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OUTLINE OF A NEXUS ROADMAP FOR ALBANIA

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BACKGROUND

The present document was developed by GWP-Med within the framework of the “SEE Nexus Project” (“Promoting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Southeastern Europe, through the use of Nexus approach”), funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and implemented by Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean (GWP-Med) in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). As an output of the Project, this Roadmap is broad in scope and simple in structure, and it is proposed as a “living” document that Albania’s authorities can adjust as needed, by discussing it among sectors, and agreeing upon detailed actions, modalities, timeframe, and budget, as they consider appropriate.

The “Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus” approach is especially relevant to Albania, given its rich water resources, the significant share of hydropower in the energy mix, the key socioeconomic role of agriculture, and the extended natural areas of high ecological value. Significant advancements, especially regarding institutional settings, have taken place in recent years in Albania when it comes to the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources. However, the scope for further integration and coordination of policies, frameworks and practices has not yet been fully leveraged.

The overall aim of the Roadmap is to support a more integrated and coherent approach across sectors in the design and prioritisation of management practices, policy and regulatory frameworks, investment and infrastructure planning, to ensure the maximisation of overall benefits across sectors.

In that regard, it captures the main related findings of the Nexus Assessment Report for Albania, developed within the framework of the Project, as well as feedback received during the consultation process with representatives of relevant national authorities. The Roadmap focuses on – and is structured around – Eight Objectives. It suggests related lines of activities for each objective, in order to meet them. The first three Objectives are of a general nature, being common for all types of ‘Nexus issues’, whereas the other five pertain to the principal objectives of each Nexus sector, recommending lines of action that address the considerations of other sectors and could capture related synergies.





OBJECTIVES, AND LINES OF ACTIONS

1 ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITIES

Lines of Action

- ▶ Create and share knowledge on Nexus Assessment methodologies as well as on related technologies and innovations
- ▶ Develop Nexus Assessments at the local (e.g. river basin) level
 - identifying cross-sectoral interlinkages and
 - exploring in detail priority synergies, quantifying the benefits of increased coordination
 - ensuring multi-stakeholder dialogues and local engagement
- ▶ Ensure data availability and monitoring, and the use of appropriate indicators of cross-sectoral relevance. Request regular and detailed monitoring reports by the responsible authorities for the implementation of key strategies
- ▶ Facilitate capacity building for decision makers, key stakeholders and staff
- ▶ Promote vocational training in Nexus-related skills

2 STRENGTHEN CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION, GOVERNANCE AND COHERENT POLICYMAKING

Lines of Action

- ▶ Enhance the role and capacities of inter-ministerial Bodies and Groups
- ▶ Implement an efficient and clear segregation of mandates and responsibilities for all levels of government
- ▶ Ensure that sectoral Strategies are in line with Albania's targets and commitments under international frameworks (e.g. UN Agenda 2030, UNFCCC process)
- ▶ Develop recommendations for increasing the integration of cross-sectorality in policy and decision-making through specific instruments (such as impact assessments, integrated permitting, public participation requirements, rules for intersectoral coordination and consultation). Key Strategic Documents should be accompanied by Strategic Environmental Assessments
- ▶ Facilitate the engagement of local authorities and a broad range of stakeholders in the preparation of National and Local Policies and Action Plans
- ▶ Harmonise data across sectors, facilitate data sharing among institutions

3 ENABLE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NEXUS SOLUTIONS

Lines of Action

- ▶ Coordinate strategic planning for infrastructure development addressing cross-sectoral considerations, capturing opportunities arising from international frameworks such as the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, the EU's Instruments for Pre-Accession Assistance, etc.
- ▶ Leverage and facilitate international and national financing for Nexus interventions
- ▶ Promote an enabling environment, market instruments and entrepreneurship relevant to the Nexus approach
- ▶ Implement pilot interventions, starting from no-regret, climate resilient ones
- ▶ Replicate/upscale success stories, also engaging the private sector



4 ENHANCE WATER RESOURCES GOVERNANCE ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ALL USES

Lines of Action

- ▶ Finalise the development and adoption of RBMPs for all the basins in the country
- ▶ Ensure institutional cooperation at horizontal level (across Ministries, National Agencies) and at vertical level (between central and local institutions) in terms of data collection and processing, planning, implementation and monitoring
- ▶ Ensure consistency of RBMPs with parallel planning activities such as Integrated Coastal Zones Management plans, urban and/or rural development plans, etc.
- ▶ Enhance cooperation with neighbouring countries towards the development of transboundary RBMPs, as applicable

5 EXPAND AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES, CAPTURING CROSS-SECTORAL SYNERGIES

Lines of Action

- ▶ Make full use of energy efficiency options in modernising existing equipment and infrastructure and installing new ones (thereby improving utilities' financial sustainability). Reducing water losses also reduces energy consumption
- ▶ Install on-site solar panels to reduce energy purchasing costs
- ▶ Develop energy recovery (biogas) in all large wastewater treatment plants as applicable
- ▶ Facilitate synergies with agriculture in terms of using treated water for irrigation, and use of treated sludge as fertiliser, as applicable
- ▶ Promote Nature-based Solutions for wastewater treatment in small settlements



6 MEETING ENERGY AND CLIMATE GOALS ADDRESSING THE CONSIDERATIONS OF ALL SECTORS

Lines of Action

- ▶ Develop Spatial Planning for renewable energy installations, ensuring requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments and taking into account international best practices, including the EU Acquis
- ▶ Ensure that the operational rules of large HPPs take into consideration flood management objectives e.g. by updating the Regulation for Drin Cascade Operation and ensuring coordination between HPP operators and the responsible institutions for the Flood Early Warning System
- ▶ Develop a detailed assessment of scenarios on how the expected impacts of climate change may affect hydropower generation within a timeframe of 50-100 years. Prioritise the development of non-hydro renewables to reduce dependency on hydropower and avoid stresses and conflicts related to new hydropower development
- ▶ Improve the operation of HPPs by addressing sedimentation and soil erosion issues e.g. through reforestation
- ▶ Develop a study on the potential for the use of biomass and/or energy cultivation, addressing considerations in terms of water and land availability, food security, forest management, and water quality
- ▶ Develop dedicated programmes and plans for sectoral energy efficiency measures in agriculture, irrigation and drainage, in water supply and sanitation, and in residential heating in rural areas
- ▶ Capture opportunities for small-scale renewable energy generation of cross-sectoral relevance e.g. by floating solar on reservoirs, energy recovery in wastewater treatment plants, energy use of agricultural and forestry residues
- ▶ Facilitate the local ownership and operation of small-scale renewable energy installations

7 IMPROVE AND MODERNISE IRRIGATION AND DRAINAGE SERVICES WITH CROSS-SECTORAL BENEFITS

Lines of Action

- ▶ Harness opportunities for renewable energy generation by e.g. installing solar panels on reservoirs and irrigation channels, and recovering energy from agricultural residues
- ▶ Assess the potential for energy cultivations in the country, minimising impacts on food security and availability of land and water resources
- ▶ Facilitate the engagement and role of WUOs in the use and maintenance of irrigation schemes; raise awareness and enhance capacities of farmers and stakeholders

8 ENHANCE THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL AREAS ADDRESSING CROSS-SECTORAL CONFLICTS AND PRESSURES

Lines of Action

- ▶ Improve and mainstream the SEA / EIA processes for all infrastructure development as well as in the preparation of sectoral strategies and plans
- ▶ Develop Management Plans for all protected areas following the requirements and guidelines of the EU Acquis
- ▶ Develop Spatial Planning for renewable energy installations, ensuring requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments and taking into account international best practices, including the EU Acquis
- ▶ Update the regulations on environmental flows for HPPs based on international best practices. Ensure sufficient water for Ecosystem services in all cases of water allocation and permitting
- ▶ Promote land restoration initiatives, also addressing soil erosion and sedimentation, primarily with the use of Nature-based Solutions
- ▶ Ensure sustainable forest management and wood biomass harvesting practices





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