

# SUSTAINABLE MEDITERRANEAN

MEDITERRANEE DURABLE • ΒΙΩΣΙΜΗ ΜΕΣΟΓΕΙΟΣ • MEDITERRANEO SOSTENIBILE المتوسطة المستدامة



Contributing to capacity building on  
transboundary water resources management in  
South Eastern Europe

Contribution au renforcement des capacités  
en matière de gestion des ressources en eau  
transfrontalières en Europe du Sud-Est

Quarterly newsletter produced by  
the **Mediterranean  
Information Office** for the  
**Environment, Culture** and  
**Sustainable  
Development**, in collaboration  
with the **European  
Environmental Bureau** and the  
**Arab NGO Network for  
Environment and Development**

Issue no **57**  
02/2009

This issue of Sustainable Mediterranean  
was financed by **MIO-ECSD** with the  
support of the **European Commission**



This issue of Sustainable Mediterranean summarizes the major capacity building initiatives that MIO-ECSDE has undertaken jointly with other stakeholders active in the region on transboundary water resources management in South Eastern Europe.

MIO-ECSDE, jointly with GWP-Med and several other partners co-organized a series of targeted capacity building activities that focused on methodologies and experiences on addressing issues of transboundary water resources management in the framework of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and GEF IW:LEARN. Four workshops in total were implemented within 2008 (for more information on the structure and content visit [www.watersee.net](http://www.watersee.net)). The aim of these workshops was to enhance the practical capacity of key stakeholders on priority issues of integrated management of shared water bodies, hence assisting in advancing practical application in South-eastern Europe (SEE).

The workshops geographically focused primarily on the:

- a. hydrographical network of the Southwestern Balkan Peninsula that includes the Prespa, Ohrid and Shkoder Lakes and Drin River basins.
- b. Sava River Basin.

Before describing the capacity building workshops an introductory article provides an overview of important processes related to transboundary waters in South Eastern Europe so as to set the overall framework for the reader. In closing, the major outcomes of a consultative meeting on the Integrated Management of the extended Drin River Basin that took place on 24 November, 2008 in Tirana, Albania so as to facilitate the exchange of information among national competent authorities and key international actors, is presented.

MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med are going to organize two more capacity building workshops in 2009 as well.

Cette édition du Bulletin d'Information Méditerranée Durable résume les principales initiatives pour le renforcement des capacités en matière de gestion des ressources en eau transfrontalières en Europe du Sud-Est que le MIO-ECSDE a entrepris conjointement à d'autres parties prenantes actives dans la région.

Le MIO-ECSDE, en coopération avec GWP-Med et plusieurs autres partenaires, a organisé une série d'activités pour le renforcement des capacités, qui ont été axées sur les méthodologies et expériences utiles à traiter des questions concernant la gestion des ressources en eau transfrontalières dans le cadre du Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process et GEF IW: LEARN. Quatre ateliers ont été organisés en 2008 (pour plus d'informations sur leur structure et contenu veuillez visiter [www.watersee.net](http://www.watersee.net)). L'objectif de ces ateliers était de renforcer les capacités pratiques des acteurs clé sur les questions prioritaires liées à la gestion intégrée des masses d'eau partagées, contribuant donc à leur application pratique en Europe du Sud-Est (ESE).

Les ateliers se sont concentrés principalement sur les zones géographiques suivantes:

- a. le réseau hydrographique de la péninsule Balkanique du sud-ouest qui comprend Prespa, Ohrid et les bassins du lac Shkoder et du fleuve Drin.
- b. le bassin du fleuve Sava.

Avant de décrire les ateliers de renforcement des capacités l'article introductif fournit un aperçu des processus importants liés aux eaux transfrontalières en Europe du Sud Est de manière à présenter au lecteur le cadre global. En terminant, les principaux résultats d'une réunion consultative sur la Gestion Intégrée du bassin étendu du fleuve Drin qui a eu lieu le 24 Novembre 2008 à Tirana, en Albanie, sont présentés, afin de faciliter l'échange d'informations entre les autorités nationales compétentes et les acteurs clé actifs au niveau international.

MIO-ECSDE et GWP-Med organiseront deux autres ateliers de renforcement des capacités en 2009.

IMPORTANT PROCESSES RELATED TO TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE	4	"INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT" WITH REFERENCE TO THE CONDITIONS IN THE EXTENDED DRIN RIVER BASIN	11
CAPACITY BUILDING ON INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF SHARED WATER BODIES IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE (SEE)	6	CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON "SHARED GROUNDWATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"	14
"STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSBOUNDARY WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"	6	CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF THE EXTENDED DRIN RIVER BASIN	17
"INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF SHARED LAKES BASINS"	8	MISCELLANEOUS MEDITERRANEAN NEWS	18

The views and opinions expressed in Sustainable Mediterranean by individual contributors do not necessarily reflect those of MIO-ECSDE or those of our sponsors.



## Important Processes related to Transboundary Waters in South Eastern Europe

The **Petersberg Phase II Process / Athens Declaration Process** for the South Eastern Europe is jointly coordinated by Germany, Greece and the World Bank.

The **Petersberg Process**, initiated in 1998, concerns cooperation on the management of transboundary waters. The Petersberg Process – Phase II is intended to provide support to translate into action the current developments and opportunities for future cooperation on transboundary river, lake and groundwater management in the SEE. It is supported by the German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the World Bank.

The **Athens Declaration Process** concerning Shared Water, Shared Future and Shared Knowledge was initiated in 2003. It provides a framework for a long-term process to support cooperative activities for the integrated management of shared water resources in the SEE and Mediterranean regions. It is jointly supported by the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the World Bank.

The two processes progressively came together in order to generate synergies and maximize the outcomes for the benefit of the SEE region. The Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) is the technical facilitator of related activities.

The main joint objective is to build capacity and share experience on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), and to develop IWRM plans for shared water bodies as a response to the targets of the 2002 Johannesburg Summit. The Process supports a series of complementary activities that provide a forum for transboundary water management issues in SEE.

The Process complements the EU integration processes and other ongoing initiatives in the region. It contributes directly to the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem.

For more information visit [www.watersee.net](http://www.watersee.net)

GEF IW:LEARN is supporting synergy in the Petersberg Process Phase II / Athens Declaration Process, and contributions of practical experience from GEF projects working in transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwater in the SEE region as well as elsewhere in the world.

For more information visit [www.iwlearn.net](http://www.iwlearn.net)

The **UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention)** is the only existing international legal framework outside the EU in force for transboundary water cooperation. The Convention was signed in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996. As of September 2008, 35 countries and the European Community are Parties to the Convention, including Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania and Slovenia.

The Convention aims to protect surface and ground water by preventing transboundary impacts on health, safety and nature, which in turn affect the quality of life. It also promotes ecologically sound management of transboundary waters, and their reasonable and equitable use as a way of avoiding conflicts.

Parties to the Convention are obliged to conclude specific bilateral or multilateral agreements providing for the establishment of joint bodies (institutional arrangements such as river basin commissions). These joint bodies must agree on a common action plan to reduce pollution, in addition to agreeing on water quality objectives and wastewater emission limits. They are also required to cooperate on information exchange and monitoring and assessment. Early warning systems must be established to warn neighbouring countries of any critical situation such as flooding or accidental pollution that may have a transboundary impact. Parties to the Convention are also required to inform the general public of the state of transboundary waters and any prevailing or future measures.

The Convention provides a legal framework for regional cooperation on shared water resources. Several bilateral and multilateral agreements between UNECE countries are based on the principles and provisions of the Convention, including, in SEE, the Danube River Protection Convention and the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin.

Under the Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health and the Protocol on Civil Liability were adopted in 1999 and in 2003, respectively.

The programme of work adopted every three years by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention is a useful tool to support Parties' and non-Parties' implementation, identify joint priorities and address emerging challenges. SEE is considered a priority action area, thus the 2007-2009 programme of work includes a number of activities to support ratification by non-Parties and foster cooperation on transboundary waters in the region.

For more information visit [www.unece.org/env/water](http://www.unece.org/env/water)

The **Global Environmental Facility Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem (GEF SPM)** is an initiative primarily funded by GEF aiming to assist Mediterranean basin countries in implementing reforms and investments in key sectors that address transboundary pollution reduction, biodiversity decline, habitat degradation and living resources protection. It will serve as a catalyst in leveraging policy, legal and institutional reforms as well as additional investments necessary for reversing degradation of damaged large marine ecosystem and their contributing freshwater basins, habitats and coastal areas. The GEF SPM is linked to an Investment Fund for the Mediterranean, managed by the World Bank. Overall, the activities will be implemented over a period of 5 years.

An Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) component of the GEF SPM has been prepared under the lead of GWP-Med that involves the promotion of IWRM planning at transboundary, national and regional levels as a means to reduce pollution from land based activities in the Mediterranean. It aims to support targeted countries in the progressive adoption of IWRM policies, the implementation of IWRM practices in pilot areas and associated capacity building. The Development of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in globally important river basins and adjacent coastal areas is one of the activities anticipated to be implemented within the project. The possibility of Drin river basin to be one of the areas of focus is being explored.

In the GEF SPM MIO-ECSDE is responsible for the component on Civil Society involvement.

For more information visit [www.medsp.org](http://www.medsp.org)





## Capacity building on integrated management of shared water bodies in Southeastern Europe (SEE)

MIO-ECSDE and GWP-Med jointly organized a series of targeted capacity building activities that focused on methodologies and experiences on addressing issues of transboundary water resources management in the framework of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and GEF IW:LEARN. Four workshops in total were implemented within 2008 with the overall aim to enhance the practical capacity of key stakeholders on priority issues of integrated management of shared water bodies, hence assisting in advancing practical application in SEE.

The initiative works in synergy with the GEF IW projects in the area i.e. “Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR Macedonia and Greece” and “Integrated management of Skadar Lake ecosystem”. Moreover, the workshops take into account and support the implementation of the objectives of the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems as well as the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI).

The four capacity building workshops were:

- “Stakeholder involvement in Transboundary Water Resources Management”
- “Integrated Management of Shared Lakes Basins”
- “Integrated Water Resources Management” with reference to the conditions in the extended Drin River Basin
- “Shared Groundwater Resources Management”

Reports of the four workshops follow herewith.

### “Stakeholder involvement in Transboundary Water Resources Management” 25-27 March 2008 Podgorica, Montenegro

Public involvement has been recognised as an integral component of an effective system for managing water resources. Decisions related to the use and management of water resources have impacts on people’s everyday lives, their economic well-being, and, not least, on the health of the ecosystems on which all societies depends. The right of the public, and particularly of affected stakeholders, to participate in these decisions has been widely acknowledged by international law e.g. Aarhus Convention. The integration of stakeholders’ views and interests into international waters management reflects a broader recognition and application of the public’s fundamental right to be involved in environmental decision-making processes. Among other, this recognition was clearly articulated in the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Public participation in water management is not only a right; it is also a very useful tool. It has been proven that early and meaningful involvement of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of water management, secures a much more sustainable and smooth operation of the relevant systems and schemes.

The Capacity Building Workshop “Stakeholder involvement in Transboundary Water Resources Management” was organized in Podgorica, Montenegro, 25-27 March 2008 by the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Mediterranean Information Office

for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE) in cooperation with the Montenegrin Ministry of Tourism and Environment. The activity was supported by the European Commission<sup>1</sup>, GEF IW: LEARN and UNEP/MAP.

### Objectives

The main objective of the Podgorica Workshop was to build capacity of targeted players involved in the management of transboundary waters in SEE and support their efforts in developing IWRM plans for shared water bodies with emphasis on stakeholder involvement. Responding to and serving the outcomes of the Ohrid International Roundtable (2006)<sup>2</sup>, the workshop also aimed to assist the process for the development of a shared vision for the greater Drin River Basin as a first step towards cooperative management of the Basin.

The specific objectives of the workshop, was for the participants to:

1. understand the conceptual framework for public participation in shared water resources management at different levels: international, national, and local;
2. be informed about the legal frameworks for public participation at international level;
3. get familiar with the various involvement strategies and tools that may be used in the

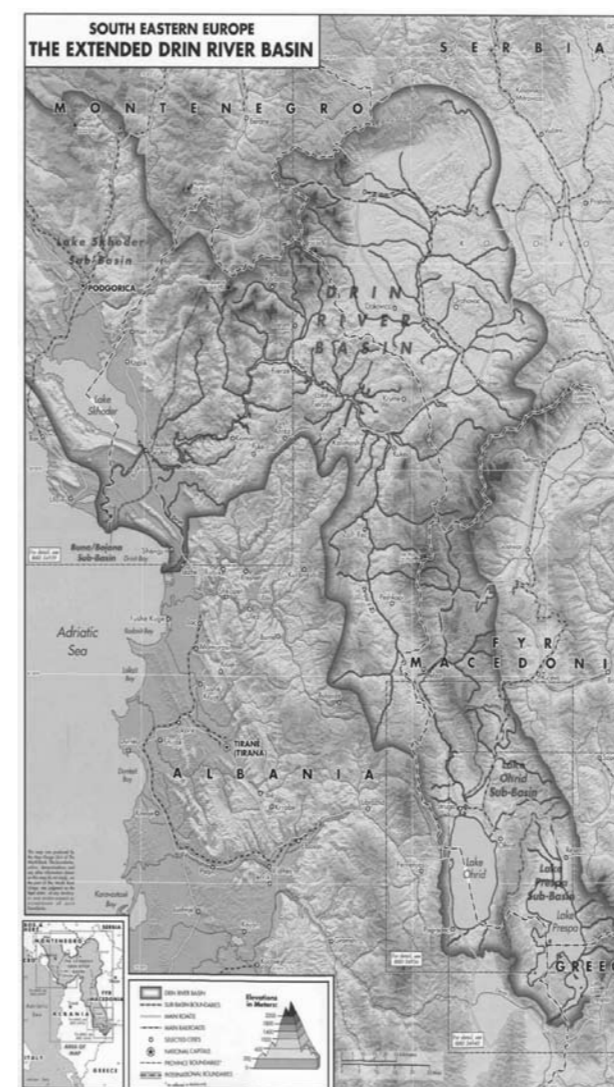
1. Through the Annual Funding of MIO/ECSDE

2. International Roundtable “Integrated Shared Lake Basin Management in Southeastern Europe”, 12 - 14 October 2006, Ohrid, FYR Macedonia

4. learn the steps of a stakeholders involvement process<sup>3</sup>;
5. identify ways of integrating the different tools and techniques into IWRM planning at national and transboundary level;
6. learn how to prepare a stakeholders involvement plan;
7. identify peers in the region to work with in addressing issues of TWRM in the future;
8. appreciate the importance of public participation and its benefits to the IWRM and to their work.

### Participants, Methodology & Structure

Sixteen selected representatives of water management authorities at national and local levels, research institutes, regional and national NGOs from Albania, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo, and Montenegro participated in the Workshop.



3. A stakeholders involvement process include: Identifying and analyzing of the interest groups; defining the objectives; determining the type of public involvement required; choosing the involvement strategies and methods; planning of the implementation, evaluating the process, etc.

The Workshop followed a participatory and interactive approach allowing the familiarization of the stakeholders with the relevant conceptual approaches and tools while providing at the same time case-specific examples from within and outside the SEE region.

The agenda of the three day Workshop included short lectures, presentation of case studies, role playing, group and plenary discussions and a planning exercise. The approach followed enhanced sharing of experiences among participants. The discussions and work conducted was supported by training and background materials on the subject.

The **case study presentations** were focused on experiences of public participation and stakeholders involvement in the management of transboundary waters in the:

- SEE and more specifically in the Shkoder Lake Basin shared by Albania and Montenegro;
- the Danube river basin;
- the Baltic Sea Basin, including the transboundary Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe Basin shared by Estonia and Russia.

These presentations in combination with the **short lectures** provided the necessary background information (legal framework at international level, stakeholder involvement methods and tools etc.) to the participants. An important part of the discussions that followed the presentations was devoted on how to advance the approaches currently used to apply IWRM approaches and public participation principles to meet the future requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive in view of the integration of the countries of the region in the European Union.

The **role playing** was conducted using the “ORK simulation game manual” (Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation, 2005). It assisted participants to “think outside of the box” and understand the perspectives and roles of the different stakeholders while addressing challenges linked to natural resources management. It also allowed understanding the importance of the stakeholders’ involvement in effectively addressing such challenges.

The **study visit** to the Skadar Lake National Park premises and the lake surroundings provided the participants with first hand information about the state of the Shkoder Lake, the pressures to the natural system, the managerial measures adopted as well as the roles of different stakeholders. This information being complementary to this provided by the organizers was used by the participants as background for the **planning exercise**.

Based on these, the Shkoder lake basin (where the event took place) was used as a “laboratory” for the needs of the workshop; **the participants were asked to work in two groups** on a scenario based on realities of this shared water body and prepare an outline of a “stakeholders involvement plan”. The work of each of the two groups was facilitated by a trainer. The group work for the preparation of the plan, besides being a “hands on” approach



allowed the interaction among the participants, hence their cross-fertilization. It also assisted them to identify peers in the region to work with in addressing issues of TWRM in the future.

Given the broad spectrum of issues involved in the preparation of such plans, the learning process -during the planning exercise- was adaptive and elaborated on specific issues in accordance to the learning needs and the background of the participants. The work focused on 4 main topics:

- identification of the overall objectives of the “stakeholders involvement plan”,
- identification of the key stakeholders to be involved,
- identification of the key interests and priorities of the stakeholders, and finally
- identification of the already implemented as well as needed key public participation and stakeholders involvement activities.

The group discussions demonstrated that there is already a range of stakeholders involved in the management of the Shkoder Lake. A number of activities have been implemented at various levels aiming to enhance public participation and stakeholders’ involvement. Nevertheless, the participants realized that more work should be done in the future and that stakeholders shall benefit from experience and input from other basins facing similar challenges.

There is a range of on-going and planned projects for the management of Lake Skadar at local, national and

trans-national levels. Enhanced public participation and stakeholders’ involvement are key to their successful implementation.

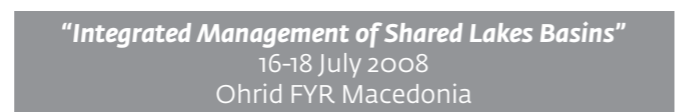
All participants agreed on the importance of enhanced coordination among responsible institutions, especially at the trans-national level in order to develop sound public participation and stakeholders’ involvement plans covering the whole basin.

The conclusions of the working groups’ discussions could be used as an input by experts involved in the development of the Lake Skadar stakeholder involvement plan. It is important that the proposed activities at different management levels are coordinated and information exchange is organized to ensure that all the key stakeholders are involved.

The participants were given a CD that included the presentations made, the overview of the outputs of the two working groups as well as the training and background material on public participation and stakeholders involvement in TWRM used in the workshop. This material is also available at [www.watersee.net](http://www.watersee.net).

### Evaluation by the participants

Overall, the participants considered the Workshop to be successful. The majority thought that the objectives of the workshop as well as their objectives and expectations were sufficiently met. Most of the participants appreciated the participatory and interactive approach followed as well as the fact that a facilitated planning exercise where the participants developed an outline of a stakeholder involvement plan was used as a learning approach. This was also obvious from the answers given regarding the characteristic of the Workshop that they mostly appreciated. The majority was pleased by the quality of the organization and the duration of the workshop.



The Capacity Building Workshop on “Integrated Management of Shared Lakes Basins”, was organized in Ohrid FYR Macedonia, 16-18 July 2008 by the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med) and the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE) in cooperation with the GEF/UNDP “Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR-Macedonia and Greece” project and the FYR Macedonian Ministry for Environment and Physical Planning. The activity is supported by the European Commission<sup>4</sup>, GEF IW: LEARN, GEF/UNDP “Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR-Macedonia and Greece” project and UNEP/MAP.

Lake basins have special characteristics such as their integrating nature, long water retention time, and com-

4. Through the Annual Funding of MIO/ECSDE

plex response dynamics. The combination of these characteristics which can individually be found elsewhere as well (e.g. groundwater and estuaries) is what distinguishes lakes from other water bodies. This fact often affects the way that their basins need to be managed and has to be taken into account while respective policies and subsequent laws and management instruments are being planned and implemented, and institutions are set up. It is essential to understand that the implications of these characteristics mean that management institutions and their policies and plans need to be established and funded on a long term basis; that scientific knowledge is particularly important for unraveling the complex responses of lakes to exogenous changes; and the management instruments need to be adapted to the integrating nature of lakes. It can be easily understood that this rather difficult task is becoming even more difficult in the case of shared lake basins.

Transcending political and even administrative boundaries, the available water must be shared among individuals, economic sectors, intrastate jurisdictions and sovereign nations. There are numerous obstacles in achieving these aims. Except for these deriving from the interdependences that are created between different uses (fisheries, agriculture, hydropower generation, water supply, tourism, etc.), there exist different priorities and interests in each country as well as different policies.

There are three major shared Lakes in the SEE region: Prespa<sup>5</sup>, Ohrid and Shkoder<sup>6</sup>. These Lakes and their ba-

and to equip them with the knowledge / tools that will enhance their skills to participate in the preparation of Lake Basin Management Plans.

Responding to and serving the outcomes of the Ohrid International Roundtable (2006)<sup>7</sup>, the workshop also aimed to assist the process for the development of a shared vision for the greater Drin River Basin as a first step towards cooperative management of the Basin (see Map, page 21).

The specific objectives for the participants were:

- To become familiar with Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approaches, concept and tools as well as with the Ecosystems Approach as an integral part of the IWRM approach.
- To understand the need for integration of water resources management and spatial planning.
- To be informed about the legal frameworks and tools for water resources management at international and EU levels.
- To receive basic information on the EU WFD and its provisions (also in relation with IWRM).
- To understand the conceptual framework of integrated management of lake basins at different levels: trans-national, national, and local.
- To understand the basic steps of the preparation of a Lake Basin Management Plan - what does such a plan entail; what are the different steps for its preparation.
- To identify peers in the region to work together in addressing related issues in the future.

Table1. Shared lake basins in the South-Western Balkan Peninsula

Shared lake basins	Country			
	Greece	FYR Macedonia	Albania	Montenegro
Prespa				
Ohrid				
Shkoder				

sins are spread in a geographical area that includes Albania, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Greece.

These water bodies along with Drin and Buna/Bojana Rivers - also shared water bodies - comprise an interconnected hydrological system. They can all be considered part of the greater Drin River Basin.

### Objectives of the Workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to build the capacity of stakeholders on transboundary lake basin management

5. The Prespa basin includes two lakes separated by a naturally formulated narrow strip of land: Macro Prespa and Micro Prespa. From this point forward we will refer to the system of the two lakes as Prespa.

6. The Lake is named “Skadar” in Montenegro and “Shkodër” or “Shkodra” and also sometimes “Scutari” in Albania.

### Participants, facilitators, methodology & structure

Twenty three selected representatives of water competent management authorities at national and local levels, local authorities, joint commissions and bodies, management authorities of protected areas, research institutes, regional and national NGOs from Albania, FYR Macedonia, and Montenegro participated in the Workshop. The representatives of the organizers - one from GWP-MED, two from MIO-ECSDE and two from GEF/UNDP “Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR-Macedonia and Greece” project - were responsible for administrative issues and assisted the team of the two facilitators,

7. International Roundtable “Integrated Shared Lake Basin Management in Southeastern Europe”, 12 - 14 October 2006, Ohrid, FYR Macedonia



Mr. George de Gooijer and Ms. Nighisty Ghezze in the different activities of the workshop.

The workshop focused on Lake Basin management concepts and approaches, the relevant legal frameworks at EU as well as at International level and their application in the transboundary Lakes of the South West Balkan Peninsula.

The programme of the three day Workshop included short lectures, presentation of case studies, group and plenary discussions and exercises. The Workshop followed a participatory, interactive and experiential approach allowing the familiarization of the stakeholders with the relevant conceptual approaches and tools while providing at the same time case-specific examples. The approach followed, enhanced sharing of experiences among participants. The Lake Prespa, was used as a reference/case study for the workshop activities. References were made to the Lakes Ohrid and Shkoder.

The discussions and work conducted was supported by training and background materials on the subject. The participants were provided with the following printed background material:

- Managing Lakes and their Basins for Sustainable Use: A report for Lake Basin Managers and Stakeholders (ILEC, 2005. International Lake Environment Committee Foundation: Kusatsu, Japan)
- Assessment of the Management of Shared Lake Basins in Southeastern Europe. A report within GEF IW:LEARN Activity D2. GWP-Med, Athens, 2006
- Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes. UNECE Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment. Finish Environment Institute. Helsinki, 2003

The presentations and material produced throughout the workshop as well as additional material on the subject are available at [www.watersee.net](http://www.watersee.net).

The workshop was opened by Mr Dejan Panovski, State Secretary of the FYR Macedonian Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and Mr Aleksander

Pererski, Mayor of Ohrid. Following the **presentation of the objectives and the structure of the workshop** an activity to identify the **expectations of the participants** was conducted. Based on the expectations the workshop activities were adapted (content and sequence of the presentations, way to form the working groups and conduct the exercises), within the predefined context, to respond to the expressed needs.

The **short lectures** focused on Integrated Water Resources Management, Integrated Lake Basins Management (ILBM), the EU Water Framework Directive, the UNECE Water Convention, Spatial Planning and ILBM and introduced the participants to the respective approaches and tools and provided the necessary background information and knowledge to be used in the exercises to follow.

The **case study presentations** –on Ohrid and Shkoder lakes- focused on experiences and lessons learned regarding the management of the two transboundary lake basins. The presentation on the Prespa lake basin focused primarily on the current management status (institutional and legal framework, management instruments, etc.) as well as on the challenges linked with integrated natural resources management. It also referred to the recently initiated UNDP / GEF Prespa lake Project. The aim was to provide the necessary information to be used in the exercise to follow.

Two **exercises** were conducted. The first, on Day 1, was an introduction to the negotiation and cooperation processes. The main message was that cooperation is a choice and that it leads to the maximization of benefits shared among the cooperating parties. It was important for the participants to understand the obstacles, difficulties and challenges involved in a negotiation process, among different actors with different interests, towards cooperation. Equally important, it succeeded in creating a group dynamic which allowed the participants to meaningfully work together and interact; hence, it strengthened the learning process.

The second exercise, on Day 2, aimed to introduce the participants to the management of lake basins through an experiential learning approach. This exercise was meant to consolidate the, until then, provided



information on the concepts, methods and approaches to the lake basin management.

The participants were asked to work in four groups. Using the information provided through the short lectures and the case study presentations each group worked in the identification of the current situation within each of the sectors/pillars of the ILBM (Institutions, Policies, Information/knowledge, Participation/Stakeholders involvement, Technology/Infrastructure and Financing) approach and identify the respective challenges. The group work, besides being a “hands on” approach allowed the interaction among the participants, hence their cross-fertilization. It also assisted them to identify peers in the region to work with in addressing issues of TWRM in the future.

The **study visit** to the Lake Presa provided the participants with first hand information about the pressures to the natural system, the managerial measures adopted as well as the roles of different stakeholders. This information, being complementary to that provided through the lectures and the presentations, was used as background for the second phase of the exercise.

On Day 3, following the presentation of the outcomes of the work of each group, the participants worked in plenary with the assistance of the facilitators. They used the outcomes of the group work to identify the needed actions within each of the aforementioned sectors towards ILBM in Prespa. The exercise assisted participants to “think outside of the box” and understand the need for integration among sectors as well as the perspectives and roles of the different stakeholders while addressing challenges linked to natural resources management.

An important part of the discussions was devoted to addressing how to advance the approaches currently used for the management of the lake basin to meet the future requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive in view of the integration of the countries of the region to the European Union. The linkages between spatial planning and natural resources management in the context of lake basins management were also discussed. The cooperation among countries for the management of the extended Drin River Basin was another theme addressed.

### Evaluation by the participants

Overall, the participants considered the Workshop to be successful; well prepared and executed. The majority was pleased by the quality of organization and the duration of the workshop. The vast majority thought that the objectives of the workshop as well as their objectives and expectations were sufficiently met. Most of the participants appreciated the participatory, interactive as well as experiential learning approach followed. This was obvious also from the answers given regarding the characteristic of the Workshop that they mostly

appreciated. They appreciated the opportunity they were given to meet and network with their counterparts from the neighboring countries.

*“Integrated Water Resources Management”  
with reference to the conditions in the extended  
Drin River Basin  
25-27 November 2008  
Shkodra, Albania*

The “extended” Drin Basin (Basin) comprises the watersheds of the Prespa<sup>8</sup>, Ohrid and Shkoder<sup>9</sup> Lakes and the Black Drin<sup>10</sup>, White Drin<sup>11</sup>, Drin<sup>12</sup> and Buna/Bojana Rivers.

The Drin River is the “connecting body” of a water system, linking the lakes, wetlands, rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem of major importance. The water bodies and their watersheds are spread in a geographical area that includes Albania, Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (from this point forward referred to as FYR Macedonia), Montenegro and Kosovo (*UN administered territory under UN Security Council resolution 1244*). Flowing from Lake Ohrid, which itself receives a percentage of its waters from Lake Prespa through underground karstic formations, the Black Drin eventually leaves FYR Macedonia and enters Albania. The White Drin rises in Kosovo and flows into Albania where it meets the Black Drin to form the Drin River. Flowing through Albania, one arm of the Drin joins the Buna/Bojana River (a watercourse which drains Lake Shkoder and, shared between Albania and Montenegro forms part of their border before finally flowing into the Adriatic Sea) near the city of Shkodra and the other arm drains directly into the Adriatic Sea south of Shkodra near the city of Lezhe. Each of these water bodies has a number of tributaries, small rivers and streams. The following table depicts the hydrographic connections.

Transcending political and even administrative boundaries, the available water must be shared among individuals, economic sectors, intrastate jurisdictions and sovereign nations. There are numerous obstacles in achieving these aims. Except for these deriving from the interdependences that are created between different uses (fisheries, agriculture, hydropower generation, water supply, tourism, etc.), there exist different priorities and interests in each country as well as different policies. These facts affect the way that their basins need to be managed and has to be taken into account while respective policies and subsequent laws and management instruments are being planned and implemented, and institutions are set up.

On the basis of the above, the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSD) and the GEF “Lake Shkoder/Skadar Integrated Ecosystem Management”

8. The Prespa basin includes two lakes separated by a naturally formulated narrow strip of land: Macro Prespa and Micro Prespa.

9. The Lake is called “Skadar” in Montenegro and “Shkodër” or “Shkodra” and also sometimes “Scutari” in Albania.

10. The River is called Drin i Zi in Albania and Crn Drim in FYR Macedonia.

11. The River is called Drin i Bardhë in Albania and Beli Drin in Kosovo.

12. The River is called Drin i madh or Drini in Albania.





what works and what doesn't and finally the challenges linked with the effort for the multi-purpose use of the basin.

- Agim Shimaj made a presentation about the state of environment in the Shkoder Lake Basin, the evolving management status in the area and the related challenges. He also referred to the recently initiated GEF/World Bank "Lake Skadar/Shkoder Integrated Ecosystem Management" Project. This allowed the seminar participants to (i) comprehend the context for IWRM implementation in the area, (ii) understand how the IWRM approach is actually being used in the region and the specific project and (iii) how it might be used towards the implementation of the Shkoder Lake Basin agreement made between Albania and Montenegro.

The participants were given some of the necessary information to be used in the exercise to follow. The **exercise** aimed to introduce the participants to the management of basins through an experiential learning approach. The Shkoder shared system was used as a reference making the necessary connections, with the Drin river, Prespa and Ohrid lakes.

The participants were asked to work in four groups. Using the information provided through the short lectures and the case study presentation about Shkoder lake, each group worked with the assistance of the facilitator on a mini stakeholder analysis in view of the formation of a joint management body in the reference area. The participants identified the main Stakeholders and made a short analysis of their characteristics (influenced, involved and impacted stakeholder groups, relative power, etc). An identification of the possible functions of a joint body was made as a next step in the exercise.

**Day 3: Experiences on transboundary cooperation - Integrated Transboundary Water Resources Management, Group Work (continued)**

On Day 3, the exercise continued and the four groups performed a short analysis on whether a specific



issue already identified as a source of conflict would be an issue that the joint commission could work on resolving. The groups discussed what the effectiveness of the commission would be in terms of potential solutions and to what degree these solutions would be implementable.

The exercise assisted participants to "think outside of the box" and understand the need for integration among sectors, as well as the perspectives and roles of the different stakeholders, while addressing challenges linked to natural resources management.

The workshop ended with a discussion in which the participants, presenters, facilitator, and organizers reflected on the workshop and its outcomes.

**Capacity Building Workshop on  
"Shared Groundwater Resources Management"**  
2-4 December 2008  
Karst Research Institute SRC SASA, Postojna, Slovenia

Groundwater is a "hidden" resource with special characteristics and it is interlinked with the other components of the physically integrated land-surface water-groundwater-coastal/marine system. This fact has to be taken into account while related policies, laws and management schemes and instruments at local, national and regional level are being developed. Also integration of policies for groundwater management with policies for economic development and consequently land use management, including designation and functioning of national parks and protected areas, is an imperative for sustainable development.

Groundwater management at national level is, in many cases, not sustainable due to gaps in the legal frameworks of the countries and ineffective application of management measures. Poor knowledge of the characteristics of the aquifer systems and inadequate monitoring exacerbate the situation.

Geological formations have no regard to national/political boundaries. Aquifers are to a large extent shared between two or more countries. The UNECE Assessment of transboundary water resources ("Our waters: joining hands across borders" - First Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwater, October 2007) identifies 51 transboundary aquifers in SEE. Other assessments raise this number to more than 60. These provide a share of total water usage in their respective area that ranges from 15 to 90 or even 100 percent in some of the Dinaric karstic aquifers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro.

While visible progress has been achieved in the cooperation for the management of shared surface waters in many parts of the region, there is lack of transboundary cooperation and relevant arrangements for the management of

shared aquifers. This may present an obstacle for the stability and economic development of SEE countries in the future. Solutions need to be specific for each case, taking into account, among other things, the nature of the aquifer and severity of pressures exerted, the size and importance of the shared resources and the number of countries involved.

Shared aquifers can be found in the Sava River Basin and the Dinaric Arc area. Their integrated management taking into account the geographical and geological characteristics such as karstification, karst hydrology, forests, biodiversity, etc. is crucial for the sustainable development of the region. Some examples of good practice in the area exist.

**The Workshop**

Taking all of the above into consideration the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), the Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO/ECSDE), the Slovenian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Slovenian Karst Research Institute SRC SASA and the Sava Commission, co-organized a Capacity Building workshop on Shared Groundwater Resources Management between 2 - 4 December in Postojna, Slovenia. The activity was supported by the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Slovenian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (SMESP) and the European Commission - DG ENV (through the Annual Funding of MIO/ECSDE).

The Workshop geographically focused on the Sava River Basin and the wider Dinaric Arc area.

The Workshop came as a follow up to the International Roundtable "Integrated Shared Groundwater in Southeastern Europe" that was organized in Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia, 14-16 November 2007 jointly by the SMESP and GWP-Med within the framework of the Petersberg Process Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and GEF IW:LEARN.

**Objectives**

The purpose of the Workshop was to build the capacity of the stakeholders in the Sava River Basin countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia) as well as in the countries over which the Dinaric karstic eco region extends, by way of providing knowledge and tools to improve their skills on Shared Groundwater Resources Management. Promotion of transboundary cooperation in this regard was an additional objective. The facilitation of the work of the Sava Commission in the long term and responding to the needs in the area in view of sustainable management of water resources was also an underlying goal.

**Participants and methodology**

Seventeen selected representatives of water competent management authorities and institutions, joint commissions, research institutes, NGOs, etc. from the Sava countries as well as Albania, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro participated. In addition a number of Slovenian participants (approximately 25 persons - from

the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Geological Survey, Institute of Biology, Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Food) also attended the first day of the workshop.

The Workshop followed a participatory approach allowing the familiarization of the stakeholders with the relevant conceptual approaches and tools while providing at the same time case-specific examples. The programme combined **lectures/presentation of case studies** followed by **discussions, exercises** and **a field trip**. Enhanced sharing of experiences among participants was encouraged throughout.

The **lectures/presentation of case studies** introduced the participants to key concepts regarding the management of groundwater and experiences gained. The relevant experience of Slovenia at the national as well as at the transboundary level was used to present best practices and challenges linked to a series of related issues. The **exercises**, mostly experiential, were the main educational tool used to facilitate the participants in applying and thus better comprehending/consolidating the concepts, methods and approaches provided earlier. The **field trip** allowed the participants to have a "hands-on" experience with the resource and set the issues introduced earlier in a "real conditions" context.

**Day 1: Introducing participants, introducing concepts and structures for shared groundwater management.**

The workshop was opened by the Mayor of Postojna, Mr. Jernej Verbic. Representatives of the Slovenian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, GWP -Med, the Karst Institute and the Alpine Convention welcomed the participants.

An activity to identify the **expectations of the participants** from the workshop was conducted. **The objectives and the structure of the workshop** were **presented** by the facilitator (Dimitris Faloutsos, GWP-Med) in cross reference to the expectations expressed. Dimitris explained which expectations expressed by the participants would be met and how. The first day continued with **lectures/presentations** followed by **discussions, and an exercise**.

The presentations established a common level of understanding about key concepts and structures regarding the management of groundwater resources, how this is linked to the management of other natural resources (wetlands, forests, etc.) and how spatial





planning can be used as a valuable instrument for integrated management. Case specific experiences presented further facilitated the process.

The participants were introduced and given practical information where applicable about:

- the EU Water Framework Directive and the UNECE Water Convention and how these may facilitate cooperation for the management of shared groundwater.
- Karstic geomorphology of the Dinaric Arc area, which is also present in part of the Sava basin, and how the involved particularities should be taken into consideration while management approaches are applied at national and transboundary levels.
- Legal approaches that are used in Slovenia for the management of groundwater and experiences from its application.
- Ecosystems that are within the karst areas of the region and what approaches are applied aiming at their sound management and the preservation of the biodiversity.
- Management approaches used in Slovenia for the management of forests as well as protected areas with karst geomorphology. Lessons learned and experiences were also presented.
- Linkages between spatial planning and groundwater management; again experiences from Slovenia were used to highlight best practices as well as challenges involved.

A presentation made by a representative of a major paper-mill industry was made to show the inter-linkages between groundwater management and local economic development and to underline the role of the business sector in the efforts toward a sustainable development in karst regions.

A facilitated **exercise** was conducted as an introduction to negotiation and cooperation processes of transboundary water resources management. The main message was that cooperation is a choice and that it leads to the maximization of benefits shared among the cooperating parties. It was important for the participants to understand the obstacles, difficulties and challenges involved in a negotiation process, involving different actors with different interests, leading to eventual cooperation. Furthermore, it succeeded in creating a group dynamic which allowed the participants to

meaningfully work together and interact; hence, it strengthened the learning process.

#### *Day 2: Field trip – Presentation of Cases of good practice.*

A Field Trip to the Škocjan Cave Regional Park took place during the second day; this gave the chance to the participants to experience up close both the pressures and the managerial measures adopted. After having a guided tour in the cave, the participants attended a number of presentations made by the staff of the management body focused on a series of issues related to the park and its management:

- functions and structure of the management body;
- approaches and tools used for the integrated management of the natural resources of the park, including groundwater;
- approaches for the sustainable development of the Park; how economic activities such as tourism and agriculture were used for the economic development of the area without compromising the state/quality of the resources under protection.

Slovenia's experience in managing shared karstic aquifers in cooperation with Austria was presented focusing on lessons learned; the main message was that cooperation between countries for managing shared resources is indeed feasible even for a resource of "complex nature" such as karst groundwater.

#### *Day 3: The application of Geographical Information Systems in the management of karstic areas and aquifers.*

A number of presentations on the use of geographical information systems (GIS) were made to introduce the participants to their use as decision support tools. Information was given on relevant tools and methods focusing on challenges related to their development, preparation and use, and restrictions regarding their application.

A number of web-based applications prepared in the framework of EU financed programmes and/or used by the competent Slovenian authorities were presented; the participants were offered the opportunity to apply some of these by using the facilities (e-equipment, etc.) made available to them by the host institute.

The workshop ended with a discussion in which the participants, presenters, facilitator and organizers reflected on the workshop and its outcomes.

## **Consultative meeting on the Integrated Management of the extended Drin River Basin** 24 November, 2008 Tirana, Albania

Following up on the International Roundtable on "Integrated Management of Shared Lake Basins in Southeastern Europe" (Ohrid, FYR Macedonia 12-14 October 2006<sup>13</sup>), the Albanian Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, UNECE and GWP-Med jointly organized the Consultation Meeting on Integrated Management of the extended Drin River Basin on 24 November 2008, in Tirana, Albania.

The Consultation Meeting was financially supported by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the German Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and GEF IW:LEARN. The event was organized in the framework of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourse and International Lakes (Water Convention). The Meeting contributed to and supported the implementation of the GEF Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystems (GEF SPM) and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI).

### **Aims**

The Consultation Meeting aimed to:

- Exchange information among national competent authorities and key international actors regarding: - the current status of water resources management in the Basin and - the on-going and planned initiatives and projects related to integrated water resources management in the Basin;
- Sound opinions, interests and needs from the key stakeholders in the Basin and identify challenges for promoting IWRM planning and application;
- Identify opportunities, synergies and ways of coordination toward transboundary cooperation for the integrated management of the Basin.

### **Participants**

Targeted representatives of key stakeholders involved in the management of water resources in the "extended" Drin River Basin, including competent governmental institutions, regional authorities, international organizations and institutions, NGOs, etc. participated in the meeting<sup>14</sup>.

13. The International Roundtable was organized jointly by GWP-Med and the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee within the framework of Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and GEF IW:LEARN Activity D2. It was the first time that key stakeholders from the riparian countries were brought together to discuss common challenges and aspirations on the integrated management of shared lakes in Southeastern Europe. The group of 55 participants included representatives of competent authorities, national and international organizations and donors working on shared water resources management in the area.

14. Representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had planned but could not participate in the Consultation Meeting. However, in contacts before and after the Meeting they subscribed to the conclusions of the Consultation Meeting.

A Report about the Status of the management of the "extended" Drin Basin system was prepared by the GWP-Med to provide input for the discussions in the meeting. The Report was prepared with the financial support of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

The Status Report describes the sub-basins of the system; their physical and socio-economic characteristics as well as the existing pressures and impacts.

It provides information on the basin management framework at national level (policies, institutional and legal frameworks). It also makes a brief analysis of the different components that govern management of the sub-basins at the transboundary level (management instruments, stakeholders' involvement, financing, cooperation processes and structures etc.). Finally, it analyzes challenges towards a coordinated management of the system and proposes steps forward.

The Report establishes a knowledge base to be enriched in the future and facilitate the cooperation process among the riparian countries.

### **Structure and Themes of Discussion**

The presentations made, provided information related to the status of management of the sub-basins (Prespa, Ohrid, Shkoder Lakes and Drin and Buna/Bojana Rivers) at the national and transboundary levels, in addition to the Status Report on the management of the "extended" Drin Basin, prepared by GWP-Med, and established the framework for subsequent discussions.

The representatives of the riparian countries outlined the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and challenges to be addressed in the future linked to the integrated water resources management in the different sub-basins. The representatives of the international organizations informed the meeting about the on-going activities supported in the relevant sub-basins aiming at addressing national and transboundary issues.

Based on this, the discussions were built around the following key questions:

*i. Whether moving the level of cooperation and coordinated action from the sub-basin level to the "extended" Drin river Basin level would be:*

- beneficial in terms of preserving the values of the natural interconnected system using them as an asset that will support sustainable development in the region;
- feasible, taking into account both the realities in the area and the will of the key stakeholders to be engaged in such process.

*ii. What would be the:*

- starting point of a process towards enhanced cooperation in the "extended" Drin Basin and the

- sustainable management of the shared natural resources;
- specific steps to be made in the near future in support of this process;
- specific short, medium and long term prospects.

iii. How the international community would facilitate this process.

In terms of **understanding important issues** and **key challenges and identifying opportunities**, the following key points emerged from the presentations, interventions and discussions:

- The management of Shared Waters is closely linked with the management of the National Waters; developments in one area influence the other.
- Coordination/cooperation towards the sharing of benefits should be facilitated.
- Preservation of the natural values of the interconnected water system in the area needs to be ensured - Coordination across sectors, countries and sub-basins is crucial in this regard.
- A “multipurpose use” approach needs to be adopted regarding the management of the Drin basin. Development across the basin should be balanced with the need for preserving the natural values across this complex system.
- Inter-basin and Trans-basin dialogue as means for the identification of the context of the “multipurpose use” management approach in the Drin Basin needs to be established.
- The existence of interlinked surface/groundwater systems has to be taken into account while management approaches are planned/developed.
- Facilitation and promotion of transboundary cooperation and dialogue: Frameworks are already in place e.g. the UNECE Water Convention<sup>15</sup> and the EU Water Framework Directive, GEF projects and “soft” International Initiatives such as the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process.
- On-going cooperation processes and existing structures at sub-basin level offer a pool of experience and knowledge - constitute a concrete basis for cooperation at the Basin level.
- Existing scientific information and data need to be enriched, linked with policy options and support decision making.

In terms of **responding to challenges** and **the way forward** there was agreement that:

- Launching the Process to establish a Strategic Common Vision for the Drin Basin and moving from bilateral to multilateral coordination/cooperation is needed.
- The starting point of such a Process should be to create a “Drin Forum” building on the established cooperation processes and joint structures.
- The assistance of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process and the UNECE Water Convention
- UNDP/GEF assistance would catalyze action on the ground.
- Identifying knowledge and data gaps, generating additional information to facilitate discussions, development of decision support tools are needed.

## MISCELLANEOUS MEDITERRANEAN NEWS

### **Working and Living with Nanotechnologies - NGOs and Trade Unions present their views**

On April 2nd 2009, at the European Parliament in Brussels the conference ‘Working and living with nanotechnologies’ took place, which focused on the results of the European NanoCAP (acronym for “Nanotechnology Capacity Building NGOs”) project<sup>16</sup>. The Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE) presented jointly with the other NGOs participating in the project, its position on Nanotechnologies. Interestingly enough, the views and positions of the Trade Unions<sup>17</sup> very much coincided with those of the NGOs, although originating from the perspective of safety in the working place.

High level decisions are in progress in Europe (EU Parliament, Commission, Council, etc.) and around the world on the future of nanotechnologies, which although at a first glance provide very promising applications, when examined in more detail may pose environmental and health risks that need to be taken into account and prevented.

15. The Water Convention has been signed and ratified by Albania and Greece; the UNECE is working with the FYR Macedonia and Montenegro towards their accession.

16. <http://www.nanocap.eu/>

17. [http://hesa.etui-rehs.org/uk/dossiers/dossier.asp?dos\\_pk=18](http://hesa.etui-rehs.org/uk/dossiers/dossier.asp?dos_pk=18)

“Although indisputably nanotechnology could offer an endless extent of possibilities, the key challenge is to set a long term plan of action, by engaging all stakeholders in an open discussion; and this, at an early stage of development of this powerful, innovative, high-end technology so as to ensure that it moves towards the resolution of many of the world’s current problems, and at the same time constitutes a ‘no regret’ approach”, states the Chairman of MIO-ECSDE, Prof. M. Scoullou.

At the conference, both NGOs and Trade Unions called for a Sustainable Governance of nanotechnologies and of their applications, including nanomaterials and nanoproducts, through the adoption of a strict regulatory framework in order to ensure that they follow the principle of sustainable development and are indeed not a threat for human health and the environment.

Furthermore, the *precautionary principle* approach should be adopted before producing and introducing nano-materials in the market for consumer use as this would help us to avoid the mistakes made in the case of GMOs, which have entered our daily lives without being properly tested for short and especially long-term effects on human health and the environment.

MIO-ECSDE, being a Federation of 107 NGOs from all the countries bordering the Mediterranean and beyond, contributed to both the project and the Brussels conference, by providing the views and concerns of Mediterranean civil society on emerging nanotechnology issues, many of which are bound to have a significant influence on the sustainable development of the region.

Through its membership and its publications, MIO-ECSDE is committed to further inform the concerned scientists, NGOs and the wider public on the issue of nanotechnologies and the ways the Mediterranean governments should address the issue through institutional and operational means.

For the full version of the MIO-ECSDE position on Nanotechnologies please refer to:

[http://www.mio-ecsde.org/filemgmt\\_data/files/mio%20position%20nanotechnology.pdf](http://www.mio-ecsde.org/filemgmt_data/files/mio%20position%20nanotechnology.pdf)

For further information contact Ms Thomie Vlachogianni, tel: +30 210 3247490, [vlachogianni@mio-ecsde.org](mailto:vlachogianni@mio-ecsde.org)

### **Towards classification of 21 Tunisian wetlands on Ramsar list**

The classification of 21 additional Tunisian wetlands, among Sekbhats, lakes, dams and Wadis, on the list of the Ramsar convention is one of the components of the project announced, on Feb. 2, 2009, on the occasion of the World Wetlands Day celebrated this year on the theme: “Wetlands towards Greater International Co-ordination.” This project, carried out by the Office of the Global Fund for Nature (WWF) in Tunisia, in collaboration with the General Division of Forests, will help conduct studies on these areas in different parts of the country. Tunisia has succeeded in a first stage to record 20 wetlands on the same list in 2007.

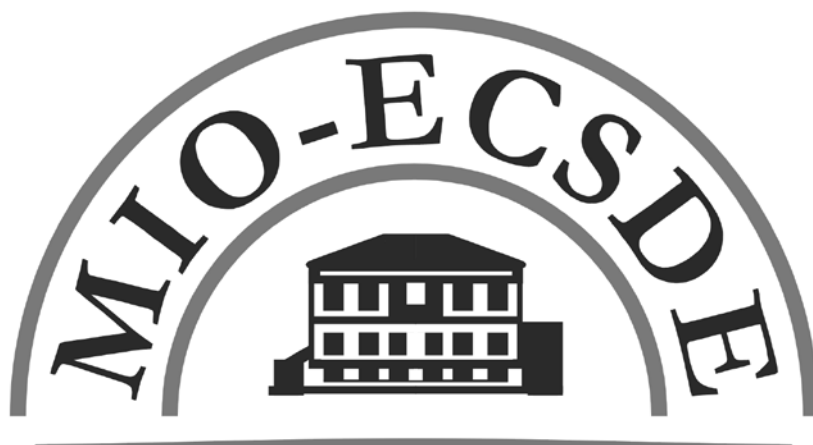


The fund will co-finance the project with the Swiss Foundation for Environmental Education (MAVA). In addition to the classification of areas concerned on the Ramsar list, the project provides for awareness programmes to benefit residents, associations and schools that are located around these areas. At least three areas should be determined according to their ecological, economic and social value, in addition to developing training programmes for the benefit of managers of these areas.

The project also provides for drawing up management programmes for the benefit of three areas among those concerned, in addition to the creation of a national committee “Ramsar” in Tunisia, similar to other countries which signed the convention. Tunisia has 231 wetlands listed and classified in 11 categories. Their area is 1 million 250 thousand hectares.

The convention on wetlands signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971 is an inter-governmental treaty bringing together nearly 158 countries. As for the list of Ramsar it contains 1755 areas. Tunisia is among the first countries to have signed this convention which provides for the conservation and rationalisation of the use of wetlands thanks to the setting up of relevant national and regional programmes and the development of international co-operation in this field.





## MIO-ECSDE Profile

The Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development, is a Federation of Mediterranean Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for the Environment and Development. MIO-ECSDE acts as a technical and political platform for the intervention of NGOs in the Mediterranean scene. In cooperation with Governments, International Organizations and other socio-economic partners, MIO-ECSDE plays an active role for the protection of the environment and the sustainable development of the Mediterranean Region.

### Background

MIO-ECSDE became a federation of Mediterranean NGOs in March 1996. Its roots go back to the early 80s, when the expanding Mediterranean membership of the European Community encouraged the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) to form its Mediterranean Committee supported by Elliniki Etairia (The Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage). The Mediterranean Information Office (MIO) was established in 1990 as a network of NGOs, under a joint project of EEB and Elliniki Etairia and in close collaboration with the Arab Network of Environment and Development (RAED). The continuous expansion of MIO-ECSDE's Mediterranean NGO network and the increasing request for their representation in Mediterranean and International Fora, led to the transformation of MIO-ECSDE to its current NGO Federation status. Today it has a membership of 107 NGOs from 26 Mediterranean countries.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to protect the Natural Environment (flora and fauna, biotopes, forests, coasts, natural resources, climate) and the Cultural Heritage (archaeological monuments, and traditional settlements, cities, etc.) of the Mediterranean Region. The ultimate goal of MIO-ECSDE is to promote Sustainable Development in a peaceful Mediterranean.

### Major tools and methods

Major tools and methods used by MIO-ECSDE in order to achieve its objectives are the following:

- Promotion of the understanding and collaboration among the people of the Mediterranean, especially through their NGOs, between NGOs and Governments, Parliaments, Local Authorities, International Organizations and socio-economic actors of the Mediterranean Region.
- Assistance for the establishment, strengthening, co-operation and co-ordination of Mediterranean NGOs and facilitation of their efforts by ensuring the flow of information among relevant bodies.
- Promotion of education, research and study on Mediterranean issues, by facilitating collaboration between NGOs and Scientific and Academic Institutions.
- Raising of public awareness on crucial Mediterranean environmental issues, through campaigns, publications, exhibitions, public presentations, etc.

### Contact Information

POSTAL ADDRESS: 12, Kyriistou str. • 10556 Athens, Greece

T: +30210 3247267, 3247490 • F: +30210 3317127

E: [info@mio-ecsde.org](mailto:info@mio-ecsde.org) • W: [www.mio-ecsde.org](http://www.mio-ecsde.org)