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Terminal Evaluation of the GEF/UNDP MSP project

Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System (DIKTAS)

[PIMS No. 4056, ATLAS 59453]

Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro

International Waters

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization –
International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP)

Evaluation Report

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January 2016

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Acknowledgements

The evaluator is grateful to all those who supported the implementation of this Terminal Evaluation: the UNESCO IHP and UNDP for the overall support, the UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna Office in Sarajevo, for the support in organizing the evaluation mission, the Project Coordinator, who provided the documentation for review, and all those – Project staff members, government officials and other Project stakeholders – who responded positively to the invitation for an interview within the evaluation process, and provided a valuable information and their views of the DIKTAS project through the interviews. The evaluator is also grateful to those who provided comments on the draft Evaluation Report, thus contributing to its overall quality.

Disclaimer

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

Executive summary

Project summary table

Project title:	Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System			
GEF Project ID:	4056		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
UNDP Project ID: UNESCO Project ID:	00059453/0074336 INT 007 2696	GEF financing:	2.16	
Country:	Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro	IA/EA own:	0	0
Region:	SEE	Government:	1.9	
Focal Area:	International Waters	Other:	1.503	
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):		Total co-financing:	3.403.570	
Executing Agency:	UNESCO	Total Project Cost:	5.563.570	
Other Partners involved:	IGRAC International Groundwater Resource Assessment Centre	Pro Doc Signature (date project began):		May 2010
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 30 June 2014	Actual: 31 May 2015 ¹

Project description

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 Aquifer System – one of the world's largest karstic geological provinces and aquifer systems, corresponding to the Dinaric mountain range, which runs from Friuli (NE Italy), through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Albania.

A strategic priority of the Project countries is to move toward more sustainable development models and to deal with the threats to a 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 a high vulnerability of the aquifer 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 the water resource use
- Negative impacts of the transboundary hydraulic infrastructure

¹ Soon after the period of the terminal evaluation (May 2015), an additional no-cost extension of the Project by 31 December 2015 was approved to complete some minor activities agreed at the last meeting of the Steering Committee (held in May 2015), e.g. preparation of a short version of the Strategic Action Program, translation of the Program to all local languages, preparation of CD-ROMs with project documents.

- 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 the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach in dealing with both transboundary surface and groundwater.

To achieve that, the Project was supposed to implement the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) – Strategic Action Program (SAP) process, tested successfully in numerous GEF International Waters projects. In addition to these two major outputs, numerous Project activities covered a broader perspective and were 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.

Evaluation Rating Table

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA & EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry	Satisfactory	Quality of UNDP Implementation	Satisfactory
M&E Plan Implementation	Satisfactory	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	Satisfactory
Overall quality of M&E	Satisfactory	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	Satisfactory
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance	Relevant	Financial resources:	Moderately likely
Effectiveness	Moderately satisfactory	Socio-political:	Moderately likely
Efficiency	Satisfactory	Institutional framework and governance:	Moderately likely
Overall Project Outcome Rating	Moderately satisfactory	Environmental:	Moderately likely
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	Moderately likely

Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

The DIKTAS project is highly relevant, both with respect to its design and implementation. The design process was satisfactory in terms of involvement of stakeholders, consideration of their capacities, assignment of the Project roles, identification of partnership arrangements, and negotiation on responsibilities of the partners. The Project objectives were clear, however not all of them seemed to be feasible within the Project timeframe, as some risks were not identified or taken into account in the design phase, and this possibly contributed to delays in the Project execution.

The effectiveness of the Project is moderately satisfactory. The Project was clearly successful in launching the transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues in the region, and provided a very good basis for future cooperation. However, there were delays in preparation of some outputs and some targets have not been achieved as foreseen in the

Project Document. The efficiency of the management arrangement model is considered good, however some deficiencies relating to the way of populating the Project Team, as well as the PCU capacity and strength, were identified. In addition to the complexity of the Project and a number of long-lasting and demanding activities, there is a number of other reasons for delays in implementation (summarized in the conclusions of this Report).

The efficiency of the Project is satisfactory. Its management and administrative arrangements were cost-effective and rational, yet shortcomings of financial reporting on disbursement of grant funds and co-financing were noticed.

The overall attainment of the Project objectives and results is moderately satisfactory. The transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues has been successfully launched, and a very good basis for future cooperation has been provided. However, outcomes have not been fully attained as foreseen in the Project Document. Namely, a formal endorsement of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) by the countries has not taken place within the time span of the Project, primarily due to complexity of consultation on the SAP content, however a document summarizing the SAP is planned to be submitted, by the Project end, to the countries, for their consideration and signing. The Project also failed to establish a regional consultation and information exchange body (CIE), as the CIE creation has finally been included into the SAP as a future activity. Therefore, a follow-up is considered essential for completion of outputs, achievement of all intended targets and strengthening the Project impact.

The sustainability of the DIKTAS project is moderately likely. Given that the coordination mechanisms have not been fully established, the countries perceive financial and other risks that might jeopardize the sustainability, the level of the risks depending strongly on whether a follow-up to the Project will take place in future or not.

Based on the abovementioned criteria, the evaluation has found that, overall, a solid progress has been made towards the achievement of the DIKTAS project objectives. The overall rate of the Project is satisfactory. Although the outcomes have not been attained as foreseen in the Project Document, the Project was clearly successful in launching the transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues, and provided a good basis for future cooperation. There is an obvious interest of the countries, as well as their recognition of the need, to continue their joint work on the issue through a follow-up project. The follow-up is seen as an opportunity, not only to ensure completion of DIKTAS outputs and full achievement of its targets, but also to further strengthen the regional cooperation by building upon valuable achievements provided by this Project, primarily through the SAP implementation.

For planning of the post-project activities, it is recommended to:

- Establish a mechanism (CIE) that will ensure continuation of the transboundary cooperation and facilitate further activities related to the adoption and implementation of SAP.

- Orient next steps toward concrete activities (primarily, establishment of a basis for a joint monitoring programme and implementation of local scale activities), and define objectives as concrete and realistic as possible.
- Plan the activities so as to ensure that the outputs are based, not only on the existing data, but also on the data to be obtained through new investigations.
- Consider the possibility of extending the project region to other countries sharing the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, such as Serbia and FYR of Macedonia.
- Make efforts to further strengthen science-policy interactions in each project country and ensure that the capacity of national institutions is used to the maximum extent.
- Make efforts to further improve awareness raising and capacity building and consider strengthening of the project team by involving water management experts.

In order to further improve the effectiveness of project management for future activities, it is recommended to:

- Preserve NICs (even if the SAP will not be implemented in future) as a basis for intersectoral communication and coordination within countries.
- Consider possibilities (and sustainability) of holding the PSC meetings more frequently and thus further strengthening the project management.
- Plan a stronger Project Coordination Unit in the region that would, in addition to the Project Coordinator, include an information officer and an administrative officer (and preferably a GIS/database specialist).
- Further strengthen the Project Team by ensuring a closer and permanent cooperation among the NFPs of project countries.
- Ensure a better quality check of outputs and performance of experts, *inter alia*, by linking a contract renewal closely to performance in a previous contract period.
- Consider appropriateness of decentralizing the Project budget on a yearly basis and possibilities to minimize administrative obstacles.
- When planning the awareness raising and capacity building activities, try to ensure that the responsible organization is, either located in the region or includes a person with an ability to speak languages of the project region.

The DIKTAS project could be considered as a complex one with regard 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 even more complex given a number of differences (political, economic, ethnic, societal, managerial and overall developmental differences) exhibited by the participating countries. As a result, numerous obstacles and related risks have been experienced during the implementation period (political and organizational issues, human resources management, etc.). A considerable experience has been gained through the implementation and many lessons have been learned, being potentially very useful for future activities, but also for other similar projects.

The commitment of the involved countries and their representatives in the Project was crucial for the Project achievements. The funding by the GEF and implementation/execution by UN organizations was a powerful combination in securing the commitment. Establishment of personal relationships, building a project team spirit and international

exposure of the Project were of extreme importance for the Project success. To ensure a proper involvement of other stakeholders (NGOs, users, professionals), the communication and capacity building activities need to be given more attention in future.

Continuation of the DIKTAS project through a realization of the Strategic Action Program seems to be the most feasible option at the moment. In that case, the CIE could become a permanent consultation mechanism with a secretariat supported by the PCU, which could then (similar to secretariats of river basin commissions) perform some administrative and organizational tasks that have been carried out by the Executing Agency so far, thus contributing to a more efficient and flexible management of activities.

Acronyms and abbreviations

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
EA	Executing Agency
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GWP-Med	Global Water Partnership Mediterranean
IA	Implementation Agency
IGRAC	International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre
IW	International Waters
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEU	National Execution Unit
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	National Inter-ministerial Committee
OFP	Operational Focal Point (of GEF)
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PD	Project Document
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PRF	Project Results Framework
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PT	Project Team
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SAP	Strategic Action Program
SA	Stakeholder Analysis
SPPS	Stakeholder and Public Participation Strategy
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO Venice Office	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
UNESCO IHP	UNESCO International Hydrological Programme

1. Introduction

Purpose of the evaluation

Terminal Evaluation is performed upon completion of project implementation, in accordance with requirements of the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policies for full and medium-sized projects. Such an evaluation is needed to assess the project design, scope, relevance, performance and success, to elaborate early signs of potential impact and sustainability, to promote accountability and transparency, and to provide lessons and recommendations that may help improve the selection, design and implementation of future UNDP/GEF projects.

Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project „Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System“ (DIKTAS) has been initiated by the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub as the GEF Implementation Agency and UNESCO as the Executing Agency responsible for this project. As stated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), given in Annex 1 to this Report, the main purpose of this evaluation is to provide managers (at the ministries of the Project countries, UNDP/GEF and Project levels, as well as the GEF Secretariat) with an independent assessment of the extent to which the Project has met its overall objectives and outcomes and to help provide lessons learned and recommendations for future similar projects.

The TE is also intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Project design and implementation, and to come up with recommendations for activities to follow after the termination of the Project.

The information gathered during the evaluation process and provided in the Evaluation Report, is expected to be used by the Project management team, administrations of the Project countries 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.

Scope and methodology

The scope of the evaluation covers all activities undertaken in the framework of the Project:

- Comparison of planned outputs to actual outputs of the Project
- Assessment of the actual results, to determine their contribution to the attainment of the Project objectives
- Evaluation of the efficiency of Project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency, as well as features related to the process involved in achieving those outputs and the impacts of the Project
- Consideration of the underlying causes and issues contribution to targets not adequately achieved during the Project implementation.

The evaluation methods have been developed in accordance with the standard UNDP/GEF guidelines for conducting evaluations. The methods are closely guided by the following

specific criteria outlined in the guidelines, as well as the ToR:

- **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 the Project benefits and outputs, and
- **Impact** of changes the Project has made so far in the participating countries.

The core of the approach is the use of an Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2), providing the set of questions covering each of these criteria, that need to be answered in order to assess the Project performance. The purpose of the matrix is to:

- Ensure a clear and common understanding by stakeholders of the approach and methods to be used in the evaluation.
- Ensure consistency in the approach used for the evaluation themes and comparability of the findings.
- Set out clearly the sources of information (i.e. documents, questionnaires, interviews, and field visits), the way of collecting the data and the chain of reasoning used in deriving the evaluation conclusions, facilitating evidence-based findings and recommendations.
- The evaluation matrix and its related products – the questionnaires and indicators – also provide a framework for the final report.

The evaluation was carried out in three steps, as described in the following text.

1. Documentation review (desktop study)

A wide variety of documents covering the Project design, implementation progress and monitoring, have been reviewed: Project Document, Project reports (Annual Project Reports, Project Implementation Reviews), Mid-Term Evaluation Report, reports from meetings (steering committee, working groups), workshops and conferences, financial reports, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, Project files, national strategic and legal documents, and other relevant documents (newsletters, website, etc.). These documents have been obtained from Project Coordinator. The list of the documents reviewed is given in Annex 3.

2. Data collection in the Project region

Data collection was done through a series of interviews with the Project stakeholders, during the evaluation mission that took place in the period May 11-19, 2015. The initial plan of the mission (given in Annex 3 to the TE Inception Report) has been made based on the list of stakeholders provided in the ToR, which included the Implementing Agency (IA) and Executing Agency (EA), Government partners, Project Steering Committee (PSC) members, Project Team (PT) members, and key stakeholders. A sampling of the stakeholders was made to achieve as good coverage of the stakeholders as possible, given the limited time available for this evaluation. Efforts were made to ensure a reasonable balance of interviewees in terms of their functions / roles in the Project, the sectors and fields they represented, and their countries of origin.

The final itinerary of the mission was defined, however, based on the feedback of stakeholders (which was missing in some cases), their availability in the given period of time and possibilities of travelling to, and covering, all Project countries in the same period. The final mission itinerary is provided in Annex 4 to this Report, while the list of interviewees and their contact data are attached in Annex 5.

The interviews were performed both through face-to-face interviews with stakeholders at their location, and by telephone/skype/e-mail. A summary of field visits is given in Annex 6. The interviews were based on a set of questions in a conversational format, with the aim to provide answers to the points described in the following chapter of the Report. The interview questions have been slightly modified as compared to the provisional questionnaire attached to the TE Inception Report. The modifications were done as the documentation review was progressing, with the aim to best fit the particularities of the Project and its implementation. The questionnaire used, along with a summary of results, is attached in Annex 7.

Given a relatively broad range of topics covered by the questionnaire, a high number of questions in the questionnaire, as well as a diversity of the persons interviewed, not all interviewees were asked all questions from the list, but a selection was made depending on their role in the Project and the information they might be in a position to provide accordingly. The Annex 6 indicates the selection of issues discussed with each interviewee, and presents a brief summary of the discussions, while Annex 7 shows answers and opinions of all interviewed stakeholders, summarized on the country level.

3. Analysis of the information collected

The third evaluation step is an objective and evidence based assessment of the Project performance. This has been carried out, based on expectations set out in the Project Results Framework (appended to the ToR, provided in Annex 1). This document is the baseline and overall assessment framework as it provides performance and impact indicators for the Project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. For the assessment purposes, the information collected, including documentary evidence, interviews and observations, has been compiled and organized according to the questions asked in the assessment. As for the information collected through the interviews, an overall conclusion was made by the evaluator for each interview question (wherever it was possible), based on the positions of all Project countries. The evaluator's conclusions are presented in the last column of the table given in Annex 7. Triangulation of results, i.e. comparing the information from different sources, such as documentation and interviews, or interviews on the same subject with different stakeholders, has been used to check the reliability of evidence.

Structure of the Evaluation Report

The structure of the Evaluation Report follows the outline as provided to the evaluator in the ToR. The Report provides a brief description of the DIKTAS project and reviews the Project in its development context (Chapter 2), presents the assessment findings related to the Project design, implementation and results (Chapter 3), and provides conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned (Chapter 4).

2. Project description and development context

Karstic aquifers are widespread globally, often being transboundary and generally containing 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 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, Skadar / Shkodra and many more) and abundant high yield and quality freshwater springs.

Today, the countries are determined to move towards more sustainable development models and to deal with the threats to a 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 a high vulnerability of the aquifer 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 the 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 the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach in dealing with 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 was to implement the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) – Strategic Action Program (SAP) process, tested successfully in numerous GEF International Waters projects. In addition to these two major outputs, numerous Project activities cover a broader 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.

Project start and duration

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

The duration of the Project was set at four years. Its implementation was planned to start soon after the Project endorsement, however due to initial delays for administrative reasons, a 6-month no-cost extension was requested by the PSC and approved by the donor. Given this adjustment, the official period for the Project implementation was shifted to the period July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2014. According to the Inception Report, the Project Inception Phase ended with the organization of the Inception Workshop (Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, November 10-12, 2010), thus extending the Inception Phase to approximately 10 months (January – November 2010), which might be considered rather long for a project of this magnitude, however it should be kept in mind that the Project start was delayed for administrative reasons.

In the course of the Project implementation, another three no-cost extensions were requested by the PSC and approved by the donor. Given the delays caused by a longer-than-expected realization of certain Project activities (e.g. preparation of the TDA report, setting up of the NICs), a 6-month extension was approved in 2013 (bringing the official Project termination date to December 31, 2014), and then in 2014 (shifting the termination date to May 31, 2015). The last 7-month extension was approved to complete some minor activities agreed at the 5th PSC meeting, held in May 2015 (e.g. preparation of a short version of the SAP, translation of the SAP to all local languages, preparation of CD-ROMs with project documents), thus making December 31, 2015, the actual ending date of the Project.

Problems that the Project sought to address

The DIKTAS project was 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.

Immediate and development objectives of the Project

As indicated in the introductory part of this chapter, the DIKTAS project is the first ever attempted globally to introduce sustainable integrated management principles in a transboundary karst freshwater aquifer of the magnitude of the Dinaric Karst System. 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: 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 only partly 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 contribute to sustainable management of these unique and sensitive freshwater resources and ecosystems.

At the regional level, the Project objectives are to:

- Facilitate the equitable and sustainable utilization and management of the transboundary water resources of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, and
- Protect from natural and man-made hazards, including climate change, 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 Project countries, were not stated in the Project Document.

Baseline indicators established

For achievement of the abovementioned objectives, the baseline indicators were established and provided in the Project Document. As indicated earlier, broad Project activities are divided into four components, one corresponding to each of the main objectives / outcomes. The key indicators of successful Project outcomes to be recorded through the M&E framework, include the following:

- *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)*
 1. A complete, science based Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) approved by the National Inter-ministerial Committees (NICs)
 2. Baseline conditions identified, and environmental status indicators agreed upon and adopted by the multi-country consultative body (CIE)
- *Outcome 2 (Strengthened collective knowledge and coordination among development plans and countries, agencies and donors improves sustainability of the resource)*
 1. CIE established and operational
 2. Environmental quality targets defined and adopted by the CIE
 3. Common monitoring program for harmonization of quality targets established
 4. Mechanism for coordination and exchanges with other relevant projects and initiatives, established and operational

- 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*)
 - 1. *Ad hoc* inter-ministerial committees (NICs), focused on harmonization of the existing frameworks and on priority reforms, established in each Project country
 - 2. Strategic Action Program (SAP) for the DIKTAS, and National Implementation Plans, elaborated and adopted by the 4 countries at high ministerial level
 - 3. Partnership conference aimed at consolidating international support for the implementation of the SAP is held with broad participation of the donor community
- Outcome 4 (*Long term sustainability of achievements enhanced through public and political awareness campaigns, stakeholder involvement and replication mechanisms*)
 - 1. Implementation of selected media events to highlight the Project progress and achievements
 - 2. Implementation of targeted capacity building programs to encourage replication of new practices, behaviors and techniques
 - 3. Demonstrated active participation to IW LEARN activities.

Main stakeholders

Beneficiary countries participating in the DIKTAS project (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania) are the major stakeholders. UNDP and UNESCO IHP, who are the Implementing Agency and Executing Agency, respectively, have a clear stake in the Project. The former certainly considered 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 was 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 grant (Italy and Slovenia), also have a stake in the Project. In addition, the Project Document identifies several other stakeholder groups in the beneficiary countries and outside of the Project region, 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)
- Interest groups (e.g. fishers' or industry associations, water user associations)
- Commercial/private actors (e.g. industries)
- NGOs
- Academia
- General public
- International actors (e.g. UN agencies, GEF, other donors, Project implementing and executing agencies, international river basins commissions), etc.

The PD does not elaborate further on the Project stakeholders and it suggests conducting a stakeholder analysis in an early stage of the Project implementation.

Expected results

The Project was expected to 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 activities were:

- Preparation and adoption of a TDA, providing a better knowledge of the groundwater resource and the causes of its degradation
- Development and endorsement of a SAP – a formal agreement among the countries on corrective actions including policy, legal and institutional reforms, and investments,
- Capacity building and awareness raising programmes carried out in the Project countries.

This is, in turn, 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 a regional (multi-country) Consultation and Information Exchange Body (CIE), a mechanism for coordination and exchange with other relevant projects and initiatives, and National Inter-ministerial Committees (NICs), was foreseen as a part of the Project that will establish a consultation mechanism among the countries sharing the aquifer aiming at sustainable management of the aquifer.

These objectives, which aim to contribute to sustainable development of the region, were to be achieved through a concerted multi-country effort involving an improvement in scientific understanding, the building of political consensus around key reforms and new policies, the enhanced coordination among countries, donors, projects and agencies, and the consolidation of national and international support.

3. Findings

3.1 Project design / formulation

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

Analysis of Project Results Framework

The evaluation of the Project Results Framework (Annex A in the Request for CEO Endorsement/Approval, however 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 were „SMART“. Outcomes indicate change, since each one of the four

outcomes was expected to lead to an altered future state. Results were measurable, as there was a whole set of clearly defined outputs. Outcomes were relevant, and the countries have been highly committed to the stated objectives of the Project. Finally, all outputs were very clearly defined and were self-standing "products".

The DIKTAS project was conceived as a capacity building project and considered to be the first stage along the development pathway. Such nature of the Project has determined the set of indicators presented in the Project Results Framework. The **indicators** were by necessity the process indicators, i.e. the indicators showing the status of implementation and completion of outcomes/outputs of each phase of the Project. The PRF includes 11 indicators (12 in the section of the PD related to the indicators, because the indicator number 4 in the PRF is split into two), which coincide with the Project outputs. Most of the indicators/outputs were clear products whose level of finality could easily be measured. It should be noted that all indicators/outputs were bound to go through the approval or adoption process, thus giving them a higher level of credibility. Two indicators were pivotal: the preparation and adoption of the TDA and the development and endorsement of the SAP.

The Project design **aimed** at bringing the management of transboundary groundwater aquifers to a level where countries will effectively be cooperating among themselves. That is not 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 PD, p. 10).

The Project **objectives**, as stated in the PD, could be considered more as goals than operational objectives. In spite of that, they aimed at overcoming the abovementioned barrier, which is a major one in the region, and the Project components were logical and clear. The emphasis of the Project was more on establishing the cooperation and management mechanisms in the region than on research on the karst groundwater aquifers features. This is understandable considering the financial size of the Project, and the respective Component 1, which is about improving the understanding of the aquifers and of their environmental status, is primarily aimed at providing input for the preparation of the TDA and confirmation of baseline conditions. For some of the Project objectives, however, a different perception of their feasibility within the Project timeframe was expressed by the stakeholders interviewed in the framework of the Terminal Evaluation.

The Project preparatory phase lasted about one year, during which time the Project Document was prepared. The preparation of the PD was carried out in a participatory way as four meetings were held during that period, where all countries have participated and been informed of the objectives and strategy of the Project and agreed to the Project implementation arrangements. The selection of UNESCO as the executing agency seemed logical, as that organization 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 start. During the Inception Phase, all necessary activities for the Project to start were carried out, in particular the appointment of the Project Coordinator, setting up of the Project Coordination Unit in Trebinje, and nomination of the National Focal Points.

Assumptions and risks

The only major risk in PD is the lack of sustained political support for this collaborative effort in Project countries. Still, a number of assumptions and risks have been listed in the Project Results Framework, relating to a wide range of issues, including the availability of relevant data and information in the countries, the complexity of consensus building activities on both national and transboundary level (e.g. consensus on environmental status indicators, or the TDA adoption process), the political will for harmonization (e.g. of environmental quality targets), the need for a permanent joint effort of the Project countries and a joint work of the Project Team members (e.g. various working groups), the willingness of donors to support the implementation of activities (e.g. SAP), and the interest of the public concerned, as well as media, in the Project countries to support, or to engage in, the Project implementation process. Although the interviews with the Project stakeholders indicate that the assumptions and risks were well articulated in the Project Document, the interviews also suggest that there might be risks that were not taken into account in Project planning, which is a possible cause of delays in the Project execution.

Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into Project design

A number of projects, all of them co-funded by the GEF, ongoing in the Dinaric region and its vicinity and being relevant for the purposes of the DIKTAS project, were identified during the preparation of the Project Document. They include a project on biodiversity in the coastal karst region (Croatia), three projects on the environmentally sustainable management of the “karstic” lakes of Ohrid, Prespa and Shkodra (Albania, Montenegro, Greece, FYR Macedonia), various pollution reduction investment projects along the Adriatic coast, and an important sub-project on Coastal Aquifers part of the Regional Component of the GEF – UNEP – World Bank Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea LME, covering the west flank of the DIKTAS and its submarine discharges.

A comprehensive overview of relevant international projects (funded by GEF and other donors), initiatives and activities, given in the Project Document, provided a valuable basis of lessons for the Project design and implementation.

Planned stakeholder participation

The Project governance approach including the stakeholder participation is described in the Project Document as a part of the Component 4. The PD describes major groups of stakeholders, and in a special section elaborates the Stakeholder Involvement Plan. It requires preparation of the Stakeholder and Public Participation Strategy (SPPS) and Stakeholder Analysis (SA) in early stages of the Project 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 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 a very high quality, delay in their preparation may have hindered more successful involvement of stakeholders during the Project implementation.

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 some 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 basin commissions, WWF, etc.), and advisors. The remaining groups indicated in the PD, i.e. interest groups, commercial/private actors, NGOs, Academia, general public and others, practically have not participated. The Project Steering Committee meetings were attended by the PSC members (one from each country) and the National Focal Points, thus being closed for a broader participation of stakeholders. During the preparation of the SA, national consultation workshops were held in all four countries and a series of interviews with selected key stakeholders have been conducted by the national experts – members of the Stakeholder Participation and Communication Working Group, however these activities 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 – GWP Med, yet there is neither a clear explanation of the role in the document, nor much information (in Project reports) of the results achieved in this regard.

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 has not included the 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 were considered for replication during the “lifetime” of the Project. This approach may be justified by a relatively modest budget, which does not leave many resources for replication. However, linkages and cooperation were established with a number of other transboundary water management initiatives and projects in the Mediterranean and Balkans regions but also in other karst regions, including the Petersberg Phase II, Athens Declaration and other processes, as well as the GEF projects Neretva & Trebišnjica Project, MedPartnership and Skadar/Skhodra Project (closed in the meantime), Drim/Drin Project, GEF-WB Drina River

Basin Project, and the project proposal “Development of the Study for Establishment of the Protection Zones of a Klokot Source (Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina) Intersected by Interstate Boundaries”, the Klokot Spring being one of the proposed case-studies in the DIKTAS SAP. According to the stakeholder interviewed, the Project design is appropriate for replication, given its innovative and integrated nature.

UNDP comparative advantage

The DIKTAS project has been implemented by the UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul, Turkey (by UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava, Slovakia, in the first phase of the implementation). The UNDP comparative advantage stems out of the fact that it has a long history of implementing GEF IW projects. The Bratislava Office, and then the Istanbul Regional Hub, provided support to overseeing the Project implementation, through management of the monitoring and evaluation activities, but also 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 elsewhere, the engagement of UNDP 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 2001 and 2007, should be specifically mentioned although thematically it is not directly related to the DIKTAS project. The TDA that was developed in the transboundary Danube River Basin, as well as the successful partnership that originated from that project and resulted in subsequent cooperation mechanisms, such as ICPDR, deserve a special attention. It could serve as the model for other similar projects in the region, including DIKTAS.

UNESCO comparative advantage

The Project has been executed by UNESCO, whose comparative advantage is associated with a remarkable UNESCO's experience in karst studies and projects within their International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) and International Hydrological Programme (IHP), including their support to a range of international activities in the fields of hydrogeology and water resources management related to the karst aquifers, as well as with the relevance of IHP's objectives given the innovative nature of the DIKTAS project. Moreover, UNESCO has a global centre IGRAC, specialised in groundwater assessment. IGRAC has been set up by the UNESCO Member States in order to support groundwater project activities and implementation of IHP programme at UNESCO. Concretely, the UNESCO IHP has provided the overall Project supervision and coordination, financial management, technical and scientific support to regional and international experts hired by the Project, as well as administrative and logistical support (through its antenna office in Sarajevo).

Linkages between 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 Petersberg Phase II Process, the Athens Declaration Process 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, FYR of Macedonia 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 processes such as the one coordinated by the International Sava River Basin Commission, and national projects that the Project has been linked with. Finally, a specific activity within Component 2 of the Project, with related output (5), has targeted the establishment of a mechanism for coordination and exchanges among projects, national agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors.

Management arrangements

The Project has been implemented by the UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul, Turkey (previously, by the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava, Slovakia), and executed by UNESCO IHP. The PD envisaged the establishment of the Project management arrangement at two levels. The execution of the Project activities consisted of the following:

- UNESCO IHP, responsible to ensure the Project execution supervision
- The 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 PSC meetings were held once a year to review the Project budget and work programs and provide feedback and policy guidance to the PCU.
- The PCU coordinated, with UNESCO IHP providing technical and scientific support, and with support 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 was supposed to host the PC (CTA in the PD), secretarial staff and one administrative/finance assistant and to 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, was planned to be composed of the following:

- National Inter-ministerial Committees (NICs), composed of high level representatives, established in each Project country

- Regional Consultation and Information Exchange (CIE) body, planned to be created to represent the center of international cooperation for the DIKTAS within the Project timeframe, and beyond.

The following arrangements were put in place during the Project implementation:

- 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 five meetings have been held (the fifth meeting was held at the end of the terminal evaluation process)
- 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 (e.g. assistance in preparation of meetings, implementation of procurement procedures in contracting goods and services) 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 have been considered as NEUs
- The CTA was renamed to Project Coordinator (PC). The post has been filled by the renowned expert employed by IGRAC, who has been in close contact with executing partners and has frequently visited the Project region
- Science Advisory Panel has been established
- NICs have been established in the Project countries
- CIE has not been established during the Project implementation (the issue will be elaborated in the following text).

3.2 Project implementation

Adaptive management

The Project Document identified only one major potential risk: the lack of sustained political support. Hence, during the identification of the Project components and activities, the focus was oriented towards strengthening the commitment of the countries to improving 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 goals achieved until the end of the first half of 2011 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 PSC proposed a 6-month no-cost extension and it has been granted. On the whole, this extension has not required change in the Project goals and objectives, while the work plans have been adjusted accordingly.

The most important changes relate to the delay in the preparation of the TDA and the setting up of the communication and information exchange mechanism at national and regional level (NICs and CIE). The delay in the establishment of NICs and CIE consequently led to a postponement of the outputs foreseen to be reviewed and/or approved by these bodies,

such as the SAP, and also affected the implementation of related activities (e.g. implementation of pilot projects or the establishment of a joint monitoring programme).

Therefore, two no-cost extensions were requested by the PSC and approved by the donor during the Project implementation (in addition to the 6-month no-cost extension approved at the beginning of the implementation period). Given the delays caused by a longer-than-expected realization of certain Project activities (e.g. preparation of the TDA report, setting up of the NICs, preparation of the SAP document), a 6-month extension was approved in 2013 (bringing the official Project termination date to December 31, 2014), and then in 2014, thus shifting the termination date further to May 31, 2015. Finally, an additional 7-month extension was approved to complete some minor activities agreed at the 5th PSC meeting (e.g. preparation of a short version of the SAP, translation of the SAP to all local languages, preparation of CD-ROMs with project documents), thus making December 31, 2015, the actual ending date of the Project.

The TDA preparation process was followed-up by the PSC closely. The initial plan, i.e. the TDA completion by the end of 2012, was, first, changed by shifting the deadline for its completion to mid 2013 (when the extension period is counted in). However, only the draft TDA report was submitted to the PSC in June 2013. According to PIR 2014, the TDA preparation process ended in December 2013 and the TDA report was adopted by the PSC in June 2014, with a total delay of about 12 months, as compared to the original planning in the Project Document. The main reasons for the delay were a complexity of the analysis and numerous comments of stakeholders that needed to be discussed, processed and incorporated into the report. However, the TDA underwent a systematic reviewing process, being discussed by NICs twice, so the final output is quite comprehensive and well supported by the DIKTAS database.

Additionally, the pilot projects that were initially planned to be implemented along with the TDA preparation, were agreed by the PSC to serve as an early implementation platform for SAP and to be conducted in 2013.

Development of SAP was initiated at the Project Team meeting in June 2013, and further discussed at the Regional Stakeholder meeting in November 2013. According to the Minutes from the 4th PSC meeting, the delay in delivering the TDA has also slowed down the work on SAP, but not substantially. The draft SAP document was prepared in the first half of 2014. Anticipating that the process of negotiation and related adjustments of the SAP will take several months and perceiving the SAP adoption as a sensitive political and diplomatic process that needs time, an additional 6-month no-cost extension of the Project, till end of June 2015, was requested by the PSC at its 4th meeting, despite the indication that UNDP would prefer no new extensions of the Project. This finally resulted in shifting the termination date to May 31, 2015, and then to December 31, 2015, in order to enable finalization of a document summarizing the SAP and its submittal, by the Project end, to the countries, for their consideration and signing.

Following the discussion of the document at the NIC meetings in all Project countries, a new SAP version has recently been prepared and it will be presented at the joint project meeting of NICs, Project Team and PSC to be held at the end of the Project implementation period. It practically means that the implementation of SAP, as well as the pilot projects, has been postponed to the post-project period.

The evaluator has found that these changes have not significantly affected the overall goal of the Project. However, the documentation reviewed and the interviews with the country representatives suggest that not all outcomes have been attained as foreseen in the Project Document, thus producing a risk related to sustainability of the Project outputs. Therefore, a reconsideration of the need for a change of the initial Project goals and objectives would have been reasonable. Nevertheless, it is obvious 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 implementation.

Partnership arrangements

In addition to two major partners in the Project, UNDP and UNESCO IHP, a number of other partners were 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 has been actively involved in the implementation of the Component 4 related to the stakeholder participation. IGRAC has provided the Project Coordinator and contributed to the hydrogeological and informational activities of the Project. The IAH has been assisting through its Karst Commission, on a no-cost basis (only travel expenses were covered by the Project), with its wide network of experts in providing advice on technical issues related to karst groundwater aquifer management. All the three partners have brought their own co-financing to the Project.

The water agencies of the Project countries were also involved in the Project execution. According to interviews with stakeholders, the level of involvement of the water agencies could have been higher.

A cooperation has also been established with World Wildlife Fund (WWF), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Research Centre on Karst, Guilin (China), Centre for Karst (Croatia), Karst Research Institute (Slovenia), Edwards Aquifer Authority (USA), University of Malaga (Spain), Competence Pool Water (Austria), and BRGM (France). Internationally renowned Karst scientists from within and beyond the region have agreed to serve as Scientific Advisory Panel for the Project. The organization of the DIKTAS conference in partnership with the IAH, and in collaboration with the Hydropower System Trebinje (HET), Trebinje, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and the University of Belgrade, Serbia, is an example of good partnership of the Project with scientific institutions, national and international associations and public enterprises. Finally, the International Sava River Basin Commission has been active in supporting the Project, especially in its early stages. As already indicated in the MTE Report, it might be useful to consider a possible contribution of the Commission to sustainability of the outputs after the Project termination. No particular interest of private sector has been found for this project, being a water resources assessment project on regional level. More interest is expected in investment projects on the local level.

The evaluator finds that partners' role in the Project execution has been important and their contribution to its outputs has been valuable.

Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

As indicated in the previous text, the duration of the Project was set in the Project Document at four years. However, three 6-month no-cost extensions were approved during the implementation, due to: initial delays for administrative reasons (the extension approved in the beginning of 2011), and the delays caused by a longer-than-expected realization of certain Project activities (one extension approved in 2013, and then another one in 2014), thus shifting the Project termination date to May 31, 2015. Finally, an additional 7-month extension was approved to complete some minor activities agreed at the 5th PSC meeting, held in May 2015, thus making December 31, 2015, the actual ending date of the Project.

The most important changes relate to the delay in the preparation of the TDA report and the setting up of the communication and information exchange mechanism at national and regional level (NICs and CIE). The delay in the establishment of NICs and CIE (which has not been established by the Project end) consequently led to a postponement of the outputs foreseen to be reviewed and/or approved by these bodies, such as the SAP, and also affected the implementation of related activities (e.g. implementation of pilot projects or the establishment of a joint monitoring programme).

The delays and their (potential) consequences to the Project effectiveness were followed-up through the M&E activities closely. A number of reasons for delay in the implementation were listed in PIR 2014. For example: „... a) the Project Team national experts were selected by respective governments and a difference in their quality and, especially, in motivation, has been noticed; b) the government in Albania changed after the election – the new National Focal point is very dedicated but a new Steering Committee member has not been nominated; c) the UNESCO liaison to the Project left and new one will need quite some time to get familiar with Project background, people, customs and procedures; d) UN rules and regulations ask for considerable time, e.g. printing the proceedings would never be possible if the payment was not made via differently (via IGRAC in this case)“. Nevertheless, challenges in implementation of the management arrangements were mostly associated with the maintenance of the Project Team performance.

Setting up of the Project structure, as prescribed in the Project Document, was successfully finalized soon after the Project Inception Phase. The National Execution Units (NEUs), each of them composed of four national experts and the Project NFP, were created in all countries by the end of March 2011. Besides, two international experts were contracted in the field of hydrogeology and international law. Four Working Groups (WG) – for Hydrogeology (WG1); Environment and socio-economics (WG2); Policy, legal and institutional framework (WG3); and Stakeholder participation (WG4) – were set up in accordance with the Project plan. The nomination and pre-selection of candidates for the national experts was carried out by the responsible ministries in the four countries, whereas UNESCO conducted the final selection and the contracting.

Coordination within the WGs was in general good, with some differences among the groups, mostly reflecting personal commitment of a WG leader and the WG members. The National Execution Units (NEUs) were functioning as a less prominent but important transverse Project structure.

Coordination of activities and especially an adequate information exchange at the Project level were more challenging than at the WG or NEU level. Twenty five members of the Project Team were spread over several countries and various organizations. Despite efforts invested, the internal Project communication was found not to be optimal. The use of DIKTAS Collaborative Environment increased slightly but not sufficiently. The only occasion where the Project progress was shared with all team members were Project Team meetings.

The meetings of the Working Groups were organised several times during the year, WG1 and WG2 meeting more often than WG3 and WG4 meetings. All the meetings were found successful by the team members. The Minutes of the Meeting were prepared for the Project Team meetings but not for the majority of WGs meetings. That was one of the reasons for the insufficient internal communication and coordination. Besides, the follow up of the agreements made at the WG meetings was more difficult to analyse without the Minutes. According to an interview, a continuity of cooperation among NFPs was lacking, thus causing a different dynamics of work of WGs.

A number of comments regarding the Project Team performance, given by the PSC members, are visible from the documentation. In order to cope with the delays, the PSC requested, at its 2nd meeting, to be updated on the status of Project implementation more regularly. At the 3rd meeting, the PSC concluded that the Project Team should be reorganized in order to efficiently carry out SAP activities. The interviews show that an insufficient time was available for discussion of outputs and next steps by the PSC, and the frequency of the PSC meetings (once a year) was found to be too low for such a complex project.

Project finance

The financial planning of the Project has been carried out according to the UNDP rules. The total amount of the GEF grant is 2,596,000 USD (200,000 USD for Project preparation; 2,160,000 USD for Project implementation; 236,000 USD – Agency fee), while the co-financing of 3,653,570 USD (including 250,000 USD for Project preparation) was expected to be provided by beneficiary countries, other countries in the region, France, Project partners and other international organizations, almost all of the co-financing being in-kind. That is 141% of the grant amount, which is considered a solid ratio (for Project implementation, the ratio is even better – 158%). Only UNESCO has been 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 into the four 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. Table 1 in this Report (which is also the first table in the Section III of the PD) gives the allocation of GEF grant per Project outcomes and, for each 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.

Table 1. Allocation of GEF grant per Project outcomes

GEF Outcome / Atlas Activity	Respon-sible Party (Imple- menting Agent)	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budget- ary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Amount (USD)				Total (USD)
						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	
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
				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	Miscella-neous	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
				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	Miscella-neous	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
				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	Miscella-neous	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	20,000
				TOTAL OUTCOME 3		79,000	79,000	79,000	79,000	316,000
				TOTAL OUTCOME 4		99,500	104,500	103,500	108,500	416,000
OUTCOME 5: PROJECT MANAGEMENT	UNESCO- IHP	62000	GEF	71200	International Consultants	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	160,000
				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 OUTCOME 5		54,000	54,000	54,000	54,000	216,000
				TOTAL		620,500	665,500	459,500	414,500	2,160,000

However, there is a discrepancy between Table 1 (above) and a table from the PD (the second table in the Section III of 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 Table 1 have been used in the Inception Report as the baseline.

The planned Project budget, as well as revisions of the budget made during the Project implementation, are shown in Table 2, indicating the amounts that stand for calendar years.

The disbursement of grant funds is, however, not easy to track, as the PIRs provide the data on (cumulative) disbursement until June 30 of a Project year, while the documents prepared by the Project Team for the PSC meeting provide the data corresponding to a calendar year. In addition, there are a few discrepancies between the data provided in different documents.

Table 2. Planned and revised Project budgets

Year	Amount (USD)						
	Planned	Revised (2012)	Revised (2013)	Revised (2014)	Revised (2015)	Disbursement of grant funds per year	Disbursement of grant funds (cumulative)
2010	620,500	21,061	21,061	21,061	21,061	21,061	21,061
2011	665,500	490,648	490,648	490,648	490,648	490,648	511,709
2012	459,500	459,500	463,616	463,616	463,616	463,616	975,325
2013	414,500	414,500	658,919	453,631	453,631	453,631	1,428,956
2014		774,291	525,756	580,000	494,927	494,927	1,923,883
2015				151,044	236,117	233,253	2,157,136

Generally, shortcomings of financial reporting, in terms of its quality, were noticed by the stakeholders interviewed. It stands, especially, for the year 2014. As can be seen from the Minutes of the 4th PSC meeting, the budgetary report for the year 2013 was not submitted prior to the meeting, as it was regularly done for the first three meetings, so that the PSC requested UNESCO to prepare an elaborated document on Project Expenditures 2013 and Project Budget 2014 after the meeting. The request was repeated at the 5th PSC meeting, as can be seen from the Minutes of this meeting.

The disbursement of co-financing is, on the other hand, not possible to show in the above table, as these data are provided in the PIRs only (and not in the Project expenditures reports prepared for the PSC meetings), so the only data available stand for the period until June 30 of a Project year and can not be transposed into the values for a calendar year.

Based on the available data (given in the PIRs), it can be concluded that the amount of the co-financing committed is considerable. The 2012 PIR mentions that cumulatively, until June 30, 2012, the total of 1,350,000 USD was disbursed (about 37% of the total committed), while the PIR 2013 indicates that 1,650,000 USD was disbursed until June 30, 2013 (45% of the total committed). These amounts are based on a conservative estimate of the countries' contributions and more detailed estimate of other partners' contributions. It should be noted that IGRAC contributed additional 200,000 USD of in-kind co-financing. This was not mentioned in the PD and that amount can be considered as a leveraged resource. Although the countries were supposed to report on co-financing on an annual basis (and such a recommendation was made in the MTE Report), such data have not been available to the evaluator. Finally, it is also unclear whether some of the promised co-financing was materialized, notably by INFO/RAC.

Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation

Project Monitoring and Evaluation component was conducted in accordance with established UNDP and GEF procedures. The Project Results Framework provides clear indicators to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the Project implementation along with their

corresponding means of verification, which form the basis on which the Project Monitoring and Evaluation system is built. An independent Mid-Term Evaluation was undertaken at the end of the second year of implementation, while an independent Terminal Evaluation is taking place at the end of the Project implementation.

The M&E plan has foreseen 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 was found sufficient. The planned reporting schedule has been respected.

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 implementation is the detailed presentation of the first annual work plan and timetable only. While the report gives a detailed account of the Inception Workshop (not necessary to be included in the inception report), the report does not present the actions supposed 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 budget, as well as on the overall Project work plan and timetable.

Four PIRs have been produced (2011 – 2014), which is according to the reporting schedule. In the PIRs for 2011 and 2012, the Project implementation rating given by UNESCO-IHP is Highly Satisfactory, while in the 2013 PIR, it was rated Satisfactory, stating that “the Project has made considerable progress towards the achievements of its goals. The process of TDA preparation has been conducted thoroughly, involving more than 20 national and regional experts and consulting with stakeholders in all Project countries. This process, however, turned out to be more time-consuming than expected, which caused a slight delay in the Project implementation ...”. There was no rating by the UNESCO-IHP in the 2014 PIR. The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor gave it the Satisfactory mark in all four PIRs.

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 made available to the evaluator.

In addition to the above reports, the PSC and Project Team meeting reports were regularly prepared and distributed. Additionally, the Project Management Summary Reports, prepared annually as an input document for the PSC meetings, were found to be a valuable source of information for the evaluation purposes. The background documents prepared for the PSC meetings were generally of a good quality. Although the PSC meeting reports are entitled as “Minutes”, they provide a limited amount of the discussion by meeting participants.

The evaluator rates the Monitoring and Evaluation System as satisfactory, because only minor shortcomings were perceived, which did not affect the overall effectiveness of the Project implementation process.

UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution coordination, and operational issues

The executive and implementation structure of the Project was dispersed between several locations. The seat of the Implementing Agency (UNDP) is in Istanbul, Turkey (previously, it was in Bratislava, Slovakia). The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor was not interfering with day-to-day operations. The seat of the Executing Agency (UNESCO IHP) and the Project Supervision was in Paris, France. The Project Coordination Unit was 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 centre IGRAC, in Delft (The Netherlands). The role of the PCU in Trebinje was mainly the processing of the data collected by the Project Team and the development of the Project information system, and it was staffed by one GIS expert only. The PCU was also providing, through the Water Agency, minor secretarial functions.

The formal communication with the Project countries was carried out by the Implementing Agency, whereas the day-to-day Project execution was continuously coordinated/supervised jointly by the Project Coordinator and the Project Supervision at UNESCO in Paris. The logistical and administrative matters were partly handled by the UNESCO Venice Office, Antenna office in Sarajevo. While the execution and implementation modalities may look complicated, they seem to be cost effective. The countries find the management arrangement model good, however some deficiencies related to the way of populating the Project Team, as well as the PCU capacity and strength, were identified.

The ToRs for the Project NFPs were prepared in the early stage of the Project implementation and they were appointed soon after. This has significantly contributed to the country ownership of the Project, which was evident during the interviews. However, not all the answers of the stakeholders interviewed are clear on the performance of NFPs, so there is no sufficient information for the assessment of that. The NEUs have been established only virtually, since a large group of national consultants have been engaged in the implementation of the Project 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 implementation seemed to be working and the preparation for the meetings was efficient. The meetings' participants that were interviewed were satisfied with the financial, technical and logistical arrangements.

Assistance by the UNDP

UNDP was the Implementing Agency for the DIKTAS project. It was responsible for the preparation of the Project Document. During the execution of the Project, UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul (previously, UNDP Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava) was not providing operational support but had a supervising role only. Its main responsibility was the monitoring and evaluation of the Project implementation. All reports (PIR and quarterly reports, in particular) were sent to UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul. Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) reviewed the reports and gave 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 was the member of the PSC, where he had 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 participated in key meetings. Its role was also to stay "on hold" to react in case of serious situations, which fortunately has not been the case. The UNDP country offices were not involved in the implementation of the Project, although the MTE Report suggested to reconsider their role, and explore possibilities for their stronger involvement. Although interviews indicate that the intensity of contacts with the UNDP during the implementation was not high, the assistance of the UNDP can be considered efficient, given their role in the Project.

The evaluator rates the assistance of the UNDP as satisfactory.

Operational support by UNESCO

UNESCO IHP was responsible for the execution of the Project and was 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 was very good, while the logistical and financial arrangements were handled in an effective way. UNESCO was managing the budget based on the approved budget lines. Inside the DIKTAS Management Team, Project Supervision and the Project Coordinator prepared budgetary requests jointly. Logistical and administrative support by the UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna office in Sarajevo, was efficient. Weaknesses were found in financial reporting, as indicated in the previous text (see Project finance).

The evaluator rates the operational support by the UNESCO as satisfactory.

Coordination and operational issues by the PCU

Initially, the PCU was supposed to be established in Croatia, but due to administrative and technical reasons, that was not possible and the offer of Bosnia and Herzegovina to host it was accepted. The PCU, which had a central function in the Project, was physically embedded within the Water Agency of Republika Srpska of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was providing some secretarial functions for the Project. The fact that the Project Coordinator is located elsewhere has not been perceived as a constraint or a problem by the country representatives, partners or the evaluator. The progress of all activities was 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 were addressed by regularly updating these documents and endorsing these changes by the Project partners and beneficiaries, and reported at the annual PSC meetings. Communication with the PCU was evaluated by the interviewees as good.

3.3 Project results

The impact of the Project is addressed here by the outcomes recorded in the APR/PIR reports, Quarterly Progress Reports, PSC meeting reports, in combination with the results of the interviews with country representatives and the information supplied by the DIKTAS PCU.

Overall results

As stated in the PD, the overall objective (goal) of the Project was (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 first half of the Project implementation period, 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, systematized 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. In the second half of the implementation period, the focus was gradually being shifted to the parts (ii) and (iii) of the Project goal (e.g. establishment of NICs, preparation of SAP, organization of the partnership conference, etc.), however a significant further progress toward the achievement of the goal is expected once the SAP implementation starts.

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)

Under this Objective, the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) is certainly the main output. The TDA report was completed on December 31, 2013, after almost three years of intensive preparation, and was adopted by the PSC in June 2014.

The main added value of TDA (content-like) is the collection and harmonization of a large amount of data and information relevant for the assessment and management of karst groundwater resources in the region. This gathered information was not always complete and in some cases there are still significant information gaps. Nevertheless, the DIKTAS TDA is the first thorough regional groundwater analysis that covers Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Outputs of the TDA, including GIS material (such as thematic maps and database) and quantitative hydrogeological analyses, form the basis for developing groundwater resources management models at both regional and local scales. While the TDA has produced a fair assessment of groundwater resources in the region, it also revealed limitations of knowledge on their actual state and trends in terms of quality and quantity. The main reason for this situation is a lack of monitoring data at both regional and local scales, such as in the vicinity of solid waste and wastewater disposal sites, mines, intensive agriculture areas, and industrial facilities handling and generating hazardous materials and similar. Therefore, a strong message resulting from the TDA is a request for improvement of the groundwater monitoring network throughout the region and the need to intensify capacity building in the public sector.

The TDA report was finalized with a total delay of about 12 months, as compared to the original planning in the Project Document. The main reasons for the delay were a complexity of the analysis and numerous comments of stakeholders that needed to be discussed, processed and incorporated into the report. However, the TDA underwent a systematic

reviewing process, being discussed by NICs twice, so the final output is quite comprehensive and well supported by the DIKTAS database. In 2014, a brochure was prepared, summarizing the TDA findings for a broad public. The brochure was included in the DIKTAS conference material but also as a chapter in the SAP. The Atlas of DIKTAS Maps was prepared and a publication and the major DIKTAS maps were made available via the DIKTAS portal in the online GIS facility.

What has been found by the countries as a shortcoming, though, is a failure to implement local scale activities. Initially, these activities were planned to be performed along with the TDA preparation. During the Project execution, however, they were postponed for the SAP implementation period, as the Project follow-up activities.

A first proposal for environmental status indicators (Output 2) was prepared and discussed already in 2013. However, the baseline conditions could be fairly estimated and agreed only if sufficient monitoring data are available, which is not the case at the moment. According to the Project Management Summary Report 2014, feasibility of many indicators was questioned several times during the Project execution, especially during the SAP preparation. It seems that some of indicators that usually appear in the literature are very difficult to assess even in a much simpler environment than karst. Nevertheless, the Project Team invested an effort and prepared a proposal that will hopefully be tested in the SAP implementation phase. In the Project Document, indicator quality targets and related monitoring programme are envisaged as a separate output (4).

Objective/Outcome 2 (Strengthening of the collective knowledge and coordination among development plans and countries, agencies and donors improves sustainability of the resource)

Establishment of the coordination mechanism among countries to manage transboundary groundwater aquifer systems (Regional or Multi-Country Consultation and Information Exchange Body - CIE), was the main intended output under this Objective. The CIE was expected to serve to establish a cooperation mechanism among countries sharing the aquifer and to maintain it also after the termination of the DIKTAS project. The Terms of Reference for the CIE was prepared by the Project Management Team and adopted by the PSC already in 2012. It was planned to hold the first CIE meeting once NICs meetings have been held in each of the Project countries (first half of 2013). However, it seemed that there was no real need for this meeting, since this role during the Project execution was fulfilled by the PSC. Also, three countries indicated that their representative in the PSC will also represent the country in CIE. Therefore, the first CIE meeting was planned to be held back-to-back with the PSC meeting in the first half of 2014. That would have also been an opportunity to see what (if anything) is required to be negotiated about the SAP document. However, a draft of the SAP document was not ready for the PSC meeting in June 2014. Also, not all the countries had formally nominated their representative in CIE. The draft SAP document suggests a number of activities to be carried out under coordination of CIE. It also suggests setting up of a permanent secretariat for CIE. During the SAP document discussion at the NIC meetings, questions were posed about CIE authorisation and the logistics about a future secretariat. Therefore, the updated SAP document clearly states that the exact role of CIE (and a possible setting up of a secretariat) will be specified by countries at the beginning of the SAP

implementation phase. In addition to the implementation of local scale activities, the establishment of CIE seems to be the main target not achieved by the Project (although both activities were recommended in the MTE Report to be given priority). However, some interviewees indicated a few advantages of the delays in preparation of some outputs (such as the establishment of CIE, see Annex 7).

Based on the analysis of environmental status indicators (Output 2), the EU WFD implementation experiences from other projects and the literature search, strategic environmental quality targets have been suggested for the DIKTAS region. There are no clear guidelines about environmental monitoring in karst; however, those are a precondition for establishing a joint monitoring programme. In this context, the harmonisation of criteria for delineation of source protection zones is essential. Only when the criteria are harmonised, an effective joint monitoring can be agreed among the countries. Therefore, the monitoring and the criteria harmonisation make up the main suggested priority actions in the SAP.

To contribute to the achievement of Objective 2, linkages and cooperation were established with a number of other transboundary water management initiatives and projects in the Mediterranean and Balkan regions but also in other karst regions, as outlined in the previous text (Replication approach).

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*)

Attainment of this objective was progressing satisfactorily with regard to the establishment of National Inter-ministerial Committees (NICs), whose primary role has been to facilitate harmonization of policies and priority reforms in the countries. After having the NICs established in all four Project countries and the first round of meetings (first quarter of 2013), all NICs met in November 2013 at the Regional Stakeholder meeting. This was a major meeting where a draft TDA report and the SAP procedure were scrutinised. The second round of meetings was held in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in November 2014, in Montenegro in February 2015 and in Albania just in May 2015. The NICs discussed the draft SAP document and provided many comments and suggestions to be processed by the DIKTAS Project Team.

It should be noted, however, that the NICs have shown to be vulnerable to rearrangements or personal changes in governments of the Project countries. For instance, a meeting of NIC Albania was significantly delayed due to the transfer of the (international) water activities from the Ministry of Environment to the Ministry of Agriculture, causing the need for appointment of a new Project NFP and a representative in the PSC. In Montenegro, since the NIC chair and the representative in the PSC changed his position, a request had been sent to the Ministry to appoint the new representative. Despite some setbacks, experience with the NICs as a collaborative mechanism is very positive. Ministries seem eager to participate in the water related issues at the national and international level. It is very important to preserve NICs after the Project closure also in a case that SAP will not be implemented.

Development of SAP was initiated at the Project Team meeting in June 2013, and further discussed at the Regional Stakeholder meeting in November 2013. According to the Minutes

from the 4th PSC meeting, the delay in delivering the TDA has also slowed down the work on SAP, but not substantially. The draft SAP document was prepared in the first half of 2014. Following the discussion of the document at the NIC meetings in all Project countries, a new SAP version has been prepared and presented at the joint project meeting of NICs, Project Team and PSC, and subsequently adopted by PSC at its 5th meeting. Upon request of PSC from the same meeting, a document summarizing the SAP has been prepared and is expected to be distributed, by the Project end, to the countries, for their consideration and signing.

The DIKTAS Conference "Karst without Boundaries" was held in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dubrovnik, Croatia (with the post-conference excursion to Montenegro) in June 2014. The conference was organized in the framework of the DIKTAS project, in partnership with the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), in collaboration with the Hydropower System Trebišnjica (HET), Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the University of Belgrade, Serbia, and with support of UNESCO, the IGRAC Centre and GWP-Med. The conference brought together 155 international karst scientists, engineers and DIKTAS stakeholders from 35 countries and was a huge success. The reactions received from participants of the conference are overwhelming. Organization of the conference was a major effort, that slowed down some other Project activities but it was certainly worth of doing – one of the main goal of DIKTAS project was to strengthen a scientific base knowledge in the region and the conference greatly contributed to it. The conference material included the comprehensive Field Trip Guide and the Conference Proceedings were prepared in a paper and digital form.

Objective/Outcome 4 (Long term sustainability of achievements enhanced through public and political awareness campaigns, stakeholder involvement and replication mechanisms)

Activities under this Objective 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 only been drafted. The main stakeholder-related activities (national workshops, e-querries, interviews) took place in the first half of the Project, resulting in a thorough analysis and valuable input to the Project activities.

Awareness raising is another important element of the Component 4, and numerous activities were envisaged in this respect. A number of related activities have been performed within the Project implementation, including development and a regular updating of the Project web-site, publishing brochures, leaflets and newsletters, as well as presenting the Project at a number of events.

The Project website following IW LEARN standards has been established and regularly updated. The Project newsletter has been issued (twice a year) and distributed to inform a broad audience about the Project and its progress. DIKTAS has been represented in numerous meetings and conferences within and beyond the region, including the ISARM International Conference (Dec. 2010, Paris), the International Karst Conference (June 2011, Bowling Green, US), IAH Annual Congress (Sept. 2012, Canada), the International Conference "Waters in sensitive and protected areas" (June 2013, Croatia), the 7th World Water Forum (April 2015, Korea) and others. The Project has also contributed to the GEF International

Water conferences (October 2011, Croatia; November 2013, Barbados) by presentations, participation in roundtables, dissemination of information by other means (flyers, brochures, poster and film). Additionally, the technical site visit "The Lost River and Transboundary Interactions: The Trebišnjica River Basin" was successfully organized during the GEF IW Conference in Dubrovnik and received extremely positive feedback from the participants.

What should be stressed in this context is the DIKTAS Conference "Karst without Boundaries", held in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dubrovnik, Croatia (with the post-conference excursion to Montenegro) in June 2014, which had a very broad media coverage, increasing awareness among population on importance and vulnerability of karst groundwaters. The conference communication that was organised by a journalist from Croatia was a great success (there were 43 media releases about the conference registered).

For the 7th World Water Forum, a DIKTAS brochure was prepared, being also the final Project brochure.

Experiences with the communication showed that a project partner responsible for these activities should preferably have command of local project languages (Project Management Summary Report 2014). The responsible organization should be located in the region or at least have someone speaking local languages.

The capacity building activities included a number of actions, such as the participation of the PT members in the training sessions organized in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme, in Athens and Zagreb, or the co-organization of a training workshop on karst waters in Split, Croatia, in March 2012 (also within the H2020 framework), or the participation of the DIKTAS GIS expert in the UNEP/IW LEARN ICT Workshop on Spatial Data Management in Manila, Philippines, in March 2014.

The major capacity building activity was the Karst Summer School, held back-to-back with the DIKTAS conference in June 2014. The School was organised in cooperation with the University of Belgrade, Serbia. It attracted participants from all over the world; no fees were asked from the school from participants, they needed to cover only their travelling and living expenses. The prominent school lecturers contributed for free, so the costs of the school were modest. The school is also planned for beginning of June 2015.

The study tour to the Edwards Aquifer Authority in Texas, USA, took place in December 2014. The tour was organised for the members of Steering Committee and the country Focal Points. The participants learned about rich experience of the Edwards Aquifer Authority on managing a large karst aquifer. Also the DIKTAS project and groundwater management in project countries was presented to staff of the Edwards Aquifer Authority. A prominent staff member of the Edwards Aquifer Authority will participate as a lecturer in the Karst Summer School in June 2015.

The activity called 'Karst Waters' was initiated by the Project Team to increase awareness among school children, but eventually not carried out. (The activity was not separately budgeted in the Project Document; the proposed budget for this activity was spent for other, more feasible activities, such as the Karst Summer School.) According to the Project Coordinator, it was difficult for GWP-Med to organise activities in the Project countries without a full support of national and local institutions. In order to ensure full support, a

partner should preferably be located in the Project region and speak local languages. This holds especially when it comes to communication and capacity building.

Based on the Minutes from the 3rd and 4th PSC meetings (June 2013 and June 2014, respectively), the awareness raising and capacity building activities performed within the Project, were evaluated by the PSC as insufficient, although it was recommended in the MTE Report to increase the intensity of these activities in the second half of the execution period.

Regarding the contribution of the Project to IW LEARN activities, DIKTAS was one of the hosting projects for the IW Conference in Dubrovnik in 2011 and also actively contributed to the IW conference in 2013. There were no major IW events planned for 2014. Nevertheless, all the major outcomes of DIKTAS project were placed on the IW LEARN server. IW-LEARN online mapping facility was implemented for visualisation of DIKTAS maps. DIKTAS took a part in the abovementioned workshop on Spatial Data Management organised by IW-LEARN. The DIKTAS web-portal was regularly updated and will remain available after the Project completion as it is a part of the IW-LEARN GEF facility.

The evaluator rates the overall attainment of the Project objectives and results as moderately satisfactory. The implementation of the Project activities has differed among components and not all targets have been (fully) achieved. The SAP was not formally endorsed by the countries within the implementation period, primarily due to complexity of consultation on the SAP content, however a summary of the SAP is planned to be submitted by the Project end to the countries, for their consideration and signing. The CIE was not established, as its creation has finally been included into the SAP as a future activity. For these reasons, there are certain risks related to sustainability of the Project results.

Relevance

Based on the conceptual approach explained in the PD, the relevance of the DIKTAS project needs to be evaluated at two levels: global, and national/local. Globally, it is highly relevant, as it has remained one of the few projects attempting to tackle the complex issue of karst transboundary groundwater aquifer management. Nationally and locally, all the stakeholders interviewed confirmed their satisfaction how the Project has been dealing with this issue, which is high on their agenda. The Project relevance was 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 relevance in regional context is confirmed by the fact that countries have ratified most of relevant regional conventions.

The Project strategy and outcomes, and its design, are 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 has 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 resulted in several outcomes and outputs that may assist in reaching such an agreement. Finally, a number of relevant lessons and experiences have been provided by the Project for other similar projects in the future.

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

Effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness of the Project refers to the extent to which the expected objectives and outcomes of the Project have been achieved. Based on the documentation review, as well as the opinions of the stakeholders interviewed, it can be concluded that the results have been achieved to a (moderate) satisfaction of the Project countries. The Project was clearly successful in launching the transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues, and provided a very good basis for future cooperation. However, there were delays in preparation of some outputs and some targets have not been achieved as foreseen in the Project Document (e.g. launching of the SAP implementation process, implementation of local scale activities, establishment of CIE). The countries have a different perception of the shortcomings. Some shortcomings relate to the efficiency of the management arrangement model, which is considered good, however some deficiencies related to the way of populating the Project Team, as well as the PCU capacity and strength, were identified. Deficiencies in implementation of the arrangements might have taken place, mostly within the Project Team. Further, the answers did not allow for a reliable assessment of the NFPs' performance. On the other hand, there was a strong dependence of the NICs on the performance of NFPs. So, changes of the NFPs or deficiencies in their performance might have had broader impacts on the overall Project effectiveness.

Documentation reviewed suggests a number of reasons for delay in the implementation. In addition to the complexity of the TDA and the organization of the DIKTAS conference, which have undoubtedly been extremely demanding activities, other reasons for the delay, outlined in the PIR 2014, relate to differences in performance (quality, motivation) of the Project Team national experts, discontinuities caused by changes in the governments and at the position of the UNESCO liaison to the Project, as well as the UN rules and regulations requiring time-consuming procedures (e.g. for printing of the proceedings). For illustration, the Project Management Summary Report 2014 finds that the duration of activities such as translation of documents (e.g. TDA, SAP) in five languages of the Project countries (which is an obligation in accordance with the PD) was affected by procurement rules of UNESCO, so this is an issue that should be kept in mind when planning follow-up activities.

As for the Project efficiency, a total of 2,160,000 USD has been allocated by GEF for DIKTAS project implementation during the period 2010-2014 (2,596,000 USD in total, including the 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 will build consensus and commitment to effective management of this resource by all countries in the region and wider, through: a 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, not only the governments but also NGOs, interest organizations, academia and other, and the capacity building, which is aimed at wider replication of project results.

Cost-effectiveness in this Project was also achieved by the interest and commitment of the respective regional governments and other Project partners, including their plans to allocate 3,403,570 USD of in-kind and cash co-financing for the Project implementation (3,653,570 USD, if Project preparation co-financing is included). This is almost 1.6 times the size of the GEF grant for the Project implementation.

Finally, the Project management arrangement was also cost-effective, although the dispersion of Project Team 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.

It should be noted, however, that the updated information on disbursement of the grant funds and the co-financing has not been available to the evaluator.

The evaluator concludes that the Project is moderately satisfactory in terms of its effectiveness, and satisfactory in the context of its efficiency.

Country ownership

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 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 started their joint work within this project. This progress may be based on the realization 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 realized that only a joint management of this resource can secure its long term and sustainable utilization.

The interest of the countries and their gradual appropriation of the Project were 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 rectifying that situation by including the proposed policies and regulatory and management frameworks into the national water management plans and programmes once the Project is completed. It is likely that the major Project outcomes will contribute significantly to making a progress in this direction, especially if the cooperation continues through the SAP implementation. One moment that hinders the fully positive rating of this aspect is the fact that there are uncertainties associated with the continuation of activities after the Project termination.

Mainstreaming

As indicated in the PD, as well as the previous text, 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. Being focused on improving the understanding of the resource and of its environmental status, establishing cooperation among countries sharing the aquifer and facilitating harmonization of policies and priority reforms, the main Project objectives / outcomes are fully aligned with UNDP strategies and GEF-required global environmental benefits outlined in environmental conventions.

Through the major Project outputs, namely the TDA and SAP, a significant step forward has been made in mainstreaming the improved governance, while positive effects of the Project on local populations relate to its contribution to improved natural resource management arrangements with local groups, improvement in policy frameworks for resource allocation and distribution, and thus to a progress toward a long term sustainability of the groundwater resource.

Gender issues have not been given significant attention in the Project design and implementation. The gender strategy was not developed during the initial phase of the project and its importance has not been raised as an issue. Although the issue was not revisited and a gender-mainstreaming plan was not developed, as it had been recommended in the MTE Report, it should be noted that the Project Team composition was very well balanced in terms of the gender representation.

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 sustainability, namely: continuity of stakeholder 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 sustainability. One of the Project successes in this context is the establishment and work of the NICs, their primary role being to facilitate harmonization of policies and priority reforms in the Project countries. Their work was focused particularly on the discussion of the draft TDA and SAP documents and the provision of numerous comments and suggestions to the Project Team. Although the NICs have shown to be vulnerable to rearrangements or personal changes in governments of the Project countries (see the comments on the attainment of Outcome 3 in the section "Overall results"), the experience with the NICs is generally very positive and it is very important to preserve NICs

after the Project closure, also in a case that SAP will not be implemented. On the other hand, the multi-country coordination body (CIE) has not been established during the implementation period. According to interviews, delay in the establishment of CIE makes the follow-up to the Project essential for sustainability of results.

Development of appropriate institutional capacity is an important sustainability factor. Several stakeholder training workshops have been carried out, and other forms of capacity building have taken place, although the capacity building activities have been found insufficient by the Project countries.

Financial sustainability is critical for the overall Project sustainability. Many interviewees are of the opinion that there are financial risks that might jeopardize the sustainability. Perceptions of socio-economic risks differ from country to country, ranging from low to moderate risk, depending strongly on whether a follow-up to the Project will take place in future or not. There is a need for further raising of awareness of stakeholders and public in this context. Differences also exist in perception of the institutional framework and governance risks by the countries. Where the interviewees recognize such a risk, it is primarily caused by internal complexities in the country.

The evaluator finds that the sustainability of the DIKTAS project is moderately likely, depending primarily on whether a follow-up to the Project will take place in future or not.

Impact

According to the UNDP/GEF guidelines for conducting evaluations, the impact is evaluated by assessing whether the project has demonstrated:

- verifiable improvements in ecological status
- verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems
- through specified process indicators, that progress is being made towards achievement of stress reduction and/or ecological improvement.

Given that the TDA is one of major outputs of the DIKTAS project, and thus the Project can be considered a 'foundation setting effort', the stress reduction and/or status change impacts cannot be discerned at the Project closure. However, a progress has certainly been made towards the achievement of impacts, taking into account primarily that a considerable amount of knowledge and data have been collected and incorporated into the major Project outputs, i.e. TDA and SAP, and a good basis for further regional cooperation in the field has been established, introducing a globally replicable and highly innovative example of the use of IWRM principles for balancing water uses in a karstic environment.

The Project has produced a relevant impact through an enhanced transboundary cooperation and stability in the region. However, it failed to make the countries reach a strong political commitment on implementing reforms for the achievement of the Project goal. Therefore, a follow-up to the Project is considered essential for completion of outputs, achievement of all intended targets and strengthening the impact, i.e. achieving a long lasting nature of the impact, primarily through the implementation of SAP.

4. Conclusions, recommendations & lessons

Conclusions

The conclusions, based on the findings of the TE, 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 highly **relevant**, both with respect to its design and implementation. All the countries share a perception of a high degree of consistency with national and local policies, priorities and needs. A considerable potential for replication, not only on national and regional, but also on global level, has been recognized, due to an innovative and integrated nature of the design / approach. The Project design process was satisfactory in terms of involvement of stakeholders, consideration of their capacities, assignment of the Project roles, identification of partnership arrangements, and negotiation on responsibilities of the partners. The Project objectives were clear, however different views of their feasibility within the Project timeframe were presented. It might be the case that some risks were not identified or taken into account in the design phase (e.g. limitations associated with resources, legislation and project management arrangements in the Project countries), and this possibly contributed to delays in the Project execution. The positive countries' perception of the Project relevance and appropriateness has been shown by the readiness to establish the NICs, and to work in these committees. The Project is also relevant in the wider regional context – synergies with complementary projects and initiatives, the MedPartnership, and the GEF Neretva-Trebišnjica project, have been created, while synergies with others (e.g. International Sava River Basin Commission) are expected to be created within the follow-up activities.
- The **effectiveness** of the Project is moderately satisfactory. The Project was clearly successful in launching the transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues in the region, and provided a very good basis for future cooperation. However, there were delays in preparation of some outputs and some targets have not been achieved as foreseen in the Project Document (e.g. launching of the SAP implementation process, implementation of local scale activities, establishment of CIE). The countries have a different perception of the shortcomings. Some shortcomings relate to the efficiency of the management arrangement model, which is considered good, however some deficiencies related to the way of populating the Project Team, as well as the PCU capacity and strength, were identified. Deficiencies in implementation of the arrangements have taken place, mostly within the Project Team. Further, the answers did not allow for a reliable assessment of the NFPs' performance. On the other hand, the work of the NICs has shown to be strongly dependent on the performance of NFPs. So, changes of the NFPs or deficiencies in their performance might have had broader impacts on the overall Project effectiveness. In addition to the complexity of the Project (e.g. TDA, SAP, organization of the DIKTAS conference), which have undoubtedly been demanding activities, other reasons for delays in implementation relate to differences in performance (quality, motivation) of the Project Team national

experts, discontinuities caused by changes in the governments and at the position of the UNESCO liaison to the Project, as well as the limited flexibility of the UN rules and regulations for implementation of practical organizational activities (e.g. printing of the proceedings).

- The **efficiency** of the Project is satisfactory. Its management and administrative arrangements were cost-effective and rational. National Focal Points were satisfied with these arrangements, as well as with the coordination between the Project management and national levels. Shortcomings of financial reporting on disbursement of both grant funds and co-financing, were noticed, however the available documentation indicates that the use of financial resources was appropriate to the results achieved. The operation of the UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna office in Sarajevo, was efficient and in accordance with the established procurement procedures in contracting goods and services.
- The overall attainment of the Project objectives and **results** is moderately satisfactory. The transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues has been successfully launched, and a very good basis for future cooperation has been provided. However, outcomes have not been fully attained as foreseen in the Project Document. The countries have a different perception of the shortcomings and show a different level of criticism toward the targets not (fully or adequately) achieved by the Project. A considerable amount of knowledge and data have been collected and incorporated into the major Project outputs, i.e. TDA and SAP, thus providing a good basis for future activities in the field. Still, a follow-up is considered essential for completion of outputs, achievement of all intended targets and strengthening the Project impact. Establishment of CIE and implementation of local scale activities seem to be the main targets not achieved by the Project, although both activities were recommended in the MTE Report to be given priority. Failure to reach a strong political commitment among the countries on implementing reforms for the achievement of the Project goal is perceived as the main shortcoming.
- The **sustainability** of the DIKTAS project is moderately likely. Given that the coordination mechanisms have not been fully established, the countries perceive financial and other risks that might jeopardize the sustainability. Perceptions of socio-economic risks differ from country to country, ranging from low to moderate risk, depending strongly on whether a follow-up to the Project will take place in future or not. There is a need for further raising of awareness of stakeholders and public in this context. Differences also exist in perception of the institutional framework and governance risks by the countries. Where the interviewees recognize such a risk, it is primarily caused by internal complexities in the country.

Based on the abovementioned criteria, the evaluation has found that, overall, a solid progress has been made towards the achievement of the DIKTAS project objectives. The overall rate of the Project is satisfactory. Although the outcomes have not been attained as foreseen in the Project Document, the Project was clearly successful in launching the transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues, and provided a good basis for future cooperation. There is an obvious interest of the countries, as well as their recognition of the

need, to continue their joint work on the issue through a follow-up project. The follow-up is seen as an opportunity, not only to ensure completion of DIKTAS outputs and full achievement of its targets, but also to further strengthen the regional cooperation by building upon valuable achievements provided by this Project, primarily through the SAP implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the documentation reviewed, the interviews with stakeholders, and a thorough analysis of the data and information collected, the following recommendations can be provided to the implementing and the executing agencies for planning of the post-project activities:

- Make efforts to establish CIE as a mechanism that will ensure continuation of transboundary cooperation on the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System groundwater management, and that will especially facilitate further activities related to the adoption and implementation of SAP.
- In order to ensure sustainability of the SAP implementation, orient next steps toward concrete activities (primarily, establishment of a basis for a joint monitoring programme and implementation of local scale activities), and define objectives as concrete and realistic as possible.
- Plan the follow-up so that the outputs will be based, not only on the existing data, but also on the data to be obtained through new investigations.
- Consider the possibility of extending the project region to other countries sharing the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, such as Serbia and FYR of Macedonia.
- Make efforts to further strengthen science-policy interactions in each project country and ensure that the capacity of national institutions is used to the maximum extent.
- Consider strengthening of the project team by involving water management experts, in addition to the experts that have been involved in the DIKTAS implementation.
- Make efforts to further improve awareness raising and capacity building (e.g. use additional tools for promotion and clarification of the project concept and activities to national institutions, in addition to the project newsletter and web-site).
- Plan the follow-up in a more conservative way in terms of assumptions and risks (e.g. allocate more time for time-consuming activities, such as harmonization and adoption processes, or for translation of documents into local languages, especially given a limited flexibility of the UN procurement rules; allocate some time to accommodate changes in the project team, both governmental representatives and experts).

Application of such an approach will help achieve all targets that have not been fully achieved during the Project execution, provide conditions for tackling a number of concrete transboundary challenges in the region, and also provide opportunities to revive some relevant national institutions in the Project countries.

In order to further improve the effectiveness of project management for future activities, the following is recommended:

- Preserve NICs (even if the SAP will not be implemented in future) as a basis for intersectoral communication and coordination within countries.

- Consider possibilities (and sustainability) of holding the PSC meetings more frequently and thus further strengthen the project management.
- Plan a stronger Project Coordination Unit in the region that would, in addition to the Project Coordinator, include an information officer and an administrative officer (and preferably a GIS/database specialist).
- Further strengthen the Project Team by ensuring a closer and permanent cooperation among NFPs of project countries.
- Ensure a better quality check of outputs and performance of experts, *inter alia*, by linking a contract renewal closely to performance in a previous contract period.
- Consider appropriateness of decentralizing the Project budget on a yearly basis and possibilities to minimize administrative obstacles.
- When planning the awareness raising and capacity building activities, try to ensure that the responsible organization is, either located in the region or includes a person with an ability to speak languages of the project region.

Lessons learned

While not being large project in terms of financial resources employed, the DIKTAS project could be considered as a complex one with regard 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 was even more complex because of a number of differences (political, economic, ethnic, societal, managerial and overall developmental differences) exhibited by the participating countries. Numerous obstacles and related risks have been experienced during the implementation period (political and organizational issues, human resources management, etc.).

The commitment of the involved countries and their representatives in the Project was crucial for the Project achievements. The funding by the GEF and implementation/execution by UN organizations was a powerful combination in securing the commitment. Establishment of personal relationships, building a project team spirit and international exposure of the Project were of extreme importance for the Project success, also representing a best practice that can be shared across the GEF programme. However, the level of involvement of other stakeholders (NGOs, users, professionals) during the implementation phase took place at a somewhat slower pace, so the communication and capacity building activities need to be given more attention in future, while the project coordination units should preferably have a communication officer.

The basis for cooperation, both at technical and political level, has been established successfully and a wide cooperation in the region has been initiated. Considerable amount of knowledge and data have been collected and incorporated into the major Project outputs, i.e. TDA and SAP, providing a good basis for future activities in the field. Still, a follow-up is considered essential for completion of outputs and strengthening the Project impact.

Continuation of the DIKTAS project through a realization of the Strategic Action Program seems to be the most feasible option at the moment. In that case, the CIE could become a permanent consultation mechanism with a secretariat supported by the DIKTAS PCU. As an organizational entity, the secretariat (similar to river basin commissions) could then perform

some project administrative and organizational tasks that have been carried out by the executing agency so far. The outcome would be a more efficient and flexible management of activities.

No 'bad' practices have been identified in the DIKTAS project. However, a number of recommendations have been given in this chapter of the Report, both to a possible follow-up project to DIKTAS, and to other similar projects to be implemented in the future.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

Annex 2. Evaluation question matrix

Annex 3. List of documents reviewed

Annex 4. Mission itinerary

Annex 5. List of persons interviewed

Annex 6. Summary of field visits

Annex 7. Questionnaire used and summary of results

Annex 8. Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for independent **Terminal Evaluation** of the GEF/UNDP MSP project
“Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System”

Type of Contract:	Individual Contract (Consultant)
Languages Required:	English
Duration:	estimated April 2015 – May 2015 (estimated 28 working days)
Location:	Home based (14 days) + 14 days on mission to: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro.
Deadline for submission:	31 March 2015, by 17.00 hours (CET)
Applications are to be submitted to the following addresses:	
m.nikolic@unesco.org with cc to s.sesum@unesco.org and l.bialy@unesco.org or by post at the address UNESCO, Zmaja od Bosne BB, UN House , 71.000 Sarajevo	

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) set out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project “Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System” (PIMS #4056, Atlas # 59453).

The Project Document was signed by the Ministry of the Environment Forestry and Water Administration of Albania, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water management of Croatia and Ministry for Spatial Planning and the Environment of Montenegro May 2010 and it will end on 31 May 2015.

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project title:	Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System			
GEF Project ID:	4056		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
UNDP Project ID: UNESCO Project ID:	00059453/0074336 INT 007 2696	GEF financing:	2.16	
Country:	Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro	IA/EA own:	0	0
Region:	SEE	Government:	1.9	
Focal Area:	International Waters	Other:	1.503	
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):		Total co-financing:	3.403.570	
Executing Agency:	UNESCO	Total Project Cost:	5.563.570	
Other Partners involved:	IGRAC International Groundwater Resource Assessment Centre	Pro Doc Signature (date project began):		May 2010
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 30 June 2014	Actual: 31 May 2015

This Terminal Evaluation (TE) is initiated by the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub as the GEF Implementation Agency and UNESCO as the Executing Agency responsible for this project and it aims to provide managers (at the Ministries of the project countries, UNDP/GEF and project levels, and the GEF Secretariat) with assessment of the extent to which the project has met its overall objectives and outcomes and to help provide lessons learned for future similar projects.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>.

Project description

The DIKTAS project (Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System), is the first ever attempted globally to introduce sustainable integrated management principles in a transboundary karst freshwater aquifer of the magnitude of the Dinaric Karst System. 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 (carbonatic rock formations), which are widespread globally, but poorly understood. The Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, shared by several countries and one of the world's largest, has been identified as an ideal opportunity for applying new and integrated management approaches to these unique freshwater resources and ecosystems.

At the regional level the project's objectives are to:

1. Facilitate the equitable and sustainable utilization and management of the transboundary water resources of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, and
2. Protect from natural and man-made hazards, including climate change, the unique groundwater dependent ecosystems that characterize the Dinaric Karst region of the Balkan Peninsula.

These objectives, which aim to contribute to sustainable development of the region, are achieved through a concerted multi-country effort involving improvement in scientific understanding, the building of political consensus around key reforms and new policies, the enhanced coordination among countries, donors, projects and agencies, and the consolidation of national and international support.

Project Outcomes/outputs

The Project produces a better knowledge of the groundwater source and on the causes of its degradation. As one of the outcome a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) were prepared and published. A TDA is an assessment and prioritization of Transboundary water related issues of concern. It uses the best available verified scientific and technical information to examine the state of the environment and the root causes for its degradation. The analysis is carried out in a cross sectorial manner, focusing on Transboundary problems without ignoring national concerns and priorities.

Second outcome of the project: Strategic Action Plan (SAP), and a consultation mechanism (NIC and CIE) among the countries sharing the aquifer, formal agreement on corrective actions including policy, legal and institutional reforms, and investments, to be taken jointly and improved awareness and sustained international support.

Results are measured in terms of the achievement of key benchmarks (establishment of national inter-ministry committees, approval of TDA, endorsement of SAP, establishment of a joint permanent consultation mechanism).

2. DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The scope of the evaluation will cover all activities undertaken in the framework of the project. The evaluator will compare planned outputs of the project to actual outputs and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project objectives. It will also attempt to evaluate the efficiency of project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency as well as features related to the process involved in achieving those outputs and the impacts of the project. The evaluation will also address the underlying causes and issues contribution to targets not adequately achieved.

The key product expected from the terminal evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report written in English that should follow requirements as indicated in [Annex F](#).

The terminal evaluation report will be a stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions. The report will have to provide convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings.

Special attention shall be paid to the Lessons Learned section. The Terminal Evaluation Report will include a separate chapter on Lessons Learned, providing recommendations for replication and transfer of the experience related mainly to:

- post-project sustainability of the efforts both in terms of governance and in terms of environmental benefits;
- capacity building;
- successes and challenges.

The report together with its annexes shall be presented in electronic form in MS Word and pdf format.

The review will take place in consultant's home office with four missions to Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro. The consultant is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring engagement with the project team, project partners and all key stakeholders. The consultant should request all meetings during the missions at least 3 working days prior to undertaking the missions.

The consultant is expected to use interviews as a means of collecting data on the performance and success of the project. Questionnaires prepared by the consultant can be distributed to national project partners, facilitated by participating implementing agencies.

Evaluation approach and method

An overall approach and method² for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the [UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects](#). A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR in [Annex C](#). The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular Ministry of the Environment Forestry and Water Administration of Albania, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water management of Croatia and Ministry for Spatial Planning and the Environment of Montenegro. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro, which are also the project sites. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum: UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, Ministry of the Environment Forestry and Water Administration of Albania, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water management of Croatia and Ministry for Spatial Planning and the Environment of Montenegro; Steering Committee members; Project Team, key stakeholders.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#) of this Terms of Reference.

Evaluation Criteria & Ratings

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum

² For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

Evaluation Ratings:					
1. Monitoring and Evaluation		<i>rating</i>	2. IA & EA Execution		<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry			Quality of UNDP Implementation		
M&E Plan Implementation			Quality of Execution - Executing Agency		
Overall quality of M&E			Overall quality of Implementation / Execution		
3. Assessment of Outcomes		<i>rating</i>	4. Sustainability		<i>rating</i>
Relevance			Financial resources:		
Effectiveness			Socio-political:		
Efficiency			Institutional framework and governance:		
Overall Project Outcome Rating			Environmental :		
			Overall likelihood of sustainability:		

Project finance / co-finance

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator will receive assistance from the Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Other (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

Mainstreaming

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender/vulnerable groups.

Impact

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.³

Conclusions, recommendations & lessons

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations and lessons**.

Implementation arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNESCO. The UNESCO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluator to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

³ A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROTI Handbook 2009](#)

Although the evaluator should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned, all matters relevant to its assignment, they are not authorized to make any commitment or statement on behalf of UNESCO, UNDP or GEF or the project management.

Evaluation timeframe

The total duration of the evaluation will be up to 28 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	recommended: 3-4 days	20.04.2015
4 Evaluation Missions	recommended: 14 days	18.05.2015
Draft Evaluation Report	recommended: 5-8 days	23.05.2015
Final Report	recommended: 1-2 days	28.05.2015

Evaluation deliverables

The evaluator is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method, presents the agreed mission plan	No later than 1 week before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNESCO
Mission debriefing	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNESCO
Draft Evaluation Report	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 2 weeks of the evaluation missions,	Sent to UNESCO (reviewed by UNESCO, UNDP, PCU, GEF OFPs)
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving comments on draft	Sent to UNESCO

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

The report shall be submitted and all further communication with UNESCO regarding the implementation of this assignment should be addressed to:

Mr Sinisa SESUM (head UNESCO antenna office in Sarajevo of UNESCO Venice Office) copy
Ms Alice Aureli
Chief Groundwater Systems and Settlements Section
UNESCO - Division of Water Sciences
International Hydrological Programme (IHP)
Coordinator Transboundary Aquifers Management Programme -ISARM
1, rue Miollis - 75732 Paris Cedex 15, France

Responsibility for Expenses and their Reimbursement

The Consultant will be responsible for all personal administrative and travel expenses associated with undertaking this assignment including office accommodation, printing, stationary, telephone and electronic communications, and report copies incurred in this assignment. For this reason, the contract is prepared as a lump sum contract.

The remuneration of work performed will be conducted as follows:

- **First payment:** 10% of the total contract upon submission of the first field visit workplan, depending on the date of the evaluation missions and its acceptance by UNESCO approving officer Mr Sinisa SESUM;
- **Second payment:** 40% of the total contract upon submission of the draft Evaluation Report and its acceptance by UNESCO project manager;
- **Third/Final payment:** 50% of the total contract upon submission of the final Evaluation Report and its acceptance by UNESCO project manager.

3. COMPETENCIES

Required competencies:

- Strong interpersonal skills, communication and diplomatic skills, ability to work in a team
- Ability to plan and organize his/her work, efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results
- Openness to change and ability to receive/integrate feedback
- Ability to work under pressure and stressful situations
- Strong analytical, reporting and writing abilities

4. QUALIFICATIONS

The Evaluator **must be independent** from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of activities in question, i.e. he/she must not have participated in the preparation and/or implementation of the assessed project and must not be in a conflict of interest with project-related activities.

Academic Qualifications/Education:

- Master degree in economics, engineering, environmental science, groundwater management or equivalent experience.

Experience:

- At least 7 years of professional experience in the field of sustainable freshwater management;
- Familiarity with water management policies in SEE;
- Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures;
- Recent experience in evaluation of international donor driven development projects;
- Knowledge of MS Word, Excel and email communication software;

Language skills:

- Excellent English writing and communication skills

5. EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNESCO applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

- **Financial Proposal** - specifying a total lump sum amount for the tasks specified in this announcement. The financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (number of anticipated working days – in home office and on mission, travel – international and local, per diems and any other possible costs), using the following template.

	Nr. of units*	Units	Rate / USD	Total / USD
Work in home office**				
	14	man/days		0
		man/days		0
		man/days		0
Work on mission**				
	14	man/days		0
		man/days		0
		man/days		0
Sub-total fee				0
Travel costs				
International travel to and from country/ies	4	mission		0
DSA		overnights		0
Local travel		destination		0
Sub-total travel costs				0
TOTAL				0

* Estimates are indicated in the TOR, the applicant is requested to review and revise, if applicable.

** Add rows as needed

Evaluator Ethics

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct ([Annex E](#)) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

Please note that the **financial proposal is all-inclusive and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health insurance, vaccination and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of services...). All envisaged **travel costs** must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to join duty station/repatriation travel.*

Payments will be made only upon confirmation of UNESCO on delivering on the contract obligations in a satisfactory manner.

Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have **vaccinations/inoculations** when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. Consultants are also required to comply with the UN **security directives** set forth under [dss.un.org](#).

General Terms and conditions as well as other related documents can be found under: <http://on.undp.org/t7fjs>

ANNEXES:

- A: Project Logical Framework
- B: List of Documents to be reviewed by the Evaluator
- C: Evaluation Questions
- D: Rating scales
- E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form
- F: Evaluation Report Outline
- G: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

Annex A: Project Results Framework

	Objectively Verifiable Indicators				
Goal	<i>Improve the understanding of the transboundary water resources of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System, facilitate their equitable and sustainable utilization, and protect the unique groundwater dependent ecosystems that characterize the Dinaric Karst region of the Balkan peninsula.</i>				
Objectives/Outcomes	Indicator (Process)	Baseline	Target	Sources of verification	Assumptions
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.	1. The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis of the DIKTAS completed and approved indicating regional agreement on priority TB issues, immediate and root causes.	Incomplete biophysical and socio-economic information on the aquifer; Inadequate understanding of its shared nature and of the transboundary problems and their socio-economic root causes and impacts.	Approval of TDA by national, inter-ministerial committees by the end of Q4/2011.	Final TDA document. Reports of analyses undertaken as part of the TDA. Meeting minutes and record of approval by inter-ministerial committees. PIRs, midterm and final evaluations. Information available on official websites at UNDP, project website, and national government websites.	Cooperation between multiple technical and scientific working groups is maintained throughout the TDA process. National-level budgets for participating ministries are not significantly reduced. Countries and data owners agree to contribute data and information, and to make data freely available.
	2. Baseline conditions identified, and environmental status indicators agreed upon and adopted.	Fragmented and non-harmonized information on the DIKTAS environmental state as a whole.	By Q1/2011 a Report on Baseline Environmental Conditions containing agreed Environmental Status Indicators is approved by the National Inter-ministerial Committees and published	Report on Baseline Environmental Conditions. See Above	Informed consensus on indicators is strengthened by joint scientific fact-finding and action of Science Advisory Panel. Simple identified indicators will be feasible given the technology available in the countries.
Outcome 2: The strengthened collective knowledge and coordination among development plans and countries, agencies and donors improves sustainability of the resource	3. A multi-country consultative body established and operational.	Information and knowledge on karst problems and management responses are fragmented and not sufficiently shared among the countries. There is lack of coordination	The consultative body established by Q1 2012. At least three meeting held during the project execution	Founding document available including the consultation protocol. The meeting reports (containing the concrete sets of recommendations) produced and distributed to stakeholders on all levels.	Willingness of participating countries to participate and actively engage in work of the consultative body

		among planned and on-going activities related to transboundary aquifers			
	4. Environmental quality targets defined and adopted. A common monitoring program for harmonization of quality targets established.	Environmental quality targets differ from country to country hindering establishment of consistent environmental targets for transboundary aquifers	Proposal for harmonized monitoring program developed by the project team by Q4 2011, and approved by inter-ministerial committee by Q4 2012. The multi-country consultative body promotes national commitment on implementation.	Proposal document of the project team Approval document of the inter-ministerial committees Meeting reports of the multi-country consultative body.	Country specialists reach a common view on environmental quality targets Political willingness for harmonization of environmental quality targets
	5. A mechanism for coordination and exchanges with other relevant projects and initiatives, including the GEF supported Mediterranean Partnership and others, established and operational	Lack of coordination among relevant ongoing projects causes duplication of efforts, and prevents synergies.	Coordination Mechanism established by SC in Q3 2011. First Coordination Meeting held within 2011.	Report of the relevant SC meeting. Report of the Coordination Meeting.	Agencies and management responsible for ongoing projects are willing to participate and contribute.
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	6. Ad hoc inter-ministerial committees focused on harmonization of existing frameworks, and on priority reforms established in each project Country.	Weak or absent coordination among relevant ministries is hindering action and transboundary cooperation.	Inter-ministerial committees established by Q4 2010.	Founding documents available First meetings held and meeting reports available.	Willingness for cooperation among the relevant ministries.
	7. A Strategic Action Program (SAP) for the DIKTAS, and 4 National Implementation Plans, elaborated and adopted by the countries at high ministerial level	Transboundary concerns related to the sustainability of the karst groundwater resources are not prioritized or addressed.	DIKTAS SAP endorsed at ministerial level in the four countries by Q4 2012. National Implementation Plans adopted in each participating country by Q3 2013	Endorsed SAP Document. 4 National Implementation Plans documents.	Countries willing to engage and commit to coordinated actions including reforms and investments.

	8. A partnership conference aimed at consolidating international support for the implementation of the SAP is held with broad participation of the donor community.	Fragmented support of donors and lack of overall framework for coordinated development assistance on transboundary groundwater issues.	Conference held by Q4 2013.	Final declaration of Partnership Conference.	International donors are willing to engage in a coordinated action in support of SAP implementation
Outcome 4: Long term sustainability of achievements enhanced through public and political awareness campaigns, stakeholder involvement and replication mechanisms	9. Number of media events to highlight project's progress and achievements, implemented.	Public awareness about the transboundary nature and vulnerability of the Dinaric Karst System is scarce or absent. The DIKTAS project, its objectives and achievements is little known by many stakeholders	At least four media events during the project implementation period	Media events have been recorded and are digitally available	National media in the project countries are willing to support the project's objectives and report on the DIKTAS progress and achievements
	10. Number of targeted capacity building programs to encourage replication of new practices, behaviors and techniques, implemented.	Limited capacities and lack of awareness in the project countries pose threats to resource sustainability.	At least three capacity building/training sessions have taken place, focused on (i) legal issues and harmonization of water related legislation; (ii) advanced training on Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Mapping, and (iii) land use practices in karst areas.	Report/documentation of the training sessions.	Countries recognize importance of improved capacities and assist in the organization of training sessions.
	11. Number of events, contributions to IW LEARN activities.	Expertise on karst issues existing in the region is not part of, or shared with a broader community of practice.	Project website following IW LEARN standards established by Q1 2010. Project participates to IW Biennial Conferences.	Project website operational and frequently visited. Poster and publications prepared for IW Conferences.	Stakeholders in the region engage in distance learning and other ICT activities promoted through the website.

Annex B: List of Documents to be reviewed by the Evaluator

Document	Description
Project document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Document
Project reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inception Report• Quarterly Progress Reports• Annual Project Report to GEF• GEF focal area tracking tools• Mid-term Evaluation Report
Technical documents produced by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Action Plan• TDA Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis• Conference Proceedings
Other relevant materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SC meeting minutes• Project budget revisions

Annex C: Evaluation Questions

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives? • Is the Project relevant to all four countries of the project environmental objectives? • Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries? • Is the Project internally coherent in its design? • How is the Project complementary to activities of other stakeholders and donors active in the region? • How could the Project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries? 			
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the outputs and activities of the project consistent with the intended project objective and goal? • To what extent have implemented outputs produced or contributed to attaining the expected outcomes? • How was risk and risk mitigation being managed? • What lessons have been learnt for the Project to achieve its outcomes? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the Project in order to improve the achievement of the Project' expected results? • How could the Project be more effective in achieving its results? 			
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? • Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) Was the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned? Were the findings, lessons learned and recommendations shared among Project stakeholders for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement? Did the Project mainstream gender/ vulnerable groups considerations into its implementation? Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Can be considered sustainable? Did the Project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the Project? 			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design? Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues? Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support? Are policies and frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date? Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up? What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results? 			
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the project achieve its long-term goal? What is the level of sensitization and awareness about the sustainable 			

<p>management of shared groundwater resources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the impact of awareness raising in private, public and/or at individual levels?• Were cross-cutting issues identified and reflected during the project implementation?• How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?			
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Annex D: Rating Scales

Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution	Sustainability ratings: 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	Relevance ratings 2. Relevant (R) 1. Not relevant (NR)
6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems		Impact Ratings: 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
<i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

Annex E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁴

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at *place* on *date*

Signature: _____

⁴www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

Annex F: Evaluation Report Outline⁵

- i. Opening page:
 - Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
 - UNDP and GEF project ID#s.
 - Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
 - Region and countries included in the project
 - GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program
 - Implementing Partner and other project partners
 - Evaluation team members
 - Acknowledgements
- ii. Executive Summary
 - Project Summary Table
 - Project Description (brief)
 - Evaluation Rating Table
 - Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons
- iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations
(See: UNDP Editorial Manual⁶)
- 1. Introduction
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Scope & Methodology
 - Structure of the evaluation report
- 2. Project description and development context
 - Project start and duration
 - Problems that the project sought to address
 - Immediate and development objectives of the project
 - Baseline Indicators established
 - Main stakeholders
 - Expected Results
- 3. Findings
(In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (*) must be rated⁷)
 - 3.1 Project Design / Formulation
 - Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
 - Assumptions and Risks
 - Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design
 - Planned stakeholder participation
 - Replication approach
 - UNDP comparative advantage
 - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
 - Management arrangements
 - 3.2 Project Implementation
 - Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
 - Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)
 - Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

⁵The Report length should not exceed 40 pages in total (not including annexes).

⁶ UNDP Style Manual, Office of Communications, Partnerships Bureau, updated November 2008

⁷ Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory, see section 3.5, page 37 for ratings explanations.

- Project Finance:
- Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (*)
- UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (*) coordination, and operational issues

3.3 Project Results

- Overall results (attainment of objectives) (*)
- Relevance(*)
- Effectiveness & Efficiency (*)
- Country ownership
- Mainstreaming
- Sustainability (*)
- Impact

4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

- Corrective actions for the design, 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
- Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

5. Annexes

- ToR
- Itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits
- List of documents reviewed
- Evaluation Question Matrix
- Questionnaire used and summary of results
- Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Annex G: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

(to be completed by UNESCO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNESCO

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 2. Evaluation criteria matrix

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
• Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?	• Existence of a clear relationship between the Project objectives and UNDP objectives	• Project documents • UNDP strategies and documents • UNDP, Project partners	• Documents review • UNDP web-site • Interviews
• Is the Project relevant to environmental objectives of all four Project countries?	• Degree to which the Project supports national environmental objectives • Degree of coherence between the Project and national priorities, policies and strategies • Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of the Project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities • Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the Project design process • Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP/GEF criteria	• Project documents • National policies and strategies • Project partners	• Documents review • Interviews
• Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?	• Strength of the link between the expected Project results and the needs of relevant stakeholders • Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in Project design and implementation	• Project documents • Project partners and stakeholders	• Documents review • Interviews
• Is the Project internally coherent in its design?	• Level of coherence between the Project expected results and the Project design internal logic • Level of coherence between Project design and Project implementation approach	• Project documents • Key Project stakeholders	• Documents review • Interviews
• How is the Project complementary to activities of other stakeholders and donors active in the region?	• Degree to which the Project was coherent and complementary to other donor programming nationally and regionally	• Documents from other donor supported activities • Project documents • Project partners	• Documents review • Interviews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could the Project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of Project targets that would better address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policies and strategies • Key Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in the future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of lessons and experiences relevant for other projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the outputs and activities of the Project consistent with the intended Project objective and goal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of consistency of the Project outputs with the intended Project objective and goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Key Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have implemented outputs produced or contributed to attaining the expected outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspond to the indicators in Project Result Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project reports • Key Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was risk and risk mitigation being managed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during the Project planning and design • Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues • Quality of risk mitigation strategies developed and followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, UNESCO, Project team and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lessons have been learnt for the Project to achieve its outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of lessons used to achieve Project outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the Project in order to improve the achievement of the Project expected results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of changes that could have been made in order to improve the achievement of the Project expected results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Key Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could the Project be more effective in achieving its results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of lessons that would make the Project more effective in achieving its results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Key Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurrence of change in Project design / implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and reports • UNDP, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and quality of financial and progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and reports • UNDP, UNESCO, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and reports • UNDP, UNESCO, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of discrepancy between planned and used financial expenditures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and reports • UNDP, UNESCO, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned vs. actual funds leveraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and reports • UNDP, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the findings, lessons learned and recommendations shared among Project stakeholders for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents and reports • UNDP, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Project mainstream gender/vulnerable groups' considerations into its implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the gender/ vulnerable groups' considerations taken into account in the Project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Can be considered sustainable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of supported partnerships • Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the Project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of expertise used from international experts compared to national experts • Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<p>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of a sustainability strategy • Development of policy and regulatory frameworks that further the Project objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood that financial and economic resources will not be available beyond the Project support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of commitment of the Project partners to continue their activities beyond the Project support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were policies and frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of policies and frameworks addressed in the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of capacity at the national and local levels and its adequacy to ensure sustainability of the results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of the Project activities and results replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • UNDP, Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the Project achieve its long-term goal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of further actions of the Project countries toward the achievement of the goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Key project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of sensitization and awareness about the sustainable management of shared groundwater resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the level of awareness about the sustainable management of shared groundwater resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the impact of awareness raising in private, public and/or at individual levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the level of awareness in private, public and/or at individual levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were cross-cutting issues identified and reflected during the project implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of cross-cutting issues identified and reflected during the project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of lessons learned enhancing the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project team, Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents review • Interviews

Annex 3. List of documents reviewed

Document	Description
Project document	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Document
Project reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inception Report• Quarterly Progress Reports• Annual Project Reports / Project Implementation Reviews• GEF focal area tracking tools• Mid-term Evaluation Report
Technical documents produced by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis• Strategic Action Program• Conference Proceedings
Other relevant material	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes of the PSC meetings• Project Management Summary Reports• Financial reports (project expenditures, budget revisions, detailed budgets)

Annex 4. Mission itinerary

Date	Place	Institution	Name	Position	Type of interview
May 11	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna Office Sarajevo	Siniša Šešum	Head of Office	Face-to-face
		Public Enterprise Electric Utility of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kadira Močević	NIC member	Face-to-face
		Sava River Watershed Agency, Sarajevo	Selma Merdan	NIC member	Face-to-face
		Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations	Biljana Rajić	Project NFP	Face-to-face
		UNESCO-IHP, Paris, France	Alice Aureli	PSC member	Call
		Sava River Watershed Agency, Sarajevo	Enes Alagić	CEO's Advisor for Technical Issues	Face-to-face
May 12	Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Public Institution „Vode Srpske“	Branko Čolić	NIC member	Face-to-face
	Podgorica, Montenegro	UNDP Regional Hub, Istanbul, Turkey	Vladimir Mamaev	PSC member	Call
May 13		Environment Protection Agency	Lidija Šćepanović	NIC member	Face-to-face
		Hydro-Meteorological Service	Luka Mitrović	NIC member	Face-to-face
		Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism	Jelena Plamenac	Project NFP	E-mail
			Novak Čadjenović	PT member	Face-to-face
		GWP Mediterannean, Athens, Greece	Dimitris Faloutsos	PCU member	Face-to-face
May 14		University of Belgrade, Serbia	Zoran Stevanović	Project support (International specialist)	Call
		Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Ranko Kankaraš	NIC member	Face-to-face
May 15	Tirana, Albania	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration	Pellumb Abeshi	GEF OFP	Face-to-face
			Viola Saliaga	Project NFP	Face-to-face

Date	Place	Institution	Name	Position	Type of interview
May 18	Zagreb, Croatia	Croatian Waters	Želimir Pekaš	PT member	Face-to-face
		Ministry of Agriculture	Mirela Hahn	Project NFP	Face-to-face
		Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection	Gordana Ruklić	GEF OFP, PSC member	Face-to-face
		Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Boško Kenjić	PSC member	Call
May 19		Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Senad Oprašić	GEF OFP	Call
		Adriatic Sea Watershed Agency, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Damir Mrdjen	NIC member	Call
		UNESCO-IGRAC, Delft, The Netherlands	Neno Kukurić	Project Coordinator	Call
		IAH Karst Commission member, Serbia	Petar Milanović	Scientific Advisory Panel member	Call

Annex 5. List of persons interviewed

Name	Institution	Position	E-mail address
Siniša Šešum	UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna Office Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Head of Office	s.sesum@unesco.org
Kadira Močević	Public Enterprise Electric Utility of Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	k.mocevic@elektroprivreda.ba
Selma Merdan	Sava River Watershed Agency, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	merdan@voda.ba
Biljana Rajić	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Project NFP	biljana.rajic@mvteo.gov.ba
Alice Aureli	UNESCO-IHP, Paris, France	PSC member	a.aureli@unesco.org
Enes Alagić	Sava River Watershed Agency, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	CEO's Advisor for Technical Issues	alagic@voda.ba
Branko Čolić	Public Institution „Vode Srpske“, Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	trebinje@vodeherc.org
Vladimir Mamaev	UNDP Regional Hub, Istanbul, Turkey	PSC member	vladimir.mamaev@undp.org
Lidija Šćepanović	Environment Protection Agency, Montenegro	NIC member	lacija.scepovic@epa.org.me
Luka Mitrović	Hydro-Meteorological Service, Montenegro	NIC member	luka.mitrovic@meteo.co.me
Jelena Plamenac	Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro	Project NFP	jelena.plamenac@mrt.gov.me
Novak Čadjenović	Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro	PT member	novak.cadjenovic@mrt.gov.me
Dimitris Faloutsos	GWP Mediterannean, Athens, Greece	PCU member	dimitris@gwpmed.org
Zoran Stevanović	University of Belgrade, Serbia	Project support (International specialist)	zstev_2000@yahoo.co.uk
Ranko Kankaraš	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Montenegro	NIC member	ranko.kankaras@mpr.gov.me
Pellumb Abeshi	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania	GEF OFP	Pellumb.Abeshi@moe.gov.al
Viola Saliaga	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania	Project NFP	Viola.Saliaga@moe.gov.al

Name	Institution	Position	E-mail address
Želimir Pekaš	Croatian Waters, Croatia	PT member	zpekas@voda.hr
Mirela Hahn	Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia	Project NFP	mirela.hahn@voda.hr
Gordana Ruklić	Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection, Croatia	GEF OFP, PSC member	gordana.ruklic@mzopu.hr
Boško Kenjić	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	PSC member	Bosko.Kenjic@mvteo.gov.ba
Senad Oprasić	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	GEF OFP	senad.oprasic@mvteo.gov.ba
Damir Mrdjen	Adriatic Sea Watershed Agency, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	jsliv-01@voda.tel.net.ba
Neno Kukurić	UNESCO-IGRAC, Delft, The Netherlands	Project Coordinator	neno.kukuric@un-igrac.org
Petar Milanović	IAH Karst Commission member, Serbia	Scientific Advisory Panel member	petar.mi@eunet.rs

Annex 6. Summary of field visits

Name	Institution	Position	Summary
Siniša Šešum	UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna Office Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Head of Office	The interview was focused on the role of UNESCO Venice Office – Antenna Office in Sarajevo, and how the administrative operations of the Project were carried out. Impression is that it is very effective, and that financial and administrative matters were dealt with timely. The office provided logistical support to the organization of meetings, and handled all contracts and payments.
Kadira Močević	Public Enterprise Electric Utility of Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	The interviewee described the work of NIC. Satisfied with the Project implementation and involvement of relevant stakeholders from the country. Given that the major outputs (TDA and SAP) were prepared with delay, a follow-up would be very important to complete the outputs and strengthen the impact through the SAP implementation.
Selma Merdan	Sava River Watershed Agency, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	The Project management structure was complex, however the communication with the PCU, the UNESCO Antenna Office, and within the NIC, was very good. Project performance is satisfactory. SAP is a good basis for further activities in the field. A follow-up is crucial to put the prepared documents into practice.
Biljana Rajić	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Project NFP	Project is relevant and important, well recognizing the country needs. The management arrangement was good, as well as the communication with the PCU and within the NIC. However, a stronger PCU providing a permanent coordination is necessary in such a complex project. Delay in establishment of CIE makes the follow-up essential for sustainability of the Project results. The existing mechanisms of regional cooperation should be considered as options for coordination of future activities.
Alice Aureli	UNESCO-IHP, Paris, France	PSC member	Project management is considered very successful. Communication with PCU was very good, local enthusiasm was obvious. Close cooperation and mutual trust with UNDP. Main challenges include delays in TDA and SAP preparation, and in CIE establishment, possibly caused by underestimated man-power, as well as inadequate Project budget. Supportive of the follow-up activities.

Name	Institution	Position	Summary
Enes Alagić	Sava River Watershed Agency, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	CEO's Advisor for Technical Issues	Project is relevant and important. Project performance is fair. Capacity of the national institutions could have been used to a greater extent. Outputs provide a good basis for further regional cooperation on the issue.
Branko Čolić	Public Institution „Vode Srpske“, Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	TDA and SAP provide a good basis for further work, however the Project sustainability is a great challenge, primarily if the SAP is not endorsed by the official end of the Project. A follow-up is supported. Implementation of pilot projects would add considerable value to the follow-up. Stronger involvement of local experts in the Project implementation is important for the transfer of ownership to the Project countries.
Vladimir Mamaev	UNDP Regional Hub, Istanbul, Turkey	PSC member	Project did not experience any significant challenge. Implementation was good, with a high degree of trust in, and a constant communication with, the PC and UNESCO. Despite the delays (TDA, SAP, CIE), often associated with the implementation of regional projects, the Project is considered a success. He supports the follow-up activities.
Lidija Šćepanović	Environment Protection Agency, Montenegro	NIC member	Very important project, given the importance of regional cooperation. Satisfied with the management arrangements, and involvement of relevant stakeholders in the country through NIC. Implementation of SAP through a follow-up is essential for sustainability of Project results.
Luka Mitrović	Hydro-Meteorological Service, Montenegro	NIC member	High relevance of the Project. Connection between science and policy within the Project was not strong enough. Capacity of the national institutions was not used to the maximum extent. Nevertheless, a considerable amount of knowledge has been collected within the Project and it is a good basis for future activities in the field.
Jelena Plamenac	Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro	Project NFP	Good management structure. Excellent communication with PCU. Satisfied with the Project outcomes and outputs. The main challenges include the harmonization of national legislation (including the preparation of by-laws at the national level) and the provision of financial resources to improve monitoring, establish a national water information system, and implement measures to prevent pollution and protect ecosystems dependent on groundwater.

Name	Institution	Position	Summary
Novak Čadjenović	Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro	PT member	Very good organization of Project Team. Share of experts from the Project countries satisfactory. Promotion and clarification of the Project concept and activities to national institutions was insufficient. The basis for regional cooperation, provided by the Project, is a great success. A follow-up is supported by the country.
Dimitris Faloutsos	GWP Mediterannean, Athens, Greece	PCU member	In general, complexity of management structure did not affect the overall Project performance. Stakeholder involvement has been done on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis, rather than in a systematic way. Supports the follow-up and considering the existing platforms for regional cooperation as options for coordination of further activities.
Zoran Stevanović	University of Belgrade, Serbia	Project support (International specialist)	Organization of the Project Team was good, as well as the communication with PCU. Preparation of SAP was the main challenge in the Project implementation. There are risks associated with the SAP implementation. Follow-up is very important, however a clear ToR for functioning of CIE is essential.
Ranko Kankaraš	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Montenegro	NIC member	Satisfied with the management arrangements. All relevant stakeholders from the country, both governmental and non-governmental, were involved in the implementation. There is a readiness in the country to participate in follow-up activities.
Pellumb Abeshi	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania	GEF OFP	(One meeting was held with both interviewees.) Important topic and useful project. Good communication with PCU and within the country.
Viola Saliaga	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania	Project NFP	Project is a very good start. Considerable experience was gained. The capacity building component was satisfactory. SAP is a good basis for further work. Follow-up would be very important.
Želimir Pekaš	Croatian Waters, Croatia	PT member	Very important project, being the first joint effort of the Project countries to systematize data, and conduct analyses and mapping of groundwater resources. Satisfied with the functioning of the Project Team. Acceptance of the Project results by policy makers was the main challenge.

Name	Institution	Position	Summary
Mirela Hahn	Ministry of Agriculture, Croatia	Project NFP	Satisfied with how the Project management was functioning and how relevant country representatives were involved in the Project execution. Project results were achieved in a satisfactory way, despite the delays. There are risks associated with endorsement of SAP on a high political level, as well as financial risks associated with the SAP implementation.
Gordana Ruklić	Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection, Croatia	GEF OFP, PSC member	Good involvement of relevant country representatives and local experts. Considerable amount of data and knowledge collected within the Project. CIE should have been established during the Project execution. Not all risks were taken into account in Project planning, which is a possible cause of delays in the implementation.
Boško Kenjić	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	PSC member	The interview was focused on lessons learned and recommendations for a possible follow-up. Due to delays in preparation of the main outputs, the opportunity was missed to formalize the regional cooperation. There is a risk related to SAP endorsement and implementation.
Senad Opravić	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina	GEF OFP	Project provided a good basis for further activities and cooperation. The interviewee gave a number of recommendations for future work related to priority issues, increase of country ownership and stronger involvement of stakeholders.
Damir Mrdjen	Adriatic Sea Watershed Agency, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina	NIC member	Very important project. National reports, TDA and SAP are valuable documents, however important outputs such as the National Implementation Plans are missing. Participation of water management experts in Project Team would have been beneficial.
Neno Kukurić	UNESCO-IGRAC, Delft, The Netherlands	Project Coordinator	The interview was focused on the Project outputs (with a particular emphasis on TDA and SAP), as well as lessons learned, primarily those related to Project management issues.
Petar Milanović	IAH Karst Commission member, Serbia	Scientific Advisory Panel member	Considerable amount of data and information has been collected. Communication was established on various levels, including the political and expert ones. The international conference was a very successful event. Project outputs are valuable, however they only provide a basis (source of information), which needs to be further upgraded in future.

Annex 7. Questionnaire used and summary of results

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
Project Design / Formulation					
1. To what extent is the Project consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries in your country?	Yes, to a great extent. The topic is relevant and the Project is important.	Project has recognized the country needs very well. There was a considerable interest of institutions and the public.	To a great extent.	To a great extent, as there are continuous efforts in the country to transpose the EU directive in this field. The Project will enable implementation of specific measures to protect the karstic area in the country, which has not been the case so far. This is the first project dealing with protection of this segment of environment.	Relevance of the Project is obvious.
2. Were the Project objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe?	Yes, to a great extent.	They were clear, however not all of them were feasible within the timeframe (e.g. preparation of National Implementation Plans).	Yes, to a great extent. However, there were delays from the beginning of the execution.	Mostly yes.	The objectives were clear. For some of them, there is a different perception of their feasibility within the Project timeframe.
3. Were the capacities of executing institution and its counterparts properly considered when the Project was designed?	Yes, to a great extent.	Partly, given that the capacity of ministries is relatively low.	Yes.	Yes.	The capacities were properly considered in most cases.
4. Were the Project roles properly assigned during the Project design?	Yes.	Yes, to a great extent.	Yes.	Yes.	The Project roles were properly assigned.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
5. Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to Project approval?	Yes. Ministry of Environment participated in identification and approval of the institutions.	Yes. Nevertheless, there are challenges associated with the complex structure of the country.	Yes.	Yes.	The partnership arrangements were properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to Project approval.
6. Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements, in place at Project entry?	Partly.	Partly.	Mostly yes.	Partly.	Counterpart resources, enabling legislation and adequate project management arrangements, were not fully in place at Project entry.
7. Were the Project assumptions and risks well articulated in the Project document?	Yes, most of them.	Yes, to a great extent.	Yes. Not all risks were taken into account in Project planning, which is a possible cause of delays in the Project execution.	The only major risk in PD is the lack of sustained political support for this collaborative effort in Project countries. However, during the Project execution, the NICs contributed to reducing the risk.	There might be risks that were not taken into account in Project planning, which is a possible cause of delays in the Project execution.
8. Were the stakeholders involved, and how were they involved, in the Project design process?	Yes.	Yes, to a great extent, mostly through their participation at meetings.	Yes, in a satisfactory way.	Yes, very much.	The stakeholders were involved in the Project design process in a satisfactory way.
9. Does this Project have a design / approach that can be replicated regionally, nationally or globally? Give evidence. Why or why not?	Yes, as this is the first Project dealing with the issue in a comprehensive way.	Yes. It aims at integrating all aspects of groundwater resources management.	Yes. An important, pioneering Project, especially in the region.	Yes, as it introduces sustainable integrated management principles for the transboundary karstic freshwater aquifer.	The design / approach can be replicated, given its innovative and integrated nature.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
Project Implementation					
1. Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the Project preparation and execution?	Yes.	Yes, to a great extent. Some were missing, though.	Yes, through workshops and other events.	Yes, through NIC (governments) and within the activities of public participation WG (civil society).	Relevant country representatives, from governments and civil society, were involved in Project preparation and execution.
2. Can the management arrangement model employed in the Project be considered as an optimum model?	The model was fair. Dispersion was not a problem. PCU performed well, it was efficient and flexible.	Not. Way of engaging the Project Team members from the countries (experts from national institutions, engaged in the Project as consultants) could have been better. Participation of water management experts in Project Team would have been beneficial. A stronger PCU providing a permanent coordination is necessary in such a complex project.	The model was complex, yet functioning well.	Yes.	The management arrangement model was good, however some deficiencies related to the way of populating the Project Team, as well as the PCU capacity and strength, were identified.
3. Were the management arrangements implemented and how efficient were they?	Yes, the arrangements were efficient.	Not so efficient: delays in the execution, insufficient time available for discussion of outputs, no time available for discussion of next steps. Frequency of PSC meetings (once a year) was too low for such a complex project.	Lack of continuity of cooperation among NFPs, causing a different dynamics of work of WGs. Occasionally, some experts were not engaged as much as it was expected, which might be a cause of delays.	Very good organization of Project Team.	The opinions differ from country to country. There might have been deficiencies in implementation of the arrangements, mostly within the Project Team.
4. What was the quality of your communication with PCU?	Good.	Very good.	Very good.	Excellent.	The quality of communication with PCU was very good, obviously.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
5. How was the role of your country Project Focal Point being executed? What was the quality of your communication and dissemination of results with Project's beneficiaries in your country?	Communication within the country was good.	Very good.	Well.	Good communication on the country level.	Not all the answers are clear on the performance of NFPs. Communication within the countries is considered good.
6. Assess the role of UNDP. Assess contribution to the Project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination).	Attending workshops only. Advice neither sought nor given.	Neither significant support, nor any obstacle.	No contacts with the Regional Office, a few contacts with the Country Office.		Contacts with UNDP were not sufficiently intense to assess their role properly.
7. Assess the role of UNESCO-IHP in Project execution and implementation.	Very good communication with working groups.	Very good performance of UNESCO Antenna Office.	Very good, except the quality of financial reports, especially during the last year of the Project.	Significant and useful.	Communication with, and performance of, UNESCO-IHP and UNESCO Antenna Office, were very good.
8. Did the local stakeholders participate in Project management and decision-making?	Yes.	Yes.	Partly.	Yes.	Local stakeholders participated in Project management and decision-making to a satisfactory level.
9. Assess the financial management of the Project.	Fair.	Shortcomings were noticed.	Financial reports were not of a sufficiently high quality, especially during the last year of the Project.		Shortcomings of financial reporting, especially during the ending phase of the Project, were noticed.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
10. What were the main challenges in the Project implementation?	No significant challenges.	On the country level, challenges are associated with the complex structure of the country.	Communication of Project results to policy makers and acceptance of the results by them.	Harmonization of national legislation (including the preparation of by-laws at the national level) and the provision of financial resources to improve monitoring, establish a national water information system, and implement measures to prevent pollution and protect ecosystems dependent on groundwater.	The main challenges differ from country to country, however all are linked to complexities and obstacles existing on the national level.
Project Results					
1. How the Project's intended results have been achieved?	Satisfactory. Project is a very good start in terms of regional cooperation on groundwater management.	Moderately satisfactory. Outcomes formulated in PD were not fully attained. Outputs are based on the collection of the existing data only – results of new investigations would have added value.	Satisfactory. Delays at the very beginning of the Project execution certainly caused delays in preparation of major outputs. However, delays in preparation of outputs also provided benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More time to achieve a better quality of outputs and better acceptance of results in the countries - In Croatia, activities got better aligned with river basin management planning activities according to the EU WFD - More time for decision making, thus reducing the associated risks. 	Satisfactory. The basis for regional cooperation, provided by the Project, is a great success.	The results have been achieved to a (moderate) satisfaction of the Project countries. The Project was clearly successful in launching the transboundary cooperation on groundwater issues, and provided a very good basis for future cooperation. However, outcomes have not been attained as foreseen in the Project Document. The countries have a different perception of the shortcomings.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
2. Assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the Project. Is it a good value for money?	Considerable experience was gained. The capacity building component was satisfactory. SAP is a good basis for further work.	Very important project providing a good basis for further activities in the field. National reports, TDA and SAP are valuable documents, however some important outputs are missing. Therefore, a follow-up would be very important for completion of outputs and strengthening the Project impact through SAP implementation.	The data and knowledge collected within the Project are very useful. Not all risks were taken into account in Project planning, which is a possible cause of delays in the Project implementation.	Considerable amount of knowledge has been collected within the Project and it is a good basis for future activities in the field.	Considerable amount of knowledge and data have been collected and incorporated into the major Project outputs, i.e. TDA and SAP, providing a good basis for future activities in the field. Still, a follow-up is considered essential for completion of outputs and strengthening the Project impact.
3. Which targets have not been adequately achieved by the Project?	Endorsement of SAP and launching the SAP implementation.	Establishment of CIE. Implementation of local scale activities.	CIE should have been established during the Project execution.	Establishment of CIE. However, allocating more time and thus allowing for a thorough analysis of SAP by the countries was a good approach, despite the delay.	Establishment of CIE and implementation of local scale activities seem to be the main targets not achieved by the Project.
4. What do you consider the main shortcoming in terms of the targets not achieved by the Project?		Due to delays in preparation of the main outputs, the opportunity was missed to formalize the regional cooperation and the risk related to the SAP endorsement and implementation increased.	Stronger coordination and better quality control of outputs and performance of experts, were necessary. Project planning was too optimistic.	Connection between science and policy within the project was not strong enough. Capacity of national institutions was not used to the maximum extent. Promotion and clarification of the Project concept and activities to national institutions was insufficient – the Project newsletter and web-site were not sufficient tools for this purpose.	Failure to reach a strong political commitment among the countries on implementing reforms for the achievement of the Project goal is perceived as the main shortcoming.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
5. Are there financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of Project outcomes? (What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the Project ends?)	Yes.	Yes.	This is a key issue. Therefore, a careful planning of activities in SAP is very important, in order to ensure sustainability of the SAP implementation.	Implementation of SAP through a follow-up is essential for sustainability of the Project results, however there is a risk for the activities not to be continued.	There is obviously a perception of financial risks that might jeopardize the sustainability of Project outcomes.
6. What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the Project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?	Low.	The risk is considerable, if there will be no follow-up to the Project. The Project sustainability is a great challenge, primarily if the SAP is not endorsed by the official termination of the Project.	There are risks associated with endorsement of SAP on a high political level.	There is a readiness in the country to participate in follow-up activities.	Perceptions of such a risk differ from country to country, ranging from low to moderate risk, depending strongly on whether a follow-up to the Project will take place in future or not.
7. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the Project's long-term objectives?	Partly.	Yes. However, communication to media should be further strengthened in future.	Moderately good. Should be further improved.	Partly.	There is a need for further improvement of awareness raising in this context.
8. Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the Project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of Project benefits?	Not. National strategy is under development. The country is ready to endorse SAP.	Yes, to some extent, due to the complex structure of the country.	Not.	Partly. However, efforts are being made to improve national legislation by transposing principles, objectives and measures from relevant EU directives.	There is a different perception of this risk by the countries. Where exists, the risk is caused by internal complexities in the country.

Question	Country				Remark / Conclusion
	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Montenegro	
What is your key message based on the experience gained during the Project execution?	Implementation of a follow-up project would be very important. It should focus on concrete activities rather than stick to „paper work“.	Delay in establishment of CIE makes the follow-up essential for sustainability of the Project results. Next steps should be oriented toward concrete activities, while objectives should be defined in as concrete and realistic way as possible.	Very important project, the first opportunity for a joint work of the countries – especially, former federal units of Yugoslavia - on the issue. The country has recognized the Project importance, it is satisfied with the results and ready for a follow-up, which would be a good opportunity to tackle a number of concrete transboundary challenges in the region.	Project of high relevance and importance. Follow-up, focused on concrete activities such as implementation of pilot projects and establishment of a monitoring system, would be equally important, also as an opportunity to revive some national institutions in the Project countries.	There is an obvious interest, as well as an awareness of the need, of the countries to continue their joint work on the issue through a follow-up project. The follow-up is seen as an opportunity, not only to ensure completion of DIKTAS outputs and full achievement of its targets, but also to further strengthen the regional cooperation by building upon valuable achievements provided by this Project, primarily through the SAP implementation.

Annex E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁸

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: Dejan Komatina
Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____
I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.
Signed at place on date Zagreb, May 6, 2015

Signature:

⁸www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct