



Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project
"Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer
System (DIKTAS)"

PIMS No. 4056

Governments of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania

International Waters

United Nations Education, Science and Communications Organisation –
International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP)

Evaluation Report

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

APR	Annual Project Report
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIE	Regional Consultation and Information Exchange Body
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DIKTAS	Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GWP Med	Global Water Partnership Mediterranean
IAH	International Association of Hydrogeologists
IGRAC	International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre
IMC	Inter Ministerial Committee
IR	Inception Report
IW	International Waters
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
NEU	National Execution Unit
NFP	National Focal Point
PC	Project Coordinator
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PD	Project Document
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PRF	Project Results Framework
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SA	Stakeholders Analysis
SAP	Strategic Actions Programme
SPPS	Stakeholders and Public Participation Strategy
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO BRESCE	United Nations Education, Science and Communication Organisation Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
UNESCO IHP	United Nations Education, Science and Communication Organisation International Hydrological Programme
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

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Disclaimer

This report is the work of an independent consultant and does not necessarily represent the views, or policy, or intentions of the UNESCO IHP or UNDP.

Executive Summary

Karstic aquifers are widespread globally: from Central America, to East Asia and to the Mediterranean region. They are often transboundary and generally contain very large freshwater resources. Their potential and characteristics are however little known, and the general lack of understanding of their vulnerability to land use patterns and water channeling/diversions are threatening their value and long-term sustainability. The DIKTAS project is a four-year project executed in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania. It focuses on one of the world's largest karstic geological provinces and aquifer systems. Countries are determined to move towards more sustainable development models and to deal with the threats to the long-term sustainability of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System and their transboundary implications. The project's activities are covering much larger perspective and are spread within four components, namely: (i) improving the understanding of the resource and of its environmental status; (ii) establishing cooperation among countries sharing the aquifer; (iii) facilitating harmonization of policies and priority reforms; and (iv) communication, dissemination and replication activities.

The main purpose of this Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to assess progress from the beginning of its implementation to the mid-point of the project's four years of implementation. The information gathered during the evaluation process and in the evaluation report will be used by the project management team, participating countries' respective administrations and other national stakeholders, international organizations operating in the region and other international actors that are dealing with the issue of karst groundwater aquifers at a global level. Having in mind the global significance of the project, it is expected that the evaluation report will become an important resource for planning and implementing similar projects in the future. Key issues to be addressed by the MTE are: project relevance, strategy, preparation and readiness; ownership at the national and local levels; stakeholder participation; underlying factors and assumptions; project organization and management arrangements both in the planning and implementation stages of the project, and an assessment whether these arrangements could still be considered as optimal in the current implementation context; cost-effectiveness of the project budget and duration; Monitoring and Evaluation system; sustainability and replicability; adaptive management; assessment of the UNDP and UNESCO-IHP contributions; and complementarity with other relevant ongoing or past activities, establishment of partnerships in the future, and catalytic role DIKTAS could play in the region.

The evaluation concluded that the DIKTAS project is still highly relevant, both with respect to its design and implementation, and its overall "architecture" should remain unchanged. The continuous importance of DIKTAS is based on the fact that it is still one of rare projects and/or initiatives, globally, dealing with the issue of coordination and management in the transboundary karst groundwater aquifers. From the perspective of beneficiaries, primarily the countries actively participating in the project, there is still a strong correlation between the DIKTAS' objectives, outcomes and outputs and the countries' needs. The necessity to establish an effective coordination and management mechanism, could only increase in the future considering the growing dependence of the region on utilisation of karst groundwater resources. The project is also relevant in the wider regional context, and synergies should be created with complementary projects and initiatives, such as Sava River Commission, the Medpartnership, and the GEF Neretva-Trebinjica project.

The project has been moderately effective in achieving its objectives. The results, i.e. the outputs, produced for the TDA so far are mainly sectoral reports related to country specific issues relevant to groundwater aquifer management, and they have been of good quality and delivered according to schedule. However, the usefulness of these outputs could be assessed only when the TDA and SAP will be prepared, hence the element of risk associated with evaluation based on this criterion. While the stakeholders' mobilisation process is now in full course, it had a somewhat slower start than planned, and those mobilised are mainly of the administrative/governmental provenance. The management and decision-making structures, as well as the roles played by UNDP and UNESCO,

have proven to be effective. The direct cause and effect analysis for the DIKTAS project cannot be performed, because its outcomes are not envisaged to have direct impact on the karst groundwater aquifer ecosystem in the region covered by the project. However, the coordination mechanism that will be established will potentially be very effective in solving the conflicting situations that might arise in the future in the transboundary aquifers.

The project's efficiency is satisfactory. Its management and administrative arrangements are cost-effective and rational. National focal points are satisfied with these arrangements as well as with the coordination between the project management and national levels. The use of financial resources is appropriate to the results achieved so far. The outputs were mainly country related and they are still to be integrated into global, i.e. regional, outputs such as TDA and SAP.

The DIKTAS project results are moderately satisfactory. While a number of outputs has been delivered, though primarily related to the analysis of various aspects of karst groundwater aquifer management in national context. Serious work is still expected to be carried out to produce TDA and SAP, which carries a certain degree of risk. Positive achievement is certainly the awareness of countries that water use issues in transboundary regions have to be solved in a coordinated manner, particularly having in mind the planned interventions in water infrastructure in the region. This will, hopefully, result soon in a management body with representatives of all the countries sitting on it (CIE). Major integrating exercises will be preparation, discussion and adoption of TDA and SAP, as well as establishment of national and regional coordination bodies (IMCs and CIE).

The sustainability of the project is moderately likely, primarily because the coordination mechanisms are not yet fully in place, and the intensity of the capacity building activities should be increased. The sustainability strategy doesn't exist, while the replication strategy, although not envisaged in the PD, should be prepared. The participation of stakeholders is gradually increasing and the range of stakeholders groups involved should be expanded, notably with the national NGOs and users associations.

The overall rating of the project is satisfactory, as a solid progress has been made towards achievement of the DIKTAS project objectives.

The report includes 22 recommendations divided in four groups. The most important ones are: prepare an analysis of the co-financing contributions; the Project Coordinator is advised to visit the project region in the coming period more frequently; request another no-cost extension of 6 to 12 months duration; finalise draft TDA by the end of the first quarter 2013 at the latest, and discuss it at the next PSC meeting; secure national commitment by establishing Inter ministerial committees (IMCs); regional coordination mechanism, the multi-country consultative and information exchange (CIE), needs to be established as a matter of priority; preparatory activities for the demonstration projects at local level should start as a matter of priority; prepare the Replication Strategy; land use issues should be better addressed; and strengthen partnerships with other complementary initiatives in the region.

The report presents several lessons learned. The DIKTAS project could be considered as a complex one with regards to the subject it is tackling - the transboundary karst groundwater aquifer management, which is one of the most complex water resources systems globally. The project design is logical, coherent and consistent. Since the involvement of major governmental stakeholders during the project preparation and the inception phases was substantial their support and commitment are unconditional. The project management is an example of how the project of this size could be run efficiently and effectively, and using relatively modest financial resources. However, those activities that might require ample time to mobilise, such as establishment of coordination bodies at national and regional level (IMCs and CIE), capacity building and local demonstration projects.

1. Introduction

1.1. Brief description of the project

Karstic aquifers are widespread globally: from Central America, to East Asia and to the Mediterranean region. They are often transboundary and generally contain very large freshwater resources. Their potential and characteristics are however little known, and the general lack of understanding of their vulnerability to land use patterns and water channeling/diversions are threatening their value and long-term sustainability.

The present project focuses on one of the world's largest karstic geological provinces and aquifer systems: the karst region corresponding to the Dinaric mountain range, which runs from Friuli (NE Italy) through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Albania. This region is still largely pristine, with large extensions of densely forested areas, viable populations of large carnivores, many thousands of caves, unique karstic lakes (Ohrid, Prespa, Plitvice, Shkodra and many more) and abundant high yield and quality freshwater springs.

Today, countries are determined to move towards more sustainable development models and to deal with the threats to the long term sustainability of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System and their transboundary implications, such as:

- lack of harmonized multi-country policies regulating land-use and physical planning throughout the karstic region in view of the aquifer's high vulnerability to contamination;
- lack of a conceptual framework for balancing various demands on the water resources, which results in areas of over-extraction, and very strong seasonal and multi-annual variability of water resource use;
- negative impacts of the transboundary hydraulic infrastructure;
- potential impacts of global changes (development, population growth, migration), including climate change (such as excessive variability in rainfall patterns, flooding etc.); and
- lack of public participation and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) including both transboundary surface and groundwater.

Addressing these issues is a strategic priority for the countries participating in this project. In that respect, the DIKTAS project is the first ever attempted globally to introduce sustainable integrated management principles in a transboundary karstic freshwater aquifer of the magnitude of the Dinaric Karst System. To achieve that objective, the project will implement the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis – Strategic Action Program (TDA-SAP) process, tested successfully in numerous GEF International Waters projects. While TDA is considered to be one of the major outputs of the project, its numerous activities are covering much larger perspective and are spread within four components, namely:

- Improving the understanding of the resource and of its environmental status;
- Establishing cooperation among countries sharing the aquifer;
- Facilitating harmonization of policies and priority reforms; and
- Communication, dissemination and replication activities.

1.2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

As this evaluation is performed at the midpoint of DIKTAS project's implementation, by necessity it is to be considered as a performance type of evaluation. Midterm evaluation generally has a formative nature as it intends to improve performance. Therefore, the main purpose of this Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to assess progress from the beginning of its implementation to the mid point of the project's four years of implementation. Evaluation will use the following criteria:

- relevance of the initiative and its consistency with the national and local policies and priorities;

- effectiveness of delivery of outputs;
- efficiency of use of economic resources;
- sustainability which will be the measure of continuation of project's benefits and outputs; and
- impact of changes DIKTAS has made so far in the participating countries.

The MTE is also intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of the project design and implementation, and to come up with recommendations for eventual changes in the overall design and orientation of the project and on the work plan for the remaining period of project's implementation.

The information gathered during the evaluation process and in the evaluation report will be used by the project management team, participating countries' respective administrations and other national stakeholders, international organizations operating in the region and other international actors that are dealing with the issue of karst groundwater aquifers at a global level. Having in mind the global significance of the project, it is expected that the evaluation report will become an important resource for planning and implementing similar projects in the future.

The scope of the MTE covers all activities undertaken in the framework of the project. This refers to:

- planned outputs of the project compared to actual outputs and the actual results leading to attaining the project objectives;
- problems and necessary corrections and adjustments;
- efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency;
- funds spent at the time of evaluation against the total amount allocated; and
- likely outcomes and impact of the project in relation to the specified goals and objectives of the project.

1.3 Key issues to be addressed in the evaluation

The ToR indicates a large number of issues to be addressed by the MTE. These issues could be summarised as follows:

- Project **relevance and strategy**, which includes examination whether the project's strategy designed during the project's formulation phase and during its hitherto implementation is still relevant, i.e. consistent with national and local as well as global policies and priorities.
- Project **preparation and readiness** examines the clarity and feasibility of its objectives and components, and whether the planned implementation arrangements were based on properly conducted preliminary assessment of partners' resources.
- **Project ownership** at the national and local levels.
- **Stakeholder participation**, both in the project preparation and implementation stages.
- Assessment of **underlying factors and assumptions**, primarily of those originating outside the project's context, and measures to counteract them.
- **Project organization and management arrangements** both in the planning and implementation stages of the project, and an assessment whether these arrangements could still be considered as optimal in the current implementation context.
- Assessment of the cost-effectiveness of the **project budget and duration**, and implementation of the financial aspect of the project including co-financing.
- Soundness of the **Project Monitoring and Evaluation system**.
- **Sustainability and replicability** of the project's achievements and impacts including an assessment of the feasibility of planned replication strategy based on current project's results.
- **Gender perspective** including whether the project has taken adequate measures to ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed in the implementation of project activities.

- Effectiveness of the application of **adaptive management** through monitoring and evaluation, risk management, work planning including regular updates and reporting.
- Assessment of the **UNDP and UNESCO-IHP contributions**.
- **Complementarity** with other relevant ongoing or past activities, establishment of **partnerships** in the future, and **catalytic role** DIKTAS could play in the region.

1.4. Methodology of the evaluation

As suggested in TOR, the evaluation will be organised into overlapping phases focusing on:

- Document review and analysis (desktop study);
- Review of specific products;
- Interviews with key stakeholders and implementing and executing agencies, both through face-to-face-interviews at their location and by telephone/skype/email, and
- Review of the development of selected tools used in the execution of the project.

Methods of data collection and data analysis will be the following:

- Data collection in the field (interviews, direct observations),
- Review of project preparation and approval documents (PIF, project document, logframe, GEF CEO endorsement),
- Analysis of project reports (annual reports, PIR),
- Analysis of meeting, workshops, conferences reports (steering committee, working groups, training courses, mission reports etc.),
- Review of financial records - to a limited degree (contracts, TORs, annual financial reports),
- Analysis of outputs (working group reports, thematic reports, guidelines),
- Review of other relevant documents (newsletters, website, etc).

1.5. Structure of the evaluation

The structure of the evaluation follows the outline as provided to the evaluator in the TOR. It reviews the DIKTAS project in its development context and in its design, as presented in the Project Document (Chapter 2), then assesses the started implementation and results achieved on the basis of produced reports and stakeholder interviews (Chapter 3), and provides recommendations (Chapter 4) and lessons learned for the remaining period of the project's implementation (Chapter 5).

2. Project and its development context

2.1. Project start and its duration

Following the approval of the PIF (submitted in April 2008), the GEF endorsed one year Project Preparation Phase of the DIKTAS project in order to prepare the Project Document (PD). The Inception Report (IR) states that during that phase, in addition to several other meetings and workshops, the Project Inception Workshop, i.e. the project's kick-off meeting was held in Podgorica in November 2008. The DIKTAS PD and request to GEF CEO were submitted to UNDP Regional Office in Bratislava on 29 October 2009. The DIKTAS project was endorsed for funding by the GEF CEO on 4 January 2010.

The duration of the project is set at four years. Its implementation was planned to start soon after the project's endorsement, but due to initial delays for administrative reasons, a 6-months no-cost extension was requested by the Steering Committee and approved by the donor. Considering this adjustment the official period for the project's implementation has been established in the period

from July 2010 to July 2014. The Inception Report defines the period between the endorsement of the project by GEF CEO (January 2010) and the official start of the implementation of the project (July 2010) as the project's Inception Phase, and states that it ends with the organisation of the Inception Workshop, which took place later, on 10-12 November 2010 in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having that in mind, we may conclude that the Inception Phase lasted more than 10 months, i.e. from January to mid November 2010, which is rather long for the project of this magnitude. However, the justification may be found in the fact that the start of the project was delayed for administrative reasons.

2.2. Implementation status

The project is implemented by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) in Bratislava, and executed by UNESCO IHP. The PD envisages that the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), headed by a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), will be established in Croatia. The Project Management Team will be established and it will be composed of: UNESCO IHP that will secure the Project Supervision, the PCU, headed by the CTA, and the National Focal Points. In addition to the Project Steering Committee (PSC), the National Execution Units (NEU) were to be established in each of four project countries, headed by the DIKTAS National Focal Points and staffed by national experts selected by PCU in concertation with UNDP and UNESCO IHP. The above has been partially changed, and the PCU has been established in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina while the CTA has been renamed into Project Coordinator (PC).

The third year of project's implementation has just started. The activities so far are roughly within the planned course of implementation. The project has completed the stage when sectoral outputs are being produced, and has entered into the stage when integrated outputs will be prepared.

2.3. Problems that the project seeks to address

The DIKTAS project is expected to address effectively the barriers that are hindering sustainable management of transboundary groundwater aquifers in the project area, and to set the basis for reversing present and future degradation trends through a concerted multi- country effort involving:

- improvement of scientific understanding of the system in all countries sharing the aquifer, needed in order to reach an informed consensus on the factors affecting its integrity at the national and at the transboundary level;
- building the political consensus around relevant key priority reforms and new policies in the Dinaric Karst region;
- enhanced coordination of transboundary groundwater aquifer management among countries, donors, projects and agencies;
- consolidation of national and international support; and
- increased public awareness and stakeholder participation.

2.4. Immediate and development objectives of the project

The immediate and development objectives are not specifically distinguished as such in the Project Document. Actually, the title of each component points clearly to the specific objective related to that component, and if they are taken together one could get the ideas what real objectives of the DIKTAS project are. However, the Project Document does state major aims of the project at two levels: the global and regional.

At the global level, the project aims at focusing the attention of the international community on the huge but vulnerable water resources contained in karst aquifers, which are widespread globally, but not fully understood. The Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, shared by several countries and one of the world's largest, has been identified as an ideal opportunity to apply new and integrated

management approaches that would assist sustainable management of these unique and sensitive freshwater resources and ecosystems.

At the regional level, the project's objectives are (i) to facilitate the equitable and sustainable utilization of the transboundary water resources of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, first, by understanding better the nature of the system and, second, by creating practical management arrangements, and (ii) to protect the unique groundwater dependent ecosystems that characterize the Dinaric Karst region of the Balkan Peninsula. The development objectives of the project, which are aimed to position it within a wider developmental context of the countries participating in the project, were not stated in the Project Document.

2.5. Main stakeholders

Beneficiary countries participating in the project (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania) are the major stakeholders. UNDP and UNESCO IHP, who are implementing and executing agencies respectively, have a clear stake in the DIKTAS project. The former certainly considers this project as an opportunity to raise the stakes for an accelerated development of the, generally, economically depressed areas where transboundary aquifer regions are located. The latter is active, on a world scale, in promoting sustainable management systems for groundwater aquifers and this project is certainly an opportunity to show to a wider audience how such a complex system could be effectively managed. Other countries sharing the karst groundwater aquifer, but not benefitting from the project's grant (Italy and Slovenia), are also having a stake in the project. In addition, the Project Document identifies several other stakeholder groups in the beneficiary countries and wider, namely:

- Political actors (at local and -where appropriate- entity, and national levels);
- Public administration (e.g. competent Ministries, agencies for water management, protected area management bodies, water and sanitation authorities and institutions, etc.);
- Interest groups (e.g. fishers' or industry associations, water user associations etc.);
- Commercial/private actors (e.g. industries, etc.);
- NGOs;
- Academia;
- General public;
- International actors (e.g. UN agencies, GEF, other donors, Project implementing and executing agencies, international river basins commissions etc.); etc.

The PD doesn't elaborate further on the project's stakeholders and it proposes that stakeholders' analysis be prepared in early stage of the project's implementation.

2.6. Results expected

The project will result in a more comprehensive and shared understanding of the freshwater resources of the whole Dinaric Karst region. Major expected outputs of this strand of the project's activities are the preparation and adoption of the TDA and SAP, capacity building and awareness programmes carried out in the countries participating in the project. This in turn is expected to enhance the effectiveness of a number of complementary ongoing and planned initiatives (e.g. Ohrid, Prespa and Skadar/Shkodra Lakes, Neretva and Trebišnjica river basin projects) by providing the so far lacking overall ecosystem context and planning framework. A specific activity, with related outputs such as multi-country consultative body, mechanism for coordination and exchange and IMCs, is foreseen as part of the project that will establish a mechanism for sustainable management of the transboundary aquifers.

3. Findings and Conclusions

3.1. Project concept and formulation

The DIKTAS project was formulated in accordance with standard GEF policies and procedures and it was approved at all the appropriate levels. The project's concept transposed into Project Results Framework (PRF), which is prepared instead of the Logical Framework Analysis, shows that SMART indicators were largely, but not fully strictly, used to measure the progress of implementation of the outcomes.

3.1.1. Project relevance

Based on the conceptual approach explained in the PD, the DIKTAS project's relevance needs to be evaluated at two levels: global, and national/local. Globally, it is still highly relevant, as it has remained one of the few projects attempting to tackle the complex issue of karst transboundary groundwater aquifer management, and its results and proposals are eagerly expected. Nationally and locally, all the stakeholders interviewed confirmed their satisfaction how the project is dealing with this issue, which is still high on their agenda. Its relevance is also confirmed by the existence of a legal context, which is very elaborate in all the countries of the region, and the project is consistent with the national legal and strategic frameworks related to water management. On the positive side, the project's relevance in regional context is confirmed by the fact that countries have ratified most of the relevant regional conventions. However, the state of implementation of legal obligations could only be evaluated once the TDA/SAP process will be completed.

The project's strategy and outcomes, and its design are still relevant as there has been no major change in the circumstances existing at the time of its preparation. As a matter of fact, the relevance of the project and its expected outcomes and outputs have actually increased because of several hydraulic investment projects planned in the areas covered by the project. As the nature of karst aquifers is not yet fully explored, such initiatives may have wide ranging impacts across the region, and they have to be agreed by the countries involved. The project will result in several outcomes and outputs that may assist in reaching such an agreement.

The evaluator concludes that the project is still **relevant** in view of its global importance and consistency with the regional, national and local policies and strategies for groundwater aquifer management.

3.1.2. Implementation approach

The project's design aims at bringing the management of transboundary groundwater aquifers to a level where countries will effectively be cooperating among themselves. That will not be an easy task considering that "...none of the countries sharing the aquifer recognize in their water resources and environmental plans and policies the interconnected and transboundary nature of the aquifer system as a whole, and their plans regarding the management and protection of their karst ecosystems, and various water utilization policies are necessarily fragmented and with mostly local relevance." (see DIKTAS Prodoc, p. 10).

The project's objectives, as stated in the PD, could be considered more as goals than operational objectives. In spite of that, they aim at overcoming the abovementioned barrier, which is a major one in the region, and the project's components are logical and clear. The emphasis of the project is more on establishing the cooperation and management mechanisms in the region than on research on the characteristics of the karst groundwater aquifers. This is understandable considering the financial size of the project, and the respective component 1, which is about improving the

understanding of the water aquifers and of their environmental status, is primarily aimed at providing input for the preparation of the TDA and confirmation of baseline conditions. Having the above in mind the project's design could be considered as practicable and feasible within the time frame and could lead towards the achievement of stated objectives.

The evaluation of the Project Results Framework (Annex A in the Request for CEO Endorsement/Approval, but entitled as Strategic Results Framework - SRF, in the PD!), which presents the logic and strategy of the project, has not found any relevant weaknesses. The planned outcomes are "SMART". Outcomes indicate change, since each one of the four outcomes leads to an altered future state. Results are measurable, as there is a whole set of clearly defined outputs. At this point, the results seem to be achievable. Outcomes are relevant, as countries still seem to be highly committed to the stated objectives of the project. Finally, all outputs are very clearly defined and are self standing "products".

The project preparatory phase lasted about one year, during which time the project document was prepared. The preparation of the project was carried out in a participatory way as four meetings were held during that period, where all countries have participated and have been informed of the objectives and strategy of the project and agreed to the project's implementation arrangements. The selection of UNESCO as the executing agency seemed logical, as that organisation had over the years developed a proven capacity to implement complex projects in the area of natural sciences.. During the interviews, the country representatives also confirmed clear understanding of the project and its objectives.

The project document gives an extensive overview and analysis of the national, regional and international legislation on water resources with a specific reference to groundwater management. Countries have also confirmed their co-financing prior to the project's start. During the Inception Phase, all necessary activities for the project to start were carried out, in particular the appointment of the DIKTAS Project Coordinator, setting up of the PCU in Trebinje, and nomination of the DIKTAS national focal points.

The evaluator concludes that the implementation approach was satisfactorily carried out and that the implementation arrangements were fully in place at the start of the project's implementation.

3.1.3. Countries ownership/Engagement

The PD gives only a brief overview of the actions that preceded the start of the project preparation phase, and subsequent endorsement and start of the project's implementation. It shows that, while countries agreed as far as in 2006 that their key priority is to improve understanding of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer system and to adopt policies for its joint management, the actual situation on the ground, until that moment, was different. As indicated earlier, none of the countries has recognized in their water management plans the interconnected and transboundary nature of the aquifers and the need for joint management. However, taking in consideration the existence of this duality of intentions, it is a great achievement that countries have embarked on this project at all. This progress may be based on the realisation that in all transboundary basins the groundwater is the major resource to be protected, while in some of them it is a major source of economic wellbeing. Having in mind the nature of the karst groundwater aquifer systems and the fact that every country could find itself simultaneously in the "upstream" and the "downstream" type of situation, they have realised that only the joint management of this resource can secure its long term and sustainable utilization.

The interest of countries and their gradual appropriation of the project are confirmed by their active participation at four preparatory meetings and subsequent steering committee and other technical meetings. Actually, by endorsing the DIKTAS project, the countries have committed themselves to rectify that situation by including the proposed policies and regulatory and management

frameworks into the national water management plans and programmes once the project will be completed. It is too early, however, to expect that to happen mid way through the implementation of the project. One moment that hinders the fully positive rating of this aspect is the fact that only two countries (and that only recently) established the inter-ministerial committee (IMC).

3.1.4. Stakeholders participation

The project's governance approach including the stakeholders' participation is described in the project document as part of the Component 4. The PD describes major groups of stakeholders, and in a special section elaborates the Stakeholders Involvement Plan. It requires preparation of the Stakeholders and Public Participation Strategy (SPPS) and Stakeholders Analysis (SA) in early stages of the project's implementation, as well as the Information and Strategic Communication Plan, but without indication when it should be prepared. The preliminary SPPS was prepared during the Project Preparation Phase, while the SA was planned to be prepared in the first year of the project's implementation. However, more time was spent on their completion than expected and both documents were completed only in August 2012. Although both documents are of very high quality, delay in their preparation may have hindered more successful involvement of stakeholders during the hitherto implementation of the project.

Effective governance requires participation of a very wide group of stakeholders. First the PD and then the SA have identified very wide spectrum of stakeholder groups. However, during the project preparation phase (4 meetings) and inception phase (inception workshop), only a few of these groups participated, mainly the following: political actors (at entity and national levels); public administration (e.g. competent Ministries, agencies for water management, protected area management bodies, water and sanitation authorities and institutions, etc.); international actors (e.g. UN agencies, donors, Project implementing and executing agencies, international river basins commissions, WWF etc.), and advisors. The remaining groups indicated in the PD, i.e. interest groups, commercial/private actors, NGOs, Academia, general public and other practically have not participated at all. The project's Steering Committee meetings were more "closed" affair, and they were attended by the PSC members (one from each country) and the national focal points. It is true that national consultation workshops were held in all four countries during the preparation of the SA, but these workshops were more of a consultative than of the decision-making nature, and were aimed mainly at acquainting the stakeholders with the project itself. Finally, the PD mentions that the implementation of components 1 to 3 of the project will be supported by the Stakeholder, Public Participation and Communication Facility. This role has been taken by one of the Project partners: the GWP Med, but nowhere in the document, not even in the section on implementation arrangement, this role is explained in more detail.

Awareness raising is another important element of the component 4, and numerous activities are envisaged in this respect. Until now, the project web site was developed, leaflets and newsletters published, and the project was presented at one major media event: the GEF International Waters biannual conference in Dubrovnik in October 2011.

The evaluator rates the Stakeholders Participation as **moderately satisfactory** because the participation of stakeholder groups has been limited to major institutional actors only, and the major documents that were meant to guide the activity, although of good quality, were delivered late. The communication products are few and do not present the achievements of the project yet.

3.1.5. Replication approach

From the replication perspective this project seems to be very important because it is the first GEF project attempting to develop mechanisms and approaches for the cooperative management of a major transboundary karst aquifer system. The project design hasn't included development of a

specific replication strategy. It only mentions that, in its component 4 (outcome 4, output 10), replication of new practices, approaches/behaviours and techniques will be facilitated through capacity building activities. It could be considered as a sort of “soft” approach to replication, since no concrete new projects are supposed to be considered for replication during the “lifetime” of the project. This approach may be justified by a relatively modest budget, which doesn’t leave many resources for replication. However, it is envisaged that linkages and cooperation will be established with other transboundary water management initiatives and projects in the Mediterranean and Balkans regions but also in other karst regions. In this respect, the Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea LME (The MedPartnership) is specifically mentioned as it contains the Mediterranean Coastal Aquifer subcomponent as well as large replication component.

3.1.6. Cost-effectiveness

A total of US\$2,160,000 has been allocated by GEF for DIKTAS project implementation during the period 2010-2014 (US\$2,596,000 in total, including project preparation and Agency fee). The project has been designed to reach maximum effectiveness of outputs vis-à-vis financial resources utilized. It has adopted a "step-by-step" approach that through shared scientific knowledge of partners, in particular of UNESCO IHP but also of other scientific organizations advising the project, the joint work of all stakeholders, and not only government related ones but also NGOs, interest organizations, academia and other, and through capacity building, which is aimed at wider replication of project results, will build consensus and commitment to effective management of this resource by all countries in the region and wider.

Cost-effectiveness in this project is also achieved by the interest and commitment of the respective regional governments and other project partners, which have allocated US\$3,403,570 of in-kind and cash co-financing for project implementation (US\$3,653,570, if project preparation co-financing is included). This is almost 1.6 times the size of the GEF grant for the project’s implementation.

Finally, the project management arrangement is also cost-effective, although the dispersion of project units may point otherwise. While reputed professionals have been engaged to coordinate the project and execute its activities, the personnel and other management costs are comparably lower than in other projects of similar size.

3.1.7. UNDP comparative advantage

The UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava, Slovakia implements the DIKTAS project. The UNDP comparative advantage stems out of the fact that it has a long history of implementing GEF IW projects. The Bratislava office, with its experienced staff, will provide critical support in overseeing the project's implementation, through management of the monitoring and evaluation activities. The Bratislava office also is executing the IW:Learn project, which is directly linked with the Component 4 (Outcome 4, Outcome 11) of DIKTAS.

While the DIKTAS project is innovative in its concept and it is difficult to find the comparable experience in the project region and wider, UNDP's engagement in other complementary projects in the wider region has been quite extensive and could be considered as an advantage. The UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project, implemented between 2003 and 2007, should be specifically mentioned although thematically it is not directly related to the DIKTAS project. The TDA that was developed in that Danube transboundary water region deserves special attention, as well as the successful partnership that originated in that project, which resulted in subsequent initiatives, such as ICPDR. It could serve as the model for other similar projects in the region, including DIKTAS. UNDP, in addition to the regional office in Bratislava, has offices in all countries of the region, which could assist in project's implementation.

3.1.8. UNESCO comparative advantage

UNESCO has extensive expertise in groundwater management, and has been actively involved in the region through implementation of two projects/programmes. The first is the ISARM programme, which has been instrumental in the identification and finalisation of the DIKTAS project's design. UNESCO IHP secretariat, instrumental in ISARM, provides the technical guidance for the project. Second relevant project is the coastal groundwater aquifers management sub project of the MedPartnership, which is led by UNESCO IHP. It is implemented in all four countries participating in the DIKTAS project, while in 3 of them demonstration projects are carried out (Croatia, Montenegro and Albania). This project is relevant because coastal areas of these three countries are also karst areas. Finally, UNESCO has an antenna office in Sarajevo, an offshot of the UNESCO BRESCE office in Venice, and it serves as logistics and administrative arm of the DIKTAS project.

3.1.9. Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector

During the preparatory and inception phases of the project an extensive survey of related initiatives in the sector and in the region was made. Many of these initiatives participated in the project preparation and linkages were established, starting from the UNESCO ISARM programme, under aegis of which the first meeting was organised in 2006 in Belgrade. A number of international processes (the Petersburg Process, the Athens Declaration and related consensus building measures), and EU initiatives such as the Stabilization and Association Process that is ongoing in the region, and the Regional Environment Reconstruction Programme for SEE (REReP) initiated by the European Commission should also be mentioned. Furthermore, there is a number of GEF funded activities in the region, and DIKTAS is well linked with them: Lake Skadar-Shkoder Integrated Ecosystem Management Project (LSIEMP), Integrated Management of Basin Ecosystem of Prespa lake in Albania, FYROM and Greece, Ohrid Lake conservation project, Regional Project "Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem" (The MedPartnership), and Neretva and Trebisnjica River Basin Management Project. There are other relevant regional initiatives such as International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), and national projects that the project is linked with. Finally, a specific activity, with related output (5), is foreseen as part of the project (Component 2), that will establish a mechanism for coordination and exchanges among projects, national agencies, bilateral and multi-lateral donors.

3.1.10. Indicators

The DIKTAS project is conceived as a capacity building project and it is considered to be the first stage along the development pathway. Such nature of the project has determined the set of indicators that is presented in the Strategic Results Framework. The indicators are by necessity the process indicators, i.e. the indicators that show the status of implementation and completion of outcomes/outputs of each phase of the project. The SRF has 11 indicators (12 in the section of the PD related to the indicators, because the indicator number 4 in the SRF is split in two), which coincide with the outputs of the project. Most of the indicators/outputs are clear products whose finality could be easily established. It is important to say that all indicators/outputs are bound to go through the approval or adoption process, which certainly gives them higher level of credibility. Two indicators are pivotal: the preparation and adoption of the TDA and of the SAP.

3.1.11. Management arrangements

The project is implemented by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava, Slovakia, and executed by UNESCO IHP. The PD envisaged the project management arrangement to be established at two levels. The execution of project's activities would consist of the following:

- UNESCO IHP will secure the project execution supervision;

- The Project Steering Committee (PSC) composed of one senior government official from each country, the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor for Europe/CIS and UNESCO IHP senior expert responsible for the groundwater and ISARM activities at the IHP Secretariat. The SC will meet at least once a year to review the Project budget and work programs and provide feedback and policy guidance to the PCU.
- The PCU will coordinate with UNESCO IHP that will provide technical and scientific support, and will also be supported by NEUs, regional and international experts hired by the project, and the Stakeholder, Public Participation and Communication Facility operated by GWP-Med, another partner in the project. The PCU will host the CTA, secretarial staff and one administrative/finance assistant and will carry out the day-to-day implementation of the Project and be responsible to UNESCO IHP and UNDP RTA for the project activities, financial accountability, staff welfare and discipline, etc;
- Science Advisory Panel, comprising a selected group of eminent scientists from the region and outside the region, including scientists from GEF recipient countries not participating to the project (Serbia) and from Slovenia, Italy and Greece and other Karst countries. Its proposed tasks were to review the TDA draft, to support CIE activities, to review the draft SAP, etc.

The longer-term sustainable management of the DIKTAS project, including the period beyond the duration of the project, will be composed of the following:

- National Inter-ministerial Committees (IMC) composed of high level representatives will be established in each country;
- Regional Consultation and Information Exchange (CIE) body will be created to represent the center of international cooperation for the DIKTAS within the project's timeframe, and beyond;

During the first two years of the project's implementation, the following arrangements were put in place, including both groups mentioned above:

- UNESCO IHP has undertaken the project supervision and provided administrative and logistical support through its antenna office in Sarajevo;
- The Project Steering Committee was established and has been meeting regularly;
- The PCU was established in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, instead of Croatia, and with somewhat reduced competences compared to its original TOR (technical preparation of the GIS data base, and some minor administrative duties);
- Logistical and administrative duties have largely been carried out by the UNESCO Antenna office in Sarajevo;
- National experts to work within the 4 working groups were nominated, and together with the project National Focal Points, they could be considered as NEUs;
- The CTA was renamed to Project Coordinator (PC). The post has been filled by the renowned expert employed by the UNESCO category 2 centre (IGRAC). The PC has been in close contact with executing partners and has frequently visited the project region;
- Science Advisory Panel has been established;
- Two IMCs have been established (Croatia and Montenegro);
- CIE has not been established yet.

3.2. Implementation

3.2.1. Financial management

The project's financial planning has been carried out according to the UNDP rules. The total amount of the GEF grant is US\$2,596,000 (US\$200,000 project preparation; US\$2,160,000 project implementation; US\$236,000 Agency fee), while the co-financing of US\$3,653,570 (including US\$250,000 for project preparation) is expected to be provided by beneficiary countries, other

countries in the region, France, project partners and other international organizations). That is 141% of the grant amount, which could be considered, if realized, as a solid ratio. For project implementation the ratio is 158%, which is even better. Almost all of the co-financing is in kind. Only UNESCO is providing cash contribution, which is given as a lump sum together with the in kind contribution, hence the size of its cash co-financing could not be established.

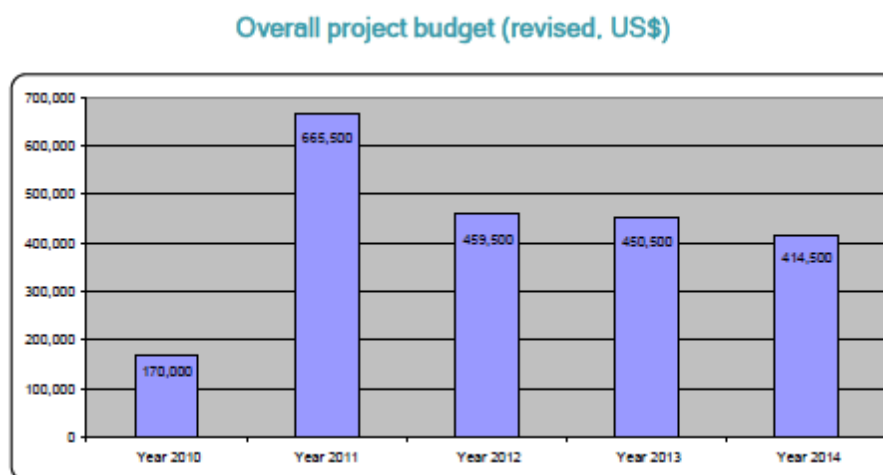
The Request for CEO Endorsement/Approval, which also contains the full PD, has several tables presenting the project budget. In the Project Framework table, the grant amount is divided among 4 project components and project management, together with the corresponding co-financing amount. This is the only instance in the PD where the co-financing is presented in relation to the project components. The table below (non numerated table from the Section III of the PD) gives the allocation of GEF grant per project's outputs (not components, as in the abovementioned table), and for every output per budget lines and over four years of the planned project implementation. The amount of the GEF grant is the same as in the abovementioned Project Framework table.

GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	Responsible Party/ Implementing Agent	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Amount Year 1 (USD)	Amount Year 2 (USD)	Amount Year 3 (USD)	Amount Year 4 (USD)	Total (USD)	See Budget Note:
OUTCOME 1: Countries recognize the Karst Aquifer System as a shared and highly vulnerable resource, and agree to take steps to deal with its transboundary implications.	UNESCO-IHP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	\$124,000	\$124,000	\$59,000	\$39,000	\$346,000	1
				71300	Local Consultants	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$95,000	\$65,000	\$480,000	
				71600	Travel	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$70,000	
				74200	Equipment	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	
				74500	Miscellaneous	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000	
					Total Outcome 1	\$321,500	\$321,500	\$176,500	\$126,500	\$946,000	
OUTCOME 2: The strengthened collective knowledge and coordination among development plans and countries, agencies and donors improves sustainability of the resource	UNESCO-IHP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$70,000	2
				71300	Local Consultants	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$70,000	
				71600	Travel	\$10,000	\$60,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$90,000	
				74200	Equipment	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000	
				74500	Miscellaneous	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$16,000	
					Total Outcome 2	\$66,500	\$106,500	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$266,000	
OUTCOME 3: Political commitment reached among the countries on implementing priority legal, institutional and policy reforms for the protection and equitable utilization of the Karst Aquifer System	UNESCO-IHP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$136,000	3
				71300	Local Consultants	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$80,000	
				71600	Travel	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$80,000	
				74500	Miscellaneous	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000	
					Total Outcome 3	\$79,000	\$79,000	\$79,000	\$79,000	\$316,000	
OUTCOME 4: Long term sustainability of achievements enhanced through public and political awareness campaigns, stakeholder involvement and replication mechanisms	UNESCO-IHP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	\$29,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$34,000	\$131,000	4
				71300	Local Consultants	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000	
				71600	Travel	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$17,500	\$70,000	
				74200	Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$85,000	
				74500	Miscellaneous	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$30,000	
					Total Outcome 4	\$99,500	\$104,500	\$103,500	\$108,500	\$416,000	
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	UNESCO-IHP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$160,000	5
				71300	Local Consultants	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$16,000	
				71600	Travel	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000	
					Total Management	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$216,000	
PROJECT TOTAL						\$620,500	\$665,500	\$489,500	\$414,500	\$2,160,000	

However, there is a discrepancy between the above table and subsequent Table 2 in the PD (Summary Budget of GEF grant), which gives different figures of allocations per year and per component, although the total amount of the GEF grant is the same. The evaluator does not know the origin of this discrepancy, but it has to be mentioned that figures from the table presented above have been used in the Inception Report as the baseline.

The Inception Report mentions that the same amount will be spent during the first year of project implementation as indicated in the above presented table from the PD, i.e. US\$620,500. Due to the delay in the start of the project's implementation, the annual grant allocations have been revised. The document DIKTAS/SC2/5, prepared for the Second Steering Committee meeting proposes the overall budget revision (see below). The explanation for budgetary shifts is that because of "...a slight delay in

the start of project implementation (the Inception Workshop was held in November 2010) a reduced amount of funding (170,000 USD) was allocated for 2010, while the remainder (414,500 US\$) was transferred to the year 2014. A six month extension was requested by the SC and approved.” This explanation is not correct because remainder from the Year 1 is US\$450,500 and it is shifted to year 2013, while the amount initially allocated to the Year 4 (US\$414,500) has now been shifted to the last year of the project implementation (2014). In addition to that, the evaluator finds that the amount allocated for 2014 in the revised budget is way too high, because after the extension has been given, it is expected that the project will be closed by the end of June 2014. Considering that some time in that year will be spent on the project’s closure, this effectively means that the amount of US\$414,500 will have to be spent in, roughly, 3 months only, and that only under the assumption that there will be no re-phased funds from the previous years.



The situation with the actual disbursement of funds is not clear. The financial reports obtained from UNDP state that until 30 June 2012 the total of US\$746,873 was disbursed. Majority of these funds (90%) were spent on contracts with national and international consultants and training, while only 4% were spent on travel. That points to the conclusions that most of financial resources were spent on country level activities. However, the 2012 PIR states that in the same period US\$975,000 was disbursed. According to the revised budget, the amount to be spent until the end of 2012 is US\$1,295,000. The former disbursement figure is thus equal to 58%, while the latter is equal to 75% of the amount planned to be spent until the end of 2012. Even if we take that there is still 6 months to go before the end of the year, the former amount could be considered as rather low disbursement rate, while the latter might be considered as being somewhat within the limits of disbursement, leaving hope that planned amount might be disbursed until the end of 2012.

The amount of the co-financing committed is considerable. The 2012 PIR mentions that cumulatively, until 30 June 2012, the total of US\$1,350,800 was disbursed (about 37% of the total committed). This amount is based on the conservative estimate of the countries' contributions and more detailed estimate of other partners' contributions. It should be noted that IGRAC contributed additional US\$200,00 of in-kind co-financing. This was not mentioned in the PD and that amount could be considered as a leveraged resource. Countries should report on co-financing on an annual basis. Finally, it is also doubtful whether some of promised co-financing will be materialized, notably by INFO/RAC.

According to the information obtained from the UNESCO antenna office in Sarajevo, the total of 34 contracts have been signed, out of which 32 were signed with national experts for the preparation of the TDA, and 2 contracts were signed for the acquisition of GIS equipment and associated training.

3.2.2. Monitoring and evaluation

Project Monitoring and Evaluation component is planned to be conducted in accordance with established UNDP and GEF procedures. The Strategic Result Framework provides clear indicators to monitor and measure the effectiveness of project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification, which form the basis on which the project's Monitoring and Evaluation system is built. An independent Mid-Term Evaluation is planned to be undertaken at the end of second year of implementation, while an independent Final Evaluation will take place three months prior to the terminal tripartite review meeting.

The M&E plan envisages an elaborate reporting schedule consisting of the Inception Report, the Annual Project Report (APR)/Project Implementation Review (PIR), Quarterly Progress Report, Periodic Thematic Report, and Project Terminal Report. The PD contains an indicative M&E work-plan. The corresponding budget is sufficient. The planned reporting schedule has been respected. This MTE represents the first significant M&E expenditure.

The Inception Report has been prepared during the Inception Phase of the project and adopted at the Inception Workshop. The report is rather basic in its contents and its real contribution to the project's implementation is the detailed presentation of the first annual workplan and timetable only. While the report gives detailed account of the Inception Workshop (not necessary to be included in the inception report), the report doesn't present the actions to be taken as the result of the conclusions and recommendations of the Inception Workshop. Equally so, even if the parties accepted the no-cost extension of the project, the report does not elaborate on the implications of that decision on the project's budget as well as on the overall project's workplan and timetable.

Two PIRs have been produced so far (2011 and 2012), which is according to the reporting schedule. In the 2011 PIR, the project's implementation rating given by UNESCO-IHP is Highly Satisfactory and it states that "The project is progressing in a very promising way and is fully satisfying the expectations...With the countries being fully supportive to reach the project's ambitious objectives it is expected that the project will continue its commendable development." The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor gave it the Satisfactory mark stating that "...the project team must make sure that project budget expenditures will reach the target at the end of 2011." The 2012 PIR has been submitted to the UNDP. UNESCO IHP gave it the Highly Satisfactory mark, while the implementing agency has not yet rated it.

The Quarterly Progress Reports have been regularly prepared and submitted. However, these reports are essentially a simple list of actions and outputs taken and/or prepared without any further elaboration on eventual problems, gaps and risks perceived. No Periodic Thematic Reports have been produced yet.

In addition to the above reports, the SC and Project Team meeting reports are regularly prepared and distributed. The background documents prepared for the SC meetings are generally of good quality. Although the SC meeting reports are entitled as "Minutes" they do provide only the limited amount of the discussion by meeting's participants. It would also help if the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting would be summarised, either in the main body of the text or as an annex.

The evaluator rates the Monitoring and Evaluation System as satisfactory , because only minor shortcomings are perceived, which do not affect the overall effectiveness of the system.

3.2.3. Execution and implementation modalities

The executive and implementation structure is dispersed between several locations. The seat of the implementing agency (UNDP) is in Bratislava. The UNDP's Chief Technical Advisor is not interfering with day-to-day operations. The seat of the executing agency (UNESCO IHP) and the Project Supervision is in Paris. The Project Coordination Unit is established in Trebinje, embedded within the Water Agency of the Republika Srpska of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Project Coordinator (in the Project Document: the Chief Technical Advisor) is with the UNESCO Category 2 centre (IGRAC) in Delft. The role of the PCU in Trebinje is mainly the processing of data collected by the DIKTAS team and development of the project information system, and staffed only by one GIS expert. The PCU is also providing, through Water Agency, some minor secretarial functions.

The formal communication with the countries is carried out by the Implementing Agency, whereas day-to-day execution of the project is continuously coordinated/supervised jointly by the Project Coordinator and the Project Supervision at UNESCO in Paris. The logistical and administrative matters are partly handled by the UNESCO BRESCE antenna office in Sarajevo. While the execution and implementation modalities may look complicated, they seem to be cost effective. What is most important, all the countries consider this modality as acceptable and are satisfied with the hitherto project management performance.

The TORs for the DIKTAS National Focal Points were prepared in the early stage of the project's implementation and they were appointed soon after. This has significantly contributed to the country's ownership of the project, which was evident during the evaluator's interviews with the NFPs. The NEUs have been established only virtually, since large group of national consultants has been engaged in the implementation of the project's activities, primarily the TDA. However, no offices were specifically designated for the NEUs, as stipulated by the PD.

Practical arrangements for the meetings organised during the last two years seem to be working and the preparation for the meetings are efficient. The meetings' participants that were interviewed were satisfied with the financial, technical and logistical arrangements.

3.2.4. Assistance by the UNDP (RCU and country offices)

UNDP is the implementing agency for the DIKTAS project. It has been responsible for the preparation of the project document. During the execution of the project, UNDP Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) is not providing operational support but has a supervising role only. Its main responsibility is monitoring and evaluation of the project/s implementation. All reports (PIR and quarterly reports, in particular) are sent to UNDP Regional Office in Bratislava. Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) reviews the reports and gives final rate to the PIR. UNDP and RTA have been involved in the selection of Project Coordinator, and of the international and national consultants. Finally, RTA is the member of the Steering Committee, where he has provided guidance to the project with respect to GEF rules, as well as given the critical advice on the development and preparation of TDA. UNDP also participates in key meetings. Its role is also to stay "on hold" to react in case of serious situations, which fortunately has not been the case so far. The UNDP country offices are not involved in the implementation of the project. Overall, the assistance of the UNDP RCU is efficient, countries are satisfied with its performance and swift response when it was needed, while the role of UNDP country offices needs to be reconsidered.

The evaluator rates the assistance of the UNDP as **satisfactory**. Possibilities for greater involvement of UNDP country offices in the remaining period of the project's implementation should be explored.

3.2.5. Operational support by UNESCO

UNESCO IHP is responsible for the execution of the project and is providing day-to-day support and assistance to the project partners and countries involved in the project. All countries are satisfied with the operational support provided by UNESCO. They claim that the communication with all working groups is very good, while the logistical and financial arrangements are handled in an effective way. UNESCO is managing the budget independently from the UNDP, based on the approved budget lines. Inside the DIKTAS Management Team, Project Supervision and the Project Coordinator prepare budgetary requests jointly. Logistical and administrative support by the UNESCO BRESCCE antenna office in Sarajevo is efficient.

The evaluator rates the operational support by the UNESCO as **satisfactory**. Financial reporting and reporting from the meetings should be improved.

3.2.6. Coordination and operational issues by the PCU

Initially, the PCU was supposed to be established in Croatia, but due to the administrative and technical reasons, that was not possible and the offer of Bosnia and Herzegovina to host it was accepted. The PCU, which has a central function in the project, is now physically embedded within the Water Agency of Republika Srpska, which is providing some secretarial functions for the project. The fact that the Project Coordinator is located elsewhere country representatives, partners or the evaluator as a constraint or a problem has not perceived. The progress of all activities is carefully monitored and evaluated by the PCU staff in relation to the work plan and timetable. Constraints in progress, e.g. delays in the production of outputs are addressed by regularly updating these documents and endorsing these changes by the project partners and beneficiaries, and reported at the annual PSC meetings.

3.2.7. Role and contributions of partners

In addition to two major partners in the project, UNDP and UNESCO IHP, a score of other partners is involved in its implementation. Three partners have been singled out as the most active, namely the GWP Med, IGRAC and IAH (International Association of Hydrogeologists). The first one is actively involved in the implementation of the Component 4 related to the stakeholders' participation. IGRAC has provided the Project Coordinator and contributes to the hydrogeological and informational activities of the project. The IAH is assisting through its Karst Commission, on a no cost basis (only travel expenses are covered by the project), with its wide network of experts in providing advice on technical issues related to karst groundwater aquifer management. All three partners are bringing their own co-financing to the project. In a somewhat less active role, the water agencies of participating countries are also involved, as well as the Slovenian Karst Institute and the Croatian Karst Centre. Finally, the Sava River Commission has been active in supporting the project in its early stages, but its role has recently been less visible. It would be important that its profile within the project be raised in the remaining period of the project's implementation as it may provide significant contribution to the project's sustainability. The evaluator finds that partners' role in the project's execution is important and their contribution critical for its success and sustainability.

3.2.8. Identification and management of risks (adaptive management)

The Project Document identified only one major potential risk: the lack of sustained political support. Hence, during the identification of project's components and activities the focus was oriented towards strengthening the commitment of countries to improve knowledge on the groundwater aquifer, and building sustainable management system that will succeed in this transboundary context.

The 2011 PIR concluded that political support for the project's goals achieved so far has been strong, and that the overall risk rating of the project is Low. Consequently, there was no need for any adaptation of project objectives, outcomes and outputs. Similar conclusion was reached in the 2012 PIR.

The Steering Committee proposed a 6-month no-cost extension and it has been granted. On the whole, this extension has not required change in the projects' goals and objectives. The activities' workplans have been adjusted accordingly. The most important changes relate to the workplans of the two most important outputs: TDA and SAP. The time planned for the preparation of the TDA was, first, shortened at the suggestion of RTA and agreed upon by the PSC, and when the extension period is counted in, it is supposed to be completed by mid 2013. It was also agreed at the PSC that the pilot sites, which were initially planned to be implemented along with the TDA preparation, will now serve as SAP early implementation platform and will therefore be conducted in 2013. The SAP is supposed to be completed by the end of the third quarter 2013. The evaluator has found that these changes have not significantly affected the overall goal of the project, and that there was no need to change initial project's goals and objectives. Equally so, the country representatives interviewed have been in agreement with those changes. However, the evaluator finds that there may be a certain risk arising from the postponement of the abovementioned activities, particularly if the adoption period for these two major outputs will be extended. The fact that consultation process on TDA and SAP within and between countries may take longer than expected should be factored in. In spite of that, it could be concluded that the project management has respected the principles of adaptive management and that the changes that have taken place were for the benefit of the overall project's implementation.

3.3. Results

The impact of the project is addressed here by the Outcomes recorded in the APR/PIR reports. Two reports submitted so far were examined, for 2011 and 2012, in combination with the project Quarterly Reports, and as well as results of the interviews with country representatives and information supplied by the DIKTAS PCU. However, it is evident that the current state of the DIKTAS project, having in mind its delayed start, allows only for an interim assessment of the project's results, and the MTE should be cautious with an evaluation how much the overall results will finally be attained.

3.3.1. Attainment of objectives

As stated in the PD, the overall objective (goal) of the project is (i) to improve the understanding of the transboundary water resources of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, (ii) to facilitate their equitable and sustainable utilization, and (iii) to protect the unique groundwater dependent ecosystems that characterize the Dinaric Karst region of the Balkan peninsula. During the two years of project's implementation, the focus was on the activities of the part (i) of the overall objective. The working groups established, and the national experts working within them, advised by a group of international renowned experts, brought about the expanded knowledge of the regional groundwater aquifer system. Although the information collected was already existing, the experts collated, systematised and mapped it, which was not an easy task considering different water resources management as well as mapping and information collection systems that were developed in the past in the countries of the region.

Under Objective/Outcome 1 (Countries recognize the Karst Aquifer System as a shared and highly vulnerable resource, and agree to take steps to deal with its transboundary implications) good progress has been made towards preparation of the TDA, which is the main output for this objective/outcome. Three working groups established (hydrogeology; environment and socio-

economics; and legal and institutional framework) have prepared national reports. The regional synthesis that will prioritize the transboundary problems in 7 areas identified is still pending. It is important to stress that the problems' analysis should cover the entire region as a singular area, in order to avoid spatial fragmentation. The GIS database of the DIKTAS Information System has been developed. The GIS layers produced are the simpler ones, while composite maps such as the groundwater quality map and aquifer vulnerability map are yet to be produced. It has to be mentioned that mapping information obtained from countries was not always compatible, and the layers produced so far could already be considered as a significant achievement at a regional scale. Although there is no indication that this objective will not be attained, particularly having in mind that the deadline for the adoption of TDA was extended to the end of Q2 2013, efforts will have to be increased to produce draft TDA soon as time will be needed by the countries to review it and adopt it. Reaching an agreement on priority transboundary problems among countries will be the first major test of this project. Another pending issue is the fact that no local scale activities were yet initiated. While the implementation of local scale activities was transferred to objective/outcome 3, output 7 (SAP), the preparations for the local projects should start soon.

Objective/outcome 2 (the strengthening collective knowledge and coordination among development plans and countries, agencies and donors improves sustainability of the resource) focuses on establishing the coordination mechanism among countries to manage transboundary groundwater aquifer systems (Regional or Multy-Country Consultation and Information Exchange Body - CIE). The progress was rather marginal as only TORs for both functions of CIE (multy country, and coordination with other initiatives in the region) were drafted and adopted by PSC. The implementation of this activity will have to be speeded up, as it is necessary that this body becomes operational during the lifetime of the project, and negotiation process within and between countries may take time.

Attainment of the objective/outcome 3 (political commitment reached among the countries on implementing priority legal, institutional and policy reforms for the protection and equitable utilization of the Karst Aquifer System) is progressing satisfactorily with regards to the establishment of Inter Ministerial Committees, having in mind obstacles that exist in countries while establishing these bodies. The efforts to establish IMCs in the remaining two countries, including greater involvement of the PCU, should be increased. The preparation of the SAP and holding a partnership conference is planned in 2013. However, the preparation for the local activities that were transferred from the outcome 1 should start soon, as this might take longer time than expected.

Activities under objective/outcome 4 (long term sustainability of achievements enhanced through public and political awareness campaigns, stakeholder involvement and replication mechanisms) had a slower start, which has caused some delay in delivery of SA and SPPS. While the Stakeholders Analysis and the Stakeholders and Public Participation Strategy have finally been prepared, the Information and Strategic Communication Plan has been prepared only as draft and is still to be approved. The project was represented at several media events, and the web site, although a bit rudimentary in its layout and information provided, was opened soon after the project started. The communication products are of good quality and have been widely disseminated, but its range has to be expanded, particularly by including project results. The project is somehow lagging behind in the implementation of the capacity building activities.

The evaluator rates the overall attainment of the project's objectives and results as **moderately satisfactory**. The implementation of the project's activities has differed among components and has not always been according to the workplan. There are several risks, such as those caused by the delay in establishing multi-country coordination body (CIE), which is critical for the adoption of major outputs such as TDA.

3.3.2. Prospects of sustainability

As with any initiative of this type, results will only be sustainable if supported by the governments' policies and practice at all levels. While the PD has not elaborated a fully-fledged sustainability strategy, it does present several elements essential for the DIKTAS project's sustainability, namely: continuity of stakeholders' involvement in project formulation and implementation; the need that the issue of transboundary groundwater aquifer management becomes and remains the priority issue; synergies with parallel GEF projects and processes in the region; presence of UNESCO and UNDP in the region; public awareness and communication; international attention and donor's mobilization to provide support; continuous communication and dialogue with development partners; and replication activities.

Existence of the organizational and institutional arrangements is among the most important indicators of the DIKTAS project's sustainability. With the completion of the TOR, the seeds for a coordination body (CIE) have been placed. The countries are moving towards establishing IMCs, which could be considered equally as important as establishment of CIE. It is too early to evaluate the policy and regulatory framework, as the TDA is still in the making and has to be discussed and approved, while SAP preparation will not start before mid-2013. Equally so, the mainstreaming of groundwater management issues into development planning cannot be assessed before TDA and SAP will be prepared, discussed and adopted. Development of appropriate institutional capacity is important sustainability factor. Several stakeholders' training workshops have been carried out, but other forms of capacity building will have to take place yet, and it would be appropriate if preparation for their implementation will start soon. Finally, financial sustainability is critical for the overall project's sustainability. Talks have to start yet with the potential donors, but this could be effectively done only if and when the appropriate replication strategy will be prepared and adopted.

Initial indications, based on QPRs and PIRs, which have identified no risks to sustainability, are that the project's results are moving in the right direction. The evaluator has found that country representatives have fully accepted the project and national focal points are showing a lot of enthusiasm for it. However, the real level of commitment, which will also show how the project is sustainable in reality, will be when the TDA will be presented and discussed, then during the preparation of SAP, which will form the backbone for concrete actions in the post-project period, and finally when the CIE will start functioning as the coordination and management body dealing with the real life conflicting situations.

The evaluator finds that the sustainability of the DIKTAS project is **moderately likely** since the indications are that the project is moving in the right direction, but major outputs are still to be delivered.

3.4. Conclusions

The conclusions, based on the findings of the MTE, are presented in the form of a brief consolidated assessment by each evaluation criterion, namely the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability:

- The DIKTAS project is still highly **relevant**, both with respect to its design and implementation, and its overall “architecture” should remain unchanged. The continuous importance of DIKTAS is based on the fact that it is still one of rare projects and/or initiatives, globally, dealing with the issue of coordination and management in the transboundary karst groundwater aquifers. From the perspective of beneficiaries, primarily the countries actively participating in the project, there is still a strong correlation between the DIKTAS' objectives, outcomes and outputs and the countries' needs. The necessity to establish an effective coordination and management mechanism, such as CIE, could only increase in the future considering the growing dependence of the region on utilisation of

karst groundwater resources. However, the speed in establishing the IMCs and CIE will be one of the most important tests of the countries' perception of the project's relevance and appropriateness. The project is also relevant in the wider regional context, and synergies should be created with complementary projects and initiatives, such as International Sava River Basin Commission, the Medpartnership, and the GEF Neretva-Trebinjica project. Finally, the SFR's indicators are still relevant because they are well designed and reflecting the relevance of the project, but also because the major outputs are still to be produced. Consequently, there is no need to propose any change in the indicator system.

- The project has been moderately **effective** in achieving its objectives. The results, i.e. the outputs, produced for the TDA so far are mainly sectoral reports related to country specific issues relevant to groundwater aquifer management, and they have been of good quality and delivered according to schedule. However, the usefulness of these outputs could be assessed only when the TDA and SAP will be prepared, hence the element of risk associated with evaluation based on this criterion. While the stakeholders' mobilisation process is now in full course, it had a somewhat slower start than planned, and those mobilised are mainly of the administrative/governmental provenance. Preparation of the integrated data base is progressing well considering difficulties caused by frequent incompatibility of data. Project has to reach out to other projects and initiatives in the region to achieve full regional synergy. The management and decision-making structures, as well as the roles played by UNDP and UNESCO, have proven to be effective. Finally, the direct cause and effect analysis for the DIKTAS project cannot be performed, because its outcomes are not envisaged to have direct impact on the karst groundwater aquifer ecosystem in the region covered by the project. However, the coordination mechanism that will be established will potentially be very effective in solving the conflicting situations that might arise in the future in the transboundary aquifers.
- The project's **efficiency** is satisfactory. Its management and administrative arrangements are cost-effective and rational. National focal points are satisfied with these arrangements as well as with the coordination between the project management and national levels. The use of financial resources is appropriate to the results achieved so far. The outputs were mainly country related and they are still to be integrated into global, i.e. regional, outputs such as TDA and SAP. Consequently, most of the resources, aside from the project management, were spent on country related activities. The operation of the UNESCO BRESCE antenna office in Sarajevo is efficient and it is following the established procurement procedures in contracting goods and services. Minor shortcomings that will have to be solved in the future relate to the co-financing reporting, and adjustment of the annual workplans resulting from project revisions.
- The DIKTAS project **results** are moderately satisfactory. While a number of outputs has been delivered, primarily related to the analysis of various aspects of karst groundwater aquifer management in national context, serious work is still expected to be carried out to produce TDA and SAP, which carries a certain degree of risk. Positive achievement is certainly the awareness of countries that water use issues in transboundary regions have to be solved in a coordinated manner, particularly having in mind the planned interventions in water infrastructure in the region. This will, hopefully, result soon in a management body with representatives of all the countries sitting on it (CIE). Major integrating exercises will be preparation, discussion and adoption of TDA and SAP, as well as establishment of national and regional coordination bodies (IMCs and CIE).
- The **sustainability** of the project is moderately likely, primarily because the coordination mechanisms are not yet fully in place, and the intensity of the capacity building activities should be increased. The sustainability strategy doesn't exist, while the replication strategy, although not envisaged in the PD, should be prepared. The participation of stakeholders is gradually increasing and the range of stakeholders groups involved should be expanded, notably with the national NGOs and users associations.

Based on the abovementioned criteria, the evaluation has found that, overall, a very solid progress has been made towards achievement of the DIKTAS project objectives. The overall rate of the project is **satisfactory**. Keeping in mind that the DIKTAS project is only mid way through its implementation course, and that highly competent project management is in place, there is no doubt that the project's performance can be maintained, particularly if the recommendations below will be taken in consideration.

4. Recommendations

The MTE of the DIKTAS project has identified a number of issues, which are presented below as recommendations to be used during the remaining period of the project's implementation.

4.1. Corrective actions for the design, duration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

The overall approach taken to the project's design and implementation has resulted in satisfactory progress against the objectives, and only minor recommendations for corrective actions regarding the design, duration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project are proposed.

Recommendation 1: *The adaptive management approach taken by the project to-date needs to be continued as it permits adjustments to project activities in response to changing circumstances (including funding and co-financing availability, successes that can be built on, and failures that require a modification in approach), based on clearly developed justification, feedback from participants and the agreement of all countries participating in the project, and without losing sight of the fundamental objectives of the project.*

Responsible: Project Management (Project Supervision and Project Coordinator), UNDP (Regional Technical Advisor), PSC.

Recommendation 2: *As the report on co-financing materialized during the last two years has not been presented, an analysis of the co-financing contributions made so far, based on the response of countries and partners hopefully to be received soon after the respective request has been sent recently by the Project Management, as well as an assessment of prospects for the remaining period should be made. Co-financing is a concrete contribution to the project's implementation (even if it is in kind) as well as an indicator of commitment by the project's partners. The assessment should include an identification of "risky" co-financiers, such as INFO/RAC, and a proposal for actions to be taken to substitute the co-financing that will be identified as improbable to materialize.*

Responsible: Project Coordinator and Project Supervision.

Recommendation 3: *Consistent system of reporting on co-financing needs to be established. The co-financing report should provide minimum information such as the amount of yearly co-financing by donor and/or partner, separately in cash and in kind; distribution of co-financing per component; rate of co-financing provided and the amount left for the remaining period of the project's implementation; budgetary items co-financing is referred to (experts, equipment, offices, other); perceived risk in provision of co-financing by partner and/or donor and proposal for actions to be taken to mitigate risks; and other elements that PCU will propose and PSC adopt as necessary. The co-financing report should be presented to, discussed and adopted by the PSC on a yearly basis.*

Responsible: Project Financial Manager, UNDP.

Recommendation 4: *Make financial reporting more transparent by presenting expenditures per component, in addition to the budgetary items groups, as is the case now. Reporting should include*

expenditures by partner. The revision of the project's budget should be made to indicate the changes caused by the project's extension. It is important that revised budget takes in consideration the dynamics of the future implementation of the project, in particular the need to avoid the expenditure of large funds during the last year of the project's implementation. The budget revision should be detailed enough to show division of funds among components, outcomes, outputs and activities of the project. Eventual additional extension of the period of the project's implementation should be followed by the respective budget revision.

Responsible: Project Financial Manager, UNDP.

Recommendation 5: *Meetings reports, in particular of the PSC meetings, should be made more substantive by presenting better record of the discussions held during the meetings. The conclusions and recommendations of the meeting should be clearly presented either in the main body of the text or as an annex, because in the current reports they are presented in a fragmented way and often hidden in the text. The Quarterly Progress Reports are rather rudimentary, listing only the actions that have been taken in the reporting period. While the extensive QPR reporting should be avoided, it would help if QPRs would contain the list of major risks identified in the reporting period and actions to be taken to deal with them. In the absence of the half yearly progress reports, the yearly reporting period (between two PIRs, or two PSC meetings) might be too long, and some risks might pass unnoticed and without needed actions being taken to deal with them.*

Responsible: Project Coordinator

Recommendation 6: *The Project Coordinator is advised to visit the project region in the coming period more frequently. It will be a critical period when major outputs, such as TDA, will have to be finalized. As countries are supposed to be actively participating in the discussion on TDA, they should be stimulated to do so by the project management. Because consultation process on SAP, as well as local case studies, will follow immediately after the next PSC meeting the continuous presence of the project management in the region will be absolutely necessary.*

Responsible: Project Coordinator

Recommendation 7: *While the current extension was granted because the funds were effectively made available only in October 2010, it may be justified to request another no-cost extension of 6 to 12 months duration. The indications that it might be needed are: (1) the fact that TDA when it will be finalized will require ample time for the consultation process, including the discussion with the PSC; (2) the required time for the consultation process on SAP and local case studies might be longer than envisaged; and (3) the disbursement of funds might be delayed with a real danger that towards the current closure date of the project larger amount will remain non disbursed.*

Responsible: Project management, PSC, UNDP, UNESCO IHP.

4.2. Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

The project has been soundly planned and has been implemented following the workplans (initial and as amended by the PSC), while all implementation of all the planned activities has been initiated. Actions required to follow up or reinforce initial benefits are as follows:

Recommendation 8: *Finalise draft TDA by the end of the first quarter 2013 at the latest, and discuss it at the next PSC meeting, which should be held during the second quarter of 2013. This deadline should not be missed. TDA should identify and prioritize transboundary problems, but avoid doing so in a fragmented way that emphasizes the local scale. TDA is not a negotiated document but a tool for engagement of stakeholders around the common issues. Therefore, it is important that as much as*

possible of the regional institutional coordination arrangement, envisaged by the project, be in place for the commencement of the TDA discussion process (see Recommendations 10 and 11 below).

Responsible: Project Management Team.

Recommendation 9: *Efforts to build the GIS as the basis for the DIKTAS Information System should be continued. While the majority of sectoral maps has been produced, in spite of problems related to inconsistencies between the countries' data bases, efforts should be concentrated on producing the integrated maps, in particular the Groundwater Quality Map and Aquifer Vulnerability Map. The essence of GIS is integration, both physical and socio-economic, of data and it is an important instrument for the TDA/SAP process.*

Responsible: Project Management Team (PCU, Working Groups).

Recommendation 10: *Secure national commitment by establishing Inter ministerial committees (IMCs), which are pivotal for the consultation process inside the countries. IMCs will also propose members for the region wide coordination body – the CIE. So far, two countries have established their IMCs (Croatia and Montenegro). Every effort should be made to establish the remaining two IMCs (Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina), preferably before the end of 2012, while the already established ones should become operative as soon as possible, i.e. their inception meetings should be organised. Consequently, all IMCs have to be established and be operative before the end of the first quarter 2013 in order to participate in the discussions on the draft TDA. The Project Coordinator should assist countries in doing so (see Recommendation 6).*

Responsible: Participating countries, Project Coordinator.

Recommendation 11: *Regional coordination mechanism, the multi-country consultative and information exchange (CIE), needs to be established as a matter of priority as it will be the central regional coordination body to participate in the discussions on TDA and preparation of SAP. This body must be solid and efficient, because there is a consensus among countries in the region that this groundwater aquifer is case where intense use of water on one side can have repercussions on the other side of the transboundary aquifer. While the ToR for the CIE were prepared, efforts have to be oriented towards nomination of its members and effectuating its structure, operational modalities and level of participation, in particular strengthening efforts to have all Inter-Ministerial committees established soon .*

Responsible: Participating countries, Project Management, PSC.

Recommendation 12: *Preparatory activities for the demonstration projects at local level have to start as a matter of priority. Initially, these projects were meant to be implemented alongside with the TDA, but their start has been shifted to the forthcoming period to coincide with the start of the SAP preparation. The linkage between demo projects and SAP needs to be clearly established with a view of showing how that linkage will be established. SAP is a negotiated policy document endorsed at the highest policy level, which establishes clear priorities for action (policy, legal, institutional reforms and investments), while demo projects show how a certain priority will be practically applied at a local level. Therefore, the nature and location of the local demo projects have to be commensurate with the policies endorsed by SAP. It is recommended that by the end of the Q1 of 2013, a methodological paper be prepared to show the benefit of SAP/local projects linkage to be discussed and adopted by the PSC.*

Responsible: Project Coordinator, PSC.

Recommendation 13: *Increase the capacity building intensity. While capacity building is envisaged to be an on-going activity implemented throughout the entire duration of the project, the training and capacity building programme has to be prepared in order to start in 2013. The targeted programmes should include those where a certain base already exists, such as GIS, and where the resources utilised could be justified only if the number of users will dramatically increase. Other programmes should have to include the transboundary planning tools, primarily the land use planning tools, but also the decision-making tools including the use of models, the economic tools and EIA/SEA.*

Responsible: Project Management Team, Participating Countries.

Recommendation 14: *Speed up the preparation of the Information and Strategic Communication Plan. While this plan has been mentioned in the Project Document, no action has been taken to develop this strategy. It is true that some communication products have been delivered (see Recommendation 16), but more strategic approach is needed. The project is half way through its implementation and efforts have to be made to disseminate its achievements. The next PSC meeting should approve the Communication Plan.*

Responsible: GWP Med.

Recommendation 15: *Improve the project web site, and improve existing and developed new communication products. The web site is based on the IW:Learn template. Efforts should be continued to have it regularly updated. It would be useful if the date were always placed when an update is being made. The access to the project documentation needs to be made easier by making the availability of documents as wide as possible. Page should be prepared to monitor the progress of implementation of the project's activities per component and per country. The communication products already produced are quite rudimentary and new ones have to be prepared with a view to presenting the project's achievements. The possibility to develop the ipad/iphone and android application should be explored.*

Responsible: GWP Med, Project Management Team.

4.3. Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

The project has been adequately designed with due consideration given to its effectiveness and efficiency, and adequate management and monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure a timely response to any future needs. At this point, the following is recommended:

Recommendation 16: *Possibilities for greater involvement of UNDP country offices should be explored. These offices have been operating in the countries of the region for a long time and could be considered as an asset particularly when it comes to greater involvement of NGOs.*

Responsibility: UNDP

Recommendation 17: *The support of national and local stakeholders needs to continue to be built through a mainstreaming approach.*

Responsibility: GWP Med.

Recommendation 18: *Prepare the Replication Strategy. While the Project Document doesn't request it, it may be necessary to prepare one with a view to making the sustainability of the project more likely. In doing so the experiences of other projects, such as the MedPartnership, could be taken into account. The strategy should be adopted by the PSC during its next meeting in 2013.*

Responsibility: Project Coordinator, UNESCO IHP, PSC.

Recommendation 19: *Land use issues should be better addressed. The Working Groups reports do not cover this issue, although the land use planning is one of the most important instruments that could be used to address environmental protection of the groundwater aquifers in karst areas. During the finalization of TDA and preparation of SAP, and possibly within the local pilot site projects this issue should be addressed.*

Responsibility: Project Management Team.

4.4. Suggestions for strengthening ownership, management of potential risks

The ownership of the project is well embedded in its design, and countries are fully supporting its implementation. Measures taken to secure its sustainability are also serving the purpose of risk management. The following recommendations have the objective of linking the project with its wider context.

Recommendation 20: *Strengthen partnerships with other initiatives in the region, which are addressing similar issue. The obvious example is the Sava River Commission, which was participating in early stages of the project implementation. As it is an already "institutionalized" initiative and operating in an extension of the DIKTAS project's region, the modality for closer linkages with the Commission should be developed.*

Responsibility: UNDP, UNESCO IHP, Project Coordinator, PSC, Sava River Commission.

Recommendation 21: *The DIKTAS Information System should be integrated with other similar regional projects' information systems. Special issue is the continuation of the GIS and it is recommended that it be embedded within the Water Agency in Trebinje, but serving all countries that belong to the karst region. Possibilities should be sought to provide human resources to run the system. Also, the project should maintain dialogue with other projects in the area to maximize synergies.*

Responsibility: Project Management Team.

Recommendation 22: *The gender strategy was not developed during the initial phase of the project and its importance has not been raised as an issue. However, the issue should be revisited and eventually followed by the development and implementation of a gender-mainstreaming plan.*

Responsible: Project Management Team, PSC.

5. Lessons learned

The major lessons learned from the DIKTAS project implementation to date are summarized below. As the project is only at its mid-term stage, these should be viewed as being preliminary, and subject to re-evaluation and confirmation at the project's closure.

While not being large project in terms of financial resources employed, the DIKTAS project could be considered as a complex one with regards to the subject it is tackling - the transboundary karst groundwater aquifer management, which is one of the most complex water resources systems globally. The situation is made even more complex because the participating countries are exhibiting plenty of political, economic, ethnic, societal, managerial and overall developmental differences. From that perspective, the label given to the project in the PD as "global" is appropriate one, and

that makes it in itself an innovative and good practice. In addition to that overall mark, at the design and implementation level the DIKTAS project has exhibited several characteristics that could make it a model for other projects, namely:

- The project document encompasses a wide range of issues relevant for the main subject of the project. Its design is logical, coherent and consistent. What is missing in that part is replication strategy, which is considered to be one of the sustainability pillars. It should have been developed at that stage so that its implementation could start early enough. However, it has to be mentioned that experiences with replication were scarce at the time when the project's design was carried out.
- The involvement of major governmental stakeholders during the project preparation and the inception phases was substantial. This resulted in an unconditional countries' support and their commitment to make the DIKTAS project a success. The mobilisation of technical capacities in countries was also substantial. However, the involvement of other stakeholders (NGOs, users, professionals, for example) during the implementation phase took place at a somewhat slower pace.
- The project management is an example of how the project of this size could be run efficiently and effectively. Although management of the project is placed on several locations (Trebinje, Sarajevo, Bratislava, Paris, Delft), it functions well and to the satisfaction of countries, and it is using relatively modest financial resources.

It is almost impossible to identify in DIKTAS project the "bad" practices in the strictest sense of the word, not only because the project is now at the mid-term stage of implementation, but also because the overall implementation success rate doesn't allow to extract such practices. However, advice to be given to similar projects in the future is certainly to try to make an attempt to start some activities as early as possible, and especially those that might require ample time to mobilise or to be implemented, such as establishment of coordination bodies at national and regional level (in this case, IMCs and CIE), capacity building activities, and local demonstration projects.

Annexes

Annex I:	Terms of Reference
Annex II:	Itinerary of evaluator, including summary of field visits
Annex III:	List and contacts of persons interviewed
Annex IV:	List of documents reviewed
Annex V:	Questionnaires used and summary of results
Annex VI:	Co-financing and leveraged resources

Annex I

Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

1.1. Standard UNDP/GEF M&E requirements

UNESCO-IHP wishes to contract an independent international consultant to carry out the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the GEF-UNDP-UNESCO regional project “Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System (DIKTAS)” - PIMS no. 4056. The DIKTAS project is funded by the GEF, implemented by UNDP and executed by UNESCO-IHP. The evaluation will be carried out in line with the criteria of the project implementing agency – UNDP/GEF.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives:

- i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
- ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
- iii) to promote accountability for resource use;
- iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all projects with long implementation periods are strongly encouraged to conduct mid-term evaluations. In addition to providing an independent in-depth review of implementation progress, this type of evaluation is responsive to GEF Council decisions on transparency and better access of information during implementation.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

2. Objectives of the evaluation

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

This project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the UNDP/GEF regional coordination unit in Bratislava and as per the project document evaluation plan. It ought to provide the information about the status of project implementation to ensure accountability of the expenditures to date and the delivery of outputs and so that managers can make midcourse corrections as appropriate.

The main objective of this Mid-Term Evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce plausible recommendations on how to improve the project management practices during the remaining duration of the project (scheduled completion in July 2014). The Mid-term Evaluation serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability.

Its main objectives are:

- to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
- to ensure accountability for the achievement of the project and GEF objectives to improve understanding of transboundary groundwater resources of the Dinaric region and to

facilitate their equitable and sustainable utilization, including the protection of unique karst groundwater dependent ecosystems.

- to create the basis of replication of successful project outcomes achieved so far.

Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding.

More specifically, the evaluation should assess:

Project concept and design

EE should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The EE will revise the relevance of indicators and targets, review work plans, planned duration and budget of the project.

Implementation

The EE will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular the MTE is to assess the Project Management's use of adaptive management in project implementation.

Project outputs, outcomes, and impact

The External Evaluation (EE) will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. MTE should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The EE should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The EE will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

2.1. Evaluation criteria

The following evaluation criteria should be regarded in order to focus on the evaluation objectives:

- relevance: extend to which a development initiative and its intended outputs and outcomes are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries
- effectiveness: extend to which the initiative's intended results have been achieved
- efficiency: measure how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to results
- sustainability: measures the extent to which benefits of initiatives continue after external development assistance has come to end. The evaluators may look at factors such as establishment of sustainable financial mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the broader development policies and sectoral plans and economies or community production
- impact: measures changes in human development and people's well-being that are brought about by development initiatives, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended

3. Scope of work

An independent international consultant will conduct the mid-term evaluation. He/she will look at the following aspects:

3.1.1. Project relevance and strategy

- How and why project outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results;
- Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective way towards results;

- Do the outcomes developed during the inception phase still represent the best project strategy for achieving the project objectives (in light of updated underlying factors)? Consider alternatives;
- Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the project preparation?
- Do the recipient governments maintain their financial commitments to the project?

3.1.2. Preparation and readiness

- Are the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe?
- Were the capacities of executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?
- Were lessons from the previous phases of the project properly incorporated in the project design?
- Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?
- Were counterpart resources (funding, staff and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at the project entry?

3.1.3. Stakeholder participation during project preparation

- Did the project involve the relevant stakeholders through information-sharing, consultation and by seeking their participation in the project design?

3.1.4. Underlying factors/Assumptions

- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project management strategies for these factors;
- Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made;
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumption made by the project

3.1.5. Project organization/management arrangements

- Were the project roles properly assigned during the project design?
- Are the project roles in line with the UNDP and GEF programme guides?
- Can the management arrangement model suggested by the project be considered as an optimum model? If no, please come up with suggestions and recommendations
- Were the management arrangements suggested by the project document implemented and how efficient they are?

3.1.6. Project budget and duration

- Assess if the project budget and duration were planned in a cost-effective way;

3.1.7. Design of Project Monitoring and Evaluation system

- Examine whether or not the project has a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives;
- Examine whether or not the M&E plan includes a baselines (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results and adequate funding for M&E activities;
- Examine whether or not the time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs are specifies;

3.1.8. Sustainability and replication strategy

- Assess if project sustainability and replicability strategy was developed during the project design and assess its relevance;

3.1.9. Gender perspective

- Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing project interventions;
- How gender considerations are mainstreamed into project interventions.

3.2. Project implementation

3.2.1. Adaptive management in project implementation

- Monitoring system. Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:
 - ✓ Do they provide the necessary information?
 - ✓ Do they involve key partners?
 - ✓ Are they efficient?
 - ✓ Are additional tools required?
- Reconstruct baseline data if necessary¹;
- Risk Management:
 - ✓ Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why;
 - ✓ Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted;
 - ✓ Assess the project's risk identification and management systems. Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied?
- Work Planning:
 - ✓ Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it. Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content;
 - ✓ Assess the use of routinely updated work plans;
 - ✓ Are work-planning processes result-based²? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning;
- Financial management:
 - ✓ Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions;
 - ✓ Is there due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?
 - ✓ Did promised co-financing materialize?
- Reporting:
 - ✓ Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management;
 - ✓ Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners;
- Delays:
 - ✓ Assess if there were delays in project implementation, if so, what were the reasons;
 - ✓ Did the delays affect the achievement of project's outcomes and/or sustainability and if so, then how?

3.2.2. UNDP Contribution

¹ See p.67 of "Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. United Nations Development Programme" NY, 2009; <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex3.html>

² RBM Support documents are available at <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/methodologies.htm>

- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. Consider:
 - ✓ Field visits;
 - ✓ Project reviews, PIR preparation and follow-up;
 - ✓ GEF guidance;
 - ✓ Operational support;
- Assess contribution to the project from UNDP “soft” assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination) and suggest measures to strengthen UNDP soft assistance to the project management;

3.2.3. UNESCO-IHP Contribution

- Assess the role of UNESCO-IHP in project execution and implementation;
- Assess the UNESCO-IHP assistance in day-to-day project operation, guidance in procurement and financial management and monitoring. Suggest measures to strengthen UNESCO-IHP efficiency and responsiveness if necessary;

3.2.4. Stakeholder Participation, Partnership Strategy

- Assess whether or not local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary;
- Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms;
- Identify opportunities for stronger partnerships;

Products expected from the evaluation

- Inception report. Based on this ToR, initial briefing with the GEF, UNDP, UNESCO-IHP programme units and/or evaluation manager, and the desk review, the evaluator should develop an inception report. The inception report should include, inter alia:
 - Evaluation purpose and scope
 - Evaluation methodology
 - Evaluation matrix – this identifies the key evaluation questions and how they will be answered by the methods selected³
 - Detailed resource requirements tied to evaluation activities and deliverables detailed in the work plan;
- Draft mid-term evaluation report. It should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations⁴. Prior to submission of the final report the draft version shall be circulated for comments to the UNDP-GEF team, UNESCO-IHP Paris, UNESCO Sarajevo office Project Coordination Unit (Trebinje), beneficiaries and other governmental and non-governmental counterpart (to be specified in the inception report);
- Final mid-term evaluation report. The final report will be submitted upon review and acceptance of the draft report and presented in a way that will make the information accessible and comprehensible in the English and Russian languages;

³ Annex 3 of the “Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. United Nations Development Programme” NY, 2009; <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex3.html>

⁴ The evaluation report quality standards are provided in Annex 7 of the “Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. United Nations Development Programme” NY, 2009; <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex3.html>

- Evaluation executive summary. The evaluation report should include comprehensive and information-rich executive summary. This summary will be used as a stand-alone product to enhance the readership of the evaluation, and should be understandable to non-technical readers
- Evaluation blurb. This is a one-paragraph description designed to increase the visibility of published content and announce the report publication on the webpage and via electronic announcements and list serves.

Indicative outline of the mid-term evaluation report

The key product expected from this mid-term evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, include the following contents:

- Executive summary (1-2 pages)
 - ✓ Brief description of the project
 - ✓ Context and purpose of the evaluation
 - ✓ Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned
- Introduction (2-3 pages)
 - ✓ Project background
 - ✓ Purpose of the evaluation
 - ✓ Key issues to be addressed
 - ✓ Methodology of the evaluation
 - ✓ Structure of the evaluation
- Project and its development context (3-4 pages)
 - ✓ Project start and its duration
 - ✓ Implementation status
 - ✓ Problems that the project seeks to address
 - ✓ Immediate and development objectives of the project
 - ✓ Main stakeholders
 - ✓ Results expected
- Findings and Conclusions (8-9 pages)
 - ✓ Project concept and formulation
 - Project relevance
 - Implementation approach
 - Countries ownership/Engagement
 - Stakeholders participation
 - Replication approach
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - UNDP comparative advantage
 - UNESCO comparative advantage
 - Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector
 - Indicators
 - Management arrangements
 - ✓ Implementation
 - Financial management
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Execution and implementation modalities
 - Assistance by the UNDP (RCU and country offices)
 - Operational support by UNESCO
 - Coordination and operational issues by the PCU

- Role and contributions of partners
- Identification and management of risks (adaptive management)
- ✓ Results
 - Attainment of objectives
 - Prospects of sustainability
- ✓ Recommendations (4-6 pages)
 - Corrective actions for the design, duration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
 - Suggestions for strengthening ownership, management of potential risks
- ✓ Lessons learned (3-5 pages)
 - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
- ✓ Annexes
 - ToR
 - Itinerary of evaluator, including summary of field visits
 - List and contacts of persons interviewed
 - List of documents reviewed
 - Questionnaires used and summary of results
 - Co-financing and Leveraged Resources (see Table 1 attached)

The length of the mid-term evaluation report shall not exceed 30 pages in total (not including annexes).

Evaluation methodology

The mid-term evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining duration of the project.

The mid-term evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The methodology to be used by the mid-term evaluator should be provided in detail. It should include information on:

- Documentation review (desk study)
- Field visits to the project sites;
- Interviews and questionnaires should be held with but not limited to the following organizations and individuals: UNDP/GEF management unit from Bratislava, UNESCO-IHP Paris, UNESCO Antenna Office Sarajevo, UNDP Country Offices, Project Team, members of Steering Committee, members of governmental and non-governmental institutions cooperating with the project, educational and research institutions involved in and/or benefitting from the project results etc.
- Participatory techniques and other relevant approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

The Mid Term Evaluator would also provide ratings of Project achievements according to the GEF Project Review Criteria.

Management arrangements

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out by the international independent Evaluation Expert (EE). The logistical support to the EE will be provided by the Project Coordination Unit (Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina), UNESCO-IHP Paris and the UNESCO Antenna office in Sarajevo.

Duration of the mid-term evaluation

The assignment is expected to commence in mid-August 2012 and be completed by mid October 2012. The MTE shall not exceed 28 consultancy days.

Activities	Deliveries	Timeframe (not to exceed)
1	Inception report preparation	7 days
2	Field visits, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings, draft MTE report submitted and comments received	14 days
3	Final report submitted and accepted by supervisor	7 days

Duties, skills and qualifications of the Evaluation Expert

- Duties and responsibilities
 - ✓ Desk review of documents, development of draft methodology, detailed work plan and MTE outline (5 days homework)
 - ✓ Debriefing project team and implementing partners (2 days)
 - ✓ Interviews with project implementing and executing partners, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor, donor representatives (3 days, Skype conferences)
 - ✓ Interviews with the relevant Government representatives (4 days)
 - ✓ Field visits to project sites and interviews with the key experts in the breakdown of project components (7 days)
 - ✓ Development and submission of the first draft MTE report (4 days homework)
 - ✓ Finalization and submission of the final MTE report (3 day homework)
- Qualifications and competencies
 - ✓ 10 year of technical knowledge and experience in the thematic areas related to water resource management, environmental management, international waters, climate change, transboundary monitoring, and other environmental issues;
 - ✓ Proven expertise and experience in conducting evaluations (including evaluations on international level)
 - ✓ Sound RBM expertise (especially result-orientated monitoring and evaluation)
 - ✓ Excellent command of technical English related to water resources management language. Knowledge of one of the languages spoken in the region would be an asset.

- Contract Type, Duration and Payment Modality

The international independent Evaluation Expert will be hired for maximum 28 days under Individual Consultant contract by UNESCO. He/she will be paid daily consultancy fee and travel costs (economy class ticket, and DSA). DSA and other travel related expenses will be calculated according to the UN official rates.

Duty station: home based with in-country missions to the project countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro) and Paris.

A complete application package should consist of a CV and a letter of motivation.

List of documents to be reviewed

- Project document and its annexes
- Project Inception Report
- Project Annual Work Plans
- Annual/quarterly operational and progress reports
- Project procurement and financial documents

- 2011/2012 UNDP/GEF Project Implementation Reviews (APR/PIR)
- Technical reports prepared by the experts and consultants in the breakdown of the project components
- Minutes of the Steering Committee meetings

Annex II

Itinerary of evaluator, including summary of field visits

Country	Place	Date	Name	Institution	Position	Summary
Croatia	Zagreb	24/8	Darko Rajhenbah	Ministry of Agriculture	National Project Focal Point	Interview revolved around the practical issues related to the implementation of the project as well as an assessment of the Croatia's support to the project. The position of Croatia towards the project was positive. Interviewee mentions that some activities are delayed, that relatively few outputs were completed but that it is too early to draw conclusions. Satisfied with the management arrangements.
			Gordana Ruklić	Ministry of Environment	GEF Operational Focal Point	Interviewee has the opinion that this is one of the best run projects. As GEF Operational FP she is not very much involved in daily operations of the project. Croatia offers full support.
			Dejan Komatina	Sava River Commission	International organisation	At the beginning the Sava River Commission was very much involved in the implementation of the project, particularly in its preparatory and inception phase, but not as much of late. The Commission is very much interested to get involved more actively as it offers opportunity for longer term sustainability of the project as well as an extension of its impacts to the wider region.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo	28/8	Biljana Rajić	Ministry of Foreign Trade	National Project Focal Point	Very much satisfied with the implementation of the project, but mentions difficulties within Bosnia and Herzegovina arising from its peculiar institutional structure. The problem is also that the human resources of the ministry are too thin, but the interviewee is very much involved in the project's implementation. Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the project.
			Senad Oprašić		GEF Operational Focal Point	Interviewee explained the modes of operation with regards to GEF project and exposed some difficulties which may cause delays in responding to requests by the executing agency.
			Siniša Šešum	UNESCO	Senior Programme Officer	Interviewee explained the role of UNESCO BRESCE Antenna Office in Sarajevo as well as how the administrative operations of the project are carried out. Impression is that it is very effective, and

						that financial and administrative matters are dealt on time. The office provides logistical support to the organisation of meetings., and handle all contracts as well as all the payments.
	Trebinje	29/8	Vedran Furtula Branko Čolić	PCU Trebišnjica Water Agency	GIS Expert PCU Host institution	First discussion held with both interviewees when the particulars of the PCU embedding with Water Agency were explained. Detailed interview with GIS expert. All maps were presented and problems associated with collection and transfer of data were explained. The problem is that only few experts participating in the project are using the GIS data base. Discussion held on the modalities to make the use of data base more widespread. Question was also raised on the continuity of the engagement of the GIS expert.
Montenegro	Podgorica	30/8	Jelena Knežević	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Advisor	One meeting was held with all the interviewees. The problems in implementation were presented in particular with regards with the data, which differ grossly between Albania and Montenegro. They are satisfied with the progress of work, linking between the institutions. However, the concern was expressed that although the project is midway through the implementation the talk is still about the basic things. Also communication with national stakeholders was not intensive enough. Satisfied with the management of the project.
			Dragan Radojević		Expert	
			Jelena Plamenac		National Project Focal Point	
			Novak Čadenović		Expert	
France	Paris	6/9	Vladimir Mamaev	UNDP	Task Manager	Complete round of the project's outputs was made. Discussion largely revolved around the major outputs: TDA and SAP. Project management is convinced that these outputs will be prepared on time. Financial aspects were also discussed
			Alice Aureli	UNESCO-IHP	Head of Section	
			Holger Treidel		Project Manager	
			Neno Kukurić	IGRAC	Project Coordinator/CTA	
Albania	Tirana	14/9	Idlir Gumbardhi	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration	National Project Focal Point	Satisfied with the project's implementation. NFP thinks project is "good value for money". They are not sure about the possible extension. Satisfied with the project management.

Annex III

List and contacts of persons interviewed

National Focal Point	Mr Idlir Gumbardhi	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Management, Tirana, Albania	Idlir.Gunbardhi@moe.gov.al	+355 42 250 223
National Focal Point	Ms Biljana Rajic	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	biljana.rajic@mvteo.gov.ba	+ 387 33 21 34 20
GEF Operational Focal Point	Mr. Senad Oprasic	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	senad.oprasic@mvteo.gov.ba	
SC Member	Gordana Ruklic	Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Construction	gordana.ruklic@mzopu.hr	+ 385 1 3782 180
National Focal Point	Mr Darko Rajhenbah	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Croatia	darko.rajhenbah@voda.hr	+385 99 2116 764
Secretary	Mr Dejan Komatina,	International Sava River Basin Commission, Zagreb, Croatia	dkomatina@savacommission.org	+ 385 1 488 69 61
National Focal Point	Ms Jelena Plamenac	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Podgorica, Montenegro	jelena.plamenac@mrt.gov.me	
MAP Focal Point	Ms Jelena Knezevic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Podgorica, Montenegro	jelena.knezevic@mrt.gov.me	+382 67 255 604
Expert	Dragan Radojevic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Podgorica, Montenegro		
Expert	Novak Cadjenovic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Podgorica, Montenegro		

Senior Programme Officer, UNESCO Antenna Office Sarajevo	Mr Sinisa Sesum	UNESCO Office, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	s.sesum@unesco.org	+387 33 222 796
Head	Mr Branko Colic	Water Agency Trebisnjica River, Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosting DIKTAS PCU	trebinje@vodeherc.org	+387 59 245 510
DIKTAS GIS specialist	Mr Vedran Furtula	Water Agency Trebisnjica River, Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina	estavela5@gmail.com	+387 59 245 510
Regional Technical Advisor	Mr Vladimir Mamaev	UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, Bratislava, Slovak Republic	vladimir.mamaev@undp.org	+421 2 5933 7267
DIKTAS Project Coordinator	Mr Neno Kukuric	International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC), Delft, Netherlands	nenko.kukuric@un-igrac.org	+31 612 656 183
Head of Section Groundwater Resources	Ms Alice Aureli	UNESCO-IHP, Paris, France	a.aureli@unesco.org	+33 1 4569 3995
Programme Specialist, Groundwater Resources Section	Mr Holger Treidel	UNESCO-IHP, Paris, France	h.treidel@unesco.org	+33 1 4568 3943
Consultant	Mr Andrea Merla	Assisi, Italy	merla@gmail.com	+39 349 2990 036
Executive Secretary	Mr Vangelis Constantianos	GWP Med, Athens, Greece	vangelis@gwpmed.org	+30 210 3247 490
Programme Coordinator Southeastern Europe	Mr. Dimitris Faloutsos	GWP Med, Athens Greece	dimitris@gwpmed.org	+30 210 3247 490

Annex IV

List of documents reviewed

- Project Identification Form
- Project Preparation Plan
- Project Preparation Meetings Reports (Belgrade, Podgorica, Zagreb, Venice)
- Project Document
- Project Inception Report
- Steering Committee Meeting reports 2011 and 2012
- Project Implementation Review 2011 and 2012
- Quarterly Progress Reports
- Project Annual Workplans and Budgets 2011 and 2012
- Project Team Meetings 2011 and 2012
- Working Groups Reports
- Stakeholders and Public Participation Strategy
- Stakeholders Analysis
- DIKTAS Flyer/Brochure and Newsletters

Annex V

Questionnaires used and summary of results

	Question	Country				Special mention	Problem	Proposal
		Croatia	B&H	Montenegro	Albania			
1	To what extent the project is consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries in your country?	Ministry is major user. Progress in line with the objectives. IMC not easy, because it is consultative body only. GR: one of the projects where she is better involved, especially through UNESCO. No problem with PMU dislocation. Logistics works	Satisfied, good cooperation. Great interest of the public and institutions. Coordination body (IMC?) to be established soon composed of experts, government, and public.	Project's start delayed by 6-7 months. No management plans, but project will assist in preparing them in the future. TDA is not ready yet. Min. of env. is not responsible for water resources-the question of competence	Project consistent with in terms of socio economic and environmental issues. Better management is needed as population's life is dependent on water.	Establishment of IMC. Information flow: the best project so far. Identify hot spots. Good cooperation between AL and MNE.	In B&H legislation as well as strategic water planning among entities is not harmonized. In MNE competences not clear-may have impact on the project's implementation.	Need to check hydrogeological maps and harmonize them with Neretva-Trebišnjica project. Priority: Implement legislative reform, linked to EU Acquis
2	How the project's intended results have been achieved half way through its implementation?	In principle according to timetable, some activities delayed. Some delay in the beginning.	Great interest for the project with the public. PCU very good. People feel they own the project. WG (participants delegated from entities) serious.	Maps are not harmonised between MNE and AL but progress in harmonisation good. Scale too big and not appropriate for management plans. Maps ready, info being collected. Comp. 4 of the project to be utilised for popularisation. WG4-good progress,	Sources of water identified in project area. Identification of socio economic situation. Needs established. Dissemination of project's results. Identification of stakeholders-workshop organised. Achieved exactly	PCU could be more proactive.	Problem with N-T project. Establish IMC-project should send a request	Improve coordination with N-T project to achieve synergy.

				information transfer. Project is halfway through, but there is still talk of basic things.	what was expected. Deadlines respected. Once GIS data base will be completed will bring benefits.			
3	Assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project. Is it a good value for money?	Relatively few outputs completed, TDA partially, but too early to draw conclusions. Transboundary cooperation: not known how the agreements are being implemented	Good impact, animates decision makers. Hydrographic part achieved the best progress-has tangible results, but other good as well.	WG1- expected to be completed on time WG 3&4-it could take longer to achieved collaboration in water management	Yes-good value for money.		Some complaints for lack of information	IMC, need to be high level (deputy minister). Possible extension of the project because of WG 3&4.
4	Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the project preparation and execution?	Yes through workshops: one with 43 participants, could be more	Scientific papers produced. Involvement in the project only through WGs and project FP. PMU dislocation not a problem, excellent coordinator. Information on project implementation timely and sometimes overwhelming.	After stakeholder analysis no communication afterwards. Component 4 should be utilised more. Water protection map as a final output- will it be prepared? Will the aquifer vulnerability map be prepared? Problem maps are not yet ready.	Stakeholders identified. Ministries involved through contracts.	In MNE problem is that only 6000 people live in transboundary areas: How big is the problem?	Could participate more	
5	Is your country maintaining its financial commitment to the project?	Only in kind. No request to justify cofinancing. FP has no problems to coordinate activities in country		They were not asked for annual cofinancing report. There is no guidance for reporting on cofinancing.	Yes. No request received to confirm yearly co-financing.		No request to justify cofinancing	Annual cofinancing report to be prepared, clear guidance for cofinancing

								assessment to be prepared and disseminated
6	Are the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe?	Outputs will probably be feasible. Hydrology component the most important, main generator of activities.	Very well designed, but there will be some problems in implementation because of specific B&H situation.	Mostly yes. During the first two years-clear. Not know for the second part of the project, partly because of the situation in the region and the negotiation process may take some time. Technical part of the project finishes end 2012. Preparation of synthetic maps may take more time, as only raw data will be available by end 2012.	Objectives clear. 4 years seems to be sufficient, but not sure if extension will be needed in this moment.	Methodology to be developed will have global importance		Extend the time needed for the preparation of synthetic maps. Extension of the project may be needed.
7	Were the capacities of executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?	Satisfactory. Dislocation not a problem. Logistics good. Project managers good.	Partially, because very few people in the ministries are dealing with water issues (only 3 in federal ministry), but so far they can cope.	Implementation is good particularly in WG1. Delays partly caused by the existing decision-making structure. Communication is good. Dislocated management model is not a handicap. WGs: better respect for deadlines.	yes, capacities were considered GIS unit was created after the project started at Albanian geological Survey.		WGs deadlines need to be better respected.	WG coordinators should have more frequent meetings, once a year is not enough, also once a month via Skype? Important for the preparation of SAP.
8	Were the partnership arrangements properly identified	Properly identified. Special mention of UNESCO BRESCE.	Arrangement follows the BH specificity, all linkages through		Participating institutions were correctly identified.	DIKTAS is a catalyser of cooperation		UNESCO BRESCE could participate

	and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?	Consultants good.	project FP, because the entities want so.		Ministry of Environment participated in identification and approval of institutions	among ministries		more.
9	Did the project involve the relevant stakeholders through information-sharing, consultation and by seeking their participation in the project design, overall and in your country?	Yes.	Yes	Only at the level of analysis of stakeholders	Contract with ministries Hydrogeology group Interviews with local governments. NGOs Land use planning ministry involved.			
10	Were the project roles properly assigned during the project design?	Yes	More or less, yes.		Yes			
11	Can the management arrangement model employed in the project be considered as an optimum model?	Yes, it works efficiently. However, if everything will be in one place, maybe it could be more efficient.	Yes	yes	It works very well, dispersion is not a problem PMU very good, efficient and flexible. Implementation of results in the future needs to be worked out.		Lack of continuity within the country	
12	Were the management arrangements implemented and how efficient they are?	Cooperation between NFPs could be better, only during the meetings is not enough, no continuity of cooperation. Every WG has its own dynamics.	Rules of procedure were not identified, but parties respect strictly the management arrangement. It is clear who has to be contacted for specific	yes	Yes, efficient.			Consider improving cooperation between NFPs, between meetings. Consider better

			issue.					convergence among WGs.
13	What is the quality of your communication with PMU?	Very good	Very good	yes	PMU communicates very often and is very helpful. CTA visited Tirana but not the field sites.			
14	How is the role of your country Project Focal Point being executed? What is the quality of your communication and dissemination of results with project's beneficiaries in your country?	Only one workshop, too little to give an answer. WGs should initiate dissemination and give proposals how to improve it, guidance. SC member also satisfied. Meetings well prepared	Only hears about the progress, hasn't seen outputs yet. Except WG reports.	yes	Contacts with working groups, deputy minister. Things will improve when IMC will be established, expected soon (invitations sent, but no answer yet).			WGs to give guidance how to improve communication and dissemination of results within country.
15	Assess the role of UNDP. Assess contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination).	No contacts with Bratislava, some with Zagreb office	No		Attending workshops only. No advice neither sought nor given.			See if and how these contacts could be improved.
16	Assess the role of UNESCO-IHP in project execution and implementation.	Very good.	UNESCO Sarajevo office is good. Has no information of other UNESCO projects, except one on cultural heritage	Very good.	Very good communication with all groups. Visible. Logistics and finances: good and helpful.			There should be one IMC for several projects.
17	Assess whether or not local stakeholders	Do not participate.		There may be problems with Ministry of	Participate in workshops mainly.		Information is not easily obtained	Initiate participation

	participate in project management and decision-making.			agriculture, because the project is known as environmental project. Great anticipation of IMC, where WGs will have to be involved.				
18	Do you perceive problems in the execution of the project? If yes, what are they?	No	No		So far, no	National engagement essential for the implementation		

ANNEX VI
Co-financing and Leveraged Resources

Co financing (Type/ Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non- GEF) (mill US\$)		Bi-laterals Donors (mill US\$)		Central Government (mill US\$)		Local Government (mill US\$)		Private Sector (mill US\$)		NGOs (mill US\$)		Other Sources** (mill US\$)		Total Financing (mill US\$)		Total Disbursement (mill US\$)	
	Prop osed	Actua l	Proposed	Actual	Propos ed	Actua l	Prop osed	Actual	Prop osed	Actual	Prop osed	Actual	Prop osed	Actual	Prop osed	Actual	Prop osed	Actual	Prop osed	Actual
Grant			0.20*	0.20													0.20	0.20		0.16
Credits																				
Loans																				
Equity																				
In-kind			0.30*	0.50***	0.54	0.54	2.05	2.05					0.30	0.30	0.26	0.26	3.45	3.65		1.19
Non-grant Instruments*																				
Other Types*																				
TOTAL			0.50	0.70	0.54	0.54	2.05	2.05					0.30	0.30	0.26	0.26	3.65	3.85		1.35****

* UNESCO's co-financing is presented as a lump sum of cash and in-kind co-financing. It is assumed here that the total amount is split in two equal halves, both as committed and as disbursed.

** Other types of co-financing" are: (1) national institution which acts as regional activity centre of UNEP/MAP, therefore it cannot be counted among multi-lateral agencies (INFO/RAC); and (2) international professional association (IAH).

*** The "Actual" amount under "Multi-lateral Agencies" includes US\$200,000 provided as leveraged resources by IGRAC.

**** The amount of US\$1,350,800 is indicated as cumulative disbursement of co-financing in the 2012 PIR including the additional leveraged resources by IGRAC.