

TERMS OF REFERENCES

International Water Education Expert

Conceptualization of a Master Programme on Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo

Program Title:	Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo (IWRM-K)
Post Title:	International Water Education Expert
Duty Station(s):	Home-based
Duration of contract(s)	One month upon signing of the contract
Estimated work-load:	12 expert-days
Indicative start date:	8 th of March 2021

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo Program (hereinafter IWRM-K or the Program) is implemented by the Consortium of Skat Consulting Ltd., Switzerland, and the Environment Agency Austria (EAA), thanks to the generous funding provided by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Its main goal is to build long-lasting water resources management capacities at national and river basin levels in line with Kosovo's socio-economic and political priorities, as well as the needs of future sustainable development. It aims to help replace the current fragmented approach with a more comprehensive, and highly participatory approach of managing water resources, aligned with the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the EU Water Framework Directive (EU WFD).

Over the coming years, the IWRM-K will help to create the enabling environment for the envisaged transformation of Kosovo's water resources management through (i) Support to the development of institutional capacity for IWRM; (ii) Preparation of coherent planning and technical documentation base to inform future measures and water resource management decisions (e.g., River Basin Management Plans, other country-level policies, strategies, and plans); (iii) Support to knowledge and skills development of (young) water professionals whilst facilitating relevant job creation; and (iv) Public awareness-raising on environmental issues and creating stakeholder participation mechanisms in water resources management.

In line with these strategic directions, the IWRM-K Program is designed to facilitate the adoption of a comprehensive country-level IWRM system by combining institutional and technical capacity development achievements incorporated into a comprehensive set of interlinked measures. A significant share of Program-backed interventions is related to **such capacity building efforts, including knowledge and skills development of water professionals. Specifically, the Program is aiming to support state (water) administration, young (water) professionals, academics and researchers, CSOs/NGOs, and other stakeholders**¹.

One of the important educational activities supported by the Program is the development of an **interdisciplinary Master-level study programme in IWRM** that has been identified as a priority as part of an earlier Program-backed assessment process. Once established the Master Programme (MP) will support a significant improvement of the educational offer in areas related to water resource management for the country, and preferably for the broader region. It needs

¹ In implementing the educational activities, the IWRM-K Program benefits from the specialized knowledge and long-term experience of the World University Services (WUS) Austria.

to be designed to equip different groups of (water) professionals dealing with/interested in specific aspects of water management with cutting-edge knowledge on the IWRM principles, processes, and practices. Spreading this new knowledge among the country's professionals is expected to catalyse the transformation of current water management into a modern water governance system able to bring forward the country's sustainability agenda.

Ultimately, the MP on IWRM aims at bringing **trans-disciplinary knowledge among the diverse target audience** in terms of previous educational background and professional experience (e.g., engineering, economics, ecology, environmental science, social science). By this, it will be instrumental in **improving dialogue and bridging the gaps among different professions** dealing with various aspects of water resource management and bring together different dimensions that are still considered unconventional to the water resource management practices and traditions in the region (e.g., social, gender, political, environmental). In such way, future (water) professionals will be much better equipped with contemporary knowledge and skills to manage the real-life water resource management challenges and uncertainties.

Wishing to maximize the practical value of the MP, the IWRM-K Program seeks to support the creation of **problem-solving/solution-oriented studies** considering the specifics of Kosovo's water resource management context (e.g., educational, institutional, political, economic, social). The MP needs to be designed in a way to help Kosovo improve its overall water resources management by **shifting from the traditional approaches** (defined primarily by the water management doctrines of former Yugoslavia) **to contemporary holistic concepts** which consider multiple aspects and rely on the integration of achievements of different scientific disciplines. It should also assist the country transformation in light of the ongoing EU accession process², because of which the **EU-based water-related concepts, approaches, and legislation** needs to be prominent in the proposed syllabus.

The MP is planned to be **hosted by a Kosovo-based university** with previous relevant educational/academic, and research records, preferably in partnership with Swiss, Austrian, and/or other EU-based universities or other complementary institutions. To facilitate stakeholder involvement in the design of the MP and other educational activities, the IWRM-K Program intends to support the creation of an **Advisory Committee** comprising representatives of educational institutions, relevant authorities, prospective employers, young water professionals and students, as well as external (water) education experts.

This activity complements the ongoing Program efforts to introduce an **introductory training course on IWRM** targeting the country's current and prospective (water) professionals, including civil servants, young water professionals, students, professional NGOs). This parallel activity will produce a training needs assessment (TNA) report and a few other deliverables which may be useful in the design of the concept/syllabus of the MP as well.

ASSIGNMENT BACKGROUND

In preparation for launching the activities for supporting the MP creation, the IWRM-K Program seeks to hire a **highly qualified international Water Education Expert with extensive experience in the creation and coordination of higher education programmes** on water resources management at renowned Swiss/Austrian/other EU-based universities. Based on a study into the current educational offer related to water resource management in Kosovo, as

² The requirement of the EU Water Framework Directive which has already been incorporated into the national legal system will need to be considered especially when considering the educational needs

well as the identified country needs, the Expert will propose the **concept and outline the syllabus** of the future MP in IWRM³.

By this, the Expert will assist in **defining the general thematic focus of the MP**, facilitating the identification of a suitable partner university. The selection of the partner university will be carried out in a transparent process based on the actual capacity of interested universities⁴, and their genuine interest in having such MP which is the key to its long-term success.

For this purpose, the **Expert will also advise the IWRM-K Program on how to structure and organize the selection process** by applying an objective evaluation procedure. The selected university (or universities) will be offered relevant support on the path to launching the MP, for example: **a)** adaptation of premises, **b)** purchase of equipment and software, **c)** preparation of teaching material, **d)** offering scholarships for Ph.D. studies for prospective lecturers/professors, **e)** provision of research grants; **f)** support to networking and promotional activities⁵.

As a general principle, the MP design will attempt to **maximize the use of available in-country resources** (e.g., expertise, academic/teaching/research capacity, current study programs, and individual courses). For the main gaps, the MP will foresee the **involvement of international academic staff** from possible partner institutions (e.g., from Switzerland, Austria, and/or other European countries)⁶.

The MP design will also consider Kosovo's accreditation requirements⁷.

In carrying out the duties, the International Water Education Expert will be **supported by a National Expert** with long-term experience and profound knowledge of Kosovo's higher education in areas related to water resource management. The National Expert will be hired through a separate contracting procedure.

SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of the assignment is to **define the thematic focus and propose a tailor-made (outline of) syllabus**⁸ of the planned MP on IWRM in Kosovo based on the **assessment of the current educational offer**, country requirements (demand-driven concept), and identified gaps. It will also provide the IWRM-K Program with the required **advice, procedures, forms, and other guidance for the selection of the (future) host the University of the MP**. Besides the conceptualization of the MP, the Expert will also provide advice on the **general directions for improving existing (traditional) relevant courses** studied at the undergraduate and

³ These outputs need to be developed in general terms so as to allow applying universities to propose adjustments in line with their own capacities and understanding of the needs based on the features of the local context. By this the Program will attempt not to lose any good ideas which may come from the educational institutions.

⁴ This work will build upon the preliminary discussions with higher education representatives from relevant Kosovo-based private and public universities.

⁵ The final decision on the type of support to be offered by the Program will depend also on what the prospective host university can bring to the overall efforts for establishing the MP. These aspects need to be analysed and further conceptualized by the expert as part of the proposed selection/evaluation process.

⁶ The selection of international partners will either be done by the applicants/host universities, and/or will be facilitated by the Program depending on the design of the MP. The selected international expert can suggest possible options for pursuing such cooperation.

⁷ Expert support on the accreditation matters will be provided by WUS which the selected expert will need to reflect in the MP concept, call for application and other relevant products.

⁸ The syllabus outline needs to be developed in general terms/conceptual level only so as to provide the flexibility for applicant universities to propose adjustments based on their understanding of needs, opportunities and available capacities. It will primarily concentrate to the actual learning objectives of the MP based on which the applicants will propose ways forward in the direction of developing complete syllabi in future.

graduate level⁹ to ensure complementarity with the newly designed MP. S/he will advise on opportunities and challenges associated with **different modalities for delivery of the MP** (e.g., conventional ex-cathedra, online/distance learning, blended).

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The specific duties and responsibilities under this combined consultancy comprise the following:

- Review the relevant available Program documentation (e.g., Skills and Educational Aspects of IWRM Implementation – Assessment Report¹⁰, Technical Aspects of IWRM Implementation – Assessment Report, the TNA that is part of the efforts to create the introductory course on IWRM);
- Get acquainted with the water management approaches, practices, and customs in the country upon which the new IWRM knowledge and skills need to be built (e.g., by reviewing relevant regulations, and strategic documents, to be provided by the Program);
- Get acquainted with legal, and institutional context relevant to Kosovo with regard to higher education (e.g., European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance¹¹, Kosovo Education Strategic Plan, Kosovo Accreditation Agency Manual);
- Prepare and agree on the overall concept of work and methodology with the IWRM-K Program;
- Conduct desk research of existing educational offer/university curricula and specific courses currently in use at different universities/faculties to better understand the possible linkages, complementarity, and/or challenges to be expected when launching desired MP (NOTE: the necessary material will be provided and translated in English by the National Expert or by other means with the help of the IWRM-K Program);
- Propose the general concept of the MP and outline the syllabus/learning objectives based on the earlier assessment and the overall idea of adopting the contemporary concepts and approaches in water education;
- Engage in discussion with selected relevant stakeholders (e.g., university staff, authorities, students, young water professionals)¹² in an online working session to present the overall concept and receive feedback;
- Finalize the concept and the syllabus as per received relevant feedback;
- Prepare guidance document/report for selection of the host university that will include the necessary procedure, application forms, evaluation criteria, and methods;
- Present the final deliverables to the IWRM-K Program staff and other selected stakeholders in a validation working session;

⁹ For example, civil/hydraulic engineering, biology/ecology, economics, social & political sciences, agriculture, forestry, technology

¹⁰ This Program-backed assessment report comprising analysis of skill needs and educational offers in the field of IWRM in Kosovo with a focus on higher education will be made available to the selected experts.

¹¹ <https://eua.eu/downloads/content/standards%20and%20guidelines%20for%20quality%20assurance%20in%20the%20european%20higher%20education%20area%20esg%202015.pdf>

¹² These stakeholders may be organized in a form of an Advisory Expert Group to facilitate the design and establishment of the MP once the host institution is selected, hence the importance of their involvement at this MP conceptualization stage.

- Support the evaluation of applications and take part as an external member of the future Advisory Committee (subject to amendment of contract on as needed basis).

If deemed necessary, the selected consultant may be asked to take part in the evaluation of the applications submitted by universities, as well as to take part (as an external member) to the Advisory Committee¹³. This committee is expected to meet at least twice in a year throughout the period of design of the MP by the selected host university (the period required for the design and accreditation of the MP is estimated at three years).

METHODOLOGY

The Experts (international and national) are expected to undertake this assignment through: (i) brief inception process; (ii) a desk review, (iii) facilitated discussions with relevant stakeholders (including a possible focus group discussion as needed). Experts will be expected to propose the use of other tools and methods as necessary. NOTE: brief insight into the specific methodology and approach (based on an understanding of the assignment, and own previous experience), the International Water Education Expert has to provide as part of her/his application/cover letter (not more than 2 pages in total).

DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables should be submitted to the IWRM-K:

- A short **Inception Paper** (max. 2 pages) outlining the agreed methodology and approach, and the structure of the required reports;
- **Concept paper and proposed outline of syllabus/learning objectives for the MP**
- **Final report** comprising:
 - Findings of the assessment stage (e.g., an overview of education offer vis-à-vis current international developments, water resource management practices in Kosovo)
 - Overall **guidance and set of documents for selection of the host university** (e.g., forms, evaluation procedures, and methods)
 - Analysis of pros and cons of different types of delivery of the MP (ex-cathedra, online, blended)
 - General **guidance on an update of existing courses/studies** at Kosovo's main university to ensure compatibility/complementarity with the newly designed MP and the overall IWRM concept.

¹³ Should this be required, the Program will amend the Consultant's contract in line with the estimated work-load (e.g. in terms of number of days required to support the evaluation as well as to take part in the Advisory Committee that will support the actual design of the MP based on the earlier concept/outline of syllabus).

INPUTS AND TIMELINE

Description of tasks	Input		Estimated distribution of days ¹⁴		Timeline
	Lead by	Supported by	International Expert	Local Expert	
Prepare the concept of work and methodology	International Expert	Local Expert	1	1	To be agreed with Experts during the inception meeting
Conduct desk research of existing documents	International Expert	Local Expert	1.5	1	
Conduct desk research of educational offer/curricula	Local Expert	International Expert	2	3	
Drafting of MP concept paper and syllabus	International Expert	Local Expert	2.5	2	
Preparation of the final report/guidance document	International Expert	Local Expert	4	2	
Stakeholder consultations	International Expert	Local Expert	1	1	
Total¹⁵			12	10	

EXPERTS QUALIFICATION

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT

The International Expert will lead the activity while being supported by the Local Expert. To perform her/his tasks, the International Expert shall possess the following competencies:

- Advanced university degree (Ph.D.) in water resource management related studies, preferably in integrated water resource management, environmental science, or related;
- Minimum 10 years of overall academic, research, and/or professional experience in contemporary aspects of water resources management (e.g., IWRM, EU-based water resources management, water resource economics, ecohydrology, river basin management)
- At least 8 years of experience in design, and/or coordination of university programs in water resource management or related;
- Experience from at least 1 similar project/assignment (e.g., the conceptualization of higher education study programs on water resource management, preparation of respective syllabi, preparation of teaching material on water resource management subjects)
- Knowledge of the EU water-related directives is considered an asset;
- Experience in the Western Balkan's water resource management approaches, practices, and customs is considered an asset;
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English;

¹⁴ The figures serve orientation purposes only. They are used to assess the anticipated work-load for the two experts. The distribution of days per tasks may be adjusted based on experts' methodology and approach.

¹⁵ Additional days to be considered for the possible role in the evaluation process and participation in the Advisory Committee

- Excellent communication, interpersonal skills, and reporting skills.

QUALITY CHECK

The Experts will work under the direct supervision of the Team Leader of the IWRM-K Program Facilitation Unit, and in close cooperation with WUS representatives, and the selected relevant stakeholders (e.g., university staff, institution representatives, young water professionals, students). Validation of assignment deliverables will be provided through a multi-stakeholder participation process.

In ensuring that the quality expectations are clearly defined, an inception meeting will be held with all parties to agree on the expectation, scope of the work, and a specific work-plan. The regular briefing will be provided to the Team Leader and his assigned staff to update on the progress as well as to discuss any issues which require decisions/guidance. The Experts will share any final thoughts and recommendations in the course of a debriefing session prior to contact end.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

LANGUAGE

All deliverables/outputs need to be prepared in English.

TIMELINE AND DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The maximum available time for the development of the task is 12 days for International Expert and 10 days for Local Expert for 1 month.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The payment for the services will be made upon completion of all duties and acceptance of requested deliverables.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Experts shall submit their applications separately to kosovo@skat.ch by 24th February 2021. Each application needs to comprise the following documents/information:

1. Cover letter (summarizing qualifications and relevance for the position based on previous experience, as well as an outline of proposed methodology);
2. Most updated professional CV;
3. Financial offer (all-inclusive) (in EUR/expert-day).

The selection procedure will be done separately for both Experts, while they will be introduced for collaboration prior to or during the inception (kick-off) meeting.