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Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo (IWRM-K) - Program Inception Phase

In Kosovo, based on its long-standing engagement in the water services sector, the SDC aims a supporting over the next decade the establishment of an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach with related institutional capacities and people's skills. Skat Consulting Ltd. in association with the EAA was awarded the mandate of carrying out a one-year inception phase for the IWRM-K Program. Under the lead and management of Skat, the inception accomplished a full-fledged Program co-design process with the donor and local stakeholders to identify measures to be funded in the four years Phase 1 of the IWRM-K.



Country:

Republic of Kosovo

Project Period:

May 2019 – April 2020 (Inception Phase)

[May 2020 – April 2024 \(Program Phase 1\)](#)

Services Provided:

Consultancy / Program Design

Name of Staff involved and functions performed:

[Roger Schmid](#) (Program director & quality assurance), [Florian Klingel](#) (Program manager & inception lead), [Danijela Djordjevic](#) (CFO), [Dimitrija Sekovski](#) (team leader, expatriate), local staff (7 consultants)

Name of Client(s)

SDC – Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo (SCO)

Name of Partner Organisation(s):

Environment Agency Austria (EAA)

World University Services (WUS)

KEK-CDC Consultants

Kosovo is one of the most water-stressed countries in Southeast Europe due to its specific natural features combined with human pressure: lack of investments in water infrastructure, inefficient water use and water pollution from mining, untreated wastewaters, as well as agricultural runoff. Growing demand for water amplifies the challenge. Modifications of streams and natural basin structure heighten the risk of droughts and floods. Impacts of climate change increase the vulnerability of ecosystems and economy. The trans-boundary character of the four river basins further complicates water management. Although the National Water Policy promotes an IWRM approach and the related Law of Waters introduces contemporary EU-based water management practices, a functioning IWRM framework is not yet in place in Kosovo.

Against this backdrop, the SDC engaged to support the establishment of such an IWRM framework backed by properly capacitated institutions in the country over the next decade.

The inception Skat was entrusted with encompassed a comprehensive stocktaking exercise evaluating the effects of current policies, past and ongoing projects, while making the best use of achievements to date. An intensive process of strategic visioning was carried with the key stakeholders to map IWRM needs and opportunities, and to identify the priorities. The assessments focused on what institutions in Kosovo should do and what they can do: of particular interest were data and information systems and management, planning and financial instruments, and education and professional skills. Accordingly, the inception phase effectively succeeded in mainly:

- Carrying out a capacity development needs assessment in the water and other related sectors;
- Formulating the Program Document that will guide future SDC funding decisions; and
- Mobilizing, engaging and committing stakeholders for the upcoming implementation phase.

The aim of IWRM-K as per inception phase design endorsed by the donor is a transformation towards effectively improved capacities and a strengthened role of the newly established Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, and especially the River Basin District Authority, as key institutions for river basin management. The Program invariably links technical capacity building and institutional development. It is designed to catalyse the framework, knowledge, financial and other resources required to achieve the objectives of the River Basin Management Plans, which are the key documents for shaping the Kosovar sustainable water resource management agenda. Skills development of water professionals, particularly younger women and men, and job creation will be crucial. The IWRM-K will also support the institutions to nurture public awareness of environmental issues and enhancement of citizen engagement.