**Rethinking management of protected areas towards a circular economy – The BIO2CARE project**

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BIO2CARE is a CBC GR-BG 2014-2020 ongoing project aiming to reinforce protected areas capacity through an innovative methodology for sustainability. During the project, a decision support platform is jointly developed by management bodies, public authorities and universities within the area of a coastal protected area in Greece (the National Park of East Macedonia and Thrace) and a mountainous protected area in Bulgaria (the Rila National Park). The platform will include various studies, methods and tools that will facilitate the identification of key anthropogenic activities that affect the environmental sustainability of the areas and quantify their impact on biodiversity. Under this framework, a model-case study will be designed building upon the principles of circular economy to assess the symbiotic potential of the existing and future activities within the examined areas. Based on this model, a comparative study will be conducted with the utilization of the Life Cycle Assessment approach and relevant software, presenting the benefits of circular economy for the environment (existing situation vs. symbiotic situation). To do so, key material and energy flows within the national parks will be quantified and assessed. Respective software (BIO2CARE Symbiosis) will be further developedfor examining, assessing and proposing potential symbiotic activities in the areas of interest. During the ECOCITY forum 2018, the circular economy model-case study for protected areas and initial results will be analytically presented and discussed thus initiating a dialogue on how the management bodies of protected areas can benefit from the promotion of circular economy.