



INTERNATIONAL WATERS RESULTS NOTES

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Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR- Macedonia and Greece

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- The first Prespa Lake Watershed Management Plan had contributed to better a understanding of the watershed's ecological status and quantifying the anthropogenic influence, leading to an integrated water and land-use management basis for maintaining and restoring ecosystem health of the entire watershed.
- Strengthening local capacities for introducing good agricultural practices in apple production has resulted in reduced fertilizer and pesticide use, hence generating both ecosystem and economic benefits
- The signing of the international agreement on Prespa by the three riparian states, and the European Commission, formalizes the transboundary watershed management institutions, and secures long-term financing for maintaining the cooperation mechanisms across the boundaries

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UNDP/GEF Prespa Project

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

This project's objective is to catalyse the adoption and implementation of ecosystem management interventions in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR-Macedonia, and Greece that integrate ecological, economic, and social goals with the aim of conserving globally significant biodiversity and conserving and reducing pollution of the trans-boundary lakes and their contributing waters.

The project's strategy is to mainstream ecosystem management objectives and priorities into productive sector practices and policies. The project aims to strengthen capacity for restoring ecosystem health and conserving biodiversity first at the national level in Albania and FYR-Macedonian Prespa by piloting ecosystem-oriented approaches to spatial planning, water use management, agriculture, forest and fishery management, and conservation and protected area management.

Building on this strengthened national-level foundation in the Prespa Basin, the project aims to strengthen ongoing trans-boundary cooperation in resource management and conservation by empowering the existing trans-boundary institution and piloting trans-boundary management and conservation activities.

RESULTS: PROCESS

Briefly summarize the project's results in the area of process (these might include inter alia: establishment of country-specific inter-ministerial committees, completion of a country endorsed TDA, completion of a country-endorsed SAP, negotiation of treaty and establishment of new national plans and institutions.)

INDICATOR#1 The transboundary cooperation mechanism (Prespa Part Management Committee and associated working groups/bodies) is formalized under International Law [Target: PPMC is legal entity as agreed to under trilateral agreement, SAP for the Prespa basin is agreed and funding is secured]

The signing of the International Agreement sets a legal basis for integrated management of the basin, including development and financing of integrated transboundary management plans, according to international and EU standards, and for implementing the SAP developed by the project. The SAP is supported by Local Environmental Action Plans to implement best practices on watershed management.

INDICATOR#2 The three states have agreed on trans-boundary fish conservation priorities that reflect ecological management objectives for sustainable use and conservation of native species and aquatic ecosystem health and agree upon specific program of measures for cooperative fish management [Target: The riparian states cooperate on enforcement; monitoring; and research in fish & fisheries management]

The first transboundary fish and fisheries management planning process has revealed valuable information regarding the population and health status of the fish species, along with

quantification of the sources of pressure; it will provide basis for harmonization of the transboundary conservation and sustainable management efforts

INDICATOR#3 Water management considers ecosystem health needs and follows the principles of integrated basin water management [Target: Watershed management plan with targets regarding water quality, integrated water uses, and ecological status; and regulations for local water use management, provides model to be integrated into the national level watershed planning in FYR Macedonia]

The first watershed management plan prepared in accordance to the IRBM principles (EU WFD based approach) considerably improved the understanding of the ecological status of the lake and its tributaries, quantified the pressures, established the environmental objectives vis-à-vis the reference conditions, and proposed a programme of measures which will receive financing from multiple sources; a watershed planning manual developed based on the experience from the Prespa watershed provides basis for the development of the future national river basin management plans.

RESULTS: STRESS REDUCTION

INDICATOR#1 Reduction in frequency and quantity of pesticides and fertilizers applied each season by increasing the number of farmers applying good agricultural practices in apple production [Targets: Establishment of a protocol and system for the recording-monitoring of quantities of agrochemicals, and delivery capacity building programs for farmers results in 30% reduction in quantities of pesticides and fertilizers]

The long-term efforts to build local capacities to monitor and control the use of agrochemicals (including establishing agrochemical laboratory and agro-meteorological pest monitoring system) are constantly increasing the number of farmers applying sustainable farming techniques, increasing the capacity of local advisory services to farmers, resulting in reduction of pesticides and fertilizers use, as well as production costs, for approximately 30-40%% on annual level.

RESULTS: WATER RESOURCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

N/A

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Building upon existing initiatives, providing coordination role for interested donors and maintaining locally based project office, provides possibility of leveraging the GEF IW programme by ensuring long-term financing from non-GEF sources. Such long-term partnerships greatly support the continuation and sustainability of the GEF results.
- Promote transparency, provide participation and maintain continuous communication with the key stakeholders to stimulate broad support to the project objectives.
- Piloting ecosystem oriented initiatives, followed by integration of the experience / lessons learnt into various strategic / planning documentation (especially legally binding ones supported by state budgets), considerably improves the scaling-up, replication and sustainability potential of the GEF concepts.
- The positive political will towards biodiversity conservation policies and in particular lake ecosystem management must be further enforced through strengthened institutional and regulatory institutions.

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