

# **Action Plan**

for the implementation of the

## **Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin**

June 2012 – December 2015

**Draft approved by the  
6<sup>th</sup> Drin Core Group**

**September 2012**

*This document is an elaborated version of the Draft Action Plan endorsed by the 6<sup>th</sup> Drin Core Group on 30 May 2012; steps for the implementation of the actions have been introduced.*

**Prepared by the  
Secretariat of the Drin Core Group**



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## Introduction

### Background

The Drin Basin (Basin) comprises of the watersheds of the Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar/Shkoder Lakes and Drin and Buna/Bojana Rivers. The Drin River is the “connecting body” of this complex water system, linking the international lakes, wetlands, shared rivers and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem.

Each of the Drin sub-basins is of ecological importance as it hosts unique biotopes with many indigenous species, which are important from a European and international conservation perspective.

The Basin encounters diverse and unsustainable management approaches; this leads to ecosystems’ degradation and inhibits sustainable development.

Some action towards Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) has been taken at national level, driven mainly by the EU accession prospect. Riparians are at various stages of transposition and implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Legally binding agreements among the Riparians form the basis for water resources and ecosystem management cooperation in each of the three international Lakes.

### The MoU for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin

Coordinated action at the Drin Basin level has been absent until the development of the Shared Vision for the sustainable management of the Basin and the signing of a related Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Tirana, Albania, 25 November 2011) by the Ministers of the five Riparians that are responsible for water and environmental management. The establishment of the Shared Vision among the Drin Basin Riparians was the outcome of a structured multi-stakeholders process at the national and transboundary levels, the so-called “Drin Dialogue” (launched on 1 December 2009, in Podgorica, Montenegro), supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med), with contribution by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Related activities were financed primarily by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, but also with contributions from UNECE as well as GWP-Med. Support activities were implemented in the framework of the Petersberg Phase II / Athens Declaration Process, the MAP UNEP GEF MedPartnership and the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI).

The MoU describes the Strategic Shared Vision for the management of the Drin and identifies key issues, along with short-, medium- and long-term actions needed to develop an integrated management of the Basin in close cooperation among the Riparians.

The Drin Core Group (DCG), established through the Drin Dialogue, was given the mandate by the Ministers to coordinate actions for the implementation of the MoU. The Drin Core Group comprises of representatives of the (i) competent Ministries of the Riparians, (ii) the existing joint structures<sup>1</sup>, (iii) UNECE, (v) GWP-Med, and (vi) MIO-ECSD. GWP-Med was appointed through the MoU as the Secretariat of the DCG.

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<sup>1</sup>Prespa Park Coordination Committee; Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee; Skadar/Shkoder Lake Management Commission

According to the MoU, *“the decisions of the DCG will be taken by the representatives of the Parties on the basis of consensus”*.

### **Objective of the MoU (Shared Vision)**

The Parties committed to promote joint action for the coordinated integrated management of the shared water resources in the Drin Basin, as a means to safeguard and restore to the extent possible the ecosystems and the services they provide, and to promote sustainable development across the Drin Basin.

### **Goals of the MoU**

The Parties to the MoU agreed to undertake concrete actions to address problems identified as affecting sustainable development in the entire Drin Basin or in one or more of the Sub-Basins:

- (i) Improving access to comprehensive data and adequate information to fully understand the current state of the environment and the water resources and the hydrologic system (including surface, underground and coastal waters) as well as the ecosystems of the Drin Basin;
- (ii) Establish conditions for a sustainable use of water and other natural resources;
- (iii) Develop cooperation and measures to minimise flooding especially in the lower parts of the Drin Basin;
- (iv) Improve management and appropriate disposal of solid wastes;
- (v) Decrease nutrient pollution deriving from untreated or poorly treated wastewater discharges and unsustainable agricultural practices;
- (vi) Decrease pollution from hazardous substances such as heavy metals and pesticides;
- (vii) Minimise effects of hydro-morphologic interventions that alter the nature of the hydrologic system and the supported ecosystems, resulting in their deterioration.

### **The Action Plan**

The MoU provides the framework for the work towards sustainable management of the Drin Basin. The Action Plan guides this work to be undertaken by the Parties to the MoU with the facilitation of the Drin Core Group and its Secretariat.

A set of actions are proposed, and herewith described, aiming to facilitate the implementation of the MoU and the achievement of the aforementioned goals (Goals of the MoU). The Action Plan defines/describes activities, objectives, and institutions that will be responsible for the implementation of each activity, resources /experts to be involved and deliverables. The timeframe for the implementation of the activities will be largely defined by the availability of adequate human and financial resources.

“Short term” actions are proposed in the Action Plan; their initiation and delivery of outputs is foreseen from the approval of the Action Plan by the Meeting of the Parties until the end of 2015. Concrete planning for “medium-term” actions is set to be made towards the end of 2015 on the basis of an assessment of the: (a) progress regarding the implementation of the actions and activities described herewith; (b) outcomes that will be achieved as direct or indirect effect of the implementation of the current action plan; (c) outcomes that will be succeeded by the Riparians through their efforts to address water related management issues.

### **Structure of the document**

Six actions are described in this Action Plan. Each of the Actions break down in Activities which in turn break down in secondary activities/steps, i.e.:

- Actions
  - Activities
    - § Secondary Activities

- Steps

The total or part of the following details are given, as appropriate, for each of the Actions and Activities: short description; objectives; who is primarily responsible; what are the resources /experts to be involved; which other Action/Activity contribute to its implementation; to which other Actions/Activities it contributes to; what are the deliverables; what is the timeframe.

**Summary Table – Actions and activities for the implementation of the Drin MoU (2012-2014)**

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Activities</i>
1. Enhancement of coordination mechanisms among the Parties [page 6]	1. Annual Meeting of the Parties to the MoU [page 6]
	2. Operation of the Drin Core Group [page 7]
	3. Expert Working Groups on (i) Water Framework Directive; (ii) Monitoring and Information Exchange; (iii) Biodiversity and Ecosystems [page 8]
	4. Create conditions for the implementation of the MoU in the Mid term [page 9]
	5. Initiate work for the preparation of an Agreement about basin-wide cooperative management of the Drin Basin [page 9]
2. Enhancement of the knowledge basis about the Drin Basin [page 11]	1. Facilitate coordination for the characterization of the Drin Basin in accordance to the EU WFD and the preparation of a Drin River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) [page 12]
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	2.1 Preparation of Terms of Reference [page 13]
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	2.4 Consolidated Characterization Report / Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis [page 16]
3. Improvement of information exchange through the establishment of a system for regular exchange of relevant information among the competent authorities of each Party [page 18]	1. Establishment of the mechanism of exchange of information [page 18]
4. Enhancement of cooperation in the field of flood risk preparedness, management and mutual support [page 20]	1. Ad-hoc expert working group work prepares options for flood management [page 20]
5. Institutional strengthening in the field of integrated water resources management [page 22]	1. Capacity Building activities [page 22]
6. Promotion of public participation and stakeholders engagement [page 24]	1. Implementation of "Overarching" communication Activities [page 24]
	2. Public Participation and Strategic Communication activities [page 25]

## **Action 1. Enhancement of coordination mechanisms among the Parties.**

### **A. Overall**

**Short description:** In order to advance towards meeting the stated in the MoU objective and goals, there is a need to establish an appropriate institutional framework / operational working level structures at transboundary level.

The Drin Core Group (DCG) should reach a level of operational function so as to respond to:

(a) the mandate stemming from the MoU i.e. coordinate actions for the implementation of the MoU hence function as a *de facto* joint commission responsible for coordination and provision of advice to the Parties for the management of the Drin Basin. The Secretariat and the Expert Working Groups (EWGs) will assist the DCG in delivering outcomes.

(b) additional, current or future, functions i.e.

- (i) act as the steering committee / coordination body of on-going and future projects in the area as appropriate and requested by the Parties and/or international actors and donors;
- (ii) be the governing body of the GEF funded project.

Overall, the DCG its Secretariat and Expert Working Groups will facilitate coordination and cooperation among the Riparians, the international institutions, initiatives and donors active in the Basin including the European Commission, the UN agencies and programmes, IFIs and donor countries such as Sweden, Germany, etc.

**Objectives:** Establish and/or enhance the operational capacity of the institutional structures for the implementation of the Drin MoU and ensure their sustainable functioning.

#### **Expected Results / Deliverables:**

- a) Operational working level structures (primarily the DCG and EWGs) for transboundary cooperation and the implementation of the MoU.
- b) Sustainable functioning of the DCG and its EWGs.
- c) Annual Meeting of the Parties to review progress and guide the cooperation process.

**Responsible:** DCG, GWP-Med, UNECE.

**This Action receives inputs from:** All Actions.

**This Action contributes inputs to the implementation of:** All Actions.

### **B. Activities**

#### **1. Annual Meeting of the Parties to the MoU**

**Objectives:** The Ministers responsible for the management of water resources and/or environment of the five Parties to the MoU meet annually to review progress regarding the implementation of the MoU.

**Responsible:** Drin Core Group (DCG).

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med) in cooperation with the UNECE; Representatives of the Parties to the MoU to the DCG.

**Input from:** All Actions.

**Contributes to:** All Actions.

**Deliverables:** One Meeting per year, Background documents, Report.

**Timeframe:** October 2012 – December 2015.

**Financial support:** Not secured.

Ø *Work to be done*

### **1.1 Face to face meetings**

*Steps:*

- Preparation of Background documents.
- Organization of meetings.
- Preparation of reports.

## **2. Operation of the Drin Core Group**

**Objectives:** Sustainable operation of the DCG to facilitate communication and cooperation among the Parties for the implementation of the provisions of the MoU.

**Responsible:** DCG.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG; Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med) in cooperation with the UNECE.

**Input from:** All Actions.

**Contributes to:** All Actions.

**Deliverables:** At least two meetings per year and *ad hoc* meetings as appropriate, background documents, reports, studies etc.

**Timeframe:** May 2012 – December 2015.

**Financial support:** Financial resources secured for the organization of the sixth and seventh DCG meetings organized in Ohrid 30 May 2012, and Tirana, 20 November 2012 respectively - support provided by the SEPA and Austria and Finland through the ENVSEC initiative.

Ø *Work to be done*

### **2.1 Preparation of revised ToR**

Revised ToR will be prepared to adjust the rules of operation of the DCG to respond to the mandate received by the Ministers through the Drin MoU. The revised ToR will substitute the overall objective, scope/specific objectives, means to deliver results of the DCG as these were decided at Podgorica on 1 December 2009.

### **2.2 Day-by-day running**

The Secretariat (GWP-Med) will be addressing operational and administrative matters to assist the operation of the DCG:

- Preparation and/or submission of a range of DCG documents, plans and reports;
- Keep record of implementation of activities stemming from the MoU;
- Coordination of fundraising efforts;
- Facilitation of internal and external communication;
- Administration, budgeting and accounting;
- etc.

### **2.3 Face to face meetings**

Face to face and interactive DCG meetings, facilitated by the Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the UNECE, to review and discuss, in line with its mandate, issues related to the implementation of the MoU.

*Steps:*

- Preparation of Background documents.
- Organization of meetings.
- Preparation of reports.

### **3. Expert Working Groups on (i) Water Framework Directive; (ii) Monitoring and Information Exchange; (iii) Biodiversity and Ecosystems**

**Objectives:** Establishment and sustainable functioning of the three EWGs to support the work of the DCG. EWGs key task would be: (a) Providing expert advice; (b) Directly coordinating actions of technical nature, under the guidance of the DCG. Each EWG will advice on issues of its expertise and competence.

**Responsible:** DCG and its Secretariat.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Institutions appointed by the Parties to the MoU; DCG; Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the UNECE.

**Input from:** Actions 2, 3, 5.

**Contributes to:** Actions 2, 3, 4, 6.

**Deliverables:** Meetings (number to be defined by DCG - depending on the workload); advice on issues; technical reviews, assessments, reports, etc.

**Timeframe:** May 2012 – December 2015.

**Financial support:** Financial support secured for three (3) meetings in 2012 - support is provided by the Swedish EPA and GEF MedPartnership through GWP-Med.

#### **Ø Work to be done**

#### **3.1 Establishment of the Expert Working Groups (EWG) including preparation of ToRs and appointment of institutions/experts by the Riparians**

For each of the EWG, the DCG will agree on the ToR and the Parties to the MoU will appoint members.

##### *Steps:*

- The ToRs endorsed by the DCG, are adopted by the Parties through an official letter sent by July 2012 (sent by the Parties to the Secretariat).
- Each of the Parties, through the respective representative to the DCG, appoints an institution as focal point and nominates a member and an alternate for each one of the EWGs by September 2012.
- The composition of the EWGs is discussed and approved in the 7<sup>th</sup> DCG meeting (November 2012).

#### **3.2 Functioning of the EWGs**

Each of the EWGs work through email communication and face to face meetings in support of the DCG, in line with a workplan.

##### **3.2.1 Preparation of EWGs Workplan**

##### *Steps:*

- Background documents -one for each EWG- including an outline of a workplan are prepared.
- The members of each EWG provide comments on the respective background document and elaborate on the related workplan – communication should be done via email/other electronic media.
- Each EWG discuss and agree on the respective workplan in a meeting.
- The workplan of each of the three EWGs is discussed for approval in a DCG meeting.

##### **3.2.2 Preparing and Reviewing documents, studies and reports**

The members of each of the EWGs prepare and review documents and reports in accordance to the agreed workplan. The EWGs function through:

- Face to face meetings, facilitated by the Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the UNECE.  
*Steps:*
  - Preparation of background documents.
  - Organization of the meeting.
  - Preparation of the reports.
- E-mail communication.

#### **4. Create conditions for the implementation of the MoU in the Mid term**

**Objectives:** Facilitate common understanding on: (i) the orientation, challenges and opportunities for an improved cooperation among the Riparians; (ii) action to be taken reflecting the guidance to be provided by the DCG in the next 3 years (2016-2018).

**Responsible:** DCG.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the UNECE; DCG.

**Input from:** All Actions.

**Contributes to:** the implementation of the MoU.

**Deliverables:** Mid term Action Plan.

**Timeframe:** tentatively April 2015 – November 2015.

**Financial support:** Not secured.

#### *Ø Work to be done*

##### **4.1 Mid-term Action Plan for the Implementation of the MoU**

A Mid term Action Plan will guide the work for the Implementation of the MoU in the years 2016-2018.

*Steps:*

- Provision of directions by the DCG.
- Preparation of a draft Mid-term Action Plan (DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the UNECE).
- Discussion of the draft in a DCG meeting.
- Preparation of the Mid-term Action Plan.
- Endorsement of the Mid-term Action Plan by the DCG.
- Approval of the Mid-term Action Plan by the Meeting of the Parties.

#### **5. Initiate work for the preparation of an Agreement about basin-wide cooperative management of the Drin Basin**

**Objectives:** Cooperation is further supported through the preparation of a draft Agreement document about basin-wide cooperative management of the Drin Basin.

**Responsible:** DCG.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG, DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) and UNECE.

**Input from:** All Actions.

**Contributes to:** -

**Deliverables:** Draft Agreement document.

**Timeframe:** tentatively November 2014 – November 2015.

**Financial support:** Not secured.

## Ø *Work to be done*

### **5.1 Preparation of Draft Agreement**

The preparation of an Agreement about the basin-wide cooperative management of the Drin Basin is one of the tools envisaged in the Drin MoU towards the achievement of the goals and objectives agreed by the Parties.

#### *Steps:*

- The Meeting of the Parties mandates the DCG, to review progress regarding the implementation of the MoU and assess the need for the establishment of an Agreement among the Riparians for the management of the Drin Basin (tentatively November 2014).
- DCG reviews progress regarding the implementation of the MoU and assess need for the establishment of an Agreement among the Riparians for the management of the Drin Basin; if assessment is positive initiates the process for the preparation of an Agreement Document.
- Provision of directions by DCG to the DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) and UNECE regarding the content of a draft Agreement (tentatively May 2015).
- Preparation of a draft Agreement (tentatively November 2015).

## Action 2. Enhancement of the knowledge basis about the Drin Basin

### A. Overall

**Short description:** Enhancement of the knowledge basis about the Drin Basin will allow better cooperation among the Parties towards sustainable management of the Basin. Furthermore, it will facilitate fulfilling the legal requirements at national level with regard to water resources management, i.e. the implementation of the EU WFD (each Riparian is in a different stage regarding the transposition of related provisions in its legal system).

Due to the EU orientation of the Riparians, such an enhancement of the knowledge basis should build on the characterization of the Drin Basin in accordance to the EU WFD including analysis of the hydrological patterns across the Drin basin (from the Lake Prespa to the Adriatic Sea) and the identification of significant pressures and impacts of human activity on the status of surface water, groundwater and ecosystems.

In this regard, the following special characteristics of the area should be taken into consideration: (i) the karstic nature of large sections of the Drin Basin; (ii) the surface/groundwater interaction patterns and conjunctive uses throughout the Drin Basin; and (iii) the coastal ecosystems, transitional waters and shallow marine environment. Furthermore, future work should concretely build on (i) the results achieved in the Three Lake Areas (Ohrid, Prespa, Shkoder/Skadar) through previous and on-going GEF funded projects, and; (ii) the results of other on-going and past relevant projects.

Existing agreements among the Parties concerning the management of each Sub-Basin should provide the legal background for advancing with the characterization.

#### **Objectives:**

- Facilitate achievement of science based consensus among Riparians, through joint fact finding, on: (i) key transboundary concerns, including climate change and variability; (ii) the implications of the shared nature of the Basin's water resources; (iii) need for harmonized monitoring and reporting on common indicators.
- Facilitate the implementation of the EU WFD in the Riparians.
- Facilitate the development of a water balance later on in the Drin Basin.
- Facilitate the preparation of coordinated RBM plans, as needed according to the sub-basins, in each of the Riparians.
- Enable the preparation of an RBM plan at Basin Level.

#### **Expected Results / Deliverables:**

- a) A study for the actions and steps necessary to be taken by the Riparians for the preparation of coordinated RBM plans for their respective parts of the Drin Basin, including governance-related needs.
- b). Characterization report for the Drin Basin in accordance to the EU WFD including analysis (to the extent possible) of the hydrological patterns across the Drin basin (from the Lake Prespa to the river outflow at the Adriatic Sea) and; identification of significant pressures and impacts of human activity on the status of surface water, groundwater and ecosystems. The report should be prepared in a way that can be used also for the needs of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (in accordance of the GEF methodology).

**Responsible:** DCG with the assistance of the Secretariat (GWP-Med) and the UNECE.

**This Action receives inputs from:** Past and on-going projects implemented in the Drin Basin.

**This Action contributes inputs to the implementation of:**

- On-going projects implemented in the Drin Basin.
- Implementation of the Article 4 of the MoU “Priority Actions at national, bilateral and/or multilateral levels”, Point 2, a. “Achievement of a science based consensus, among the Drin Riparians, on key (Drin Basin) transboundary priorities including climate change scenarios, and also main drivers of change and indicators of sustainable development for the basin, based on the knowledge basis established”, and Point 2, b. “Preparation of an elaborated water balance for the Drin Basin as a useful decision support tool at national and transboundary levels”.

## **B. Activities**

### **1. Facilitate coordination for the characterization of the Drin Basin in accordance to the EU WFD and the preparation of a Drin River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)**

**Objectives:** Facilitate coordinated Characterization of the Drin Basin (as described above under Action 2, Short description) and preparation of a Drin RBMP.

**Responsible:** Med EUWI service contract / European Commission in cooperation with GWP-Med and UNECE.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Med EUWI service contract, GWP-Med, UNECE.

**Input from:** Action 1, Action 3.

**Contributes to:** Action 2, Activity 2.1.

**Deliverables:** A study for the actions and steps necessary to be taken by the Riparians for the preparation of coordinated RBM plans for their respective parts of the Drin Basin.

**Timeframe:** May 2012 – January 2013.

**Financial support:** Med EUWI service contract / European Commission.

*Ø Work to be done*

#### **1.1 Preparation of a study**

*Steps:*

- Elaboration of and agreement on Terms of Reference (ToR).
  - o Preparation of ToR.
  - o Comments from GWP-Med, UNECE, DCG and key Donor Countries and International Institutions active in the Drin Basin.
  - o Discussion in the DCG and adoption of ToR (May 2012).
- Preparation of the Study.
  - o Preparation of a draft Study (December 2012).
  - o Comments from DCG, EWG on WFD implementation, key Donor Countries and International Institutions active in the Drin Basin.
  - o Preparation of Final Draft (January 2013).

#### **1.2 Functioning of the DCG and its EWGs**

See above under Action 1.

## 2. Characterization of the “extended” Drin Basin

**Objectives:** Characterization of the “extended” Drin Basin in accordance to the EU WFD including analysis of the hydrological patterns across the Drin basin (from the Lake Prespa to the Adriatic Sea) and; identification of significant pressures and impacts of human activity on the status of surface water, groundwater and ecosystems.

**Responsible:** DCG; the EWG EU WFD will be supervising the exercise with the assistance of the Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med) and UNECE.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG; EWG EU WFD; EWG on Biodiversity and Ecosystem; Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med); UNECE; international experts.

**Input from:** Past, on-going and planned projects in the Basin.

**Contributes to:** Implementation of the Article 4 of the MoU “Priority Actions at national, bilateral and/or multilateral levels”, Point 2, a. “Achievement of a science based consensus, among the Drin Riparians, on key (Drin Basin) transboundary priorities including climate change scenarios, and also main drivers of change and indicator of sustainable development for the basin, based on the knowledge basis established”, and Point 2, b. “Preparation of an elaborated water balance for the Drin Basin as a useful decision support tool at national and transboundary levels”.

**Deliverables:** Characterization Report.

**Timeframe:** February 2014 – December 2015 (subject to change depending on the financial support available)

**Financial support:** Not secured.

### Ø *Work to be done*

#### 2.1 Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR)

To be prepared through Action 2, Activity 1. This should, among others, define the conditions to secure compatibility of the processes and methodologies to be used for the characterization of the different sub-basins by the Riparians.

#### 2.2 Setting up of the team of experts

A team of experts comprising of international experts and experts from the Riparians will work for the preparation of the characterization reports (as appropriate and needed – see below points 2.3.1 – 2.3.5) in the different parts of the Drin Basin. They will also work to consolidate these in a single Characterization Report for the extended Drin Basin.

#### *Steps:*

- Preparation of ToR for the international experts; preparation of ToR for experts from the Riparians.
- DCG approves ToRs.
- Selection of International expert(s) that will assist the experts from the Riparians and the institutions.
- Proposal of experts from the Riparians by the Parties; the number of experts proposed should be bigger than the number of experts to be selected.
- DCG selects international experts and experts from Riparians.

#### 2.3.1 Preparation of the study for the part of Drin extending in Albania

**Objectives:** Characterization of the part of Drin Basin extending in Albania.

**Responsible:** Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania; World Bank; SIDA.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania; World Bank; SIDA; SIWI; International Experts.

**Input from:** To be prepared through a project coordinated by the World Bank and supported by SIDA; this project has among its outputs the preparation of an RBM plan for the part of Drin Basin extending in Albania.

**Contributes to:** Consolidated characterization report – see Activity 2.4.

**Deliverables:** Report.

**Timeframe:** June 2012 – January 2013

**Financial support:** Supported by SIDA.

### **2.3.2 Preparation of the study for the part of Drin extending in FYR Macedonia**

**Objectives:** Characterization of the part of Drin Basin extending in FYR Macedonia.

**Responsible:** Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia; Directorate for Crn Drim River Basin District, FYR Macedonia.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia; Directorate for Crn Drim River Basin District, FYR Macedonia; experts from the Riparian; GWP-Med; UNECE; International Experts

**Input from:** GEF Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR-Macedonia and Greece; Work done for the implementation of the WFD.

**Contributes to:** Consolidated characterization report – see Activity 2.4.

**Deliverables:** Report.

**Timeframe:** tentatively June 2014 – June 2015 (subject to change depending on the financial support available).

**Financial support:** Not secured.

#### *Steps:*

- Assess existing information.
- Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR).
  - Preparation of draft ToR.
  - Comments from DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - Preparation of final ToR.
  - Final ToR approved by the line Ministry.
- Setting up of a team of experts.
  - Identification of international experts and experts from the Riparian.
  - Setting up of the team of experts.
- Preparation of the Report.
  - Preparation of a Work Plan.
  - Preparation of a draft Report.
  - Comments from line Ministry, DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - Preparation of Final Draft.
  - Final Draft approved by the line Ministry.

### **2.3.3 Preparation of the study for the part of Drin extending in Greece**

**Objectives:** Characterization of the part of Drin Basin extending in Greece.

**Responsible:** Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Greece; GWP-Med; UNECE.

**Input from:** GEF Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR-Macedonia and Greece; Work done for the implementation of the WFD.

**Contributes to:** Consolidated characterization report – see Activity 2.4.

**Deliverables:** Report.

**Timeframe:** tentatively June 2014 – June 2015 (subject to change depending on the financial support available).

**Financial support:** Not secured.

*Steps:*

- Assess existing information; proceed with the following steps as necessary.
- Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR).
  - o Preparation of draft ToR.
  - o Comments from DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - o Preparation of final ToR.
  - o Final ToR approved by the line Ministry.
- Setting up of a team of experts.
  - o Identification of international experts and experts from the Riparian.
  - o Setting up of the team of experts.
  - o Preparation of a Work Plan.
- Preparation of the Report.
  - o Preparation of a draft Report.
  - o Comments from line Ministry, DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - o Preparation of Final Draft.
  - o Final Draft approved by the line Ministry.

**2.3.4 Preparation of the study for the part of Drin extending in Kosovo**

**Objectives:** Characterization of the part of Drin Basin extending in Kosovo.

**Responsible:** Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Kosovo.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Kosovo; GWP-Med; UNECE, International Experts.

**Input from:** Work done for the implementation of the WFD.

**Contributes to:** Consolidated characterization report – see Activity 2.4.

**Deliverables:** Report.

**Timeframe:** tentatively June 2014 – June 2015 (subject to change depending on the financial support available).

**Financial support:** Not secured.

*Steps:*

- Assess existing information; proceed with the following steps as necessary.
- Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR).
  - o Preparation of draft ToR.
  - o Comments from DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - o Preparation of final ToR.
  - o Final ToR approved by the line Ministry.
- Setting up of a team of experts.
  - o Identification of international experts and experts from the Riparian.
  - o Setting up of the team of experts.
  - o Preparation of a Work Plan.
- Preparation of the Report.
  - o Preparation of a draft Report.
  - o Comments from line Ministry, DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - o Preparation of Final Draft.
  - o Final Draft approved by the line Ministry.

**2.3.5 Preparation of the study for the part of Drin extending in Montenegro**

**Objectives:** Characterization of the part of Drin Basin extending in Montenegro.

**Responsible:** Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Montenegro; Water Directorate, Montenegro; Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Montenegro; Water Directorate, Montenegro; Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro; GWP-Med; UNECE; International Experts; Experts from the Riparian.

**Input from:** Work done for the implementation of the WFD.

**Contributes to:** Consolidated characterization report – see Activity 2.4.

**Deliverables:** Report.

**Timeframe:** tentatively June 2014 – June 2015 (subject to change depending on the financial support available).

**Financial support:** Not secured.

*Steps:*

- Assess existing information; proceed with the following steps as necessary.
- Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR).
  - Preparation of draft ToR.
  - Comments from DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - Preparation of final ToR.
  - Final ToR approved by the line Ministry.
- Setting up of a team of experts.
  - Identification of international experts and experts from the Riparian.
  - Setting up of the team of experts.
  - Preparation of a Work Plan.
- Preparation of the Report.
  - Preparation of a draft Report.
  - Comments from line Ministry, DCG and EWG EU WFD.
  - Preparation of Final Draft.
  - Final Draft approved by the line Ministry.

## **2.4 Consolidated Characterization Report / Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis**

The characterization reports for the parts of the Drin Basin extending in the 5 Riparians will be consolidated in a single Characterization report. Having already identified in each of the aforementioned reports the significant pressures and impact of human activity on the status of surface water, groundwater and ecosystems, the DCG, with the assistance of the EWG EU WFD and the team of experts (see Action 2, Activity 2.2.), will work to agree on the priority pressures at the Drin Basin level hence, forming the basis for the negotiation and agreement, at a later stage, of a programme of measures. The consolidated Characterization Report and the programme of measures will form the River Basin Management Plan.

**Objectives:** In addition to those described under “Action 2, Overall”, lay the ground for the identification of jointly agreed Programme of Measures being part of a Drin River Basin Management Plan.

**Responsible:** DCG, EWG EU WFD.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG; EWG EU WFD; EWG Biodiversity and Ecosystems; EWG Monitoring and Information Exchange; Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med); UNECE; International experts.

**Input from:** see above under sections 2.3.1-2.3.5.

**Contributes to:** see above under “Action 2, Overall”.

**Deliverables:** Characterization Report for the Drin Basin.

**Timeframe:** tentatively July 2015 – December 2015 (subject to change depending on the financial support available).

**Financial support:** Not secured.

*Steps:*

- Preparation of a draft Report.
- Comments from EWG EU WFD, EWG Biodiversity and Ecosystems, EWG Monitoring and Information Exchange and DCG supported by feedback of key donor countries and international institutions active in the Drin Basin.
- Discussion in EWG EU WFD and DCG Meeting(s).
- Preparation of Final Draft.
- Discussion in the DCG and endorsement of the Drin Characterization Report.
- Adoption of the Drin Characterization Report by the Meeting of the Parties.

### **Action 3. Improvement of information exchange through the establishment of a system for regular exchange of relevant information among the competent authorities of each Party.**

#### **A. Overall**

**Short description:** A mechanism for the exchange of information will facilitate the enhancement of trust among the Parties to the MoU and set the basis for the coordination of management activities at the Basin and the sub-basin level (where absent). The mechanism will lay the ground and contribute to the establishment of a Monitoring Programme later on, should such a decision is taken by the Parties.

#### **Objectives:**

- Facilitate improved management of the Drin Sub-basins in each of the Riparians.
- Enhance coordination and trust among Parties to the MoU, including coordination and cooperation among scientific institutes in the Riparians and synergies leading to improved information and data about the state of the water bodies.
- Lay the ground for the establishment of a joint Monitoring Programme later on.

#### **Expected Results / Deliverables:**

- Agreement on the set of data and information to be shared among the Parties.
- A mechanism for exchange of information based on agreed by the Parties Rules of Operation.

**Responsible:** DCG with the assistance of the EWG on Monitoring and Information Exchange.

**This Action receives inputs from:** Action 1, Activity 3 “Expert Working Group Monitoring and Information Exchange”, Action 2, Activity 1 “Facilitate coordination and cooperation for the characterization of the Drin Basin in accordance to the EU WFD and the preparation of RBM Plan(s)”.

**This Action contributes inputs to the implementation of:** MoU Article 4, Point 2 c. “Establishment of a harmonized Drin Basin Water Monitoring Program compatible with the UNECE Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, the relevant provisions of the EU WFD, and the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) of the EEA” and d. “Making use of the efforts described under 4.1.c., establishment of an Information Management System (IMS) that will enable authorities to collect, store and share data and information produced through the Drin Basin Water Monitoring Program”.

#### **B. Activities**

##### **1. Establishment of the mechanism of exchange of information**

**Objectives:** Facilitate information exchange among the Riparians aiming enhanced management of the Drin Basin and its sub-basins.

**Responsible:** DCG; the EWG on Monitoring and Information Exchange will be supervising the exercise with the assistance of the Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med) and UNECE.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** EWG on Monitoring and Information Exchange, EWG EU WFD, EWG Biodiversity and Ecosystems, DCG, DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) (GWP-Med), UNECE.

**Input from:** Action 2, Activity 1.

**Contributes to:** -

**Deliverables:**

- Concept note elaborating on the aim, objectives and scope of work.
- Rules of Operation.

**Timeframe:** tentatively January 2015 – December 2015

**Financial support:** Not secured.

Ø *Work to be done*

**1.1 Agree on objectives and scope of the mechanism of exchange of information**

In order for a mechanism of exchange of information to be established, the Riparians need to agree first on the objectives of such a mechanism and its scope.

*Steps:*

- Preparation by the EWG for Monitoring and Information Exchange of a Concept Note elaborating on the aim, objectives and scope of work; the document will be based on the study on the actions and steps necessary for the preparation of coordinated RBM Plans (Action 2, Activity 1).
- Provision of comments by the DCG, EWG EU WFD and EWG Biodiversity and Ecosystems.
- Discussion in the meeting of EWG for Monitoring and Information Exchange and preparation of final draft background document.
- Presentation of the final draft document in the DCG meeting for discussion; DCG provides comments.
- Incorporation of comments; approval of the final document by the DCG via e-mail.

**1.2 Preparation of Rules of Operation**

The Rules of Operation (RoO) will elaborate on the information and set of data to be collected and exchanged, the frequency of exchange, the institutions to be involved and the means to be used in this regard. This document will provide the basis of the mechanism for exchange of information.

*Steps:*

- Preparation of draft RoO by the EWG on Monitoring and Information Exchange with the assistance of the DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) and UNECE.
- Provision of comments by the DCG, EWG EU WFD and EWG Biodiversity and Ecosystems.
- Discussion in a meeting of the EWG on Monitoring and Information Exchange and preparation of final draft RoO.
- Presentation of the final draft RoO in the DCG meeting for discussion; DCG provides comments.
- Incorporation of comments; approval of the final RoO by the DCG via e-mail.
- Presentation of the final RoO in the Ministerial Meeting for adoption.

**1.3 Appointment of Focal Points in each Party to the MoU – the mechanism of exchange of Information functions**

Each Party appoints an institution, delegating to this responsibility for the collection of agreed set of data and information from competent institutes and authorities and for making this available to the rest of the Parties. The System functions with the responsibility of the appointed institutions under the supervision and guidance of the EWG on Monitoring and Information Exchange. The DCG with the assistance of the DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) has overall responsibility.

## **Action 4. Enhancement of cooperation in the field of flood risk preparedness, management and mutual support.**

### **A. Overall**

**Short description:** Floods are of importance for the Drin Basin, given the magnitude of the impacts of such events in some of the Riparians. Basin wide action, that complements the activities already implemented at the level of the Riparians, is deemed necessary. Different options for the establishment of cooperation at technical level in this regard will be prepared by a working group comprising of representatives of the competent authorities of the Parties under the coordination of the Drin Core Group. Cooperation at technical level should aim in the formulation of action for the mitigation of flood hazards, management of hydraulic infrastructure and hydropower generation schemes, and erosion control. The respective actions should be formulated on the basis of the results of the Characterization Report (see under Action 2) as well as additional analytical work as necessary.

**Objectives:** Create the conditions for Basin wide cooperation and action in the field of transboundary flood risk management, including early warning.

**Expected Results / Deliverables:** Options for cooperation at technical level among Riparians in the field of flood management, prepared by a transboundary ad-hoc expert working group.

**Responsible:** DCG with the assistance of the DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) and UNECE, Line Ministries of the Riparians.

**This Action receives inputs from:** Action 2

**This Action contributes inputs to the implementation of:** -

### **B. Activities**

#### **1. Ad-hoc expert working group work prepares options for flood management**

**Objectives:** Facilitation of the establishment of technical cooperation on flood management.

**Responsible:** DCG, line ministries of the Riparians.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** Experts appointed by the Parties to the MoU, International experts, DCG, GWP-Med, UNECE.

**Input from:** Action 2.

**Contributes to:** -

**Deliverables:** Meetings (number to be defined by DCG - depending on the workload), Reports.

**Timeframe:** tentatively June 2014 – December 2015.

**Financial support:** Not secured.

*Ø Work to be done*

#### **1.1 Establishment of an ad-hoc expert working group for flood management under the DCG**

The ad-hoc expert working group will comprise of representatives of the Ministries of the Parties with responsibilities related to the flood management.

*Steps:*

- Preparation of Terms of Reference by International Experts.
- Provision of comments on the ToR by the DCG.
- Incorporation of comments; preparation of final ToR.
- Approval of the ToR by the DCG.
- Each of the Riparians propose a member to the ad hoc EWG and an alternate (the representative of the Parties to the DCG will facilitate related action).

**1.2 Study on options for the establishment of cooperation at technical level**

A study on options for the establishment of cooperation at technical level regarding flood management is prepared by the ad-hoc expert working group with the assistance of international experts.

*Steps:*

- Selection of international experts to assist the ad-hoc expert working group to conduct the study.
- Preparation of Terms of Reference (ToR).
- Provision of comments on the ToR by the DCG.
- Approval of the ToR by the competent ministries of the Riparians.
- Preparation of draft study.
- Provision of comments by the competent ministries of the Riparians.
- Incorporation of comments; preparation of final study.
- Approval of the study by the competent ministries of the Riparians.

## **Action 5. Institutional strengthening in the field of integrated water resources management.**

### **A. Overall**

**Short description:** Targeted capacity building activities will be realized to improve the capacities of institutions and organizations to successfully implement actions under the MoU. Priority will be given to those institutions and organizations that are directly involved in the implementation of the MoU. Later on, the group of beneficiaries should be enlarged (targeting managers, practitioners, relevant officers of national, regional and local authorities, other stakeholders etc.).

**Objectives:** Support the work for the implementation of the MoU.

**Expected Results / Deliverables:**

- Enhanced capacities of institutions and organisations from the Riparians involved in the implementation of the MoU.
- Improved functioning of the working level structures established for the implementation of the MoU.
- Capacity building workshops.

**Responsible:** DCG, Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), UNECE.

**This Action receives inputs from:** Possibly capacity building projects financed by the EC.

**This Action contributes inputs to the implementation of:** All actions for the implementation of the MoU.

### **B. Activities**

#### **1. Capacity Building activities**

**Objectives:** Enhance capacities of individuals and institutions involved in the implementation of the MoU.

**Responsible:** DCG, Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), UNECE.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG, Secretariat of the DCG (GWP-Med), UNECE.

**Input from:** Stakeholders Analysis at the Transboundary level (see under Action 6, Activity 2.1).

**Contributes to:** All Actions.

**Deliverables:** Capacity building activities.

**Timeframe:** June 2012 – December 2015.

**Financial support:** Not secured.

*Ø Work to be done*

#### **1.1 Tailored Capacity Building Workshops.**

Based on input from the Stakeholders Analysis or an Assessment on CB needs, a number of CB workshops will be organized.

*Steps:*

- Decision by the DCG regarding the CB workshops to be implemented (number, themes).
- Preparation of curriculum for each workshop.
- Provision of input by the DCG including participants for the DCG workshops.

- Organization of the workshop.

### **1.2 Capacity building activities organized by other institutions and projects.**

DCG and EWG members as well as staff of institutions and organisations from the Riparians involved in the implementation of the MoU participate in CB workshops organized by other initiatives and projects (e.g. the EU financed projects).

#### *Steps:*

- DCG members identifies workshops organized under other initiatives at the regional or/and the Riparian level that address issues in line with the objectives of the Actions.
- DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) establishes communication with the initiatives and projects and propose participants; the participants in each case are indicated by the representatives of the Parties to the DCG.

### **1.3 International experts work with experts from Riparians to conduct activities described in the current Action Plan.**

Opportunities will be sought for the provision of “in kind” assistance by donor countries for the implementation of the MoU. This assistance will be in the form of engagement of experts from the donor countries. These experts will work with EWG members as well as staff of institutions and organisations from the Riparians involved in the implementation of the MoU assisting in executing the activities described in this Action Plan and in parallel transfer “know how”.

#### *Steps:*

- DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) and UNECE explore opportunities for in kind contribution provided by donor countries, in the form of engagement of experts, in the implementation of the activities under this MoU.
- Should opportunities emerge the DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med) and UNECE make the necessary arrangements subject to the approval of the DCG.

## **Action 6. Promotion of public participation and stakeholders engagement.**

### **A. Overall**

**Short description:** A set of public participation and strategic communication activities will support “horizontally” the range of activities under this Action Plan. A Public Participation and Strategic Communication Strategy (PPSCS) will be prepared to guide the implementation of related activities aiming to strengthen the commitment of politicians, decision makers and key stakeholders at all levels for a sustained cooperative effort among the Riparians of the Drin Basin for its sustainable management. It will describe the information, strategic communication, consultation and involvement activities, the target audiences; the related timeframe; and the capacity/resources needed. The basis for the preparation of the PPSCS will be a Stakeholders Analysis that will be elaborated first.

#### **Objectives:**

- Raise awareness among Stakeholders and the Public about the Drin water bodies in order to appreciate the resource, understand the involved issues and the value of cooperation for its management, facilitating: enhanced understanding of the expected outcomes of the “business as usual” and the “taking action” options thus, improving their ability to chose and act.
- Raise awareness about the Process for the enhancement of cooperation for the management of Drin and provide information to facilitate: understanding of its benefits; understanding about issues addressed with priority within the Process and possible solutions; stakeholders and the wider public participating; transparency regarding decision making within the Process.
- Facilitate the process to sustain political support, stakeholder engagement and donors interest.

**Responsible:** DCG with the assistance of the Secretariat.

**This Action receives inputs from:** All Actions.

**This Action contributes inputs to the implementation of:** All Actions.

**Deliverables:** Stakeholders analysis report, public participation strategic communication strategy, printed material, newsletters, other awareness raising activities, workshops.

### **B. Activities**

#### **1. Implementation of "Overarching" communication Activities**

**Objectives:** Implementation of information and strategic communication activities until the PPSCS is ready.

**Responsible:** DCG.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG, DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med).

**Input from:** All Actions.

**Contributes to:** All Actions.

**Deliverables:** Website, visual identity of the DCG supported cooperation enhancement process, information note, printed material, newsletter, targeted information activities.

**Timeframe:** May 2013 – December 2015

**Financial support:** Not secured.

## Ø *Work to be done*

### **1.1 Website**

The website focusing to the transboundary water resources management in the South-Eastern Europe supported by the GEF-IWLEARN project and run by the GWP-Med will host, in a dedicated space, information regarding the Drin Dialogue, the MoU, the DCG and its activities. The website will form a tool for communication and participation activities.

### **1.2 Build the Visual Identity of the DCG supported cooperation enhancement process**

The preparation of a logo, templates for all documents for all purposes etc. will be used for the building of a communication tool, the Visual Identity of the DCG supported cooperation enhancement process.

### **1.3 Prepare Information Note** (may be adjusted as needed depending on the audience / target group)

An information note, in electronic format, will be used to briefly and efficiently communicate the Process to stakeholders. It should provide background information about the Process' background, mandate, aims, structure, components, outcomes, outputs and the involved institutions. Text will be translated by the competent Ministries in Riparian's languages.

### **1.4 Prepare Brochure, Leaflet**

Printed material will be used to provide in a more elaborated manner and with enhanced graphic environment the same information as described in section 1.3 above. The brochure and leaflet text will be translated by the competent Ministries in Riparian's languages.

### **1.5 Newsletters/"flash news" on the basis of Project's developments and milestones**

A short information note will be prepared periodically (newsletter - every six months) or on an ad-hoc basis (flash news - on the basis of Processes' developments and milestones) and disseminated to target audiences.

### **1.6 Activities to reach out targeted audiences**

A set of activities will be used to communicate targeted messages in targeted audiences i.e. key stakeholders that take decisions related to the implementation of the MoU or are in position to influence related decisions e.g. parliamentarians, journalists, etc. aiming to enhance their understanding about the Drin's resources and the necessary action towards sustainable management of the Basin. Such activities may include: targeted emails, face to face meetings and presentations etc.

## **2. Public Participation and Strategic Communication activities**

### **Objectives:**

- Identify information, strategic communication, consultation and involvement activities and develop a workplan for implementing these.
- Implementation of strategic communication and public participation activities to succeed the objectives described under Action 6 "Overall".

**Responsible:** DCG.

**Resources / Experts to be involved:** DCG, DCG Secretariat (GWP-Med).

**Input from:** All Actions.

**Contributes to:** All Actions.

**Deliverables:** A number of public participation and strategic communication activities.

**Timeframe:** November 2013 – December 2015.

**Financial support:** Not secured.

## Ø *Work to be done*

### **2.1 Stakeholders Analysis at the Transboundary level**

The characteristics and positions of stakeholders at the transboundary level as well as at the level of the Riparians will be analyzed to successfully engage them in the Process; who to inform, consult, involve, the means and timeframe. This information will be used to prepare the Public Participation Plan and Communication Strategy.

#### *Steps:*

- Review of available list of stakeholders at the international, transboundary levels and as well as at the level of the Riparians.
- Workshops in each Riparian (20 - 40 participants).
- Interviews; 30-40 key stakeholders will be interviewed in each Riparian.
- Preparation of the Draft Stakeholders Analysis Report.
- Draft Stakeholders Analysis Report is sent to the DCG members for comments.
- Presentation of the draft Report for Discussion in the DCG meeting.
- Comments provided by the DCG are incorporated; final report is approved by DCG members via e-mail.

### **2.2 Preparation of a Public Participation and Strategic Communication Strategy (PPSCS)**

#### *Steps:*

- Setting of goals and objectives; Identification of the Target Audiences on the basis of the outcomes of the Stakeholders Analysis.
- Identification of products/activities.
- Identification of the institutions/organizations to assist in the implementation of the activities.
- Estimation of the needed financial resources.
- Preparation of draft Strategy.
- Draft Strategy is sent to the DCG members for comments.
- Presentation of the draft Strategy for discussion in the DCG meeting.
- Comments provided by the DCG are incorporated; final Strategy is approved by DCG members via e-mail.

### **2.3 Implementation of the PPSCS**

#### *Steps:*

- Define roles of each Member of the Drin Core Group.
- Identify sources of financial support.
- Implementation of activities.