcement, fostering public participation, and positioning Montenegro as a regional leader in environmental justice. Addressing these gaps will be essential to ensure legal clarity, strengthen compliance, and foster public trust in environmental governance of the country.



- **One Progress Report**

The CEJ Convergence Project Progress Report for January-June 2025 outlines significant advances in strengthening environmental justice across Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro. Key achievements include finalizing national assessment reports, launching the project in Albania and North Macedonia, establishing the Steering Committee, and initiating pilot municipal partnerships in Elbasan and Resen to improve public participation. The period also saw the organization of Montenegro’s first national workshop on environmental justice, recruitment of national and international experts, and progress in the CSO coalition grants process, all contributing to stronger legal frameworks, inclusive decision-making, and empowered civil society engagement in the Western Balkans.



Looking Ahead

■ Preview of key priorities for the next semester

In the second half of 2025, the CEJ Convergence Project will focus on translating its assessment findings into concrete actions across the three countries. Priorities include organizing national roundtable discussions on environmental justice, developing and piloting practical legal tools and training modules, and advancing public participation initiatives in the pilot municipalities of Elbasan and Resen. The period will also see the final selection and contracting of CSO coalitions to implement large-scale environmental projects, alongside targeted capacity-building for local authorities, judiciary, and civil society actors.

Upcoming events to watch for (next 6 months)

Outcome 1 – Enhance access to environmental justice in Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro

- Organize national discussions on environmental justice in all three countries.
- Prepare and deliver national roundtable discussions in Albania (prep: July–Nov; delivery: Dec) and North Macedonia (prep: July–Oct; delivery: Nov).
- Report on all national roundtable discussions by December
- Develop training modules on environmental subjects in Albania and North Macedonia (Nov–Dec).
- Design legal tools for Albania and North Macedonia (Oct–Dec).

Outcome 2 – Strengthen capacities of local authorities in Albania and North Macedonia

- Analyze public participation mechanisms in two pilot municipalities (Elbasan, Alb., and Resen, N. Macedonia).
- Complete needs analysis for each municipality (July–Sept)
- Produce recommendations (Sept for Albania, July for North Macedonia).
- Design a public participation toolkit (Sept–Nov)
- Test the public participation tools (Nov–Dec)

Outcome 3: Enhance environmental participatory approaches through CSO coalitions in Albania, North Macedonia

- Evaluate full proposals for CSO coalitions (July–Aug).
- Contract with selected coalitions (Aug).
- Begin grant implementation (Aug 2025 onward)

For more information on the CEJ Convergence Project please visit our webpage:

<https://www.expertisefrance.fr/en/projects/climate-environmental-justice-project-western-balkans>