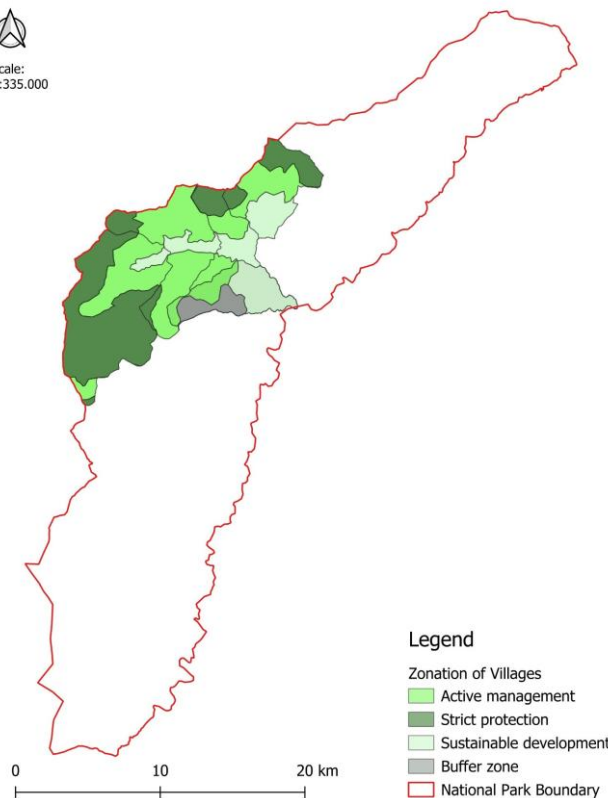


Restoration Landscape Strategic and Action Plan

for the Micro-region “5V” in Shar Mountain

Scale:
1:335.000



PULSE
(Protecting Unique Landscapes & Species in Albania and North Macedonia)

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Document Control

Item	Description
Document type	Strategic and action planning document for environmental restoration and sustainable landscape management.
Planning area	14,600 ha micro-region of Shar Mountain, including five villages (5V): Shipkovica, Vejce, Veshala, Brodec and Bozovce.
Source inputs	Three stakeholder workshop outputs based on 4 Returns Framework methodology, Management Plan of NP Shar Mountain.
Planning horizon	10-year vision through 2026-2036.
Working status	Draft version

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Executive Summary

This Restoration Landscape Plan for the Micro-region 5V (five villages) of Shar Mountain is an operational planning document. It keeps the 4 Returns Framework as the guiding logic while translating the diagnostic findings, stakeholder inputs and additional threat list into concrete strategic objectives, action areas, implementation responsibilities and monitoring indicators.

The micro-region 5V is a high-mountain landscape with strong natural values, traditional land-use systems, cultural identity and emerging opportunities for eco-tourism, agro-ecology, beekeeping, local food production and sustainable use of non-timber forest products. At the same time, it faces interlinked demographic, economic and environmental pressures: migration and aging communities, weak local markets, climate impacts, erosion and flash floods, forest fire risk, illegal logging, pollution from illegal dumping, human-wildlife conflicts, biodiversity loss and gradual disappearance of traditional cultural practices.

The planning response is structured around six strategic objectives: restoring ecosystems and biodiversity; increasing climate and disaster resilience; strengthening sustainable livelihoods and green value chains; developing low-impact tourism and cultural heritage; improving waste management and community stewardship; and strengthening local governance, youth engagement and implementation capacity.

Planning logic

Threats are treated not only as risks, but also as entry points for action. Each major threat is connected to strategic objectives, priority interventions, responsible actors, indicative timing and monitoring indicators.

1. Introduction

The restoration plan will focus on five high-mountain rural settlements in the Shar Mountain region: Veshala, Vejce, Brodec, Shipkovica, and Bozovce. These villages share a strong dependence on natural resources, particularly livestock farming, pasture use, forest resources, water sources, and seasonal mountain-based activities. The wider area is characterized by high biodiversity, numerous natural springs, forest ecosystems, subalpine and alpine pastures, steep slopes, and erosion-sensitive terrain.

Because of these characteristics, the five villages provide strong potential for ecosystem restoration, sustainable pasture management, erosion control, climate adaptation, biodiversity protection, and eco-tourism development. At the same time, the area faces several pressures, including depopulation, changing land-use practices, declining traditional livelihoods, insufficient tourism infrastructure, and climate-related risks. The restoration planning process should therefore combine environmental protection with practical local development opportunities.

1.1. Veshala

Veshala is a high-mountain village located in the Dolni Polog area, in the northwestern part of Tetovo Municipality, on the slopes of the Shar Mountains near the border with Kosovo. The village is situated at approximately 1,250 meters above sea level, with coordinates around 41.99°N, 20.80°E. It has a small and declining population of around 200 residents.

The terrain is steep and mountainous, surrounded by dense forests, mountain streams, and pasture areas. Traditional livelihoods include livestock farming, especially sheep and cattle breeding, use of forest products, and limited seasonal tourism and hiking-related activities. Veshala is among the higher settlements in the region and is characterized by well-preserved natural ecosystems, rich forest resources, and strong potential for eco-tourism and nature conservation.

From an environmental perspective, Veshala has high ecological value. The most important natural features include the upper basin of the Pena River and the mountain pastures toward the passes below Mount Kobilica. However, the steep slopes are erosion-prone and require careful restoration planning. Priority actions may include slope stabilization, sustainable pasture management, protection of water sources, forest restoration, and improved visitor management for nature-based tourism.

The cultural life of Veshala is connected to religious holidays, summer pastoral gatherings, and family meetings on mountain pastures. The nearby archaeological site of Kisha adds cultural value to the area. Traditional local events such as Potato Day and Bean Day can also support future eco-tourism and local product promotion.

1.2. Vejce

Vejce is a mountain village in Tetovo Municipality, located on the southwestern slopes of the Shar Mountain in a forested and alpine landscape. It lies at approximately 1,300–1,400 meters above sea level, with coordinates around 42.01°N, 20.84°E. The village has around 850 residents.

The village landscape consists of extensive pastures, forest belts, alpine meadows, and steep mountain slopes. The main economic activities are livestock farming, small-scale dairy production, and limited agriculture. Vejce has a strong tradition of animal husbandry, and its pasture resources are among its most important economic and environmental assets.

The village area has high biodiversity value, especially because of its pasture ecosystems and surrounding forest habitats. The most notable natural area includes the high mountain pastures and forest belts extending toward the Shar Mountain ridge, dominated by beech forests and alpine meadows. These resources are under pressure from land-use changes, reduced traditional management, and possible degradation of pasture areas.

For the restoration plan, Vejce is especially relevant for actions related to sustainable grazing, pasture rehabilitation, biodiversity conservation, forest-edge management, and climate-resilient livestock systems. The restoration approach should aim to protect natural habitats while maintaining the village's traditional livestock-based economy.

Cultural activities in Vejce are linked to religious celebrations, summer gatherings, and the return of the diaspora during the summer period. Traditional events such as Potato Day and Bean Day provide opportunities to connect restoration with local identity, food traditions, and rural tourism.

1.3. Brodec

Brodec is located in the high mountainous zone of the Shar Mountain, in the northern part of the Tetovo region. It is situated at approximately 950–1,050 meters above sea level, with coordinates around 42.03°N, 20.86°E. The village has around 730 residents.

The terrain around Brodec is hilly and mountainous, with valleys, mountain streams, arable land, pastures, and forest ecosystems. The main activities include livestock farming, agriculture, collection of forest products, and seasonal employment. Compared to some of the higher villages, Brodec has a more balanced mix of agricultural land, pasture areas, and forest resources.

The village has moderate to high ecosystem value due to its combined forest–pasture landscape. A distinctive natural feature is the Brodec River valley, with mountain streams and forest complexes descending toward the lower parts of the village. This makes Brodec suitable for integrated restoration measures that combine water management, forest conservation, pasture improvement, and small-scale rural development.

Priority restoration themes for Brodec may include riverbank protection, prevention of erosion, rehabilitation of degraded pasture areas, sustainable forest use, and protection of mountain streams. The village also has potential for community-based agro-pastoral initiatives and local nature-based tourism.

Cultural life in Brodec is connected to traditional family celebrations, religious holidays, and seasonal gatherings related to the livestock cycle and summer work in the mountains. These traditions can support community participation in restoration activities and help preserve local knowledge.

1.4. Shipkovic

Shipkovic is situated at the foothills of the Shar Mountains, northwest of Tetovo, and is connected to the higher mountain settlements in the region. The village lies at approximately 1,080 meters above sea level, with coordinates around 42.05°N, 20.89°E. It is the largest village in the group, with around 1,500 residents.

The terrain consists of hilly and mountainous areas, fertile valley zones, pastures, and forested slopes. Shipkovica has a more diversified local economy compared to the other target villages. Main activities include agriculture, livestock farming, trade, construction, and services. Because of its size, infrastructure, and local role, Shipkovica functions as a service and connection point for surrounding mountain settlements.

Environmentally, Shipkovica represents a transitional landscape between agricultural zones and forest ecosystems. The most recognizable natural element is the Shipkovica River valley, together with the surrounding forested slopes extending toward the Shar Mountains. These areas are important for water regulation, erosion control, biodiversity, and local livelihoods.

In the restoration plan, Shipkovica can play an important role as a local coordination hub. Priority actions may include river valley restoration, forest slope protection, improvement of agricultural and pasture practices, erosion control, waste management, and support for local environmental education. Due to its larger population and stronger diaspora links, the village may also offer better opportunities for mobilizing local actors and supporting pilot activities.

Shipkovica has the most developed cultural life among the five villages. Religious holidays, weddings, local festivals, and diaspora-supported events are important parts of community life. These social structures can help promote awareness, participation, and long-term maintenance of restoration activities.

1.5. Bozovce

Bozovce is a high-mountain village located in the western part of the Shar Mountain region, close to the border with Kosovo. It lies at approximately 1,350 meters above sea level, with coordinates around 42.00°N, 20.78°E. The village has a small population of around 170 residents.

The terrain is strongly mountainous, with extensive pastures, mountain valleys, rocky areas, forest belts, and abundant water resources. Main local activities include livestock farming, beekeeping, use of mountain pastures, and tourism-related activities. Bozovce is one of the most attractive villages in the Shar Mountain region because of its relatively pristine natural conditions and access to high-mountain landscapes.

The village has high conservation value due to its intact ecosystems and low level of human pressure. A key natural area is the landscape toward the Bozovce Pass and the high mountain pastures along the Shar Mountain ridge. These areas include almost untouched natural landscapes and are highly suitable for conservation, sustainable grazing, and carefully planned eco-tourism.

Restoration priorities for Bozovce should focus on protection of high-mountain pastures, prevention of overuse in sensitive areas, conservation of water resources, support for beekeeping and livestock-based livelihoods, and development of low-impact tourism routes. Because of its natural attractiveness, Bozovce also has strong potential for nature-based tourism if infrastructure and visitor management are improved.

Bozovce is often referred to as the “Macedonian Chamonix” because it serves as a main starting point for tours toward Lesnica, one of the most scenic destinations in the Shar Mountain area. Cultural activities are linked to high-mountain livestock farming, religious holidays, and summer gatherings of herders and families on the pastures. The traditional Illyrian Carnival is an important cultural event that can be linked with local identity and sustainable tourism promotion.

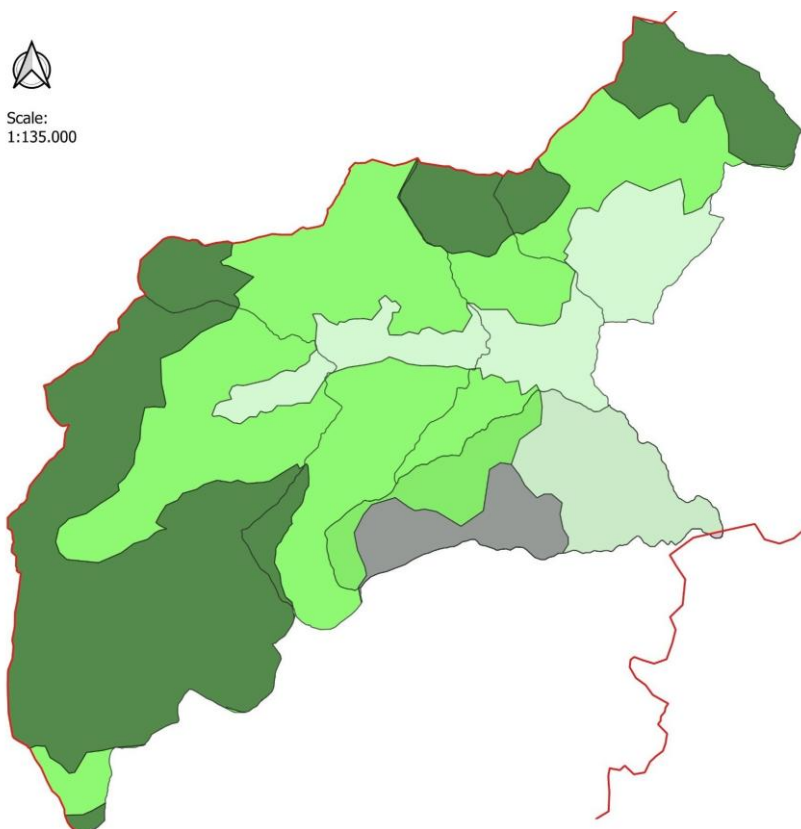
2. Purpose, Scope and Planning Approach

2.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this document is to guide coordinated environmental restoration, sustainable local development and climate-resilient landscape management in the selected micro-region of Shar Mountain. It is intended to support decision-making by CNVP North Macedonia, NP Shar Mountain, the Municipality of Tetovo, local communities, civil society organizations, farmers, beekeepers, tourism actors and donors.

2.2 Scope of the Planning Area

The targeted micro-region covers approximately 14,600 ha and includes the core high-mountain settlements of Shipkovica, Vejce, Veshala, Brodec and Bozovce. It functions as a transition landscape between high-altitude natural zones, forests, pastures, watercourses and village-based economic zones.



Micro-region "5V" in Shar Mountain

2.3 Planning Methodology

The plan is based on an inclusive, participatory and practical planning approach based on 4 Returns methodology. It draws on stakeholder mapping, three structured workshops, diagnoses questionnaires, participatory mapping and the 4 Returns Framework. The process was designed to move from diagnosis to shared vision, and from vision to concrete initiatives that can be implemented through institutional support, donor-funded projects and local action.

1. Define the boundaries and core characteristics of the micro-region.
2. Map stakeholders and establish a landscape partnership working group.
3. Conduct participatory diagnostics across the natural, social, financial and inspirational returns.
4. Define a shared 10-year vision and spatial strategy through the 3-Zone Model.
5. Prioritize practical initiatives and translate them into an action plan and monitoring framework.

2.4 Participatory Process Summary

Process step	Main contribution to this plan
First workshop - 6 May 2026	Introduced the 4 Returns Framework and completed diagnoses questionnaires across the natural, social, financial and inspirational returns.
Second workshop - 21 May 2026	Defined the shared 10-year vision, identified potential initiatives and used participatory mapping to structure the Natural, Combined and Economic zones.
Third workshop - 4 June 2026	Used the 5 Elements Scorecard to assess the landscape process, identify operational gaps and prioritize next steps for integrated management.

2.5 Returns Framework

Return	Meaning for this Plan
Return of Inspiration	Build motivation, identity, cultural pride and a shared sense of purpose for landscape restoration.
Return of Nature	Restore ecosystems, biodiversity, soil stability, water regulation and climate resilience.
Return of Social Capital	Strengthen trust, cooperation, skills, youth engagement and community capacity.
Return of Income	Develop sustainable livelihoods, green enterprises and local value chains linked to restored landscapes.

3. Landscape Baseline and Development Context

3.1 Natural and Geographical Characteristics

Shar Mountain is a high-mountain range extending across the northwestern part of North Macedonia and the southern part of Kosovo. The area is characterized by forests, pastures, glacial lakes, watercourses, geomorphological diversity and high biodiversity value. The Macedonian part of the massif covers approximately 840.2 km², with Titov Vrv reaching 2,748 meters above sea level.

The pilot zone is delineated by high-alpine ridges and crests at the upper boundaries, while deep river ravines and torrent beds shape the lateral borders. This creates an important ecological buffer and transition zone between strictly protected high-altitude areas and lower agricultural landscapes.

3.2 Climate Characteristics

The sharp altitudinal gradient creates varied climatic conditions. Lower zones around 900-1,200 m are influenced by a transitional continental climate, while zones above 1,700 m experience alpine conditions with colder temperatures, long winters and shorter summers. This climate diversity supports ecological richness, but also increases vulnerability to climate variability, extreme rainfall, drought stress, reduced agricultural productivity and changing pasture dynamics.

3.3 Demographic and Community Context

The permanent population of the five key mountain settlements is estimated at 3,587 inhabitants. Shipkovica is the largest community with 1,540 inhabitants, followed by Vejce with 848, Brodec with 734, Vesala with 291 and Bozovce with 174. The settlement structure directly affects labor availability, community mobilization, service provision and the capacity to maintain restoration and local development activities.

3.4 Socio-economic Characteristics

Local livelihoods are linked to livestock breeding, traditional mountain cheese and meat products, beekeeping, small-scale agriculture, non-timber forest products, local food and emerging eco-tourism. These activities provide a strong basis for sustainable local development, but they need modernization, market access, product branding, quality standards and protection from climate and wildlife-related losses.

3.5 Infrastructure and Access

Physical connectivity is a major enabling condition for the plan. Access to the villages depends on winding local roads from Tetovo. Road vulnerability affects beekeepers, livestock breeders, dairy producers, tourism operators and residents. Seasonal public transport and safer access routes are important for both social inclusion and economic development.

4. Stakeholder Partnership and Governance

The landscape restoration strategy should be co-created and implemented by actors who live in, manage and depend on the landscape. The working group should remain the main participatory platform for planning, coordination, project selection, monitoring and learning.

Stakeholder group	Core role
Local communities and resource users	Livestock breeders, traditional shepherds, beekeepers, farmers, agricultural landowners, wild-harvest collectors and local residents.

Stakeholder group	Core role
Protected area management and governance	NP Shar Mountain Public Institution and the Municipality of Tetovo.
Private sector and economic actors	Local eco-tourism operators, guides, mountain clubs, guesthouses, restaurants, food producers and small businesses.
Civil society and technical experts	Local and international NGOs, environmental organizations, mountaineering associations, technical experts and donor-supported facilitators.

4.1 Proposed implementation Structure

Body / mechanism	Main function
Landscape Working Group	Coordinate the strategic plan, review priorities, validate annual workplans, monitor progress and support community communication.
Technical Restoration Team	Prepare technical designs for afforestation, erosion control, riverbed restoration, biodiversity and climate resilience actions.
Local Economic Development Group	Support green value chains, tourism products, local food, beekeeping, NTFP processing and market linkages.
Community Stewardship Network	Mobilize youth, villages, NGOs and volunteers for cleanups, awareness, monitoring and cultural events.

5. Threats, Pressures and Strategic Implications

The additional threats provided for integration are consolidated below and connected to strategic implications for the plan. These threats are interlinked: demographic outflow reduces local capacity, weak markets reduce incentives for sustainable livelihoods, and climate and environmental degradation increase vulnerability for both ecosystems and communities.

Threat / pressure	Description	Priority	Strategic response
Demographic outflow and aging communities	Continuous migration and youth outflow are causing depopulation, aging communities and shortage of human resources for local development and maintenance.	High	Youth engagement, local employment, training, seasonal opportunities and locally managed projects.
Weak local markets and limited income opportunities	Low incomes, weak markets and limited investment reduce interest in traditional income-generating activities including non-timber forest products.	High	Green value chains, local branding, processing centers, micro-dairies, beekeeping modernization and market access.
Insufficient tourism infrastructure and promotion	Lack of accommodation facilities, tourism skills and promotion limits the valorization of natural and cultural heritage.	High	Low-impact trails, homestays, shepherd hut restoration, tourism information, branding and guide training.
Climate change impacts	Reduced agricultural productivity, declining honey yields and growing vulnerability of ecosystems and rural livelihoods.	High	Climate-resilient crops, beekeeping adaptation, water/soil conservation, diversified incomes and monitoring.
Soil erosion, flash floods and land degradation	Mountain slopes, degraded areas and riverbeds face environmental instability, threatening infrastructure and agricultural land.	Very high	Bio-engineering, afforestation, riverbed restoration, contour agroforestry and catchment management.
Forest fire risk	Increased fire risk can cause large-scale damage to forest ecosystems, biodiversity and local livelihoods.	High	Fire prevention, fuel management, awareness, early warning, patrols and coordinated response protocols.
Illegal logging and unsustainable forest use	Unsustainable extraction degrades forests, undermines biodiversity and weakens ecosystem services.	High	Community forest stewardship, enforcement coordination, sustainable NTFP rules and monitoring.
Illegal dumping and pollution	Illegal dumping harms soil, water, public health, landscape aesthetics and tourism potential.	High	Waste containers, clean-up actions, collection arrangements and environmental education.
Human-wildlife conflict	Bears, wild boars and other wildlife damage agriculture, beekeeping and rural safety.	Medium-High	Protective fencing, apiary protection, compensation/response mechanisms and awareness.

Threat / pressure	Description	Priority	Strategic response
Biodiversity and indigenous species loss	Medicinal and aromatic plants, raspberries, chestnuts, mountain tea and local varieties are under pressure.	High	Habitat restoration, sustainable harvesting, propagation, agroforestry and local seed/plant conservation.
Loss of traditional cultural heritage	Traditional crafts, festivals and local events such as Potato Day and the Illyrian Carnival are gradually disappearing.	Medium-High	Ethno-museum, festival support, cultural tourism, crafts training and youth involvement.

5.1 Threat-to-Action Linkages

Threat cluster	Action logic
Migration and weak local markets	Create paid local roles in restoration projects; support mini-dairies, honey modernization, NTFP processing, agritourism and youth-focused tourism/culture activities.
Climate, erosion, floods and land degradation	Prioritize afforestation, soil bio-engineering, riverbed stabilization, contour agroforestry and climate-resilient crops.
Forest fires, illegal logging and biodiversity loss	Strengthen community monitoring, fire prevention, sustainable resource-use rules, chestnut restoration and indigenous plant cultivation.
Illegal dumping and pollution	Establish waste container points, village clean-up actions, awareness campaigns and local maintenance responsibilities.
Human-wildlife conflict	Install protective fences, support beekeepers with modern apiary equipment and set up monitoring of damage incidents.
Cultural heritage decline and weak tourism	Reconstruct heritage assets, formalize trails, strengthen local festivals, promote crafts and create an integrated tourism narrative.

6. Vision, Outcomes and Strategic Objectives

6.1 Vision Statement

To transform the Micro-region in Shar Mountain into a resilient, thriving landscape where pristine biodiversity, rich geomorphology and vital water ecosystems are preserved in harmony with vibrant local communities.

6.2 Ten-Year Outcomes

- Restored and better-managed forest, pasture, riverbed and agricultural landscapes that reduce erosion, flood and climate risks.
- Improved biodiversity and protection of indigenous species, medicinal plants and traditional crop varieties.
- More resilient local livelihoods based on sustainable agriculture, beekeeping, dairy, non-timber forest products, eco-tourism and cultural heritage.
- Stronger local cooperation, youth participation and community capacity for maintaining restoration results.
- A recognized Shar Mountain micro-region identity that connects nature, culture, local products and responsible tourism.

6.3 Strategic Objectives

Code	Strategic objective	Main threats addressed	Expected result
SO1	Restore ecosystems and biodiversity	Erosion, biodiversity loss, illegal logging, land degradation, indigenous species loss	Restored forests, pastures, riverbanks, chestnut stands and priority plant species.
SO2	Increase climate and disaster resilience	Climate change, flash floods, land degradation, fire risk	Reduced risk to settlements, agricultural land, watercourses and infrastructure.
SO3	Strengthen sustainable livelihoods and green value chains	Weak markets, migration, reduced incomes, declining traditional activities	Higher local income potential from dairy, honey, NTFPs, crops, herbs and agritourism.
SO4	Develop low-impact tourism and cultural heritage	Insufficient tourism infrastructure, weak promotion, cultural heritage loss	Marked trails, upgraded visitor facilities, heritage events and stronger local tourism offers.
SO5	Improve pollution control and environmental stewardship	Illegal dumping and public health/landscape impacts	Cleaner villages, reduced illegal dumps and stronger community awareness.

Code	Strategic objective	Main threats addressed	Expected result
SO6	Strengthen governance, youth engagement and monitoring	Human resource shortage, weak coordination and maintenance risks	Operational partnership, trained actors, evidence-based monitoring and adaptive management.

7. Spatial Strategy and 3-Zone Management Logic

The plan uses the 3-Zone Model to structure where and how different actions should take place. The zoning logic ensures that conservation, low-impact livelihood activities and economic infrastructure are placed in the most appropriate parts of the landscape.

Zone	Spatial focus	Management direction
Natural Zone	Dense forest areas above Brodec, Bozovce, Vesala, Vejce and Shipkovic; fragile water catchments; steep slopes; erosion-prone zones; sensitive habitats.	Strict protection, assisted natural regeneration, afforestation, fire prevention, monitoring, riverbed stabilization and erosion control.
Combined Zone	Traditional grazing routes, high-value wildflower pastures, apiary areas, agricultural terraces, NTFP collection areas and agro-ecological lands.	Sustainable grazing, agroforestry, climate-resilient crops, controlled harvesting, beekeeping support, habitat-friendly farming and local product development.
Economic Zone	Village centers, access roads, existing infrastructure hubs, tourism routes, guesthouses, shepherd huts, local businesses and visitor service points.	Eco-tourism services, mini-dairies, NTFP processing, tourism information, cultural events, waste management and local market development.



8. Strategic Action Plan

The action plan is organized into six action areas. Each action is linked to the threat profile and to the 4 Returns logic. The timing categories are indicative and should be confirmed through annual work planning: short term (0-12 months), medium term (1-3 years), and long term (3-10 years).

Action Area 1: Ecosystem Restoration, Biodiversity and Forest Protection

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A1.1	Afforest degraded upper-catchment slopes above Brodec with native trees and deep-rooted shrubs.	NP Shar Mountain, CNVP, local communities, NGOs	Short-Medium	ha restored; seedling survival rate; erosion reduction evidence
A1.2	Apply soil bio-engineering and protective afforestation above Bozovce to stabilize erosion-prone slopes.	Technical restoration team, NP Shar Mountain, Municipality	Short-Medium	bio-engineering sites completed; reduced visible erosion; photo monitoring
A1.3	Restore degraded riverbed sections using nature-based solutions, check-dams, riparian vegetation and bank stabilization.	Municipality, NP Shar Mountain, CNVP, water/DRR experts	Medium	meters of riverbed stabilized; flood-risk hotspots reduced
A1.4	Diagnose, treat and replant chestnut trees; support resistant saplings and disease monitoring.	NP Shar Mountain, forestry experts, local landowners	Short-Medium	trees treated; saplings planted; disease monitoring reports
A1.5	Protect and propagate indigenous species and medicinal/aromatic plants such as mountain tea, raspberries and local varieties.	Farmers, NGOs, technical experts	Medium	species plots established; farmers engaged; sustainable harvesting guidance

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A1.6	Establish forest fire prevention and rapid response protocol for high-risk forest and pasture areas.	NP Shar Mountain, Municipality, fire services, communities	Short	fire-risk map; awareness events; response contacts/protocol approved
A1.7	Strengthen community-based monitoring against illegal logging and unsustainable forest use.	NP Shar Mountain, community stewards, NGOs	Short-Medium	patrol/incident logs; reported cases; community stewardship group active

Action Area 2: Climate-Resilient Agriculture, Pastures and Beekeeping

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A2.1	Manage invasive juniper encroachment on sub-alpine pastures through selective ecological restoration.	Livestock breeders, NP Shar Mountain, technical experts	Medium	ha of pasture restored; grazing plans; livestock beneficiaries
A2.2	Restore degraded agricultural lands with cover crops, traditional vegetables, native fruits and mountain tea.	Farmers, NGOs, CNVP	Short-Medium	plots restored; soil cover maintained; farmers trained
A2.3	Introduce contour agroforestry with walnut and raspberry cultivation for soil stabilization and high-value cropping.	Farmers, agricultural advisers, NGOs	Medium	walnut/raspberry seedlings planted; contour rows established
A2.4	Scale climate-resilient Shipkova white bean and traditional multi-cropping with mountain tea.	Farmers, local businesses, NGOs	Short-Medium	number of farmers; branded product pilots; seed/plant material secured
A2.5	Protect apiaries from bears and other wildlife through specialized fencing and improved siting.	Beekeepers, beekeeping associations, NGOs, NP Shar Mountain	Short	fences installed; damage incidents reduced; apiaries protected
A2.6	Modernize 2-3 model apiaries with better hives, extractors, maturation tanks and pollen traps.	Beekeepers, associations, CNVP/donors	Medium	equipment installed; beekeepers trained; honey/bee-product outputs tracked

Action Area 3: Green Livelihoods and Local Value Chains

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A3.1	Construct 3-4 community mini-dairies with hygienic processing technology for Sharr cheese and dairy products.	Livestock breeders, local businesses, food-safety authorities	Medium	micro-dairies established; certified producers; products sold
A3.2	Establish a collection, sorting and sustainable processing center for wild forest products and medicinal herbs.	Local businesses, NGOs, farmers/collectors, NP Shar Mountain	Medium-Long	center operational; harvesting rules; buyers/market agreements
A3.3	Develop apitherapy cosmetics and added-value bee products to respond to declining honey yields.	Beekeepers, women/youth groups, NGOs, market trainers	Medium	product prototypes; trainings; sales channels
A3.4	Support local branding, packaging, digital promotion and the "Partners of Shar" identity for green products.	CNVP, NP Shar Mountain, Municipality, businesses	Short-Medium	brand identity; producers using label; promotional materials
A3.5	Create local market events and sales opportunities connected with festivals, trail days and tourism visits.	Municipality, NGOs, producers, tourism actors	Short-Medium	events held; exhibitors; sales/visitor data

Action Area 4: Sustainable Tourism and Cultural Heritage

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A4.1	Design, clear and mark low-impact hiking trails such as Red Cave, Brodec Waterfalls and the trail to Stanet.	Mountain clubs, guides, NP Shar Mountain, NGOs	Short-Medium	km of trails marked; safety features installed; trail maps/signage
A4.2	Eco-friendly reconstruction of traditional shepherd huts into visitor accommodation and culinary demo-kitchens.	Local businesses, families, tourism experts, donors	Medium	huts upgraded; beds/visitor capacity; local food experiences offered
A4.3	Develop Vejce as a tourist destination through hospitality support, solar systems, accommodation capacity and promotion.	Local businesses, NGOs, Municipality	Medium	facilities upgraded; marketing strategy; visitors/overnights tracked
A4.4	Restore the old school in Bozovce into a Tourism Information Center and Regional Ethno-Museum.	Municipality, local NGO, cultural actors, donors	Medium-Long	building restored; exhibition installed; visitor registration system
A4.5	Support cultural events and local identity: Potato Day, Illyrian Carnival, qifteli workshops and traditional music promotion.	NGOs, cultural organizers, artisans, schools/youth	Short-Medium	events held; participants; crafts/products promoted

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A4.6	Explore seasonal public transportation from Tetovo to Shipkovica-Vesala-Bozovce to improve access for residents and visitors.	Municipality, transport providers, communities	Medium	feasibility note; route proposal; pilot service if approved

Action Area 5: Waste Management, Pollution Control and Community Stewardship

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A5.1	Place waste containers at strategic locations and agree maintenance/emptying responsibilities.	Municipality, local NGOs, communities, partners	Short	containers installed; collection schedule; maintenance owner assigned
A5.2	Clean illegal dumping sites in all five villages through coordinated eco-actions.	NGOs, mountain clubs, youth groups, Municipality	Short	dump sites cleaned; waste removed; before/after documentation
A5.3	Run environmental awareness campaigns on proper waste disposal, water protection and responsible tourism.	Schools, NGOs, NP Shar Mountain, Municipality	Short-Medium	events; participants; awareness survey results

Action Area 6: Governance, Capacity, Learning and Funding

Code	Action	Lead / partners	Timing	Outputs / indicators
A6.1	Formalize the Landscape Working Group with clear membership, meeting schedule and decision process.	CNVP, NP Shar Mountain, Municipality, community representatives	Short	terms of reference; meeting minutes; decisions tracked
A6.2	Prepare annual workplans that sequence priority actions by village, zone, permits, budget and responsible actor.	Working Group, technical teams	Short and annual	approved annual workplan; priority list; implementation calendar
A6.3	Launch a local call for proposals for NGOs, farmers, local businesses and community initiatives aligned with this plan.	CNVP/donors, Working Group	Short	call launched; projects selected; grant agreements signed
A6.4	Train local actors in restoration maintenance, tourism service quality, sustainable harvesting, marketing and monitoring.	CNVP, experts, NGOs, NP Shar Mountain	Short-Medium	participants trained; certificates; post-training application
A6.5	Establish monitoring, reporting and learning routines using 4 Returns indicators and community feedback.	Working Group, CNVP, NP Shar Mountain	Short and continuous	monitoring reports; field visits; lessons learned integrated



9. Implementation Arrangements

Implementation should be phased and adaptive. Immediate actions should prioritize low-regret measures with strong community support and clear environmental benefits, while larger infrastructure and value-chain investments should proceed after technical design, permitting, co-financing and operational ownership are confirmed.

Phase	Timing	Main focus
Phase 1: Mobilization and readiness	0-6 months	Confirm working group, validate action priorities, prepare annual workplan, identify permits, launch quick-win cleanups, start awareness and fire prevention.
Phase 2: Early implementation	6-24 months	Implement afforestation, bio-engineering pilots, apiary protection, waste measures, trail marking, training and selected grants.

Phase	Timing	Main focus
Phase 3: Value-chain and infrastructure scaling	2-5 years	Develop mini-dairies, NTFP/herb center, tourism facilities, ethno-museum, shepherd hut restoration and market systems.
Phase 4: Consolidation and replication	5-10 years	Evaluate results, maintain restored areas, scale successful business models, deepen governance and replicate lessons in wider Shar Mountain areas.

9.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Actor	Indicative responsibilities
CNVP North Macedonia	Facilitation, technical support, grant scheme coordination, donor liaison, capacity building and 4 Returns alignment.
NP Shar Mountain Public Institution	Conservation rules, habitat management, biodiversity monitoring, permitting guidance and enforcement coordination.
Municipality of Tetovo	Local infrastructure, waste management, transport coordination, public services, local development and community mobilization.
Local communities and resource users	Implementation, maintenance, monitoring, stewardship, traditional knowledge and local enterprise development.
Civil society organizations and mountain clubs	Eco-actions, education, trail development, cultural heritage activities, monitoring and volunteer mobilization.
Private sector / local businesses	Investment, service delivery, value chains, quality standards, jobs and market access.
Donors and technical partners	Co-financing, expertise, equipment, training, feasibility studies and quality assurance.

9.2 Annual Workplan and Operational Calendar

Status

To be completed by the Landscape Working Group after priorities, responsible actors, permits and seasonal conditions are confirmed.

10. Financing and Investment Framework

The original initiative portfolio provides indicative investment amounts for many proposed actions. These figures should be treated as preliminary planning estimates and refined through technical design, market assessment, procurement planning and co-financing discussions.

Investment window	Types of actions	Budget status
Ecosystem restoration and risk reduction	Afforestation, pasture restoration, soil bio-engineering, riverbed stabilization, chestnut restoration, indigenous plant restoration.	Several small and medium investments, plus one larger riverbed restoration estimate of EUR 150,000-250,000 which should be covered by public authorities or another donor.
Agriculture, beekeeping and value chains	Agroforestry, mountain tea/white bean cultivation, apiary protection, apiary modernization, apitherapy cosmetics, mini-dairies, NTFP/herb center.	Indicative costs vary from EUR 4,000 to EUR 50,000, depending on scale and equipment.
Tourism and cultural heritage	Trails, shepherd huts, Vejce tourism development, ethno-museum, festivals, qifteli promotion, public transport feasibility.	Indicative investments range from EUR 3,000-5,000 per event to EUR 40,000 for the ethno-museum; transport not yet costed.
Waste and pollution control	Waste containers, clean-up actions, awareness and collection arrangements.	Indicative costs include EUR 10,000 for container/waste management and up to EUR 10,000 for clean-up actions.
Governance and capacity	Working group, training, monitoring, communication, branding and call for proposals management.	To be defined in the project/grant management budget.



11. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Monitoring should combine field visits, photographic documentation, ecological assessments, stakeholder consultations, financial records and community feedback. Results should be reviewed at least every six months during early implementation and annually after the first two years.

Monitoring dimension	What to monitor	Examples of indicators / means of verification
Return of Inspiration	Community motivation, cultural identity and participation	Visual identity approved; number of educational/cultural events; participants in Potato Day, Bean Day, Illyrian Carnival or craft workshops; awareness survey results.
Return of Social Capital	Cooperation, skills and local capacity	Number of institutions involved; stakeholder meetings; trained people; youth/local residents engaged; functioning working group.
Return of Nature	Ecosystem recovery, biodiversity and reduced environmental risk	Seedlings planted; survival rate; ha restored; erosion reduction; riverbed length restored; chestnut trees treated; apiaries protected; illegal dumps removed; fire prevention measures in place.
Return of Income	Sustainable livelihoods and local economic benefits	New or upgraded local businesses; mini-dairies/apiaries/NTFP center established; tourism services improved; local products marketed; people benefiting from restored ecosystem services.

11.1 Review and Learning Cycle

1. Collect data through field monitoring, activity reports, photos, attendance lists, producer records and community feedback.
2. Review progress ongoing with the Landscape Working Group.
3. Identify barriers, maintenance needs and lessons learned.
4. Adjust annual workplans, technical designs and grant criteria based on evidence.
5. Document successful models for replication in other Shar Mountain areas or elsewhere.

11.2 Baseline Data

Status

To be completed. Suggested baseline fields: population, active farmers/beekeepers/livestock breeders, priority degraded sites, illegal dumping sites, tourism assets, cultural assets, local businesses and youth groups.

The following baseline data for the micro-region was collected through participatory consultations with residents who took part in four 4 Returns Workshops. The data reflects local knowledge, community perspectives, and key socio-economic and environmental characteristics of the area.

Vejce

Vejce has approximately 850 residents. Agriculture, livestock breeding, and rural tourism are the main economic activities. Seven households are engaged in beekeeping, around 30 households cultivate potatoes and beans, and 3 households raise sheep and produce dairy products. The village has 2 restaurants and 2 guesthouses with approximately 10 beds each.

Veshala

Veshala has approximately 200 residents. The local economy is based mainly on agriculture and livestock farming. Beekeeping is practiced by 8 households, while 30 households cultivate potatoes and beans. Livestock farming involves 7 households (3 sheep breeders and 4 cattle breeders). Three illegal waste disposal sites were identified, and several forest fires have occurred in recent years, although the affected area has not been officially assessed. No other significant local businesses were identified. During the summer period, a wildfire occurred that affected approximately 2 hectares of forest land near the locality known as Guri i Gjatë, located in the vicinity of Reka e Bachilas. The fire resulted in the burning of forest vegetation and contributed to local environmental degradation in the area.

Shipkovica

Shipkovica is the largest village in the micro-region, with approximately 1,500 residents. Agriculture, livestock farming, tourism, and community initiatives are the main economic activities. Five households practice beekeeping, around 30 households cultivate potatoes and beans, and 7 households are engaged in livestock breeding (3 cattle breeders and 4 sheep breeders). The village has approximately 10 accommodation facilities, 2 illegal waste disposal sites, 2 active NGOs (CESARD and EcoNatura), and 4 mountaineering clubs promoting outdoor tourism and environmental awareness. The area located above the villages of Shipkovica and Brodec has been significantly affected by illegal logging activities. As a result of forest degradation and reduced vegetation cover, the area has become increasingly vulnerable to soil erosion, surface runoff, and recurring flood events during periods of heavy rainfall.

Bozovce

Bozovce has approximately 170 residents. The local economy relies on agriculture, livestock breeding, beekeeping, and rural tourism. Five households practice beekeeping, around 30 households cultivate potatoes and beans, while 4 households raise sheep and 2 raise cattle. The village has 4 restaurants, 4 accommodation facilities with around 8 beds each, and one active NGO, the Illyrian Carnival Association.

Brodec

Brodec has approximately 730 residents. Agriculture, livestock farming, and mountain tourism are the primary economic activities. Around 10 households cultivate beans and potatoes, while 1 household raises sheep and 5 households raise cattle. The village has 1 accommodation facility offering traditional food and serves as a key starting point for climbing Kobilica Peak in the Shar Mountain. Two illegal waste disposal sites were identified during the field assessment.

Name of the Village	Population - approximately	Number of beekeepers	Number of active farmers	livestock breeders	illegal dumping sites	Priority degraded sites	local businesses	NGO and youth groups
Vejce	850	7	Around 30 households produce potatoes and beans	3 households raise sheep and produce dairy products	2	/	The village has 2 restaurants and 2 guesthouses with approximately 10 beds each.	/
Veshala	200	8	Around 30 households cultivate potatoes and beans	7 households (3 sheep breeders and 4 cattle breeders)	3	During the summer period, a wildfire occurred that affected approximately 2 hectares of forest land near the locality known as Guri i Gjatë, located in the vicinity of Reka e Bachilas.	/	/

Name of the Village	Population - approximately	Number of beekeepers	Number of active farmers	livestock breeders	illegal dumping sites	Priority degraded sites	local businesses	NGO and youth groups
Shipkovica	1500	5	Around 30 households cultivate beans and potatoes	7 households are engaged in livestock breeding (3 cattle breeders and 4 sheep breeders).	2	As a result of forest degradation and reduced vegetation cover, the area has become increasingly vulnerable to soil erosion, surface runoff, and recurring flood events during periods of heavy rainfall. The area located above the villages of Shipkovica and Brodec has been significantly affected by illegal logging activities.	The village has approximately 10 accommodation facilities. 2 blueberry and raspberry producers, 5, 2 cafeterias and 4 minimarkets.	2 active NGOs (CESARD and EcoNatura), and 4 mountaineering clubs promoting outdoor tourism and environmental awareness
Bozovce	170	5	Around 30 households cultivate potatoes and beans	4 households raise sheep and 2 raise cattle.	/	/	The village has 4 restaurants, 4 accommodation facilities with around 8 beds each, 2 minimarkets, 2 cafeterias	1 active NGO, the Illyrian Carnival Association
Brodec	730	/	Around 10 households cultivate beans and potatoes	1 household raises sheep and 5 households raise cattle.	2	/	1 accommodation facility offering traditional food, 2 market, 3 cafeterias	4 mountaineering clubs promoting outdoor tourism and environmental awareness

12. Risk Management

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measure	Responsible actor
Insufficient local participation due to migration and limited labor availability	High	High	Schedule activities around seasonal availability; create paid local roles; involve youth and diaspora where possible.	Working Group / Municipality
Permitting delays for works in protected areas, forests, riverbeds or buildings	Medium	High	Start permit screening early; involve NP Shar Mountain and relevant authorities in technical design.	CNVP / NP Shar Mountain / Municipality
Climate extremes damaging restoration sites	High	High	Use native species, phased planting, soil cover, maintenance plans, drought/fire measures and post-event inspections.	Technical team / communities
Forest fires, illegal logging or unsustainable harvesting continuing despite actions	Medium-High	High	Strengthen monitoring, awareness, enforcement links, community reporting and alternative income options.	NP Shar Mountain / communities
Weak market demand for local products	Medium	Medium-High	Develop branding, quality standards, buyer relationships, tourism linkages and small product pilots before scaling.	Local businesses / CNVP
Waste infrastructure not maintained	Medium	Medium	Assign maintenance owner, budget collection/emptying, monitor dumping hotspots and continue awareness campaigns.	Municipality / local NGOs
Human-wildlife conflict remains unresolved	Medium-High	Medium-High	Install fences, collect damage data, improve apiary siting and explore compensation/response mechanisms.	Beekeepers / NP Shar Mountain
Tourism growth harms sensitive habitats	Medium	High	Keep trails low-impact, use zoning, visitor rules, signage, guide training and monitoring of carrying capacity.	NP Shar Mountain / tourism actors

13. Communication and Community Engagement

Communication should strengthen community ownership, motivate young people, promote the restoration economy and explain why environmental protection supports livelihoods. Messaging should be practical, positive and village-specific.

Audience	Core message	Channels / tools
Local communities	Restoration improves safety, land productivity, water quality and income opportunities.	Village meetings, social media, local events, school/youth activities, demonstration sites.
Youth and diaspora	The landscape can offer meaningful roles in tourism, culture, green business and community leadership.	Digital campaigns, volunteer days, internships, festival involvement, youth ambassador activities.
Farmers, beekeepers and livestock breeders	Climate-resilient practices and value-chain upgrades can reduce losses and improve income.	Trainings, field demonstrations, peer exchange, producer groups.
Visitors and tourism market	Shar Mountain offers authentic nature, culture, food and responsible experiences.	Trail maps, info center, guides, “Partners of Shar” brand, online promotion.
Institutions and donors	The plan provides a structured investment pipeline with measurable environmental and social benefits.	Briefing notes, project sheets, monitoring dashboards, donor coordination meetings.

14. Conclusion

The plan positions the 5V Micro-region of Shar Mountain as a practical model for landscape restoration that connects ecosystem protection with local livelihoods, cultural identity and community governance. Its success depends on maintaining the participatory partnership, prioritizing actions with clear environmental and economic value, and ensuring that implementation is monitored and adapted over time.

The plan can now serve as the basis for donor proposals, annual workplans, municipal coordination and community-led action.