



Event Report

**EPPA Regional Workshop on Flood Protection and River
Restoration**

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Live video conference



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1 Introduction

The regional workshop

The regional workshop on “Flood Protection and River Restoration” took place on September 22-23, 2020, via live video conference. The workshop was organized in cooperation with TAIEX, and under the EPPA project work programme, namely activity 3.4 “Assistance with water management issues facing land-locked countries based on their identification of key issues”¹.

The participants of the workshop came from the relevant authorities of the EPPA beneficiaries involved in water management. They represented the Ministries with the environment portfolio and the water portfolio, in addition to hydrometeorological national institutions, water management institutions, and river basin management authorities of all beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey. Details are available in the list of participants.

Civil society was represented by NGOs from the beneficiaries, namely: Co-PLAN - Institute for Habitat Development (Albania), Center for Environment (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Institute for Development Policy (Kosovo*), FORS - Foundation for the Development of Northern Montenegro, Center for Climate Change – Gevgelija (North Macedonia), Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development (Serbia), TEMA Foundation (Turkey).

EU Delegations’ and Office representatives, of all EPPA beneficiaries, were also present.

The speakers represented EU Member States’ and EU institutions’ experience. There were experts from the national authorities of Romania and Slovenia, and DG ENV. Moreover, the workshop brought in the experience of a GIZ expert and a North Macedonian expert from the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Waters. Finally, two independent Dutch experts offered their experience with water management in the Netherlands. Details are available in the agenda.

The presentations can be downloaded in both the TAIEX website and in the EPPA project website.

2 Objectives of the training and expected results

The aim of the workshop was to provide advice to strengthen national capacity for effectively addressing the large number of implementation challenges of the Flood Directive (FD), offer guidance on flood protection and river restoration techniques, and share of experiences and promotion of best practices.

Flood Directive

Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks entered into force on 26 November 2007. This Directive requires Member States to assess if all water courses and coast lines are at risk from flooding, to map the flood extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk. It also reinforces the rights of the public to access this information and to have a say in the planning process.

The Directive is implemented in coordination with the Water Framework Directive, notably by flood risk management plans and river basin management plans being coordinated, and through coordination of the public participation procedures in the preparation of these plans. All assessments, maps and plans prepared are made available to the public.

Member States are also required to coordinate their flood risk management practices in shared river basins, including with third countries, and not to undertake measures that would increase the flood risk in neighbouring countries.

River Restoration

River restoration refers to a large variety of ecological, physical, spatial and management measures and practices. These are aimed at restoring the natural state and functioning of the river system in support of biodiversity, recreation, flood management and landscape development.

By restoring natural conditions, river restoration improves the resilience of the river systems and provides the framework for the sustainable multifunctional use of estuaries, rivers and streams. River restoration

¹ The scope of the workshop was shifted from WFD and MSFD coordination to flood protection due to the beneficiaries expressed interest, and with the approval of the European Commission.



is an integral part of sustainable water management and is in direct support of the aims of the Water Framework Directive, and national and regional water management policies.

3 Highlights from the workshop

3.1 Opening remarks

Mr. Mihail Dimovski opened the workshop by thanking the participants for their involvement and interest in the topic. He gave an overview of the workshop objectives in the context of EPPA's mandate to foster the exchange of experiences between the beneficiaries and EU Member States. He also offered a regional contextualization of the work being done in the region by EPPA's partners, such as GIZ. Given the impact of floods in the Western Balkans in recent years, he called for the participants to make as much as possible use of the workshop as a tool to guide future efforts, including in regional cooperation, a necessary condition for the implementation of the EU's water acquis.

Ms. Mihaela Popovici facilitated a round of introduction by the participants and then discussed the rationale of the workshop agenda, main topics to be approached, and how they fit in EPPA's broader water management activities.

3.2 Findings of the 2019 Report of the Fitness Check Evaluation of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive

Mr. Ioannis Kavvadas presented the results of the fitness check of the WFD and Floods Directive. Fitness checks are comprehensive policy evaluations of a set of EU legal instruments. Fitness checks aim to fulfil the EC's goal of achieving better regulation. They examine how the legal instruments perform in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, and EU added value. The fitness check took two years to complete (started in October 2017 and ended in December 2019).

Broadly, the report concluded that the legislation is fit for purpose, with room for improvement. The WFD did not achieve its full potential due to slow implementation, especially because of insufficient funding for measures and insufficient integration of environmental goals in sectoral policies.

For the Flood Directive, the conclusions are limited by its still reduced period of implementation, since 2016. However, the feedback was positive and encourages further work in the area. By analysis criteria, the main results of the fitness check were:

- **Effectiveness:** the objective is being achieved with a comprehensive framework established in the Member States. The first flood risk management plans are in place. The second plans are under preparation and it will include a reporting on the measures of the first plan (by 2022), which will allow a quantification of achievements.
- **Efficiency:** The cost-benefit ratio was found favorable, up to 1-to-10 (in euros) in specific projects. There is an added administrative burden for the Member States in terms of reporting, however that must be contextualized within the general environmental reporting that is expected from the Member States for other environmental directives.
- **Coherence:** The Directive supports the Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction and the relevant sustainable development goals. Within the EU, it supports the rescEU (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid) and its response to natural disasters. A connection was also established with agriculture and funding for rural development programmes, with the opportunity to develop better synergies with farm management. The Critical Infrastructures Directive was identified as a potential connection and future work on that directive might take into account measures of the FD to improve resilience to climate changes impacts.
- **Relevance:** The EU is subject to flooding pressures in the context of climate change; it is expected the relevance of the directive will remain high.
- **EU added value:** The FD reinforced already existing transboundary cooperation in water management and flood risks assessment. The existence of the legal instrument at EU level enhances cooperation, which in turn leads to a best practices approach to flood risk



management. Once the framework was in place, it created bilateral exchanges between the EU and Member States.

Mr. Ioannis Kavvas then focused on the public consultation results, part of the fitness check. The consultation process started with a literature review, continued with an open consultation (based on a questionnaire), and targeted consultations for the relevant stakeholders and experts. There were 370 000 responses to the open consultation, showing the attention water management has in civil society. The consultation results show that the public evaluates the FD as follows:

- Further damages from floods are avoided
- Improved information and knowledge leading to better decision making
- Better coordination and cooperation within the Member States institutions.
- The FD has been effective so far although further quantification will be needed
- Nature based solutions and land planning need more attention
- The costs of implementing the directive were seen as acceptable when compared with the benefits, and more funding for measures was called for
- Answers were divided on the administrative burden for authorities and operators. The most cited, burdensome requirements were the mapping of flood hazards at municipal level and demanding reporting requirements.
- One third of respondents prefer a simplification of the directive
- One third want to see a stronger connection between research and innovation
- Some of the challenges highlighted were the competing demand for land uses, high costs of relocating assets
- Requests for revising (missing elements) or simplifying the reporting system under the directive
- Room for improvement on the clarification of terminology and articulation with river basin management plans
- Better coherence with adaptation strategies needed
- More focus on nature-based solutions and nature management plans
- Etc².

3.3 Outcomes of the gap analysis and needs assessment in the context of implementing EU Floods Directive (WBIF Study Sep 2015) and outcomes IPA Regional project on floods

Ms. Mihaela Popovici presented two projects on flood prevention and management in the Western Balkans. The first is the outcomes of the gap analysis and needs assessment in the context of implementing the EU Floods Directive made by EC DG NEAR (WBIF Study, September 2015).

Following an extreme flood disaster in the Sava catchment, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, in May 2014, the EC ordered the investigation on the status of flood management and on the FD implementation in the Western Balkans countries and the preparation of a gap analysis. The initiative recognized the WB's exposed position to climate changes risks, especially Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. The study sought to analyse policy measures against the requirements of the FD and WFD, thus resulting in a gap analysis of the implementation Floods Directive, as well as the funding needs for potential infrastructure investment projects. The project produced six country reports, two databases with structural and non-structural measures and maps of potential flood hazard areas, land use and population density. The recommendations were to:

- Develop and adopt the FD implementation plan and programme.
- Accelerate the transposition of EU legislation.
- Incorporate flood management issues into all other sectoral procedures, such as urbanisation, urban and rural housing, agriculture or dam management. Special emphasis is to be given to land use in flood areas, sewage and waste management, as well as climate change.
- Strengthen legislative enforcement such as on land use and property issues.
- Prepare flood hazard and flood risk assessments and flood management plans.

² Consult the presentation for the full list.



- Prioritize investments.
- Establish early warning and hydro-meteorological monitoring.
- Strengthen regional and cross-border cooperation in flood management planning and design
- Monitor the results of the FD implementation process

The second project was on the “Prevention, preparedness and response to floods in the Western Balkans and Turkey” (under IPA). It sought to contribute to the reduction of the negative impact of flood risk in the directly affected regions and in neighbouring European states. The beneficiaries were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (only for part 1), North Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. In particular, the projects objectives were to:

- Improve the beneficiaries' ability to develop effective national civil protection systems: prevention, preparedness and response.
- Improve the preparation of the beneficiary countries, in addressing the challenges posed by the transposition of the EU Directive on floods.
- Achieve the capacity and performance in support of the approximation to the EU Floods Directive, and the implementation of an integrated approach for the management of flood risk including prevention activities, preparedness and response.
- Provide capacity building in compliance with the EU Floods Directive.
- Prepare guidelines on the management of flood risk on the base of current EU guidelines to the implementation of the EU Floods Directive.
- Prepare a road map for future regional action in the field of disaster risk management, with particular attention to the risk of flooding in accordance with the regional aspect and the multilateral dimension of the beneficiaries.

3.4 “Adaptation to Climate Change through Transboundary Flood Risk Management in the Western Balkans - Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia (GIZ Project)”

Ms. Merita Meksi presented the GIZ project “Adaptation to Climate Change through Transboundary Flood Risk Management, Western Balkans”. The project has three levels of approach: regional, national and local.

At regional level, the project will produce:

- Flood forecast system (Panta RHEI)
- 40 New and upgraded stations
- Online data portals in all countries
- Unified MCH databases in all countries
- MoU for data sharing among 4 riparian countries
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) for the Basin as a requirement of EU Flood Directive 2007/60/EC

At national level, the products are (similar products to be developed for the other beneficiaries):

- NAP process in Albania
- Climate change strategy (adaptation pillar)

At local level, the project delivered (similar products to be developed for the other beneficiaries):

- FRM for Shkodra
- Vulnerability assessment and action plan for Tirana
- Hec RAS 2D Hydraulic model for lower Shkodra
- Implementation of Adaptation measures in Shkodra (raise awareness, channel clearing, risk maps, GIS
- training, forestation, tools, and work outfits for civil emergencies, etc.).

3.5 International Cooperation under the Floods Directive

Mr. Ylber Mirta presented the international cooperation venues for the implementation of the Flood Directive. The Floods Directive should be implemented in coordination with the EU WFD and also requires Member States to coordinate their FRMPs and RBMPs. In case of International river basins, Member



States need to coordinate their flood risk management practices and avoid measures that would increase flood risk in neighbouring countries. Member States should take into consideration long term developments, including climate change, as well as sustainable land use practices in the flood risk management.

International cooperation on flood management has been at the core of the work under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention - UNECE) and obliges Parties to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impacts, including floods. The Convention requires that Parties should establish joint monitoring programmes, warning and alarm procedures, joint bodies to provide forums for discussing planned flood prevention measures and agreeing on possible joint measures. Finally, Parties should assist each other – for example, in case of floods. Under the work of the Water convention, two important documents were adopted: Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention and Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change.

Mr. Ylber Mirta then presented the situation in North Macedonia. He presented the legislative and institutional framework for flood risk management, as a background to the current management practice in the country. For flood protection, the MEPP, in cooperation with the MAFWE, prepares a Program for flood protection within the respective river basin as an integral part of the RBMP. For its implementation the MoEPP, Municipalities and the JS Water economy, adopt operational plans for flood protection and defence for the endangered areas. In case of danger by demolition of dams, as well as discharge or spill over of larger water quantities from reservoirs that can cause floods, JS Water economy and other legal entities are obliged to provide reporting and warning of the population at risk in the area. North Macedonia has large systems for flood control in Skopje, Pelagonija, Strumica and Struga. However, there is a need for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the existing drainage systems.

Currently, there are some project based activities on flood risk management:

- Projects financially supported by Swiss confederation and implemented by UNDP
 - Strumica River Basin & Flood Risk Management Plan
 - Crna river basin - PFRA for Pelagonija region
 - Bregalnica river basin – PFRA
 - Polog- Flood Risk Management (SDC & SECO / UNDP)
- GIZ project "Climate Change Adaptation and Flood Risk Management for The Western Balkans"
 - PFRA Drin River Basin, generation of flood hazard maps and flood risk maps (FHRM)
 - Signing agreement with the Municipality of Ohrid for financing climate change adaptation measure on a local level, improve the Flood Early Warning Systems (FEWS)
- The GEF Drini Project - The Expert Working Group on Floods - will be established. The EWG will provide expert technical support to the DCG for the implementation of the MoU on issues related to floods especially in the lower parts of the Drin Basin
- National contribution:
 - Lepenec and Treska river basin – FRMP

Mr. Ylber Mirta identified the recommendations for future flood risk management that are being taken into account in North Macedonia:

- Continuation of reforms in the Water Management Sector
- More Investment in Flood Risk Management System
- Improvement of the hydrometeorology monitoring and flood early warning system
- Harmonization of RBMPs and FRMPs (PoM)
- National Action Plan for cleaning and stabilization of the natural /regulated riverbeds
- More involvement between the public, decision makers and scientific researchers
- New projects on floods:
 - Adaptation Fund project, "Integrated climate-resilient transboundary flood risk management in the Drin River basin in the Western Balkans", implemented by UNDP and GWP Med
 - New IPA project: "Implementation of the EU Floods Directive through Harmonization of National Legislation and Preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans"



3.6 Lessons learned from “Room for River Program” in the Netherlands

Mr. Jos Timmerman presented the lessons learned from the “Room for River Program” in the Netherlands. He started with an overview of the international river systems in the Netherlands. Their international character makes transboundary cooperation on floods important, including, for instance, in the Rhine. 26% of the Netherlands is below sea level. The country is prone to flooding, especially in the Rhine basin. There was serious flooding in 1993 and 1995, with a high level of evacuations necessary. This was the source of the room-for-the-river programme. The programme increased the discharge capacity of the river, while leaving measures in place to further increase it, if needed. The measures taken included deepening the river bed, relocating dikes to increase the width of the floodplain, strengthening dikes where relocation was not possible, making high water channels, lowering flood plains, depoldering, lowering groynes, removing obstacles and creating water storage zones in specific areas. The measures amounted to 36 infrastructure projects.

Mr. Jos Timmerman gave the example of one such project in Nijmegen. Before the intervention it was a bottleneck at high discharge time. The project combined several of the measures already listed, including a bypass channel.

He then discussed the process of designing and implementing the programme. The definition of measures was made at national level, but later consulted with the local government, which led to alternative measures. The main success factors were political will and support from the public due to flood history. Another was collaboration across government levels based on a shared vision, the policy framework, the recognized economic benefits, and the monitoring of the new facilities. The programme also benefited from clear leadership, and central coordination by a programme office, that used lessons learnt to implement further measures in different locations.

In conclusion, Mr. Jos Timmerman stated that a systemic, but flexible, approach was essential for success. It allowed to coordinate the different interests (like nature and recreation), and to integrate the programme in planned investments. Participatory decision making was also key to ensure ownership and effectiveness.

3.7 Coordination between Flood Risk Management Plan and River Basin Management Plan, at the national and regional level

Mr. Gheorghe Constantin presented the aspects of coordination between Flood Risk Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans at the national and regional level. He started by comparing, and finding the commonalities between the objectives of the WFD and the Flood Directive, which can be summarized in the preservation of nature and mitigating the negative consequences for human health, economic activity, the environment and cultural heritage of flooding events.

The Flood Directive requires that Member states carry out a preliminary assessment (by 2011) to identify the river basins and associated coastal areas at risk of flooding, draw up flood risk maps (by 2013), and establish flood risk management plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness (by 2015). The main objective of Flood Risk Management Plans is to reduce the negative consequences of floods as a result of the synergy of measures and actions prior to the phenomenon (prevention, protection and preparedness), those of management during floods (emergency management) and those undertaken after floods (reconstruction, lessons learned from the phenomenon).

There are however potential implementation conflicts between the Flood Directive and the WFD. For instance, implementation of restoration/mitigation measures to achieve WFD good ecological status, or good ecological potential, at water bodies where hydromorphology is impacted by existing flood risk management measures, and impacts of new flood protection measures on hydromorphology modifications and related assessments under the WFD. Implementation of the WFD and Flood Directive could have a potential negative impact on both objectives. There is a need for coordination in order to minimize the impact and to create synergies.

Article 9 of the Flood Directive stipulates that Member States shall take appropriate steps to coordinate the application of Flood Directive and that of Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) focusing on opportunities for improving efficiency, information exchange and for achieving common synergies and benefits having regard to the environmental objectives laid down in article 4 of WFD.



Mr. Gheorghe Constantin presented the Romanian experience with floods. The country is subject to catastrophic floods, 42 of which were recorded in the 20th century. The frequent occurrence of catastrophic floods in Romania is mainly due to: limitation of river runoff areas; economic development; excessive deforestation; anthropogenic activities; and climate change. Furthermore, Romania has a high percentage of population living in floodplain areas. In Romania there are currently 2050 localities exposed to flood risk, of which 1298 are protected by works with a defense role, with different degrees of insurance, and 752 are left in natural regime. Romania is therefore managing flood potential to prevent new risks, reduce existing risks, increasing resilience, and raising public awareness.

In terms of the coordination between WFD and the Flood Directive at national level, both Flood Directive and WFD are implemented by the National Administration Romanian Waters (General Headquarters and 11 river basins). All 11 River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans are coordinated by the General Headquarters. River Basin Management Plan and Flood Risk Management Plans are coordinated at the European Union level and Danube River Basin level. The proposed measures for flood protection are analyzed based on the impact over the water status.

The Flood Risk Management Plans in Romania identify flood risk management objectives along four criteria: social, economic, environmental, and cultural heritage. The performance of the flood risk management measures is based on a scoring system. The score given to each measure varies between 0 (if the measure damages the GES/GEP) and 5 (if the measure is without prejudice to the GES/GEP for water body). The plans also propose methodological recommendations in defining the measures.

The plans are developed at the level of the 11 water basin administrations based on the methodologies defined at national level, which set forth prioritization of flood risk management measures based on multi-criteria analysis with cost-benefit elements.

International coordination is made on several levels: Danube River Basin level, international sub-basin level, and at bilateral level on transboundary water bodies. As an example, the coordination at the Danube River Basin level is done within the framework of ICPDR which is organism in charge with the coordinated implementation with the Danube international River Basin. The Danube Flood Risk Management Plan is developed in parallel with the River Basin Management Plan both at the national and regional level. It is based on the EU implementation guidance as well as at the methodologies and framework developed by ICPDR. It has a dedicate chapter for the coordination with the Water Framework Water Directive. It includes regional aspects and national approaches. The plan concludes recommendations such as:

- Implementation of concept “Giving more space to rivers”;
- Prioritisation of measures;
- Integrated planning on catchment scale to identify win-win solutions;
- Application and further investigation of effectiveness and efficiency of National Water Retention Measures (NWRMs).
- Restoration of former wetlands/floodplain areas, increasing their territory, demolition of existing dykes (like summer-dykes) or dyke relocation
- Creation of new wetlands
- Restoration of meandering capacity of rivers
- Restoration of side-branches
- Restoration of oxbows and lakes, use them for water storage
- elimination of invasive species on the active floodplain
- Reforestation on catchment
- Retention of water, precipitation and sewage
- Building reservoirs on the floodplain, change of land use and applying natural water retention measures
- Regulations in land use (e.g. no new buildings on floodplains, increase area of grass-lands/wet meadows next to the main channel instead of low profitable arable lands)
- Change land use that is resistant to floods (e.g. to grasslands/wet meadows on the floodplain instead of sensitive crops)



- Modify agriculture subsidy systems in order to ensure incentives for natural water retention measures, which can reduce flood peak downstream and improve status and ecological status of waters.

Mr. Gheorghe Constantin concluded with the key messages of his presentation. Coordination between WFD and Flood Directive is an obligation both at the national and regional level. International River Basin organizations have the task to coordinate the development of both plans at the basin level. National authorities must establish the framework for development and coordination between RBMPs and FRMPs. Promotion of win-win measures contribute to the achievement of both WFD and FD objectives.

3.8 Natural Water Retention Measures - River Restoration, with relevant European case studies

Mr. Bart Fokkens presented natural water retention measures and river restoration practices, relying on the experience of the organization: European Centre for River Restoration and Wetland International. River restoration, using nature-based solutions, seeks to bring rivers and catchments back towards natural functioning. It includes a wide variety of land and water management practices and it offers a framework for the sustainable, multifunctional use of rivers. It is also a powerful tool to restore ecosystems and preserve biodiversity.

Unadulterated rivers provide a natural solution for water retention and flood prevention. This type of natural water retention approach, by natural means or processes, enhances the retention capacity of aquifers, soil and aquatic and water dependent ecosystems. It also offers ecosystem services, or benefits, such as:

- Green infrastructure
- Chemical and ecological status
- Quantitative status of water bodies
- Vulnerability of floods and droughts
- Climate change adaptation

Some of the measures to restore rivers and increase their water retention are targeted tree planting, riparian forestation, wetland restoration, landscape design, renaturalization, buffer strips, terracing, stream restoration, remeandering.

Mr. Bart Fokkens concluded with five reasons to select and implement natural water retention measures:

- Giving more space to nature
- Delivering multiple benefits
- Achieving different policy objectives
- Providing cost effective solutions
- Existing funding opportunities for its implementation.

3.9 Green Infrastructure: connecting biodiversity and human wellbeing

Mr. Saso Santl had his presentation on green infrastructure, a way to connect biodiversity and human wellbeing. Mr. Saso Santl set the stage by looking at the concept of mean species abundance index (Braat et al., 2008) and how it demonstrates the hypothetical, negative relationship between land use intensity, biodiversity, and ecosystem services output. The more the land is intensely used, the greater the fall will be in terms of species and related services. This idea highlights the importance of recognizing green infrastructure to manage biodiversity.



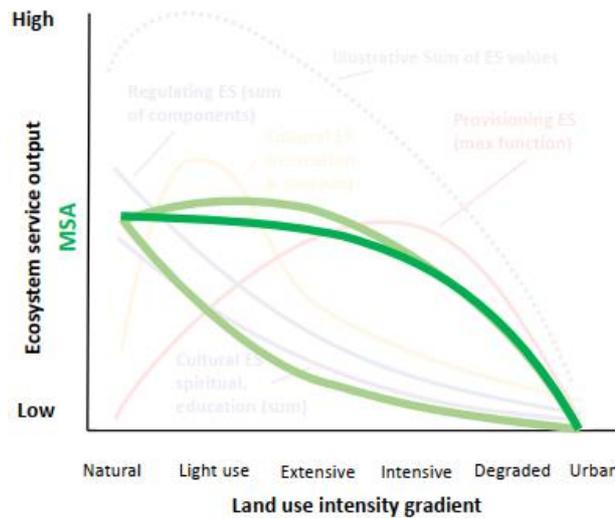


Figure 1 - Mean species abundance vs. land use intensity

Green infrastructure is therefore a guarantee for a higher supply of ecosystem services (the opposite is also true). The higher the services, the more viable that green infrastructure are can be. It can be used to support spatial planning at all levels, it should be considered whenever planning development objectives and land use, and it should both have a bottom-up and a top-down approach to harmonize local, national and regional objectives. The green infrastructure and ecosystem services approach may also provide a good tool to create synergies between several environmental policy areas (as expressed by EU directives) and improve the general state of environmental governance. For instance, the good management of influential areas (riparian sites) for bathing sites, the management of flood prone areas, the management of cultural heritage and nature protection sites can not only improve the supply of other ecosystem services (tourism, nutrient retention, fisheries, recreation, etc.), but also contribute to a better implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the MSFD, the Birds and Habitats Directives, etc. Green infrastructure should be recognized based on an area's capacity to provide biodiversity and ecosystem services. That recognition and mapping should identify the potential and needs for its further development. The survey stage will then lead to the planning and implementation of new green infrastructure. The mapping can be done using already existing legal regimes. By collecting and unifying data for biodiversity (Natura 2000 areas, valuable nature features, ecological important areas, etc.) and ecosystems services (bathing waters, water supply and drainage, flood areas, protected forests, etc.) and assigning valuation criteria one can create a ranking of green infrastructure potential across a region or country.

In terms of planning, green infrastructure should be thought of in several levels: macro (regional), mezzo (cross border), and micro (national or provincial). The macro and mezzo levels will be the areas for strategic planning and the micro level will be the area for implementation of the strategies via spatial planning. As an example, connectivity (blue and green corridors) should be planned at macro level considering the biogeographical regions, their interactions, and their needs. That agreed strategy can then be translated to specific corridors at a mezzo level and implemented locally through spatial planning of concrete corridor sections, identifying the green infrastructure, its ecosystem services and biodiversity functions.

The deployment of the explained approach will require coordination among competent authorities for spatial planning and nature protection, local communities, and a developed science-policy interface. In addition, it should always consider present uses against developmental objectives.

3.10 River restoration: latest developments in Slovenia

Mr. Sašo Šantl presented the latest experiences in Slovenia with river restoration. He started by describing the characteristics of Slovenia. Slovenia has a population of approximately 2 million people and an area of 20 273 km², divided in four geographical regions: Alpine (Triglav up to 2864 m), Dinarides



(karstic type), Pannonia, and (Sub) Mediterranean. Forest covers 58% of the territory with almost 27 000km of watercourses. It has more than 5000 lateral structures (dams, weirs) built for erosion mitigation and sediment transport control.

River restoration is a good environmental practice as it promotes environmental, social and economic benefits. In general, nature based solutions are more demanding than the classic ones, as they are more intense in their implementation (strict requirements of conservationists, unresolved land policy of water and coastal lands, more demanding planning and higher costs implementation and maintenance). But they offer a number of benefits such as: higher resilience of ecosystem to external influences, better water quality, less disturbed enrichment of groundwater, more attractive living space - connecting the local population along the water areas, social prosperity, opportunity for recreation and tourism offer and recreation.

The general objectives of river restoration are the decrease in emissions or improved resilience (fertilizers from agriculture, etc.), improved water retention capacities, improved lateral and longitudinal connectivity, improved hydro morphology. Restorations face one big challenge: multiple ownership within the river corridor.

Mr. Sašo Šantl then offered two case studies of how river restoration was done in Slovenia. In the Sora river (upstream from the confluence with Sava river) maintenance of old weir became needed, with the function to stabilize the riverbed for an upstream bridge. The existing situation also disturbed longitudinal connectivity for the Danube salmon. The restoration objectives were to offer, in addition, flood protection, debris flow regulation, riverbed stability and eco functionality.

The measures taken comprised of habitat improvements (placement of boulders and groynes to regulate the flow and provide habitat for fish), banks reinforcement and a new lateral structure (modified ramp for fish with longer riffles section allowing fish migration even in low water). The works took two years, costing 550 000 Eur covered by the National Water Fund. It achieved its goals, but plans are in place to develop vegetation along the banks.

The second case referred to the Stržen stream. The stream has karstic geology, which is very sensitive to surface pollutions. It is characterized by exchange of springs, karstic fields, sinkholes and underground currents. The delineation of catchment is very difficult: at high water discharges it can flow in multiple directions. Stržen stream is feeding the lake Cerknisko. It is one of the largest intermittent lakes in Europe. It appears every year on the karst polje (plain), caught between the Javorniki hills and the Bloke plateau on one side, and Mount Slivnica on the other. During the dry season, the lake disappears, which enables paddling, fishing, hiking or grass mowing in the same area in just one year. The lake normally stays on the Cerknica plain for about eight months a year.

The renaturalization restored two old meanders of the Stržen stream, which were cut in the past to ensure faster drainage of water for agriculture purposes. It was accomplished with two parallel projects: KRAS.RE.VITA (5 M EUR; ERDF) and LIFE Stržen (3.5 M EUR; LIFE). The activities consisted of construction works and the purchasing of 80 ha of land of the lake Cerknisko. As a consequence, the Stržen watercourse was extended by 4.6 km. The water will remain in the area for a longer period. During dry season, this increases the chances of survival of water-related organisms, such as crustaceans, fish, amphibians, birds, as well as aquatic and riparian plants. It also improved self-purification.

3.11 Effects of River Restoration on hydro-morphological and ecological processes and ecosystem services. Economic benefits of river restoration

Mr. Bart Fokkens presented the ecological and economic benefits of river restoration. He started by establishing the links between flow regimes, biota and ecosystem processes. The natural flow regimes of rivers play a role on providing an integrated habitat for species development. River restorations, and the associated ecosystem services, can therefore offer multiple benefits:

- Supporting services – those services creating conditions necessary for the provision of all other ecosystem services, for example photosynthesis or soil formation
- Provisioning services – all products coming from ecosystems, for example food, fiber, fuel, herbs and medicinal plants, genetic resources, drinking water



- Regulating services – the capacity of ecosystems to regulate important natural processes, for example regulation of climate, quality and quantity of water, etc.
- Cultural services – non-material benefits from ecosystems, for example the aesthetic and recreational value of landscapes

Mr. Bart Fokkens noted those ecosystem services are also constituents of human wellbeing. They provide security (for instance, security from disasters), basic good material life (for instance, adequate livelihoods and nutritious food), health (for instance, clean water), and good social relations (for instance, social cohesion) through a balanced environment. The relation between natural functions and societies is therefore essential. This relation can further be illustrated with the specific ecosystem services provided by (restored) rivers:

Ecosystem Services offered by natural or restored rivers	
River functions	Benefits
Maintenance/ improvement water quality	Flora and fauna / biodiversity
Water storage	Carbon fixation
Transport of wastewater	Recreation
Hydropower generation	Water transportation
Drinking water	Water security
Fisheries	Maintenance of food chain
Irrigation water	Dispersal of seeds and plants
Groundwater recharge	Economic welfare
	Psychic and spiritual welfare

It follows that deteriorated rivers deliver less services, cause high risks, and have higher operation and maintenance costs. River Restoration Investments must be made to restore hydro-morphological, ecological and social – economic benefits. The investments can be paid back by several mechanisms: cost recovery; polluter pays; payment for ecosystem services; redirection of maintenance budgets; reallocation of investments.

Mr. Bart Fokkens then synthesized a possible approach to planning and implementing river restorations. The first stage should be river characterization, followed by an assessment of its condition (drivers, pressures, state). Based on that, a response can be formulated with a set of potential measures. In the next stage, a programme of measures is to be designed and implemented, following the logic of a project cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act).

He concluded by highlighting the key results, conclusions and recommendations of the REFORM Project (2011- 2015 Horizon 2020), which should be taken into consideration when planning river restorations:

- Hydro-morphological assessments should consider physical processes and appropriate temporal and spatial aspects beyond river restoration project boundaries and project life span.
- Vegetation and plants can play a cost-effective and significant role as physical ecosystem engineers for river restoration.
- Current biological sampling methods are not appropriate to capture HYMO impacts and they underestimate the influence of HYMO on biota.
- Restoration projects should adopt a synergistic approach with either resource users to secure win-win scenarios and have well-defined quantitative success criteria.
- Cost-benefit analysis can help in prioritization restoration measures and plans.
- Restoration had positive effects even in small restoration projects.

3.12 Development of the Investment and Financial Plan for flood risk management in Romania

Mr. Gheorghe Constantin presented the Romanian experience with developing an investment and financial plan for flood risk management. He highlighted the economic importance of flooding events, with an assessment of their cost in percentage of GDP. In Romania, a single flooding event can cost



between 0.2% and 0.9% of annual GDP. As a way to further illustrate the potential harm and vulnerability in Romania, Mr. Gheorghe Constantin noted that the country recorded the following statistics for recent floods:

- 183 deaths - the highest number in the EU
- 68 000 evacuated people - third place in the EU
- 108 million Euros received from the EU Solidarity Fund - fourth place in the EU
- Total cost of flood impact: 6 300 million Euros - seventh place in the EU
- 43 900 damaged houses - the largest number in the EU
- The calculated annual average damage is 300 000 to 400 000 euros (the estimated, total damage prevented by existing infrastructure so far is 1.4 to 1.5 billion euros)

The National Strategy for Water Management includes flood risk management through a strategic and planning component and an operational management component. The strategy approach focuses on five stages: prevention, protection, training, response, and reconstruction. The Flood Directive implementation is integrated in the strategic and planning component. Within this, the country prepared a preliminary flood risk assessment which shows that those areas that have been affected by significant historical floods are those where the risk is high and potentially more intense than before.

The consequent flood risk management plan includes measures to be implemented by the 11 river administrations and are estimated to cost approx. 4 billion euros.

The 49 Major Integrated Projects defined in Romania consist of 630 individual measures, grouped into 5 areas of action (Prevention, Protection, Public Awareness, Preparedness, Response and Recovery/ Reconstruction), according to the catalogue of potential measures at national level. Currently, the prioritization process of major integrated projects at the national level is being completed; the prioritization will serve as the basis for selecting those projects to be promoted on POIM. Funding applications will be made in accordance with the Guide to feasibility studies for flood risk management projects. Lack of allocation of European funds for small infrastructure to combat soil erosion and extinction of torrents led to the cancellation of measure 125c of the NRDP.

In 2017 there were 489 000 RON (100 411 eur) in investments out of which 400 000 RON (82 136 eur) were from own sources. The activities included:

- 33 objectives completed with PIF
- 22 completed objects with independent functionality
- securing the works in different execution phases for 18 investment projects
- funds for POIM financing applications
- expropriations, design and execution acquisitions for 58 works

For the commissioning in 2018 of as many objectives as possible and respectively the completion by 2020 of more than 50% of the works in execution, it is necessary to ensure financial resources from the state budget as follows:

- Year 2018 = 600 000 RON (123 204 eur)
- Year 2019 = 750 000 RON (154 005 eur)
- The year 2020 = 900 000 RON (184 806 eur)

The investment numbers so far show the need to find funding sources over the next years to cover the total, estimated cost of approx. 4 billion euros to fully implement all the measures planned.

3.13 Adapting to climate change: reducing water-related risks in Europe–EU policy

Mr. Jos Timmerman presented EU policy that seeks to reduce water-related risks as part of climate change adaptation efforts. He outlined the commonalities between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. In addition, flood risk is a function of existing hazards, exposure, and vulnerability, which are further negatively impacted by climate change. Adaptation measures are essential to reduce the risk.

Climate Change Adaptation

Disaster Risk Reduction



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Both CCA and DRR address prevention and reduction of risks of disasters by reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience of societies	
Focus mainly on future and addressing uncertainty and new risks	Focus on present and addressing existing risks
Addressing mainly weather- and climate-related hazards	Addressing all hazard types
Longer time scale	-
Origin and culture in scientific theory	Origin and culture in humanitarian assistance and civil protection
Mainly actors in environment ministries and agencies	Mainly actors in civil protection ministries and agencies

At the global level, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides an adaption policy framework through the Cancun Adaptation Framework (2010 - Planning, prioritizing and implementing of adaptation actions) and the Paris Agreement (2015 - Global goal on adaptation to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change). The UNFCCC is complemented by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

At the EU level, the policy framework as multiple pillars:

- Water Framework Directive (2000)
- European Floods Directive (2007)
- Communication “Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts” (2007)
- Policy review for water scarcity and droughts (2012)
- Blueprint for Safeguarding European Waters (2012)
- European Adaptation Strategy (2013)

The European Adaptation Strategy seeks to Strengthen Europe’s climate resilience by enhancing the preparedness and capacity of all governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change, coordinate national adaptation strategies and risk management plans, promote transnational and regional co-operation, create adaptation strategies for European Cities, and ensure better informed decision-making. Some of the concrete actions in the strategy are:

- Encourage all Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies
- Provide LIFE programme funding to support capacity building and step up adaptation action in Europe
- Introduce adaptation in the Covenant of Mayors
- Bridge the knowledge gap - expected climate change in Europe and current and future vulnerability of regions and sectors
- Further develop Climate-ADAPT as the one-stop shop for adaptation information in Europe (<https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu>)
- Enable the climate proofing of the common agricultural policy, the cohesion policy and the common fisheries policy
- Ensure more resilient infrastructure
- Promote insurance and other financial products for resilient investment and business decisions

An evaluation of the Strategy from 2017-2018 concluded that EU research and innovation actions have created added value, that climate resilience is essential for long-term infrastructure investments, that the strategy should better integrate the international dimension of adaptation, and that progress in local adaptation strategies has been slower than envisaged.

The urgency of improving the existing cooperation mechanisms for adaptation, specially at EU level, is verified by a continental wide tendency for more frequent and severe flooding and drought events. The



cost of no adaptation for floods is astonishing. Assuming a negative scenario where the global temperature increases by 3C degrees the damages will amount to 48 billion euros/year and 482 000 people exposed/year. The same scenario, but with adaptation measures, reduces costs to 8.6 billion euros/year and 90 000 people exposed/year. Each euro spent on flood protection could avoid six euros of damage costs.

Thus, adaptation offers clear benefits. It is cost-effective in terms of avoided damage and reduction in loss of life. It reduces social inequity because vulnerable social groups are often hit hardest by disasters. It provides investment opportunities, as adaptation will provide an environment where investments are safe.

Successful adaptation will require transboundary cooperation. Such cooperation will:

- Enlarge decision space
- Stimulate resource mobilization
- Consider shared risks and opportunities
- Avert costs by reducing tensions and disputes between neighbours
- Paves the way for regional cooperation in other domains of politics, economics, environment and culture.
- Cooperation between water users and across political borders is essential for the conservation of healthy ecosystems, their functions, and services

In terms of funding opportunities for adaptation measures, the EU Member States can rely on the following tools:

- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds)
 - European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
 - European Social Fund (ESF)
 - Cohesion Fund (CF)
 - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
 - European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)
- Horizon 2020
- LIFE
- European Investment Bank
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

3.14 Interactive session

Mr. Ermal Halimi (Ministry of Tourism and Environment of Albania) presented the flood risk management plan for the Shkodër region. The plan includes adaptation measures grouped under four objectives: prevention of new hazards in flood risk areas, mitigation of existing risks in flood-prone areas, reduction of negative consequences during floods, and reduction of negative consequences after a flood. At the moment, the following measures have been implemented by local authorities in cooperation with GIZ:

- Under prevention of new hazards in flood risk areas
 - Map of flood risk areas (development and distribution of the map of flood risks sites on a regional scale)
 - Guidelines for the use of risk maps in community centers throughout the region
 - Distribution of leaflets to residents informing about: flood risks, measures that can be taken, emergency response to floods (including public and private preventive measures)
- Under mitigation of existing risks in flood-prone areas
 - Revitalization of the river bed and its banks / former floodplains: planting areas along the river with plants suitable to protect the river slopes and ensure its continuous flow
- Under reduction of negative consequences during floods
 - Restoration, expansion and improvement of the existing reception system (dams/ ponds / wetlands)
 - Cleaning and expansion of Vilun, Murtemza and Domni canals



- Maintaining clean areas where there are water junctions, especially in residential areas (support with the cleaning of trenches through mass employment for public works)
- Under reduction of negative consequences after a flood
 - Organizing periodic trainings and seminars with experts, institutions, communities, universities, students, NGOs operating in this field at regional and national level
 - Activation of actors regarding the organization of conversations and public discussions on these topics in the local media

Ms. Merita Borota (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Serbia) informed the meeting that Serbia is in the process of preparing flood risk assessment maps (by the end of 2020) and its first draft flood risk management plan.

Mr. Ylber Mirta (Ministry of Environmental Protection, Physical Planning and Waters) intervened to discuss the role of private insurance for flood events. The topic is not well developed in North Macedonia. The country has a state, *ex-post* compensation system. Municipalities assess the losses in their territory and later report that to a national commission, which has the competence to decide on the compensations for the losses. Mr. Ylber Mirta considered the flood risk assessment maps to be an important instrument to guide spatial planning and inform landowners of the risk they are exposed to. Should illegal building continue in flood prone areas, despite the information and the prohibition to build, the consequent refusal of compensation by the state can act as a deterrent to such illegal construction and potential catastrophic damages in case of floods. Currently, North Macedonia is beneficiary of a project to assess the viability of private flood insurance in the Drina area. The project seeks to identify the most appropriate types of flood insurance schemes, including the private sector capacity and interest to offer such insurances. It is expected the project will deliver in 2024. Ms. Mihaela Popovici commented that if the insurance is made mandatory, as a measure in the programme of flood risk management, then the uptake will be massive with positive, compensatory effects in case of floods.

Mr. Marko Krneta (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina) updated the meeting on the country's efforts to draw up flood risk management plans. The most recent floods of 2010 and 2014 sped up the planning and design process. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed a decree that transposed most of the flood directive. Republika Srpska amended its water law for the same purpose. The preliminary flood risk assessment, finalized in the Federation in 2013 and in Republika Srpska in 2012-2016 (for the different basins), includes maps at city scale with topography, land use, description of previous floods and damages, etc. Work also began on flood risk maps and flood hazard maps through several projects. Some of the results are expected in October 2020, including a hybrid DTM, hydrology and hydraulic model, and the hazard and risk maps themselves. After this, a new project will start to deal with flood risk management plans. The project is already contracted through IPA 2016. It is expected to start still in 2020, it will last 30 months. The project is expected to develop flood risk management plans for the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Manduka Gojani (Kosovo*) informed the meeting that the Flood Directive competence belongs to the Ministry of Economy and Environment, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Civil Protection Agency. The Interministerial Water Council coordinates the activities of all institutions involved in water management. The Ministry of Economy and Environment is responsible for water policy. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Civil Protection Agency manage and maintain the flood prevention infrastructure. The municipalities do in-situ management during flood events. The Ministry of Health is responsible for sanitation during and after a flooding event. The River Basin Authority is responsible for policy and legislation implementation. The Kosovo* water law includes provisions on floods. The water strategy, until 2036, also includes flood measures.

Mr. Bashkim Kastrati (Kosovo* Hydrometeorological Institute) presented the monitoring work of the Institute, contributing to the national information system on floods.



Ms. Dragana Đukić (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Montenegro) presented the implementation of the Flood Directive in Montenegro. The Directive was completely transposed in the water law and in a bylaw. Implementation is at an initial stage. The responsible institutions are the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (the Directorate for Water), and the Water Administration. The Ministry of Interior is engaged through civil protection services. The Hydrometeorological Institute is also involved. The first implementation activities started in November 2019 through an IPA 2016 project. The project will deliver an inventory of flood defence infrastructure, preliminary flood risk assessment, preparation of hydrology models, identification of flood prone areas, flood hazard and risk maps, and flood risk management plans.

4 Conclusions

The regional workshop provided an opportunity for the countries to discuss an important area of water management policy: floods and river restoration.

The participants heard the latest developments in policy at EU level, with the Floods Directive fitness check report indicating that the directive has performed well so far in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance, and EU added value. Complimentarily, the meeting discussed the outcomes of the gap analysis and needs assessment in the context of implementing EU Floods Directive in the Western Balkans. The gap analysis provided key recommendations for the beneficiaries to move forward. GIZ is also contributing to adaptation measures with a project on transboundary flood risk management in Albania, Kosovo*, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. The project has produced important, regional outputs such as a flood forecast system, a shared monitoring system, and preliminary flood risk assessments.

The EU Member States experts brought forward their experience with river restoration, and flood prevention using both traditional grey infrastructure approaches and nature-based solutions. Particular attention was devoted to the benefits of an ecosystem services approach and nature-based solutions: they provide sustainable, positive outcomes in flood management with significant benefits for biodiversity, climate adaptation, nature conservation and human wellbeing.

Finally, the wider instruments of EU climate adaptation policy were discussed. The relations between the Flood Directive and the Water Framework Directive were discussed at length. The main recommendation being that countries must coordinate their implementation, including the interlinks between river basin management plans and flood risk management plans. A practical example, from Romania, on the design of an investment and financial plan for flood risk management was also provided.

Workshop outputs

The workshop's main outputs were:

- Strengthened capacity to address the implementation challenges of the Flood Directive.
- Raised awareness of latest policy developments related to flood risk management at EU level.
- Raised awareness to the components of coordination needed between flood risk management plans and river basin management plans.
- Increased knowledge of best practices in terms of flood protection, including the use of nature-based solutions.
- Increased knowledge of best practices in terms of river restoration and their ecological and economic benefits.
- Exchanged experiences in flood protection and river restoration between EU Member States and the EPPA beneficiaries.
- Increased regional dialogue on flood risk management and river basin management.

5 Evaluation

The participants were asked to evaluate the workshop by TAIEX using an online survey after the event. The evaluation results are presented below in a summary table.



				No. Responses	Expert Score	Yes / Excellent
80100	Workshop - participant - A. Questions	1	Was the workshop carried out according to the agenda?	22	-	21 (95%)
		2	Was the programme well structured?	22	-	21 (95%)
		3	Were the key issues related to the topics addressed?	22	-	21 (95%)
		4	Did the workshop enable you to improve your knowledge?	22	-	18 (82%)
		5	Was enough time allowed for questions and discussions?	22	-	21 (95%)
		7	Do you expect any follow-up based on the results of the workshop (new legislation, new administrative approach, etc.)?	22	-	17 (77%)
		8	Do you think that further TAIEX - %pr_c_abbreviation% assistance is needed (workshop, expert mission, study visit, assessment mission) on the topic of this workshop?	22	-	20 (91%)
		Workshop - participant - B. Expert ratings	-	Mr. Constantin, Gheorghe - Speaker MS	22	86.36%
-	Mr. Dimovski, Mihail - Other speakers		22	88.63%	12 (55%)	
-	Ms. Popovici, Mihaela - Other speakers		22	89.77%	15 (68%)	
-	Mr. Santl, Saso - Speaker MS		22	95.45%	18 (82%)	
-	Mr. Fokkens, Bart - Other speakers		22	94.31%	17 (77%)	
-	Mr. Kavvadas, Ioannis - Speaker EU		22	92.04%	15 (68%)	
-	Mr. Mirta, Ylber - Speaker CC		22	92.04%	15 (68%)	
-	Mr. Timmerman, Jos G - Other speakers		22	95.45%	18 (82%)	
Workshop - participant - C. Logistic	-	Ms. Meksi, Merita - Other speakers	22	95.45%	18 (82%)	
	1	Conference venue	12	-	5 (42%)	
	2	Interpretation	12	-	5 (42%)	
	3	Hotel	8	-	-	
	4	Flight	7	-	-	
Workshop - participant - D. Comments	-	Catering	7	-	-	
	-	The event was well organized, and despite occasional internet connection issues, the presentations could still be followed in full. Special thanks to the organizers and experts for the organized event and the selected presentations that will be of great benefit in further work related to the flood protection and River	-	-	-	



				No. Responses	Expert Score	Yes / Excellent
80100	Workshop - speaker - A. Questions	1	Did you receive all the information necessary for the preparation of your contribution?	6	-	6 (100%)
		2	Has the overall aim of the workshop been achieved?	6	-	6 (100%)
		3	Was the agenda well structured?	6	-	6 (100%)
		4	Were the participants present throughout the scheduled workshop?	6	-	5 (83%)
		5	Was the beneficiary represented by the appropriate participants?	6	-	6 (100%)
		6	Did the participants actively take part in the discussions?	6	-	4 (67%)
		7	Do you expect that the beneficiary will undertake follow-up based on the results of the workshop (new legislation, new administrative approach etc.)	6	-	5 (83%)
		8	Do you think that the beneficiary needs further TAIEX - %pr_c_abbreviation% assistance (workshop, expert mission, study visit, assessment mission) on the topic of this workshop?	6	-	6 (100%)
		9	Would you be ready to participate in future TAIEX - %pr_c_abbreviation% workshops?	6	-	6 (100%)
	Workshop - speaker - C. Logistic	1	Conference venue	2	-	1 (50%)
		2	Interpretation	2	-	1 (50%)
		3	Hotel	1	-	-
		4	Flight	1	-	-
		5	Catering	1	-	-
Workshop - speaker - D. Comments	-	It was an online meeting	-	-	-	
	-	On-line event	-	-	-	
	-	The workshop had a very clear focus and the presentations were very well adapted to that focus. The information provided through the presentations were in general practical information and the same about the presented cases. Discussions with 50 persons by an electronic meeting is very difficult, so it was very good that the countries held each a short presentation on their own situation.	-	-	-	

Endnotes

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



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