

## Terms of Reference for the organization of the DRIN DAY celebration 2026

In the framework of:

Memorandum of Understanding  
for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin

GEF II Project “Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the Drin Basin to Strengthen Transboundary cooperation and enable Integrated Natural Resources Management “

**March 2026**

Implementing the Strategic Action Programme  
of the **DRIN BASIN** to Strengthen Transboundary  
Cooperation and Enable Integrated Natural  
Resources Management



The Coordinated Action for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the management of the Drin basin (Drin CODA) is supported by the GEF Drin Project. The latter is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the Global Water Partnership (GWP) through GWP-Mediterranean (GWP-Med), in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). GWP-Med serves as the Secretariat of the Drin Core Group, the multilateral body responsible for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

*Disclaimer: The document adheres to the UN rules and policies regarding the names and international status of Riparian's and/or other geographical areas etc. The use of characterizations, names, maps or other geographical statements in this document in no way implies any political view or positions of the Parties which are executing and implementing the Project.*

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## **1. Introduction – Background**

The Drin Basin sits in the southwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula. It comprises the transboundary sub-basins of the Drin and Buna/Bojana Rivers and of the Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar/Shkoder Lakes. The Drin River is the “connecting body” of the “extended” Drin Basin, linking the lakes, wetlands, rivers and aquatic habitats in the coastal area as well as the marine habitats in the Adriatic Sea into a single, yet complex, ecosystem of major importance. The water bodies and their watersheds are spread in a geographical area that includes Albania, Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo. With its important water resources this complex system provides a wealth of services to the Drin Riparians that share the basin: energy supply, recreation and tourism, fisheries, water supply for irrigation and domestic uses, sustenance of unique endemic biodiversity, and livelihoods. The basin is home to over 1.61 million people, living in over 1,450 settlements.

The Coordinated Action for the implementation of the Drin Memorandum of Understanding

The Drin Coordinated Action (Drin CORDA) was established in 2011 and was the result of a Drin basin level multi-stakeholders policy dialogue initiated in 2009, and preparatory technical and political engagement work initiated already in 2006. The Drin CORDA, is the framework set by the Drin Riparians for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin (Drin MoU). The Drin MoU was signed by the Ministers responsible for the management of water resources and/or environment, and high-level representatives of the Riparians in Tirana, on 25 November 2011.

The objective of the MoU is to deliver the agreed shared vision, to “promote joint action for the coordinated integrated management of the shared water resources in the Drin Basin, as a means to safeguard and restore to the extent possible the ecosystems and the services they provide, and to promote sustainable development across the Drin Basin”.

The Drin MoU provides the political framework for cooperation in the Drin Basin. Following the provisions of the Drin MoU an institutional structure was established. It includes:

- The Meeting of the Parties.
- The Drin Core Group (DCG). This body is given the mandate to coordinate actions for the implementation of the MoU.
- Four Expert Working Groups (EWG) to assist the DCG in its work.

### **The GEF Drin Projects**

The implementation of the Drin MoU has been supported -in addition to national level actions- by GEF financed projects the first of which ended in 2021. The GEF Drin I Project enabled the development and the endorsement -at Ministerial level- of a Drin Strategic Action Programme (Drin SAP; 24 April 2020) that reflects Riparians’ ownership, leadership and alignment with their mid or long-term national and transboundary strategies.

A new GEF project entitled “Implementing the Strategic Action Programme of the Drin Basin to Strengthen Transboundary Cooperation and Enable Integrated Natural Resources Management” (GEF Drin II Project) will provide support until 2029 for the implementation of priority actions under the Drin SAP.

The GEF Drin II Project is structured around four components each one including outputs and activities designed to achieve an equivalent number of outcomes:

Outcome 1: Sustainable and climate-resilient management of the Basin's resources enabled through development of technical and policy tools, and filling gaps in the understanding of the Drin Basin ecosystems functioning.

Outcome 2: Effective cooperation among Drin Riparians and socio-economic sectors succeeded through the establishment of a transboundary institutional arrangement and the development of critical transboundary policy instruments.

Outcome 3: SAP implementation is accelerated through regional, riparian and local solutions to address main causes of transboundary concern, promote sustainable water use and ensure ecosystem functioning and resilience.

Outcome 4: Long-term sustainability of achievements is enhanced through implementation of project mechanisms for stakeholder's participation, gender mainstreaming, dissemination, coordination and monitoring progress

## **2. Description of the Assignment**

### **2.1 Overall objective**

#### **The Drin Day objective**

The Drin Day is celebrated each year in the period around 5 May (official Drin Day) in all sub-basins of the extended transboundary Drin Basin under the auspices of the Drin CODA and the Drin Core Group. The celebration of the Drin Day is established by a decision of the Drin Core Group.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Drin Day was celebrated on 17th of May 2014, in numerous locations across the Drin Basin and is continuously supported over the years by the GEF Drin projects.

The overarching aim of the Drin Day events is to raise the awareness of local communities and the wider public on the importance of the sustainable management of the Drin River Basin and its ecosystems and to raise awareness amongst the wider public about the declining state of the environment of the Drin watershed and coastal areas and of the benefits of adopting an integrated multi-country approach to their management. The specific objective is to inform and raise awareness amongst specific categories of stakeholders about the aims of the project as well as the Drin's resources and the necessary action needed to move towards sustainable management of the Basin.

The events serve as a platform to broaden people's understanding, especially among youth, of the intrinsic value of the Drin River Basin and the essential benefits it provides through its ecosystem services, while encouraging concrete, comprehensive, and ongoing actions to ensure sustainable management and long-term protection of the Basin as a whole. Each year, the Drin Day celebrations center on a specific topic that reflects pressing issues related to the Basin's resources and resilience.

## **2.2 Scope of the Assignment (Thematic scope )**

This year (2026) the Drin celebration focus on the topic of Drought management.

**The background on the specific topic on the scope of the assignment is described in the Annex 1 of this TOR.**

## **2.3 Targets and participation**

The proposals should aim to enable the achievement of the following targets:

The engagement and raising of awareness on the topic addressed, of as many people and sectors as possible in at least two Riparians.

Extensive coverage by electronic media and press.

Participation of official institutions in the opening of the events, i.e. representatives of local authorities, ministries etc.

**The event should ensure participation of the :**

Institutions including Ministries or other high level governmental authorities;

Entities/ Regional or Local Government Bodies/ Authorities; River Basin District Agencies; Protected Area Authorities.

State owned utilities.

Private sector (landowners, navigation, industry) including their Chambers; Tourism Agencies/Boards.

NGOs, Civil society; Local communities; Media; Educational institutions.

## **3.Tasks – Requested activities**

The Drin Day events 2026 should be based on the information on impacts by the droughts and drought risk management and may include any of the following (the list is indicative and the NGOs applying for support under this call should use these for inspiration):

Joint organization of interactive workshops promoting the actions taken for protection of the entire Drin River Basin from the drought degradation and key impacts of droughts include water shortages, agricultural failure, increased wildfire risk, and public health issues, costing billions annually and forcing population migration

Joint organization of field trips for groups of youth to the Drin River Basin, which could include actions in the Drin related freshwater bodies in the areas of significant droughts impacts and damages.

Joint organization of a seminar/meeting with emphasis on ways to address knowledge sharing of the Drin River Basin and its invaluable ecosystem services affected by the decreased water quality and quantity, dried-out vegetation, and increased wildfire susceptibility.

Joint organization of environmental exhibitions/competitions with pictures, videos, presentations, drawings and essays or projects implemented by students inspired by the Drin River actions towards drought impacts and risk management.

Launching a survey to capture the views and perceptions of citizens living along the Drin River Basin on protecting the region and use the results as a means to raise awareness of stakeholders on climate-resilient drought management.

Combining the theme with activities relating to Education for Sustainable Development, aiming to supply youth with simple tips on sustainable behaviors and choices in relation to the entire protection in the Drin River Basin with the focus on impacts and effects of droughts and pillars of the droughts management.

Launching an awareness raising campaign on social media in order to promote diversity of actions for protection of the environment and water resources in specific the consequences, effects, damages by the droughts in the entire Drin Basin.

#### 4. Reporting, Deliverables and Milestones

##### Indicative timeline of actions and deliverables:

The successful applicants should be able to deliver the deliverables included in the indicative list below following the timeline.

Deliverables	Corresponding Tasks and steps for preparation	Date of delivery
<b>1. Agenda</b> of activities in English and in local languages	1. Preparation of a draft Agenda in English with the program of activities to take place and delivery to GWP-Med.	6 April 2026
	2. Incorporate comments by GWP-Med and preparation of final draft Agenda in English.	10 April 2026
	3. Translation in country language(s) and printing of a number of copies as necessary.	
<b>2. Invitations</b> to Mayors, representatives of local and regional authorities, cabinet of respective Ministries	1. Preparation of draft Invitation.	6 April 2026
	2. Comments from GWP-Med incorporated, Translation of invitation to country language(s).	10 April 2026
	3. Sending out invitations to Mayors, representatives of local and regional authorities, cabinet of respective Ministries.	13 April 2026
<b>3. Material to be printed / produced</b>	1. Preparation of the draft text / design etc. and delivery to GWP-Med.	13 April 2026
	2. Incorporating comments by GWP-Med and making necessary changes.	20 April 2026
	3. Production and distribution of the materials.	1 May 2026
	4. Delivery of electronic copies and hard copies to GWP-Med.	12 May 2026

<p><b>4. Engaging media</b> of local and national level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invitation of media to events;</li> <li>2. Sending information note for the Drin Day 2026 celebrations to TV news, newspaper and web portals;</li> <li>3. Uploading videos on YouTube , post the event on the website and promote it through social media;</li> </ol>	<p>28 April 2026</p> <hr/> <p>1 May 2026</p> <p>2-5 May 2026</p>
<p><b>5. Implementation of activities</b> for the Drin Day 2026</p>	<p><b>DRIN DAY CELEBRATION EVENTS (from 2-5.May 2026)</b></p>	<p><b>Drin day: 5 May 2026 (Tuesday)</b></p>
<p><b>6.Press release</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Providing information to GWP-Med about activities of the Drin Day 2026 including 30 high-resolution phot events, results of activities in numbers etc.;</li> <li>2.Sending the draft press release to GWP Med for finalization of the press release by GWP-Med.</li> <li>3.Translation of final press release to country language(s);</li> <li>4.Sending press release after the Drin Day 2026 celebrations to TV news, newspaper and web portals or video clips with participants in it to</li> </ol>	<p>5-6 May 2026</p> <p>-----</p> <p>8 May 2026</p>

<b>7.Reporting</b>	1. Delivery of Report to GWP-Med including: a. brief description of activities. any specific information expressly requested by GWP-Med for reporting of activities; b. all material and deliverables 1 – 6 above; proof from media coverage including articles in the press, TV coverage and web articles; c. photos from the Drin Day celebrations; d. any video produced.	15 May 2026
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### Reporting Line

The successful NGO/CSO will work under the direct supervision of / and communicate directly with the appointed GWP-Med Programme Officer. Coordination meetings between the consultant and the Project Team shall be scheduled on a regular basis to effectively monitor the progress pertaining to the workplan. The rendering of services shall be executed, and completion thereof shall be determined, upon the satisfaction and approval of the deliverables by the Project Manager and GWP-Med team.

### 5. Payment modalities

#### Payment Schedule:

Before each instalment the successful Applicant will invoice :  
GWP-MED/MIO-ECSDE (VAT No EL 097813422)

- 60% (3.600 USD) down payment.
- 40% (2.400 USD) after the successful implementation of the activities and the acceptance of deliverables and related expenses by GWP-MED.

### 6.Contract price and duration.

An amount of **6.000 USD/ per country (total 24.000 USD)** is available as seed funding to support the organization for each selected proposal. This amount includes all other costs, income taxes and any other amount payable or cost that may be required for the completion of the work/service. All payments except the advance payment shall be upon reception and acceptance/verification of the deliverables. Of the 6.000 USD at least half the amount will be used for costs related to promotional activities. Eligible promotional costs include: costs for filming and/or broadcasting of the Drin Day events in order to enhance impact; costs for printing material; costs for promotional material and products giving.

## 7. Disqualification criteria ON/OFF

For details on the ON/OFF disqualification please refer to the Call for Offers

## 8. Selection Criteria (pass / fail)

1. Interested bidders should be NGO or Civil Society organizations.
2. Experience of the bidder(s) in carrying out similar activities - at least 1 similar activity.
3. Minimum Establishment period of Bidders should be at least 3 years proven through official establishment documentation (e.g. not after 15/03/2023)

Failure to comply with the above ON/OFF requirements or to provide relevant proof with the application is considered ground for exclusion.

## 9. Technical Evaluation and award criterion

The technical evaluation will assess the quality and relevance of the proposed activities in relation to the Terms of Reference (ToR) (Maximum 100 Points).

Only offers scoring at least 60 points out of 100 will be considered technically acceptable.

Award criterion: The offer with the highest score of the Technical Evaluation – with minimum score 60.

Offers qualified in terms of exclusion grounds and selection criteria will be further evaluated on the basis of the requirements as follows:

<b>Criterion 1: Relevance and Methodological Quality (Maximum 25 points)</b>		
Assessment of the extent to which the proposal:	Score Range	Interpretation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates clear understanding of the ToR;</li><li>• Presents a coherent and feasible methodology;</li><li>• Provides realistic planning and organisation of activities;</li><li>• Ensures quality and timely delivery of outputs.</li></ul>	0–10	Insufficient or weak understanding of ToR; methodology unclear or unrealistic
	11–18	Good understanding; methodology clear and generally feasible
	19–25	Very good to excellent understanding; methodology coherent, realistic, well-structured and clearly aligned with ToR
<b>Criterion 2: Quality and Diversity of Activities (Maximum 20 points)</b>		
Assessment of the extent to which the proposal integrates educational, awareness-raising and field activities addressing the theme of Drin Day 2026.	Score Range	Interpretation
	0–8	Limited scope or insufficient integration of activities
	9–15	Adequate combination of complementary activities

	16–20	Strong and well-integrated combination of educational, awareness and field activities with clear thematic focus
<b>Criterion 3: Outreach and Engagement (Maximum 25 points)</b>		
<b>3.1 Expected Direct Participants (Maximum 10 points)</b>	<b>Number of Direct Participants</b>	<b>Points</b>
	Less than 50	2
	50–100	5
	101–200	8
	More than 200	10
<b>3.2 Outreach Strategy and Multiplier Effect (Maximum 15 points)</b>  Assessment of clarity, feasibility and expected impact of dissemination and engagement actions.	<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
	0-5	Outreach strategy unclear or insufficient
	6-10	Structured and feasible outreach plan
	11-15	Clear and well-sequenced outreach actions demonstrating multiplier effect and sustained engagement
<b>Criterion 4: Institutional Participation and Geographic Coverage (Maximum 15 points)</b>		
Assessment of the level of engagement of relevant institutions (e.g., mayors, local/regional authorities, ministries) and territorial scope of the proposed activities.	<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
	0–5	Limited institutional involvement and/or single location
	6–10	Engagement of multiple institutions and/or multi-municipal coverage
	11–15	Strong engagement of local, regional and/or national institutions with broad geographic impact
<b>Criterion 5: Visibility and Media Coverage (Maximum 10 points)</b>		
Assessment of the proposed visibility actions, including:  •Engagement of traditional media (local/regional/national);  •Social media and online dissemination;  •Production of audiovisual materials;  •Contribution to overall visibility of Drin Day 2026.	<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
	0–3	Limited visibility actions
	4–7	Adequate media and online visibility plan
	8–10	Strong and diversified visibility strategy with measurable outreach

<b>Criterion 6: In-kind Contribution / Co-financing (Maximum 5 points)</b>		
Points will be awarded based on the declared and quantifiable in-kind contribution or co-financing.	<b>Cofinance %</b>	<b>Points</b>
Co-financing Level (as % of total action value)	None	0
	Up to 10%	3
	Above 10%	5

**10. A template for the Application form is available as Annex .**

The Application should include the following sections:

- Introduction: Provide here a brief description about the NGO that prepares the application and the Partner NGO(s). Include more extensive descriptions of the NGO profile with similar activities listing as : details of proposed idea, What is the specific activity , where is specific drought hotspot site, the location you intend to visit, number of youth participants, number of media outlets committed to covering the activities, estimated social media reach for the synchronized post.
- Outcomes: Describe here the Outcomes or Results of to be achieved through the proposed activities.
- Activities: Describe here the activities to be implemented, the methodology to be followed and actions undertaken for their implementation.
- Outputs: Describe here the outputs/products to be developed/prepared through the activities proposed.
- Detailed financial budget as an Annex to the Application Form

**Timeframe**

- These activities should be implemented from **2-5 May 2026**

**11.Guarantee**

In the event that there are delays in the execution of the contract the awarded NGO/CSO shall be liable to pay compensation in the form of a penalty. The amount of the flat rate compensation per day of delay (penalty) shall be of 1% of the net contract value per week up to a limit of 10% of the total contract value.

**12.Monitoring and Progress Controls**

Monitoring of activities will be realized on the basis of deliverables being finalized as specified under *Deliverables*. Coordination meetings between the NFO/CSO and the Project Team shall be scheduled on a regular basis in order to effectively monitor the progress pertaining to the schedule of deliverables that is part of this TOR. The rendering of services shall be executed, and completion thereof shall be determined, upon the satisfaction and approval of the deliverables by the Project Manager and GWP Med Officer.

### **13. Place of Performance**

The Drin Day events will be organized in partnership with NGO or Civil society organizations in the following Drin Riparians: Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Montenegro. One NGO or Civil Society organization will be selected per Riparian Country, four in total. It is requested that NGOs and Civil society organizations interested to organize Drin Day events, submit an Application Form in which they describe the events that they propose to organize, the actions to be undertaken, the outputs and the envisaged outcomes.

Each NGO can apply only for one of the above mentioned Riparian's.

### **14. Communication**

In line with the deliverables following communication actions should be developed:

1. Provision of a communication plan for the proposed activities before the implementation of the activities.
2. Reporting of the electronic media and press articles dedicated to the Drin Day 2026 activities.
3. Provision of a comms package of at least 30 high resolution photographs from the activities planned cleared of rights and in accordance with GDPR prerequisites.
4. Provision of at least 3 quotes from participants on the issue of Droughts Management (1 quote to be from an official institution on the Drin Process and GEF Drin II Project)

### **15. Terms and Conditions**

- Language

The language of the key deliverables/outputs is English. Specific materials and communication packages will also be prepared in the language of the specific Riparian.

- Data and information

The NGO/CSO is responsible to collect all information and data necessary for the completion of this assignment. Missing information (from any side) would not be considered as eligible reason for not completing the tasks. GWP-Med can assist in communicating with relevant institutions and stakeholders to verify the availability of needed data or information.

- Submission of data, reports and other material produced

All primary data, reports, and other documentation produced during this assignment shall be made available to GWP-Med and to the relevant institutions in electronic format. All data acquired, and products developed during the assignment will be in the ownership of the Project and cannot be used by the NGO/CSO and its team without prior written permission.

- Cooperation requirements

The NGO/CSO is expected to work closely with GWP-Med and the beneficiaries.

### **16. Confidentiality**

All information supplied by GWP-Med in connection with this Call for Offers, and any further information supplied during the Call process shall be regarded as confidential and must not be shared with any other organization without written permission of GWP-Med.

## SUSTAINABILITY

A **sustainable event** is one that is designed, organized and implemented with a view to minimizing its ecological footprint and maximizing its positive impact on society. To reduce the general impacts of our events or their ecological footprint, we should therefore always consider the life cycle when we organize an event, in order to identify the points that will have a bigger negative impact on the environment.

Below are listed some useful tips that should be used wherever applicable in order to minimize the ecological footprint of our event to the extent possible.

Sustainability target	How
<b>Reduce energy use and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Select venues and accommodation that implement energy efficiency measures, comply with green building standards and/or use renewable energy sources.</li> <li>✓ Choose locations and venues minimizing local and long-distance transportation needs for participants and products.</li> <li>✓ Where long-distance travel is unavoidable, offset GHG emissions.</li> <li>✓ Apply energy-saving office practices during the organisation and hosting of the event.</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce materials consumption and waste generation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Minimize materials provided to participants and used by service providers (e.g. caterer, exhibitors), before, during and after the event.</li> <li>✓ Avoid the use of disposable items, use pre-used/ recycled and reusable/recyclable products and reduce packaging needs to a minimum</li> <li>✓ Separate and recycle waste where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce water use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Select venues and accommodation that implement water conservation practices and use water-efficient appliances.</li> <li>✓ Implement water-conscious measures such as avoid bottled water and re-filling glasses only upon request.</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce indirect environmental impacts on air, water and soil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Minimize the need to transport food and other products and favour local organic food.</li> <li>✓ Use products manufactured with or containing fewer harmful substances, such as chlorine-free paper and non-toxic cleaning products.</li> </ul>

**Increase the social benefits for all involved**

- ✓ Involve local and regional level as much as possible by, for example, recruiting local people (social integration), supporting SMEs (catering, energy, cleaning, IT supply, family- run accommodation), and showcasing successful local projects.
- ✓ Contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and the core ILO Conventions through compliance with labour standards, and requiring social integration (reducing unemployment), Fair Trade products and social criteria along the supply chain.
- ✓ Assure security and health aspects (e.g., noise level).

## Annex 1: Technical Background on Drought Risk and Climate Scenarios in the Drin Basin

The River Drin Basin is experiencing heightened risks of drought and flooding as a result of climate change. These challenges pose significant threats to water resources and supply, agriculture, hydropower generation, and local ecosystems. Increasingly frequent droughts are reducing water availability, degrading soil quality, and negatively affecting biodiversity, thereby exacerbating regional vulnerabilities and socio-economic impacts.

The Drin Basin is expected to increasingly be vulnerable to drought impacts. According to National Communications (NCs), droughts have had consequences in society, economy and ecosystems in the past years with visible consequences for society, the economy, and ecosystems. Projections from NCs indicate that by 2050, the region will experience rising temperatures, intensified heat waves, and a decrease in total annual precipitation by approximately 7–8%, with summer reductions reaching 40% or more. By 2100, precipitation declines are expected to be even greater.

The effects of droughts on activities and ecosystem is expected to be significant, for example on:  
**Agriculture and Water Use-** Climate change is projected to cause significant water shortages, especially during the summer months (June-August), impacting agricultural production in sub-basins with high irrigation needs.

Small family farms, often lacking irrigation systems, hail protection, and insurance, are particularly vulnerable to droughts and extreme weather. Additionally, worsening access to fresh water increases the risk of water-borne diseases and exacerbates socioeconomic vulnerabilities.

**Fisheries and Aquaculture:** Changes in water temperature, quantity, and quality -driven by climate change- could negatively affect fish stocks and aquaculture yields, particularly in bodies like Lake Ohrid, which depends on springs and groundwater sources.

**Hydropower:** Altered water availability and hydrological regimes due to climate change, as well as the greater frequency of extreme events like floods and droughts, will impact hydropower generation potential. These changes necessitate coordinated dam management with other Riparians and heighten risks to hydropower infrastructure and operations.

**Tourism:** Variations in water levels, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and coastal erosion - exacerbated by climate change- could detrimentally impact water-based tourism and associated infrastructure.

**Forestry:** Unsustainable management practices and the increased frequency and intensity of wildfires, worsened by climate change, contribute to forest degradation. This, in turn, leads to soil erosion and diminishes the ecosystem services provided by forests, such as soil stabilization and water retention. These effects pose significant threats to water resources and supply, agriculture, hydropower generation, and local ecosystems. Increasingly frequent droughts are reducing water availability, degrading soil quality, and negatively affecting biodiversity, thereby exacerbating regional vulnerabilities and socio-economic impacts. At present, there is no comprehensive drought risk management framework in place to mitigate the increasing impacts of droughts. Without coordinated intervention, these vulnerabilities are likely to intensify, further jeopardizing both communities and natural systems.

Enhancing water governance, promoting transboundary cooperation, and advancing climate adaptation measures are consequently essential for fostering long-term resilience and ensuring water security in the region. Cooperation among the Drin Riparians doesn't currently extend to drought management, but the concept of management is clear and comprehensive.

The concept of drought risk management is a proactive, continuous process of identifying, analyzing, and reducing drought vulnerability and impacts through monitoring, planning, and preparedness. It focuses on building resilience by reducing exposure to water scarcity and enhancing adaptive capacity, moving away from crisis-driven responses toward long-term mitigation.

Droughts are prolonged, slow-onset natural disasters causing severe environmental, economic, and social disruption. Key impacts include water shortages, agricultural failure, increased wildfire risk, and public health issues, costing billions annually and forcing population migration. Effective drought risk management involves proactive planning, monitoring, early warning systems, and building resilience to mitigate these long-term impacts, shifting away from reactive crisis management.

The main pillars of the drought management process are:

Monitoring and Early Warning Systems-detecting approaching droughts by monitoring indicators like rainfall, soil moisture, and temperatures to inform decision-making;

Vulnerability and Risk Assessment by identifying which sectors (e.g., agriculture, energy) and populations are most at risk, and why, to prioritize mitigation efforts ;

Mitigation and Preparedness Measures: Implementing concrete actions to reduce impacts before they occur, such as water conservation, drought-resistant crops, and policy planning.

These pillars are supported by the activities for:

Developing a harmonized approach for integrated drought risk and impact assessment, for monitoring, forecasting and early warning;

Implementing community-level, climate-resilient drought risk management and enhancing the knowledge and

Awareness of stakeholders on climate-resilient drought management.