The establishment of cooperation on the Drin Basin revealed a potentially viable strategy for sustainable development. Discussions regarding enhanced cooperation among the riparian states for the management of the Drin Basin have continued since 1996. This effort has led to the establishment of a Facilitative Committee on the Drin Basin (FCDB), which, in turn, has facilitated the development of a Shared Vision for the sustainable management of the Basin.

The Consultative Meeting on Integrated Management of the extended Drin River Basin took place on 20 November 2004, as an initiative of the international organizations involved in the management of water resources and/or environment and as a stepping stone in this process. The Ministries of the Drin Riparians responsible for the management of water resources and/or environment had a central role in its organization and was a stepping stone in this process. The Ministries of the Drin Riparians responsible for the management of water resources and/or environment had a central role in its organization.

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The Drin River Basin

Following the flow

Setting off from the Neo Philips Lake, listed as wetland of international importance, flowing through surrounding terrains until it enters in the Drin River, the largest river in terms of water volume in South East Europe. The only two outlets of Lake Drin, the Black Drin River flows north through the Soča Valley, Republic of Slovenia and enters into Austria. The White Drin River flows south into the Republic of Macedonia and enters into Greece. Flowing onward East into Albania, its Drin River flows on the Buraqani River, close also to the outlet of the Drin River, Drin River and Buna/Bojana Rivers2 joining the Adriatic Sea. The Buna/Bojana River directly discharges into the Adriatic Sea.

Important facts

The extended Drin Basin:

• Complete the sub-basins of five water bodies, each one of them shared by two or three riparians;
• The three the Drin and its two major tributaries, the Black Drin and the White Drin, as well as the Buna/Bojana River;
• The lake is called Skadar in Montenegro and Shkoder in Albania.

Encompasses complex ecosystems of major importance that host unique biotopes with high biodiversity values and supports the sustainable economic development in the region.

Managed challenges in the Drin Basin

• Unsustainable use of water and land resources;
• Hydrogeological interventions, altering the network of the hydrological system and the support for ecosystems, as well as disrupting flooding floodplains;
• Undisturbed or poorly maintained wetlands and unsustainable silk withdrawal;
• Unbalanced production practices;
• Uncontrollable farming management cost optimization, as well as fishing policies;
• Non-integrated policies, management schemes and cooperation efforts of national and international nature.

The project

The project will strive to facilitate the capitalization of management innovations through five demonstration activities, each one tested in different areas and at different scales:

• Strategic Action Plan development for the “extended” Drin Basin, i.e. the Prespa sub-basin.
• Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) to identify key management issues and needs of the shared water resources. These also assist the Drin Core Group in making informed decisions.
• Operational of a transboundary monitoring system in the Skadar/Shkoder and Buna/Bojana sub-basins.
• Integrated Basin Management Planning in the Lake Ohrid sub-basin;
• Wastewater treatment options in the Shkodra city area;
• Nutrients management in the Montenegrin part of Lake Skadar;
• Integrated Water Resources Management in the Montenegrin part of Lake Skadar;
• Integrated Management Framework in the Lake Ohrid sub-basins;
• Water management services for the Ministry of water;
• Stakeholders involvement in the Macedonian part of Lake Buna;
• Operation of an extraordinary monitoring system in the District of Durres and Berat/Ksia/Ksia region.

The ultimate goal of the work in the Drin Basin is to reach a point in the decision-making process towards management and implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) that will allow for integrated management of the shared water resources and their integrated management.

Project implementation strategy

The implementation of the WFD in the Project will be carried out following the timeline of the WFD that will include the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive. The objectives and stages of the project will be carried out in close cooperation with the Drin Core Group.

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