



## Concept Note

### Workshop

## Gender Equality for sustainable development in Nexus sectors in the Drin River basin

*To be held online on 12 October 2021  
10:00-14:00CET*

In the framework of the project  
*"Promoting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Southeastern Europe, through the  
use of the Nexus approach"*

financed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

implemented by the Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-Med)  
in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

## **Gender and sustainable development**

Sustainable development at its core encourages us to think about how to improve economies and societies without compromising the natural environment or the well-being of future generations. But for any development effort to be sustainable and effective, it must consider the needs of all people, including those who do not typically have a voice in decision making. That is why gender equality is a critical ingredient in achieving sustainable development.

**Gender equality and sustainable development are inseparable.** Gender equality can enable and even accelerate the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While gender equality is captured as a stand-alone goal (SDG 5), its benefits are multiplied when gender is integrated across all the SDGs, and gender considerations are included in all sustainable development work.

Addressing gender inequalities—including access to and control over natural resources—accelerates the impact of sustainable development policies connected to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many of the barriers to effective sustainability policies are found in outdated discriminatory social norms and legal systems. Investing in girls and women requires no radical inventions but can break systemic barriers of power and privilege that continue to leave millions behind.

## **Nexus approach and sustainable development**

Sustainable socio-economic development requires, among others, growing levels of food-energy- and water-services. The overall security of resources can be improved by co-optimising different sectors' objectives through an integrated **Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems "Nexus"** approach that aims at reconciling the interests of the different sectors, while respecting environmental needs and human rights. The Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus approach has been introduced in the natural resources management agenda to facilitate the enhancement of water, energy, and food security, while preserving ecosystems and their functions. This is done by adopting an integrated and coordinated approach across sectors as sectors compete for the same scarce resources, all while capturing existing opportunities and exploring emerging ones. Under such an approach, interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs among the relevant sectors are assessed, with the aim of identifying solutions that foster water-food-energy security and efficiency and reduce impacts and risks on water-dependent ecosystems.

The Nexus approach is especially relevant to the Southeast Europe (SEE) Region given the significant share of hydropower in the region's energy mix, as well as the significant role of forests. The "SEE Nexus Project"<sup>1</sup> aims to introduce the Nexus approach and catalyse action for its adoption and implementation in SEE at the national and transboundary basin levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Full title: "Promoting the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Southeast Europe (SEE), through the use of Nexus approach". Supported by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and implemented by Global Water Partnership – Mediterranean in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

## **The extended Drin River Basin**

Coordinated action at the Drin Basin level had been absent until the development of the Shared Vision for the sustainable management of the Drin Basin and the signing of a related Memorandum of Understanding (Tirana, 25 November 2011) by the Ministers of the water and environment management competent ministries of the Drin Riparian states i.e. Albania, the North Macedonia, Greece, Kosovo\*<sup>2</sup> and Montenegro. The Drin Coordinated Action (“Drin CORDA”) process for the implementation of the Drin MoU, was put in place after its signing, and is being coordinated by GWP-Med.

From a quick gender analysis of the beneficiary countries, it is concluded that commitment to international, national gender policies and strategies are present at national level, but that environmental and water policies and strategies do not, in general, have references to gender. Challenges in effectively implementing the legal and policy framework on gender equality negatively affect equality between women and men, and the country’s development outcomes overall. More specifically, Nexus sectors policies and strategies, in general, do not have adequate references to gender including in relation to the nexus sectors, water-energy-environment-food and to climate change, whose impacts are very cumbersome especially on women and poor rural areas.

It is in rural development plans/strategies and partly in disaster management related to extreme climate events, such as floods, protection of forests and fires, and use of biomass where gender dimensions and especially women needs/challenges come more evident forward. Due to their close link with Nexus sectors such as agriculture, water services/management and environmental management, rural development interventions and adaptation to climate change efforts could contribute in bringing forward the importance of gender and gender mainstreaming in these sectors. However, these areas need to be explored further to identify specific challenges and entry points to ensure sustainable development.

## **Scope and objectives of the workshop**

This workshop aims to initiate a coordinated discussion amongst Drin Riparians on the importance of gender equality in the Nexus sectors for sustainable development. More specifically it will aim to:

- Introduce and update the Nexus-related stakeholders with the basic concepts on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and gender mainstreaming as key components of sustainable development and how gender inequality impacts progress towards Agenda 2030.
- Inform the participants on nexus approach and its benefits for nexus sectors
- Provide a platform for the Drin Riparians to share best practices and case studies on main nexus related sectors and (water resources and management, agriculture-land use, energy, environmental protection, climate change); discuss potential policies, measures or support schemes that could remove such barriers and enhance related opportunities.

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<sup>2</sup> All references to Kosovo are made in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

- Discuss on women leadership, empowerment and participation approaches in nexus sectors and how they can support Drin related challenges.
- Create synergies and aim to establish a regional network of nexus sector stakeholders and gender experts and institution.

## **Participants**

This workshop aims to bring together representatives from the three beneficiary countries and from different Nexus sectors especially gender specialists and focal points from the institutions, agencies, and civil society organizations, academia or actors having a strong record of activities and ability to assist with promoting change.

In this workshop the key stakeholders will be present to contribute to the identification of the main challenges to address gender equality in all relevant Nexus sectors from all the participating countries.