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POLICY BRIEF #1

TROUBLED WATERS

**The Case for
Improved Territorial
Management Around
Water
Resources**



Promoting Universal
Access to **Clean Water**



Let's do it Peja!

DISCLAIMER

This publication has been produced as part of the project “Promoting Universal Access to Clean Water”, funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo and implemented by Let’s Do It Peja.

The views, opinions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the European Union Office in Kosovo.

POLICY BRIEF #1:

Troubled Waters:

THE CASE FOR IMPROVED TERRITORIAL MANAGEMENT AROUND WATER RESOURCES



Promoting Universal
Access to **Clean Water**

February, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief is the first in a series of five to be produced as part of activities of “Promoting Universal Access to Clean Water” – project funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo,¹ and implemented by Let’s Do it Peja.² During three years of implementation, the project will contribute to improve management of water resources, and ensure that most marginalized groups are empowered and supported to achieve their rights to accessing clean water. Its main outcomes will come in terms of #monitoring the implementation of National Water Strategy; #promoting gender equality, inclusiveness, community engagement in decision-making regarding water resources; and #raising awareness of relevant stakeholders and the public at large on the importance of preserving water resources.

Target groups and final beneficiaries of the “Promoting Universal Access to Clean Water” project are local communities; local and national institutions with competencies on water; civil society and media. The purpose of these policy analyses is to draw the attention of decision makers on priorities, needs, and necessary changes required to optimize management of water resources.

The research work for this paper includes a qualitative assessment of the situation, which is based on the views of the relevant stakeholders interviewed and documents reviewed. The methodology, consisting of secondary literature review; semi-structured questionnaire with open-ended questions; and stakeholder analysis workshop geared towards analyzing the full range of topics and aspects relevant to the topic of this brief.

The selection of relevant key stakeholders³ interviewed has also been done through using snowballing technique. This approach enables unbiased respondent selection, and is determined on the basis of referrals from the initial group of respondents identified to represent different constituencies/groups targeted with the research. The work for this publication has been carried out from August to December 2022.

Kosovo is water-stressed⁴ country with limited resources of drinkable water. The past decade has been problematic in some parts of Kosovo, most notably in east and southeast, where the main river basin of Morava e Binçes has in summer season completely dry out in some segments. Aside from significant droughts in summer months, climate change effects have

¹ www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo_en?s=321

² www.ldipeja.org

³ See ANNEX 1: List of Respondents

⁴ [Water Security Outlook for Kosovo](#)

also manifested themselves (mainly in western Kosovo) with increased floods and extreme weather events, which have also been worsened by illegal gravel extraction around riverbeds. It is expected that the situation regarding water resources and the manifestation of extreme weather events will worsen in the upcoming mid-term period.

Governance, management and safeguarding of water resources is a shared responsibility of many public institutions at local, regional, and national level. Independent regulators, agencies, and ministries alike, share competencies related to water management either as decision-makers or enforcing authority. Municipalities too, have extensive responsibilities on this field, both directly for management of water resources in their respective territories, and indirectly through the regional water companies, where they are shareholders.

Such complicated system of responsibilities, institutions, and structures, has been identified as one of the primary causes behind a fair number of issues and concerns related to water management. Fragmented scenery for water resource management has been at the heart of constant blaming between different institutions on who is responsible for the current situation, as well as, who is responsible to resolve it.

There appears to be a general agreement among the relevant stakeholders interviewed that the situation regarding the management of water resources is concerning, to say the least. However, when asked to name the institutions responsible for resolving the said issue, they generally are oriented outwards towards other stakeholders, and exonerate themselves from blame.

First and foremost, it is imperative that the ongoing degradation of water resources is stopped immediately. The stopping of continued pollution (untreated sewage and waste-water, solid waste, industrial polluters, and agriculture chemicals), the quality of surface waters would significantly improve within a short period of time. Finding sustainable solution to preventing degradation of water resources, such as installing drainage nets to prevent solid waste from reaching flowing water resources, is required to ensure long-term quality of water resources. Identification of water resources for the growing needs of its population is another imperative that requires immediate attention. With several studies already conducted on the feasibility of constructing dams in river-beds and streams, efforts need to be intensified and construction plans rolled out as soon as possible.

Currently, significant investments are being made to improve the quality of water in Kosovo. With several waste-water treatment plants being constructed or put into work during the implementation period, make it imperative that efforts are also put in improved policy implementation, in order for the investments to take full effect.

The key strategic document on water resource management is the [Kosovo State Strategy for Water 2017 – 2036](#), which includes provisions and measures to protect, clean, preserve, and responsibly spend water resources. It is of utmost importance that this recently-approved document is from onset set-up with monitoring mechanisms and regular independent reporting on its implementation is ensured. In terms of gender mainstreaming, the Water Strategy does not contain a gender perspective and is not based on the results of a gender analysis, as required by the Kosovo Law on Gender Equality.

In terms of policies, Kosovo should fully transpose the relevant EU directives, and ensure that the Water Strategy is implemented without delays. Necessary finances should be as with many other regulated sectors in Kosovo, water management is also affected by the low capacity to enforce laws and policies. With many institutions having responsibilities in implementing water-related competencies, the capacities to exercise those functions are deficient. Similarly, municipalities have responsibilities for ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, but with their current budgetary capacities, it would take them decades before they could provide 100% coverage with these services.

Kosovo should take the recommended steps, ideally, before it ratifies the Aarhus Convention,⁵ upon which ratification, it can become subject of lawsuits and litigations by other signatory countries.

1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. Project Background

This policy brief has been produced as part of “Promoting Universal Access to Clean Water” –The three-year project aims at increasing civil society involvement on policies related to water security. It is aimed to contribute to the following objectives:

Overall Objective is to improve water resources management, and ensure that most marginalized communities are

empowered and supported to achieve their rights to accessing clean water. In forwarding this overall objective, the Action will strive to achieve the following Specific Objectives:

SO 1: Monitor the implementation of National Water Strategy and the decision-making regarding use and management of water resources;

⁵ <https://aarhus.osce.org/about/aarhus-convention>

SO 2: Promote gender equality, community engagement, and inclusiveness, in decision-making regarding water resources; and

SO 3: Raise awareness of relevant stakeholders and the public at large on the importance of preserving water resources.

Target groups and final beneficiaries of the “Promoting Universal Access to Clean Water” project are:

Local communities whose access to water is affected by development projects, such as hydro power plants, residential or industrial development. They will be assisted to engage in processes and decision-making regarding water resources and their direct access to water.

Local and national institutions, responsible for implementing national water strategy and issuing permits and licenses to economic operators (i.e. regulatory bodies, River Basin District Authority). Ministry of Environment, is one of the key stakeholders for the Action as it is the primary duty bearer for the protection of the environment, inclusive of water.

Municipalities are also a key stakeholder group with responsibilities in water

management. Aside from key competencies in water management, municipalities are also shareholders of regional water supply companies, and consequently are responsible for their operations.

Civil society and media. Civil society organizations active on topics of environment protection are natural allies in this endeavor. Creating a unified front for the protection of water resources is an implied priority acknowledged by most of the active CSOs.

The policy brief is the first in a series of five briefs to be published on key topics to water resources management. The purpose of these policy analyzes publications is to generate debate on relevant topics related to water resources management, bring the attention of decision makers on priorities, needs, and necessary changes required to optimize management of this vital resource for life.

The research for this publication has been commissioned to IQ Consulting⁶-company specializing in qualitative and quantitative research.

⁶ For more information visit:
www.iqconsulting.biz/en/?page_id=397

1.2. Research Objectives, Approach and Methodology

Relevance

Kosovo is already considered to be a water-stressed country, with eastern parts experiencing droughts and water shortages throughout summer months. As such, water security and optimal management of water resources is one of the top environmental priorities in Kosovo, which is already affecting a significant part of its population. In such circumstances, and given the expected deterioration of situation as a result of climate change and global warming, LDIP has determined that it is of utmost importance for civil society to engage with a watchful eye and monitor the progress towards implementation of the new strategy and advocate for each citizen having access to clean water as one of the fundamental human rights, which conditions life and livelihood itself.

Objectives

The main objectives of this brief were to identify the key issues and challenges related to territorial management of water resources and generate discussions on possible solutions to overcoming them. The analysis also seeks to identify the capacity and resource gaps among target audiences and primary duty bearers, in

order for them to be properly taken into account and addressed. Through empowering both rights holders and service providers respectively, to claim and provide the right to access to water, LDIP seeks to represent most marginalized communities affected by water-related issues in the policy-dialogue on water-related topics.

Approach and Methodology

The research preceding this publication has adapted a qualitative approach and methodology, consisting of secondary literature review, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, and stakeholder analysis workshop all geared towards analyzing the full range of topics and aspects relevant to the topic of this brief. The fine-tuning of methodological has been done in close cooperation between LDIP and consultant, with the objective of approximating the methodology and tools/instruments as much as possible with the intended objectives of the analyses. The selection of relevant key stakeholders⁷ interviewed has also been closely coordinated between LDIP and the consultant, through using snowballing technique. This approach enables

⁷ See ANNEX 1: List of Respondents

respondent section which is unbiased on the part of researchers, and is determined on the basis of referrals from the initial group of respondents identified to represent different constituencies/groups targeted with the research. The work for this publication has been carried out in the

period August to December 2022. The main findings, conclusions and recommendations pertaining to effective management of water resources, derived from the application of this methodology are presented in the sections below.

2 FINDINGS

1.1. Legal and Institutional Framework for Water Resource Management

Në Kosovë , dokumenti strategjik më relevant dhe kyç për menaxhimin e resurseve ujore është Strategjia Shtetërore e Kosovës për Ujërat 2017 – 2036. Ai përfshin dispozita dhe masa për të mbrojtur, pastruar, ruajtur dhe shpenzuar me përgjegjësi burimet ujore. Duke qenë se strategjia sapo është miratuar, është me rëndësi të madhe që të sigurohet një mekanizëm monitorues dhe raportim i rregullt objektiv për zbatimin e saj. Gjithashtu, duke pasur parasysh vrullin e disa impianteve të trajtimit të ujërave të zeza që po ndërtohen ose vihen në punë gjatë periudhës së zbatimit, është thelbësore që të bëhen përpjekje edhe për të përmirësuar zbatimin e politikave, në mënyrë që të arrihen sinergji më të mëdha. Sa i përket integritet gjinor, Strategjia e Ujit nuk përmban perspektivë gjinore dhe nuk bazohet në rezultatet e një analize gjinore, siç kërkohet me Ligjin e Kosovës për Barazi Gjinore.

Ligji më relevant për temat/sectorët e mbuluar nga veprimi është Ligji Nr. 04/L-147 për Ujërat e Kosovës. Ligjet tjera që janë gjithashtu relevante për zbatimin e Veprimit në territorin e Kosovës përfshijnë:

Ligji Nr. 02 /1-79 për Veprimtaritë Hidrometeorologjike, i cili rregullon punimet hidrometeorologjike dhe përfundimin e tyre;

Ligji Nr. 02/L-78 për Shëndetin Publik, i cili i cakton Institutin Kombëtar të Shëndetit Publik përgjegjësinë për monitorimin e cilësisë së ujit të pijshëm;

Ligji Nr. 03/L-086 për Rregullimin e Shërbimeve të Ujit, i cili gjithashtu përcakton dispozita për Zyrën e Rregullatorit për Mbeturina dhe Ujë, dhe kompanitë publike të shërbimeve të ujit; dhe

Ligji Nr. 02/L-9 për Ujtitjen e Tokës së Punueshme

Strategjia Kombëtare e Mjedisit dhe Plani i Veprimit, të cilat duhet të rinovohen janë gjithashtu të rëndësishme për Veprimin. Sipas Statistikave të Ujërave të Kosovës 2016-2017⁸ të publikuara nga Agjencia e Statistikave të Kosovës, që nga viti 2016, vlerësohet se 89.59% e popullsisë së Kosovës furnizohet me ujë të pijshëm nga sistemet publike të menaxhuara nga kompanitë rajonale të ujit. Përderisa ligjet për këtë sektor nuk janë domosdoshmërisht të pamjaftueshme për menaxhimin e burimeve ujore, zbatimimi i tyre në praktikë është penguar nga paqartësitë dhe pasaktësitë në udhëzimet administrative për zbatimin e tyre, apo tolerimi nga ana e autoriteteve përgjegjëse për zbatimin e tyre.

Ka nevojë për masa për harmonizimin e politikave të ujit dhe ujërave të zeza me Acquis Communautaire të BE-së, më saktë, me Direktivën 2000/60/EC të Parlamentit Evropian dhe të Këshillit që përcakton një kornizë për veprimin e Komunitetit në fushën e politikës së ujit. (Direktiva për Ujërat). Për këtë qëllim, udhëzimet administrative për ligjet e listuara më sipër duhet të rishikohen në mënyrë që të jenë në përputhje me Direktivën e Ujit. Acquis tjera përkatëse përfshijnë: Direktivën në lidhje me trajtimin e ujërave të zeza urbane

(91/271/EEC), Direktiva për Cilësinë e Ujit për Konsum nga Njerëzit (98/83/EC), Direktiva për mbrojtjen e ujërave nga ndotja e shkaktuar nga nitratet nga burimet bujqësore (91/676/EEC); Direktiva në lidhje me menaxhimin e cilësisë së ujërave të larjes dhe shfuqizimin (2006/7/EC); Direktiva për standardet e cilësisë së mjedisit në fushën e politikës së ujit (2008/105 EC); Direktiva specifike teknike për analizat kimike dhe monitorimin e statusit të ujit (2009/90 EC).

Në nivel komunitar, autoritetet vendore dhe OSHC-të tashmë po zbatojnë aktivitete në përputhje me qëllimet e këtij projekti. Prania e tyre në terren, bën që politika dhe praktika të bashkohen lehtësisht nën kuadrin e vetëm për menaxhimin e ujërave në nivel vendor. Prandaj, roli i OSHC-ve është vendimtar për arritjen e qëndrueshmërisë mjedisore, përdorimit efikas të burimeve dhe rritjes së kohezionit ndërmjet zonave në vend. Kjo është e vërtetë veçanërisht duke pasur parasysh kapacitetet dhe ekspertizën e kufizuar me të cilën ballafaqohen veçanërisht komunat e vogla.

Që nga viti 2016, është duke u zbatuar “Marrëveshja e Stabilizim-Asociimit” e Kosovës me BE-në, me synim përmirësimin e mjedisit. Megjithatë kuadri

⁸ Raporti: <https://ask.rks.gov.net/media/4074/water-statistics-2017-2.pdf>

ligjor është përmirësuar dhe nismat e para janë duke u zhvilluar, mbeturinat mbeten një nga sfidat më të rëndësishme të vendit,

duke rezultuar në një nevojë të fortë për të angazhuar qytetarët dhe për të transformuar praktikën lokale.

2.2. Key Bottlenecks and Challenges

Some areas of Kosovo during summer periods completely dry out, leaving local communities dependent of water deliveries from local authorities for their basic needs. The levels of some accumulating reservoirs like the Badovc Lake,⁹ have too shown concerning levels during the hot seasons, requiring in several occasions, water to be pumped from Ujmani/ Gazivoda Lake to satisfy the needs of the capital during the summer. UN Water, states that when a territory withdraws 25 per cent or more of

its renewable freshwater resources it is said to be 'water-stressed'¹⁰.

Given that the climate change effects are expected to worsen over time and their manifestation through extreme weather events will increase in both frequency and intensity, it is ultimate time that Kosovo institutions increase efforts in ensuring long-term water security. According to one of the key informants, some scenarios on climate change, foresee decrease in water availability for 20% until 2040-2050¹¹.

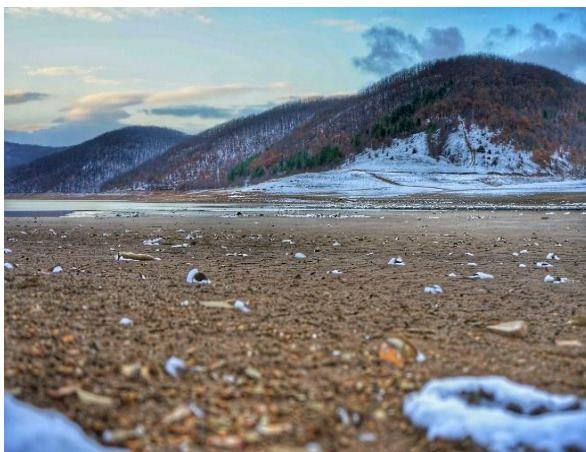


Figure 1. Badovci lake during drought season

⁹ <https://fakteplus.net/kosova-vuan-per-rezerva-ujore-ne-batlave-e-badovc-niveli-eshte-9-metra-nen-piken-maksimale/>

¹⁰ UN Water. Water Scarcity. Available at: <https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/water-scarcity>

¹¹ Interview with Member of Inter-Ministerial Committee.

Universal access to clean water is one of the most important Sustainable Development Goals, which even today is causing millions of men and women around the world to displace. Key responsibilities for developing new water resources is with Ministry of Environment Spatial Planning and Infrastructure (River Basin District Authority) but also with Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Rural Development; Ministry of Economy; Ministry of Finance Labor, and Transfers; Inter-Ministerial Water Council.

The structural challenges of water and wastewater management are engrained in local and regional actors, but the primary responsibility lies with municipalities, as the primary duty bearers of water and wastewater management. Some of the main challenges identified include:

Currently, public utility companies offering water supply and waste water management services have outdated equipment and infrastructure, incomplete coverage of network, difficulties in collecting dues for services, and face the low awareness on the part citizens and businesses about responsible use of water. These companies do not have the necessary infrastructure in place or the personnel required to enforce responsible water use policies, and as a result, often citizens (use of drinking water for gardening or agriculture), or businesses

(car washes or other businesses with high water consumption).

The inability to collect dues and the limited options they have to collect them (given that water is life-relevant resource), has crippled their ability to invest in addressing their priorities, and expanding and improving their services. Most investments in the network are made either by municipalities themselves, or through grants by central government. As most of the top priorities related to the topic of water, identifying required funding has been a revolving bottleneck around many major investment projects awaiting completion.

Lack of capacities to assume their legal competencies has also been identified as a major bottleneck in proper management of water resources. Illegal solid waste landfills alongside river-banks and other water resources (accumulating lakes), are a common sight, and are among the active polluters of water resources. Most municipalities in Kosovo lack the necessary capacities to control the banks of rivers flowing in their territories. Similarly, regional water and sewage service providers, lack the capacities to police illegal connections, misuse of water, and other aspects important to improving their performance.

Inspectorates at various levels too, lack the manpower to exercise the full range of their competencies and functions across the territory they cover.

This has led to illegal construction projects springing up around protected water resources or locations of natural heritage (such as: Bifurkacioni, Drini i Bardhë, Mirusha Waterfalls, etc.), over which there is little control of what they discharge in these resources.

Even when capacities may exist, other structural problems prevent them from being exercised. Such example of bottlenecks are for instance lack of zoning clarity alongside water resources. Sometimes unclear borderlines of municipalities or shifting riverbeds that have been identified as difficulties, but also clear marking of zones around protected water resources, make enforcement impossible even when they are clearly within boundaries of one municipality.

Lack of clearly markings for the zones in the field makes enforcement rather impossible task for designated institutions.

In 2013 A national decision has been made to designate protective measures for 16 water sources in Kosovo as protected areas which lacks implementation.

Use of water resources is another challenge and priority that has been identified. The primary responsibility for this priority lies with River Basin District Authority - RBDA. According to a relevant stakeholder interviewed and by the Law 04/L-147 commercial use of water resources should be given under concession through public and transparent processes. The current practice of awarding water licenses should be changed to ensure that all water resources are properly used.

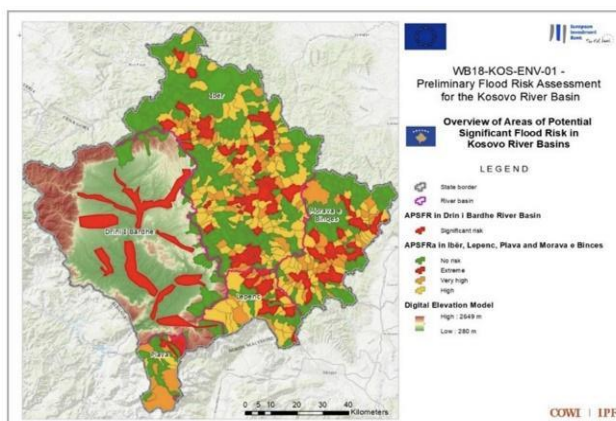


Figure 2. Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Kosovo River Basin

Managing floods and their effects has also been identified as a priority that needs immediate attention as it recurring in nature and causes annual damage. To address this issue, the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure has developed a flood risk assessment plan to identify areas that are at risk of flooding and to develop strategies to mitigate these risks presented in the table below.

Despite the increased number and intensity of extreme weather events, proper mitigation measures are believed could minimize, if not completely eliminate effects of those events. This issue is also linked directly to illegal gravel extraction, and erosion of land around both riverbeds, and accumulation lakes. Key responsibilities for addressing this challenge are RBDA, municipalities, MAFRD, and ultimately with the Agency for Emergencies' Management.

Pollution of water resources is also of major concern. Illegal landfills¹² alongside riverbeds, during high rainfall and snowfall seasons are washed off by increased water level, become a concerning contributor of marine litter. The most recent flooding events brought about

images of massive piles of washed out by water.

Lack of separate network for ground waters and sewage system, has also been identified as a major bottleneck that requires sizeable investments to address.

Most groundwater drainage systems in Kosovo are discharged in same collectors with that coming from sewage, making their combined treatment more problematic, expensive and less efficient. This has been also identified as a major bottleneck for maximizing the installed (and planned) capacities of waste-water treatment plants, which are currently being built around Kosovo.

Of similar nature is also the issue of discharges of sewage into rivers and streams without being filtered or treated beforehand.

To this end, an affordable, practical and easy to implement solutions to reducing / eliminating the problem of solid waste in river sources coming from sewage system/ drainages has been identified in Australian city of Kwinana, where simple

¹² [See map of illegal landfill of Municipality of Gjakova, a contribution of Let's Do IT Peja!, available at: \[https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1drCpai3CEIJ_oOnMG9j4pv8JY0Gmo8Ko&ll=42.388847214394175%2C20.442819595336903&z=11&fbclid=IwAR030GZfXGzstlXa2VAwE7MDPPA6tstSl2SXVnACR32sfyOCkdnQTP-SJel\]\(https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1drCpai3CEIJ_oOnMG9j4pv8JY0Gmo8Ko&ll=42.388847214394175%2C20.442819595336903&z=11&fbclid=IwAR030GZfXGzstlXa2VAwE7MDPPA6tstSl2SXVnACR32sfyOCkdnQTP-SJel\)](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1drCpai3CEIJ_oOnMG9j4pv8JY0Gmo8Ko&ll=42.388847214394175%2C20.442819595336903&z=11&fbclid=IwAR030GZfXGzstlXa2VAwE7MDPPA6tstSl2SXVnACR32sfyOCkdnQTP-SJel)

[=1drCpai3CEIJ_oOnMG9j4pv8JY0Gmo8Ko&ll=42.388847214394175%2C20.442819595336903&z=11&fbclid=IwAR030GZfXGzstlXa2VAwE7MDPPA6tstSl2SXVnACR32sfyOCkdnQTP-SJel](https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1drCpai3CEIJ_oOnMG9j4pv8JY0Gmo8Ko&ll=42.388847214394175%2C20.442819595336903&z=11&fbclid=IwAR030GZfXGzstlXa2VAwE7MDPPA6tstSl2SXVnACR32sfyOCkdnQTP-SJel)

easy to maintain drainage nets have been installed at relatively low cost.

Such solutions are also possible and advisable in Kosovo, as besides being cost effective to address the challenge of

solid waste, they only require allocation of resources by regional water companies to clean them up periodically. Figure two below provides for an illustration of these simple-to build and use systems for preventing marine litter.



Figure 3. Ujmani/Gazivode Lake 2023 floods (citizen contribution)



Foto 4. Drainage nets, Australia

Planning is another aspect that requires intensified efforts on the topic of water resource management. Delays in completing legal infrastructure and transposing EU directives through administrative instructions, has hindered any meaningful effort to protect water resources. These delays have also been identified as causes for the lack of management plans for riverbeds, which are a legal requirement. These documents would serve for streamlining measures and programs across territories of municipalities and development of implementable plans on developing and safeguarding water resources. RBDA is the primary responsible entity for developing river basin management plans, but their development should be inclusive, consultative, and involve all relevant stakeholders. In the contrary, they will lack the ownership necessary among relevant stakeholders and will not be implementable in practice.

Lack of highly skilled expertise and human resources, is required at all levels, as institutions responsible for development and implementing water policies all face this challenge.

Lack of expertise on water and water management at the level of the Kosovo Parliament, who is responsible for both passing legislation and monitoring the Strategy and Action Plan, for instance is a

major drawback. Similarly, lack of water expertise within the cabinet of the Ministry of Environment is also a major capacity deficiency. Capacity development needs of relevant actors should be raised both through short-term immediate impact trainings, as well as, long-term commitment to developing academic, research and engineering capacities demanded in the future.

One possible approach to increasing the interest declining professions relevant to the water management, is through a scholarship scheme in public universities, and for Abroad (for specializations that are not offered locally).

For instance, there is no expertise in Kosovo that would be able to assess the environmental damage from a development project, with or without the intent of the operator/business/citizen causing the damage. While laws foresee the damages/reparations owned by perpetrators also include damage to the environment, biodiversity, and ecosystems, without expertise on assessing such impact, they remain outside of the fines issued by the Kosovo courts.

Gender mainstreaming and inclusion is another aspect that requires attention, when addressing the bottlenecks related

to water management. First and foremost, the sector is professionally dominated by men, throughout the lengthy list of stakeholders with competencies related to water management. As per the Law on Gender Equality, equal representation of women and men in the water sector should be treated with priority. This is particularly important for decision-making positions like Boards and top management.

Secondly, the needs of women and other marginalized groups (including non-majority communities, persons with disabilities, children and youth, and other

disadvantaged groups) are rarely taken into consideration when taking decisions or planning investments. Although they represent some of the most affected (both positively and negatively) groups by issues related to water. Similarly, local communities were not consulted adequately, before licenses to hydro-plants, which later deprived said communities of the water for their farming needs and broad dissatisfaction among them. Inclusion of marginalized groups, which women in Kosovo are, is also one of the three basic principles of the Green Deal (# no one is left behind).

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATIONS

As argued in the sections above, challenges to ensuring effective management of water resources and long-term security for the population Kosovo needs to multiply efforts and investments dedicated to this priority. The establishment of the Inter-ministerial committee on waters has been considered a positive measure to streamline the efforts of various actors and institutions with competencies in the sector, but also for effectively monitoring the implementation of the strategy and action plan, which include measures and actions from a broad range of entities. However, it remains to be seen whether the inter-ministerial committee will be able to effectively exercise its role, particularly given the fragmented nature of the sector, competing interests and priorities, as well as, the periodic nature of its work (as compared to a body mandated to streamline issues on standing/ongoing basis).

In ensuring access to clean water, first and foremost priority is development of mini-damns in streams and springs and creating new accumulation reservoirs that satisfy the current and future needs of the country.

Water security should be treated as a top national priority as lack of action can imply detrimental social, economic effects and can produce devastating demographic and population movements. The investments in water security-related infrastructure should be multiplied if goals of universal access to clean water and sanitation are to be met. As the water strategy indicates, aside from increased public investments, additional donor and private sector investments are foreseen to address water priorities in the period covered by the document. However, in order to maximize investment efficiency and effectiveness of producing the desired outcomes, investments (regardless of source of financing) should be synergized with one another closely. Exploration of underground water resources into more depth and their consequent utilization for ensuring universal access to clean water is also a high priority. Insofar lack of research efforts have made utilization of underground water resources impossible.

Another challenge in ensuring faster results related to water management is the **fragmented institutional scene with competencies in water management**. While coordinating investments, the operations in the field are much more problematic. This holds true particularly

regarding monitoring, controlling, inspecting, and safeguarding water resources, which by law are public property. Lack of regulatory and zoning plans by municipalities, lack of perimeter control and markings around protected water resources is an illustration of such problem of coordination, which has yielded with significant water resources and natural heritage sites being irreversibly destroyed.

Protection of existing clean water resources and cleaning up those that can be treated/ reversed into their pre-polluted situation, requires joint action and mobilization of both public/government resources, as well as, civil society and communities sharing them. To this end, extensive awareness and engagement efforts should be made in massive clean-

up campaigns, where through a **series of restorative actions, nature balance is restored where possible**. It should be emphasized that the use of natural ecosystem restoration measures such as for instance increase of beaver population to restore riverbeds and prevent erosion should be promoted and prioritized. In terms of better management of drinking water reservoirs clear territorial and zoning management plans, and infrastructure should be immediately developed to ensure that their further degradation is prevented. While full transposition of EU directives remains short of small changes in sub-legal acts, the practical field coordination between actors remains challenging, to a large extent because of lack of relevant documents and regulatory processes for which given institutions have exclusive legal rights

4. SOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

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ANNEX 1: LIST OF RESPONDENTS

#	Organization/Institution
1	River Basin District Authority & Department of Waters (MESPI)
2	Directorate for Public Services, Municipality of Peja
3	Municipality of Prishtina / Gjakova / Gjlani
4	Regional Water Companies
5	Waste and Water Regulatory Office
6	Support to Water and Sanitation Project
7	SKAT project IWRM-K
9	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network
10	Kosovo Environment Protection Agency
11	Let's Do It Peja
12	Environmental Reporters



Funded by
the European Union



Promoting Universal
Access to **Clean Water**

This publication has been produced as part of the project “Promoting Universal Access to Clean Water”, funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo and implemented by Let’s Do It Peja.

The views, opinions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the European Union Office in Kosovo.

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