

EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA)

IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

Environmental Regional Cooperation



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This project is funded
by the European Union

NIRÁS **umweltbundesamt**[®]

The project implemented by the Consortium
of NIRÁS (lead) and Umweltbundesamt GmbH

Key facts



The EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA) in the Western Balkans and Turkey project seeks to be a major driver of reform and development in environmental governance through compliance with the EU environmental acquis. The project offers a collaboration platform for enlargement countries to better deal with EU environmental acquis implementation challenges, fostering regional dialogue and further developing networks with the EU Member States.

Background:

EU citizens benefit from some of the highest environmental standards in the world, guaranteed and implemented by over 200 legal acts. The EU enlargement process provides a major opportunity for the aspiring countries to increase protection of their environment, but it also entails targets and complex requirements. Regional co-operation in the environmental area has been supported by the European Union for almost 15 years. The EPPA project aims to build on the results achieved by previous initiatives in the region, specifically by the Regional Environmental Network for Accession (RENA) and the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN).

Objective and Purpose:

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the implementation of the EU environmental acquis in the Western Balkans and Turkey in areas relevant for addressing trans-boundary environmental issues. Furthermore, the purpose is to assist the European Commission in providing the Secretariat to the EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession.

Contracting Authority:

European Commission
(Directorate-General for Environment)

The Project Duration:

February 13, 2019 – February 13, 2022
(36 months)





Project Beneficiaries

The main institutional stakeholders include line ministries (responsible for environmental policies):



Albania - Ministry of Environment,



Bosnia and Herzegovina - Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology (Republika Srpska), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (Republika Srpska),



Kosovo¹ - Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning,



North Macedonia - Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy,



Montenegro - Ministry of Tourism and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Agriculture (Water),



Serbia - Ministry of Environmental Protection,



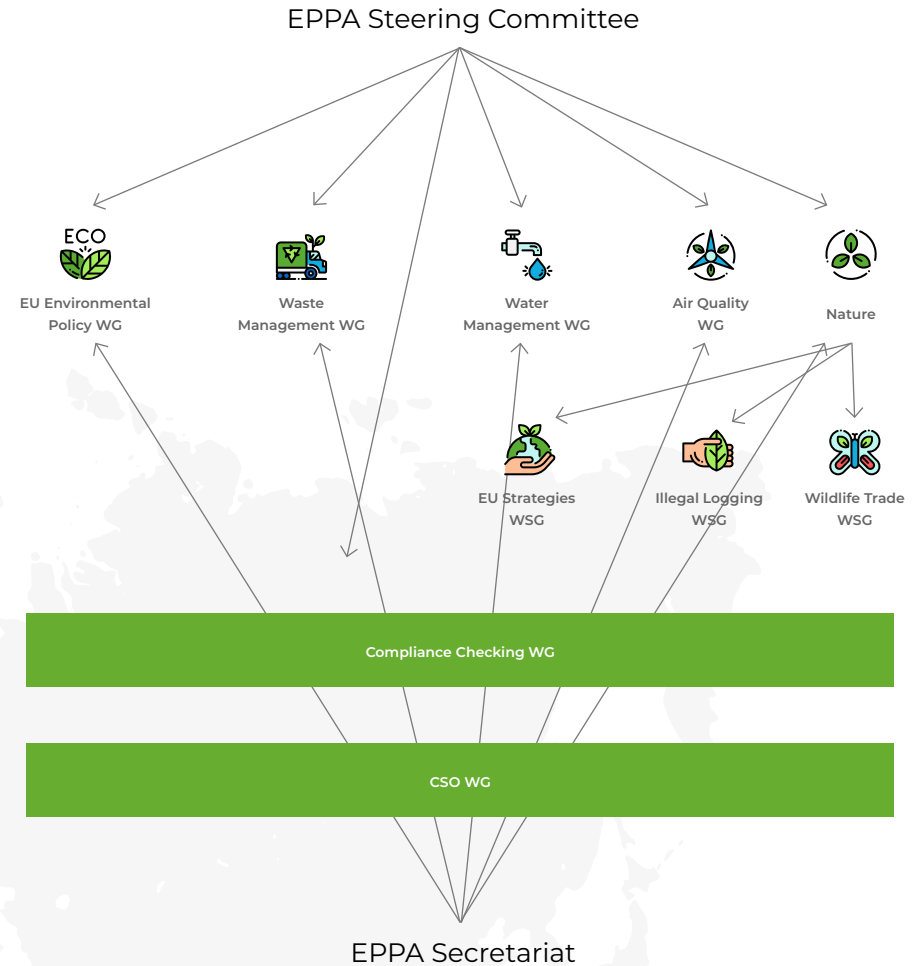
Turkey - Ministry of Environment and Urbanization.

In addition, other institutions benefit from the project. Those include environment protection agencies, statistical institutions, inspectorates, other relevant central, regional and local public authorities working on environment, and, finally, environmental civil society organisations.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with the UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Project Working Groups

The activities of the EPPA Project are implemented through the system of Working Groups (WG) and Working Sub-Groups (WSG). Each beneficiary has appointed a National Focal Point to form a Steering Committee and Working Group or Sub-Group members.



Working Group 1

EU Environment Policy

The awareness and understanding of EU environmental laws, policies, economic benefits and strategies is crucial to strengthening dialogue and cooperation between the EU and its partners. The activities within this Working Group will be built around the EU 7th and the expected 8th Environmental Action Plan (EAP). The current 7th EAP is the strategy defining 9 environment priority objectives for the EU institutions and Members States for the period up to 2020.

Main activities:

- Organisation of regional and beneficiary-level conferences on environmental priorities as envisaged by the 7/8th Environmental Action Plans. The events will include an exchange of views and debates in order to foster good understanding of policy and legislation proposals.

Result:

Information provided to the environmental ministries, and other relevant public and private institutions, on the latest policy priorities and developments in the environmental policy area.





Working Group 2

Waste Management

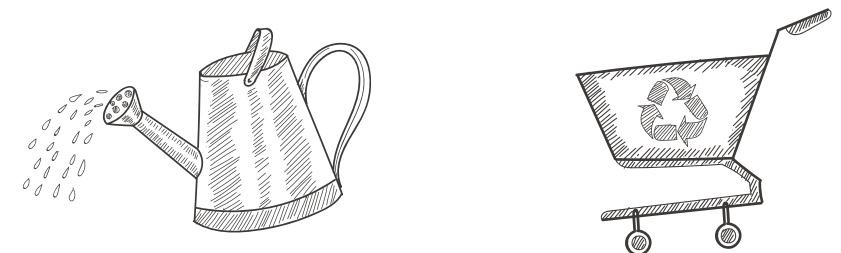
Within the EU environmental acquis, waste is one of the most demanding sectors in terms of the resources – both human and financial – needed for the transposition and implementation of the relevant EU legislation. European legislation is a key driver to improve waste management, stimulate innovation in recycling, limit the use of landfilling, and create incentives to change consumer behaviour.

Main activities:

- Assistance for the implementation of the roadmaps for improving waste management, building on the results of the South East Europe Waste Assessment (SEEWA) project.
- Capacity building on the specific needs in the waste sector and revision of waste management plans, national policies and/or legislation.
- Organization of regional and national capacity building events focusing on resource efficiency and the transition to circular economy.

Result:

Capacity building and technical expertise provided to the beneficiaries for preparation of waste management plans, development of policies and revision of legislation in line with EU waste priorities such as waste hierarchy and transition to a circular economy.



Working Group 3

Water Management

The protection of water resources, of fresh and salt water ecosystems, and of the water we drink and bath in is one of the cornerstones of environmental protection in Europe. The stakes are high, the issues transcend national boundaries and concerted action is necessary to ensure effective protection. Economic activities, population growth and urbanisation are increasing pressures on water resources throughout Europe.

Main activities:

- Support to increased participation and involvement of the relevant beneficiaries in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR).
- Strengthening of capacities for the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the management of marine litter.
- Support to the implementation of the Barcelona Convention.
- Continued support to the land-locked beneficiary countries for transposition and implementation of legislation in the water sector.

Result:

Improved regional cooperation in transboundary water management and facilitated protection of marine and coastal environments.





Working Group 4

Air Quality

Air pollution is a local, European and hemispheric issue. Air pollutants released in one country may be transported in the atmosphere, contributing to or resulting in poor air quality elsewhere. The EU has been working for decades to improve air quality by controlling emissions of harmful substances into the atmosphere, improving fuel quality, and by integrating environmental protection requirements into the transport, industrial and energy sectors.

Main activities:

- Strengthening of capacities for improved air quality monitoring, air quality management and reporting, air quality assessment methodologies and development of air quality improvement plans according to the Air Quality Directive.
- Strengthening of capacities related to emissions inventories, projections, reporting, and reduction strategies according to the National Emission Ceilings Directive (NEC), and facilitation of the ratification of the Gothenburg Protocol.
- Strengthening of capacities for monitoring sulphur emissions in maritime transport and enforcing the EU's and the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) requirements on sulphur.
- Strengthening of capacities to manage permits in accordance with Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Available Techniques conclusions developed under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), and to set emission limit values for pollutant emissions and monitoring requirements in accordance with the principles and provisions of the IED.

Result:

Capacity to address trans-boundary air quality issues and to further the alignment with air quality legislation strengthened.

Working Group 5

Nature

We all depend on nature for our food, air, water, energy and raw materials. Biodiversity is the wide variety of animals, plants, their habitats and their genes, and it is vital to countless human activities. However, protection of natural areas cannot be done in isolation and requires joint regional and global efforts. The Nature Working Group addresses nature protection and the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The EU has been committed to the protection of nature since the adoption of the Birds Directive in 1979 and the Habitats Directive in 1992. This has been further complemented with a number of other EU directives and regulations creating a system of efficient nature protection.

The work of the Nature Working Group has been divided into three Sub-Groups:



EU Strategies
WSG



Illegal Logging
WSG



Wildlife Trade
WSG

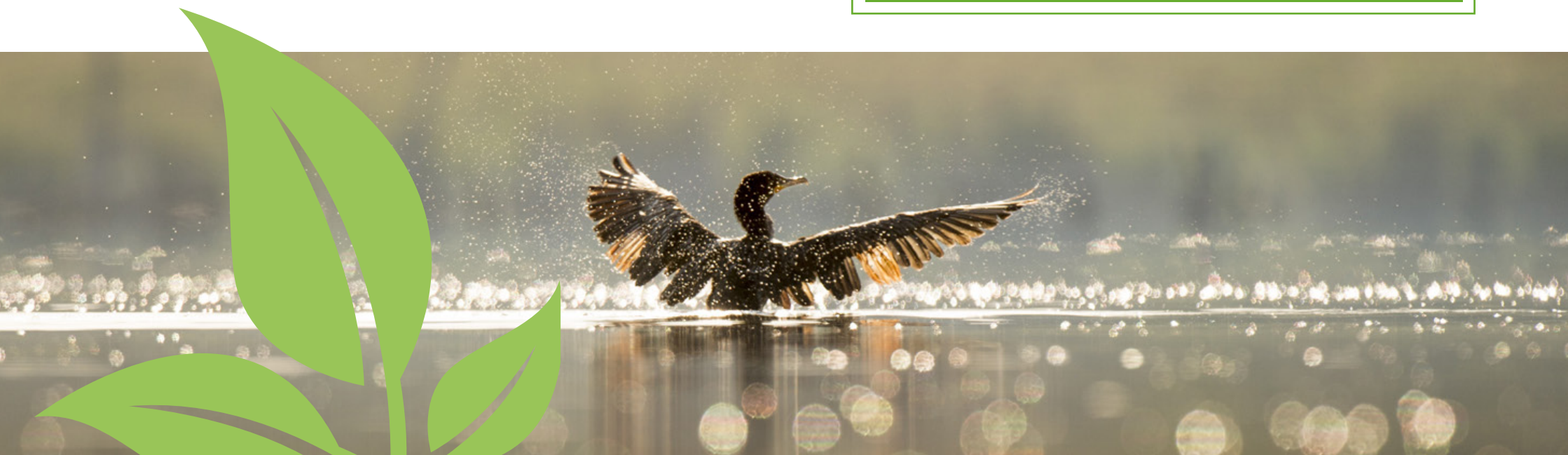
EU Strategies Working Sub-Group

Main activities:

- Development of a study on green infrastructure deployment and ecological connectivity status of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- Development of initial proposals for establishment of new Marine Protected Areas in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.
- Regional cooperation for sharing information and other scientific and technical resources on invasive alien species.
- Organisation of regional conferences on biodiversity to raise awareness of key policy goals and action needed.

Result:

Facilitated regional cooperation in managing transboundary nature protection, including marine and coastal environments.



Illegal Logging Working Sub-Group

Main activities:

- A study on trends in timber trade in the beneficiaries and between the beneficiaries and the EU.
- A study on existing administrative and legislative aspects and relevant stakeholders in the beneficiaries to inform the application and review of due diligence mechanisms under the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR).
- Organisation of regional workshops on managing illegal timber.
- Involvement of the beneficiaries in the Project Leaf (Law Enforcement Assistance for Forests).

Result:

Facilitated regional cooperation for combating illegal logging and related trade.

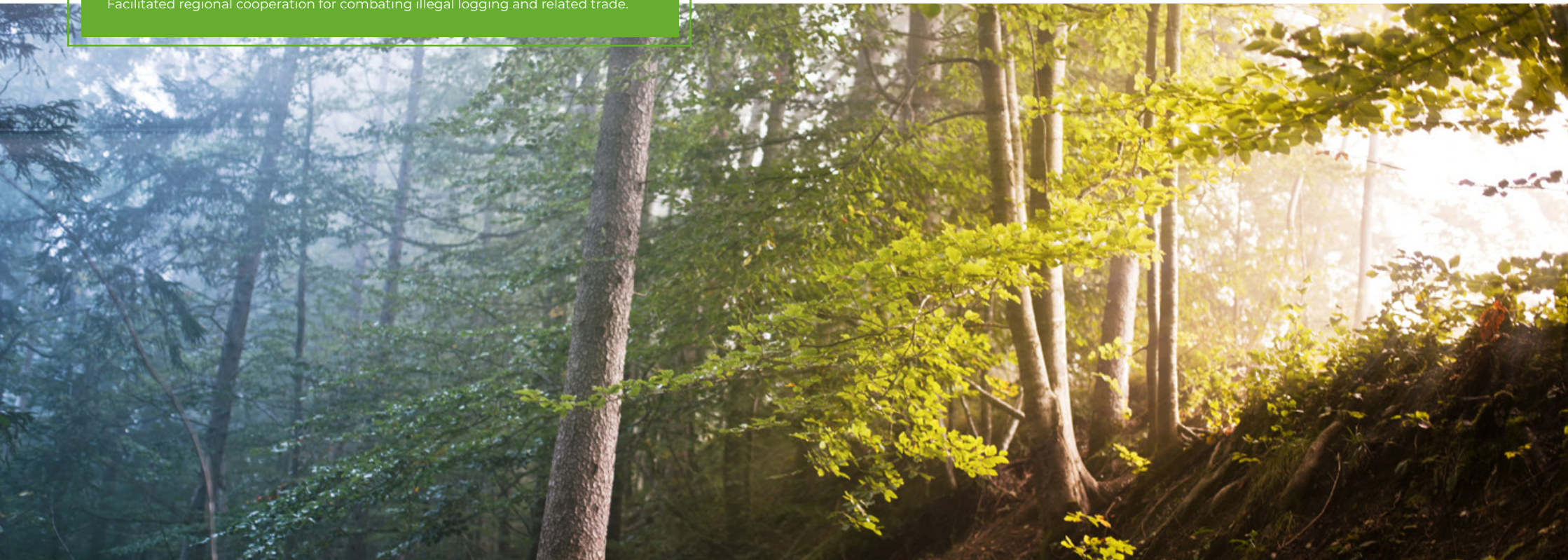
Wildlife Trade Working Sub-Group

Main activities:

- Establishment of regional wildlife trade cooperation platform between the relevant authorities in the beneficiaries and similar EU networks.
- Capacity building for effective permitting systems, in line with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Organisation of regional workshops on CITES implementation.

Result:

Facilitated regional cooperation for combating wildlife trafficking.





Working Group 6

Compliance Checking

Over the last decades, the EU has adopted a substantial and diverse range of environmental measures aimed at improving the quality of the environment for European citizens and providing them with a high quality of life. The environment can only be well protected if Member States, candidates and potential candidates properly implement the legislation they have signed up to. Compliance with EU environmental directives is not only the criteria for accession but also brings a number of benefits to countries related to public health, resources and economic efficiency and protection of the natural environment.

Main activities:

- Performing compliance checks of legal acts of the beneficiaries against the corresponding EU environmental legislation.

Result:

Compliance checks for draft legislation prepared.



Working Group 7

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in the development, implementation and enforcement of the EU environmental acquis. In the context of the EPPA project, CSOs are particularly important to disseminate information to the public, to participate in legislation and policy consultations, and to act as a third party who monitors and assesses enforcement.

The overall objective of this component is to involve and strengthen Western Balkans and Turkish civil society organisations active in the environmental protection policy area through information exchange on EU environmental policy, its implementation status and challenges in the beneficiaries.

Main activities:

- Participation of representatives of selected CSOs in all relevant capacity building activities organized under EPPA.
- Organisation of a regional meeting for the CSOs from the beneficiary countries.

Result:

Specific sectoral knowledge acquired by the CSOs' representatives and strengthened cooperation between CSOs and the authorities.



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