# *Event Report*

**EPPA Regional Workshop on promoting Climate Change Adaptation: risk prevention and management in selecting climate proof measures as part of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)**

**1-2 December 2021**

**Live video conference**

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# 1 The event

The EPPA regional workshop on "Promoting Climate Change Adaptation: risk prevention and management in selecting climate proof measures as part of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)" took place on the 1st and 2nd of December 2021, via live video conference. The workshop was organized in cooperation with TAIEX, and under the EPPA project work programme, namely activity 3.7 "Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management in selecting climate proof measures as part of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)". It targeted the following EPPA beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey.

The participants came from the relevant authorities of the EPPA beneficiaries involved in environmental policy and water management. They represented the Ministries with the environment and water portfolios, in addition to water management agencies. Details are available in the list of participants. Civil society was represented by NGOs from the beneficiaries, namely: Iliria (Albania), Center for ecology and energy (Bosnia and Herzegovina), NGO Green Home (Montenegro), Macedonian Green Center (North Macedonia), TEMA (Turkey), and Kados Kadikoy (Turkey). The EU Delegations in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey were also present.

The speakers represented the experience of EU Member States, including Romania, Croatia, and Slovenia, as well as that of the EPPA beneficiaries, namely Albania and Turkey. Additionally, the workshop mobilized contributions from UNDP, UNEP/MAP, UBA (Austria), Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change (MedECC), and EPPA experts. Details are available in the agenda; the presentations can be downloaded in both the TAIEX website and in the EPPA project website.

The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness on the complexity of current water resource management which poses many challenges aggravated by the growing uncertainties of global climate change and the long-term effects of management actions regarding the integrated water management, flooding, droughts and water scarcity, conserving biodiversity and sustaining ecological services. Climate change may pose a direct risk to Programmes of Measures which can jeopardise the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives. The response to this challenge is to perform 'climate proof' of the measures. The EU accession process with the Western Balkans can provide a framework for environmental improvements and pollution reduction, as well for more climate proof actions, which will support important developments in the area of environmental protection and climate change in detail as provided by Chapter 27 Environment and Climate and included in the Green Deal Pilar 4 "Depollution: air, water and soil".

# 2 Proceedings and conclusions

The workshop started with an example of EU's support for climate action in IPA II beneficiaries, the Tratolow project. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the development towards a resource-efficient, low emissions and climate-resilient economy. It is divided in 4 components: horizontal climate policy, greenhouse gases, EU emissions trading scheme, and climate change adaptation. This was followed by a discussion of the risks of climate change in the Mediterranean basin by MedECC. Virtually all sub-regions of the Mediterranean Basin, on land and in the sea, are impacted by recent anthropogenic changes in the environment. Both natural ecosystems and human livelihoods are affected. Significantly enhanced efforts are needed for mitigation and adaptation in the region in key areas like water and agriculture, rivers, marine ecosystems, terrestrial ecosystems, and human health. Some of the EPPA beneficiaries (Albania, North Macedonia, and Turkey) provided a zoom-in of these risks and challenges at national level, which had in common projections of water scarcity, droughts, and severe floods, for which measures within the river basin management plans will be key to mitigate.

Several experts from EU Member States reflected on their countries' experiences with climate change adaptation at river basin level. Romania brough its experience with the Danube River basin, where some of the impacts of climate change are expected to be quite serious. They include increased temperatures, extreme heat waves, more extreme weather events (draughts and floods). In the framework of the ICPDR Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Romania is seeking to implement

ecosystem-based measures to reduce the impacts of climate change (for instance, floodplain restoration, wetlands rehabilitation, ground water preservation, afforestation), coupled with technological measures and policy coordination at river basin level with other countries. These efforts rely on a risk-based approach in climate proofing measures for the Danube River Basin Management Plan, which include the creation of awareness of existing problems, the assessment of existing and future risks, and delineating responses for risk reduction.

Croatia presented its integrated energy and climate plan to meet the EU's energy and climate targets for 2030, which includes objectives on energy efficiency, renewables, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, interconnections, and research and innovation. The draft NECP of Croatia builds on the work done on the draft of the Low-Carbon Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030 with an outlook to 2050 and the draft Energy Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030 with an outlook to 2050. The national contribution for renewable energy proposed in the draft plan is set at an ambitious share of 36.4% of energy from renewable sources in gross final consumption of energy in 2030. Most of the increase in the renewable energy production is expected in the electricity sector and additional efforts seem to be necessary in the heating and cooling sector but also in transport sector, where based on the information in the draft plan Croatia would not meet the 2020 and 2030 targets. In order to strengthen energy security and reduce energy imports from third countries, Croatia is exploring the possibility to increase the production of domestic hydrocarbon resources. At the same time, Croatia also has plans to diversify natural gas supply routes by constructing an LNG terminal on the island of Krk. Reflecting on cooperation with Slovenia as regards defining a strategy for the long-term supply of nuclear fuel would benefit the final plan. The draft NECP includes estimates for investment costs for some planned measures, amounting annually to around 0.8% of GDP with a focus on building renovation, and indications on the use of EU related funding sources. However, it does not yet contain an overall assessment of the investment needs, barriers, and mechanisms to foster investments thus not yet fully taking advantage of the role NECPs can play in providing clarity to investors and attract additional investments in the clean energy transition.

Slovenia offered its experience with the introduction of ecosystems services into resilience measures against climate change. In the Slovenian policy approach, ecosystem services include service provision (materials, water, biomass, soil, etc.), regulation and maintenance services (water purification, alleviating flood hazards, improving air quality, etc.), and cultural services (natural heritage, education and science, recreation, etc.). The more services in a given space, the higher its value as green infrastructure that offers both mitigation and adaptation benefits. This value should be captured by ecosystem service fees, that regulate the sustainable use of existing resources but also offers a source of funding for further conservation and green infrastructure development with a view to adapt to climate change. Moreover, Slovenia also presented its water retention measures to mitigate droughts, which are centred on wetland maintenance and flood retention areas.

**Workshop outputs**

The workshop's main outputs were:

- Raised awareness on the complexity of current water resource management which poses many challenges aggravated by the growing uncertainties of global climate change
- Identification of main challenges related to climate change in the EPPA beneficiaries: flooding, droughts, water scarcity, conserving biodiversity and sustaining ecological services.
- Experiences exchanged with EU Member States relating to 'climate proof' of the measures in river basin management plans, including the use of green infrastructure and ecosystem services, sectoral coordination with energy production and consumption measures, and the deployment of risk-based approaches in climate proofing measures in river basin management plans.

## 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.

## Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda (provided as a separate document)
Annex 2: List of Participants (provided as a separate document)
Annex 3: Presentations (provided as a separate document)

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