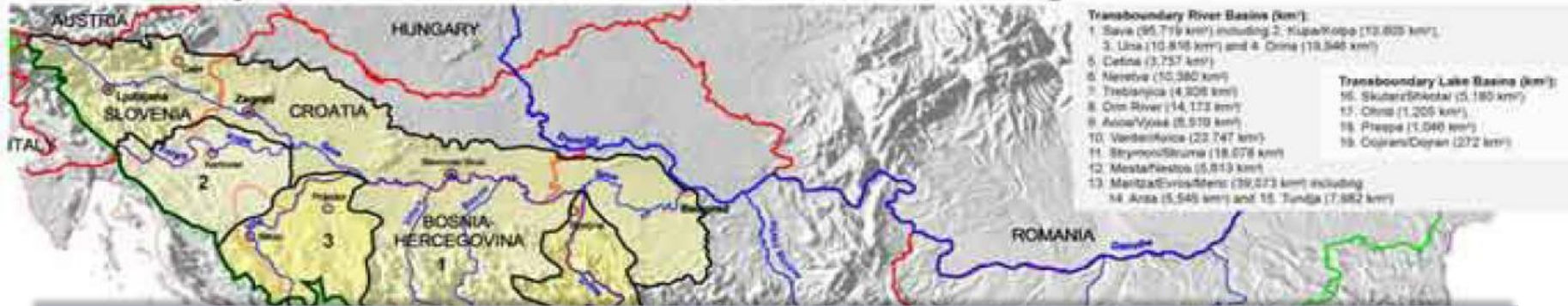


Establishing Cooperation for the Management of the Drin River Basin: **from dreams to deeds**

National workshop on frameworks for transboundary water cooperation:
Focus on the UNECE Water Convention
Amman, Jordan, 10 March 2015

Transboundary Water Management in SEE

Internationally Shared Surface Water Bodies in the Balkan Region



**In Southeastern Europe
90% of the area falls within shared basins**

LEGEND

- Border
- Capitals and settlements within the transboundary river basins:
 - Metropolis (> 1 Million Inhabitants)
 - Cities (100,000 - 1 Million Inhabitants)
 - Towns (50,000 - 100,000 Inhabitants)
- Transboundary river basins
- Transboundary rivers and important other rivers
- Transboundary lakes
- Margin of the Danube river basin



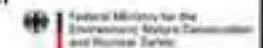
Internationally Shared Surface Water Bodies in the Balkan Region

November 2004

Extended Assessment for the:

ZINKE

Produced by ZINKE ENVIRONMENT CONSULTING for Central and Eastern Europe and FLUNUS, Floodplain Ecology and Management, Vienna 2004



Some background for the region and the basin

- The region has a background of **political instability and conflict**
- Most of the countries are still in the process **towards establishing a market economy**
- Some countries are EU members. In the Non EU countries, **major reforms** guided primarily by the **EU accession prospect** have been initiated
- **Economic growth is dictating choices** for water and other natural resources management in many cases. However, environmental considerations are a clear part of the agenda

Some facts about the Drin Basin

A complex Basin

- Complex hydrology: interconnected surface and groundwaters/ karstic
- Transboundary sub-basins of paramount ecological importance from a European and international conservation perspective

Unilateral management approaches

- The Basin encounters diverse and unsustainable management approaches leading, among other impacts, to ecosystems' degradation
- Some action towards IWRM taken at country level (driven by EU accession prospect). Riparians are at various stages of EU WFD transposition and implementation
- Legally binding agreements exist among littoral countries for each of the international lakes
- National and sub-basin plans would fail without taking into account the extended Basin's water balance (which has not been assessed)

The Drin River Basin collaboration

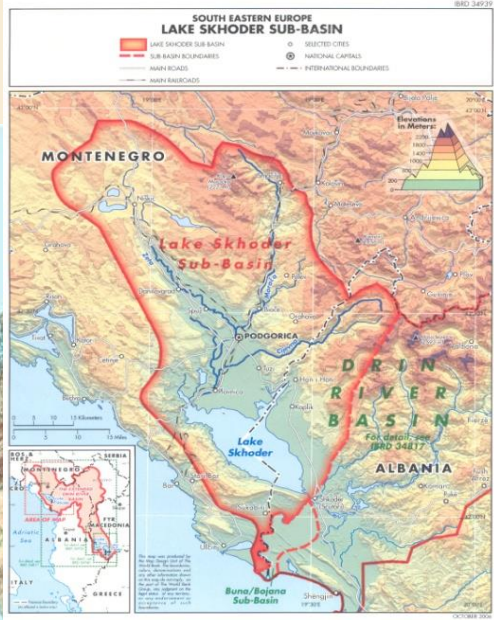
A parallel top-down & bottom-up approach,

with strong political will and international assistance

*building on existing collaboration schemes developed for
the transboundary Lakes of Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar,*

and extending to the greater Drin River Basin

The extended Drin River Basin



This map was produced by the Map Design Unit of The World Bank. The boundaries, colors, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of The World Bank Group, any judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

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The Drin River Basin Dialogue

Initiated on an *ad hoc* basis already in 2006, and started *per se* in late 2008, the Drin Dialogue was a rich and coordinated consultation process among the:

- **water resources management competent Ministries** of the five riparians (Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo (under UN SC Resolution 1244) and Montenegro)
- the existing **joint Commissions/Committees** in the sub-basins and all related **stakeholders**
- **civil society workshops** were carried out in the sub-basins prior to the joint commissions/committees & stakeholders consultations

With the main objective to:

Develop a **Strategic Shared Vision** among the competent national authorities and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin basin



The Drin River Basin Dialogue: a Partnership

The Policy and Technical Cooperation Framework is provided, *inter alia*, by:

- The UNECE Water Convention
- The European Union Water Framework Directive
- The Petersberg Phase II Process / Athens Declaration Process
- GEF IW:LEARN
- The Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative (MED EUWI)
- The GEF MedPartnership

Financial Support has been provided, *inter alia*, by: Swedish EPA, German ENV Ministry, GEF, Greek ENV Ministry, and other agencies.

GEF is supporting Drin cooperation through a Full Size Programme (2013-2017)

Key facilitating partners

- UNECE has been the key policy driving force
- GWP Med serves as the Drin Core Group Secretariat with technical functions

Drin Dialogue process

Main objective: The development of a **Strategic Shared Vision** among the competent national authorities and stakeholders for the sustainable management of the Drin basin.

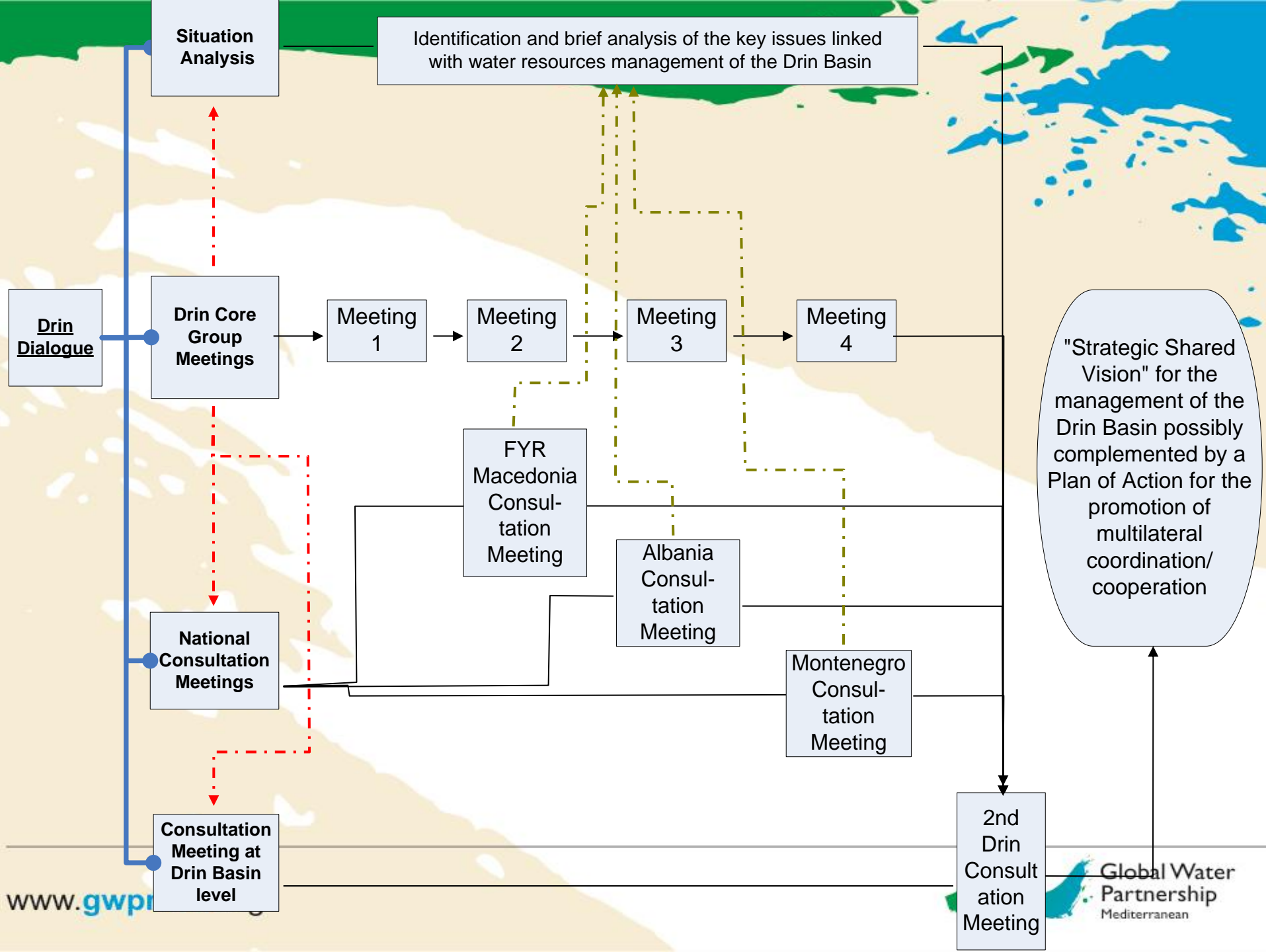


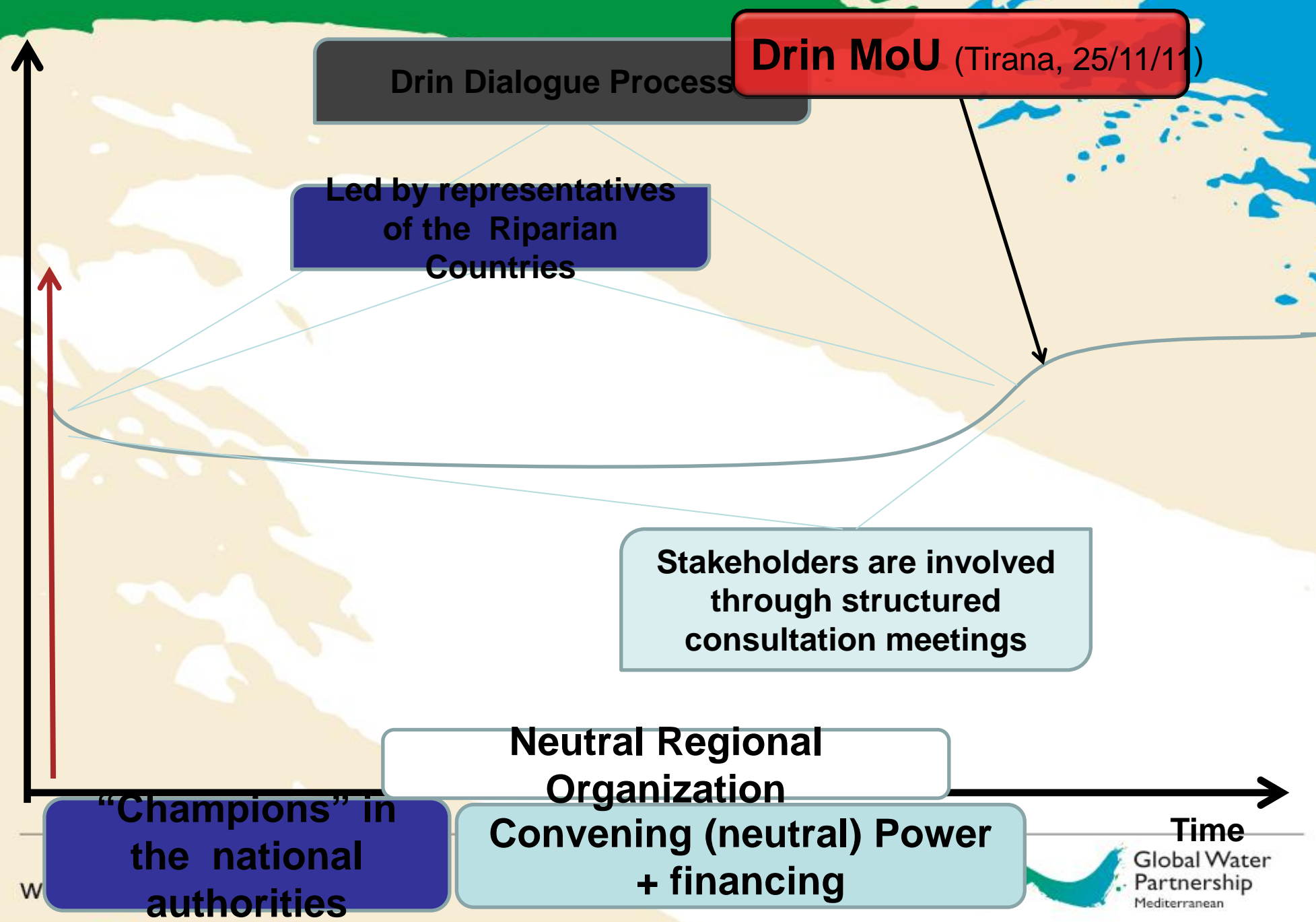
***Towards the
enhancement of
transboundary
cooperation
among the Drin
Riparians for the
sustainable
management of
the extended Drin
River Basin***

Initiation of the
efforts to establish
cooperation at the
Drin Basin level
(2006)

Initiation of the
**Drin Dialogue
process** (2009 –
ended in 2011)

Signing of the
**Memorandum of
Understanding** for
the management
of the Drin Basin
(Tirana, 25
November 2011)





Drin MoU (Tirana, 25/11/11)

Drin Dialogue Process

Led by representatives of the Riparian Countries

Stakeholders are involved through structured consultation meetings

Neutral Regional Organization

“Champions” in the national authorities

Convening (neutral) Power + financing

Time

Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin (Tirana, 25 November 2011)



Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin (Tirana, 25 November 2011)

Objective / Shared Vision: “*The Parties commit to promote joint action for the coordinated integrated management of the shared water resources in the Drin Basin, as a means to safeguard and restore to the extent possible the ecosystems and the services they provide, and to promote sustainable development across the Drin Basin*”

THE DRIN:
A STRATEGIC SHARED VISION

Memorandum of Understanding
for the Management of the Extended Transboundary
Drin Basin

Preamble

1. *Mindful* of the Ohrid Declaration of 18 April 2011 in which we, the water and/or environment competent Ministers of the Drin Riparians (hereinafter, the “Ministers”) committed to negotiate and adopt a Shared Vision document on the coordinated management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin (hereinafter the “Drin Basin”);
2. *Expressing* our political will towards basin-wide mutual understanding in water management as a precondition for cooperation towards sustainable development;
3. *With full appreciation* of the work of the Drin Core Group whose establishment in 2009 signalled the initiation of the Dialogue among the stakeholders for the management of the Drin Basin (Drin Dialogue), and *taking fully into consideration* the outcomes of the Drin Dialogue;
4. *Confirming* our commitment to sustainable development in the Drin Basin that can be brought about in a coherent way through transboundary cooperation, in accordance with the principles of the European Union integration process;
5. *Aware* that the Drin River is the connecting agent of an extended shared watershed, including a number of shared water bodies and an adjacent sea, the Adriatic, linking these into a hydrologic system that supports a variety of ecosystems within the Drin Basin;
6. *Considering* that the Drin Basin is of international importance, due to its morphology and biological diversity, including the habitats within its Sub-Basins that are vital for

Page 1 of 8

Minister
Fátmir Mediu

Minister
Abdilaqim Ademi

Deputy Minister
Velizar Vojnovic

Deputy Minister
Ilir Mirena

Special Secretary
Andreas Andreadakis

Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin (Tirana, 25 November 2011)

Provides the political framework for cooperation

Defines the context of cooperation

**MoU
Governing Body**

Meeting of Parties

Ministers responsible for water and environmental management

Coordinating Body

Drin Core Group

- Ministries from Riparians responsible for water and environmental management
- Prespa Park Management Committee
- Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee
- Lake Skadar-Shkoder Commission
- UNECE
- Global Water Partnership - Mediterranean
- Mediterranean Information Office for Environment Culture and Sustainable Development

*Drin Core Group
Secretariat*

Expert
Working
Group on
WFDI

Expert
Working
Group on
MIE

Expert
Working
Group
on
BE

Action Plan for the implementation of the MoU for the Management of the Extended Drin Basin

- 1. Enhancement of coordination mechanisms among the Parties**
- 2. Enhancement of the knowledge basis about the Drin Basin**
- 3. Improvement of information exchange through the establishment of a system for regular exchange of relevant information among the competent authorities of each Party**
- 4. Enhancement of cooperation in the field of flood risk preparedness, management and mutual support**
- 5. Institutional strengthening in the field of integrated water resources management**
- 6. Promotion of public participation and stakeholders engagement**

GEF project “Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Extended Drin River Basin”

- Approved by the GEF Council and endorsed by the GEF CEO
- UNDP is the implementing agency and GWP-Med (GWP) and UNECE the executing partners.
- GEF project:
 - will serve the implementation of the MoU
 - is tightly linked to the existing institutional setting
 - activities are directly linked with the activities in the Action Plan.

Implementation is expected to start on early 2015.

Some lessons learnt

- In politically challenging environments, the preferred way forward is to start with practical/on the ground issues of common concern and gradually build the institutional frameworks
- Full utilisation and integration of existing structures is a prerequisite
- The starting period is always slow and long followed by rapid developments for which provisions need to be in place in advance
- Neutral, international actor(s) is essential for the process, especially for facilitating & maintaining the momentum
- Stakeholders, including civil society, need to be informed and brought into the discussions early in the process
- Funding is crucial for both the process and its follow up

Being a developing case, Drin presents a valid option for **sharing experiences**, **practicing concepts** and lessons learned from other areas, **applying innovations** as well as **inspiring cooperation** in other basins in the Mediterranean and beyond

مع خالص شكري
وامتناني

Thank you for your attention

