



Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst  
Transboundary Aquifer System

# Project Management Summary Report 2012

Trebinje, January 2013

*DIKTAS/SC3/1*



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## 1 Introduction

DIKTAS activities in 2012 were carried out according to the DIKTAS Work Plan 2012, prepared after the Project Team meeting in January 2012. The plan was revised in February 2012 and endorsed by the DIKTAS Steering Committee in April 2012. This Summary Report was prepared by the DIKTAS Project Coordinator and provides a manager's review of planned & realised activities in 2012.

The DIKTAS project consists of four components (I-IV), each of them related to a certain outcome (see the list below). The activities (individual or grouped) provide outputs required to reach expected outcomes. A total of eleven outputs (1-11) are defined in the Project Document:

1. Improving the understanding of the resource and of its environmental status
  1. Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)
  2. Environmental status indicators
2. Establishing cooperation mechanisms among countries
  3. A multi-country consultative body (CIE)
  4. Environmental quality targets & joint harmonized monitoring program
  5. A coordination mechanism with other projects
3. Facilitating the harmonization of policies and priority reforms.
  6. Ad hoc inter-ministerial committees
  7. *A Strategic Action Program (SAP)*
  8. *A partnership conference*
4. Stakeholders participation, dissemination and replication of activities.
  9. Stakeholders Analysis and information and communication activities
  10. Targeted capacity building programs
  11. IW:LEARN activities & webportal.

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In 2011, the activities were focussed on project Components 1 and 4 (outputs 1, 9 and 11). Although the focus in 2012 remained on Component 1, all the remaining Component 2 and Component 4 related activities were commenced in this year. Practically, only outputs 7 and 8 of Component 3 were not dealt with this year. That made 2012 a project year with a diversity of activities where the project organisational setup, project coordination and above all the project team performance were challenged.

In continuation of this document, a brief (management) report is given about the activities planned to contribute the project outputs in 2012. Firstly, an overview of project management activities (not directly covered by the project outcomes & outputs) is provided. That includes the Project Team meetings, the Steering Committee (SC) meeting as well as the project Mid Term Evaluation (MTE). The report is rounded off with some conclusions and remarks.

## 2 General project management activities

The main practical project management task in 2012 was to ensure:

- functioning of the project (team and management) structure as established in the previous project year, and
- elaboration of the Project Document activities and their sound conductance by the Project Team.

In 2012, the Project Team continued to operate mostly through the Working Groups (WGs) as established in the previous project year. Coordination within the WGs was in general good, with some differences among the groups, mostly reflecting personal commitment of a WG leader and the WG members. The National Execution Units (NEUs) were functioning as a less prominent but important transverse project structure, especially when it came to a preparation of National Regional Reports towards the end of the year.

**Coordination of activities** and especially an adequate information exchange at the project level was more challenging than at the WG or NEU level. Twenty five members of the DIKTAS Project Team are spread over several countries and various organisations. In 2012, they were mostly working on preparation (of various parts) of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA). This long-term activity in general does not contain many milestones that could be used to regularly brief the rest of the team or public. Despite efforts invested, the internal project communication is still not optimal. The use of DIKTAS Collaborative Environment increased slightly but not sufficiently yet. The only occasion where the project progress was shared with all team members were **Project Team meetings**.

The second (second ever, first in 2012) Project Team meeting was held in Trebinje in January 2012 and the third one (also in Trebinje) in December 2012. Both meetings had the same purpose: to evaluate work in the previous year and make agreements for the coming year. The third meeting took place already in December to allow preparation of the Work Plan for 2013 as early as possible. The meetings of the Working Groups were organised several times during the year, WG1 and WG2 meeting more often than WG3 and WG4 meetings.



All the meetings were found successful by the team members. The Minutes of the Meeting were prepared for the Project Team meetings but not for the majority of WGs meetings. That was one of the reasons for the insufficient internal communication and coordination. Besides, the follow up of the agreements made during the WG meetings was more difficult to without the Minutes.

Project activities as specified in the DIKTAS Project Document were elaborated in the project Work Plan 2012. The **execution of the activities** went in general according to the plan but with some time delay. The state of each major activity will be briefly specified (in the context of expected outputs) further below.

The second meeting of the project **Steering Committee** (SC) was held in Tirana (Albania) in April 2012. The SC discussed and adopted the DIKTAS Work Plan and the budget for 2012. The SC also discussed modus operandi of the National Inter-ministerial Committees (NICs) and a Regional Consultation and Information Exchange body (CIE). The suggestions of the SC to improve the NICs and CIE modus operandi were used to create an improved version of the document. Further, the cooperation with other projects and initiatives in the region was broadly discussed during the SC meeting. The Minutes of the Meeting and the meeting material are available in the DIKTAS Collaborative Environment.

**Monitoring and reporting** in 2012 was carried out as prescribed by the GEF/UNDP Monitoring and Reporting Procedure. That included a Project Implementation Report/Annual Project Report that was prepared together with the Project Coordination Unit and submitted to UNDP.

In 2012, the regular Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted by the external evaluator. Because of their relevance for the project (and project coordination) performance, the main findings are listed below:

1. DIKTAS project is still highly relevant
  - overall design and "architecture" for implementation should remain unchanged
  - increasing dependence of the region on utilization of karst groundwater resources
2. The project has been moderately effective in achieving its objectives
  - National sectoral reports of overall good quality
  - usefulness of these outputs could be assessed only when the TDA and SAP will be prepared
3. The project's efficiency is satisfactory
  - management and administrative arrangements are cost-effective and rational
  - coordination between the project management and national levels satisfactory
  - use of financial resources is appropriate to the results achieved so far
4. The project's results are moderately satisfactory
  - A number of outputs have been delivered, though primarily related to the analysis of various aspects of karst groundwater aquifer management in national context
  - Serious work is still expected to be carried out to produce TDA and SAP
  - establishment of national and regional coordination bodies (NICs and CIE) is still on-going
5. Sustainability of the project is moderately likely
  - coordination mechanisms are not yet fully in place
  - intensity of the capacity building activities should be increased
  - The sustainability strategy does not exist
  - Replication strategy, although not envisaged in the PD, should be prepared
  - The participation of stakeholders is gradually increasing and the range of stakeholders groups involved should be expanded, notably with the national NGOs and users associations.

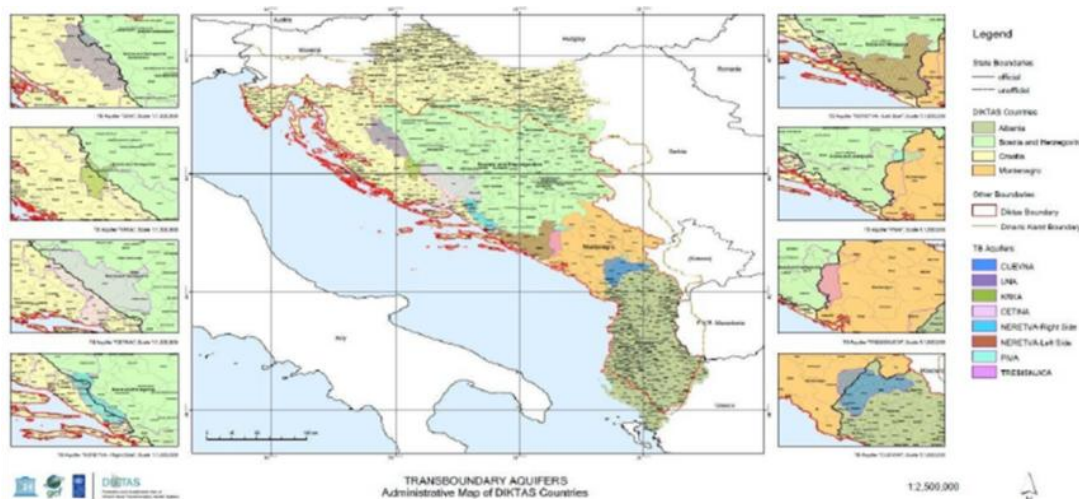
The overall rating of the project is **satisfactory**, as a solid progress has been made towards achievement of the DIKTAS project objectives. The MTE produced also a number of recommendations that will be included in the Work Plan for 2013.

A positive project evaluation is an encouragement for the Project Team. Nevertheless, the identified risks and related recommendations needs to be taken very seriously by the Project Team, especially in terms of agreements, deliverables and deadlines. This is the main concern and the main focus of the Project Coordinator in the reminding two years of the project. Execution of the project activities in 2012 (see below) was done with time delay that cannot be afforded any more.

### 3 Project content activities

#### 3.1 Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (1)

Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) was the main project content activity in 2012. Since in 2011 commenced analysis (i.e. hydrogeological characterisation, environmental and socio-economical assessment and assessment of legal and institutional frameworks and policies) was carried out at the regional level, the regional overviews were firstly synthesized and finalized in 2012. This work was done with delay of several months, postponing other planned TDA activities such as: detailed delineation of transboundary aquifers, identification and prioritization of issues of transboundary concern, causal chain analysis and compilation of a draft TDA report.



The country TDA reports are in meantime prepared, as well as the draft of the regional TDA overview for the TDA report. The crucial report chapter on issues of transboundary concern is under preparation and it will be finalised in January 2013. A deadline for the final draft of the TDA report is the end of March 2013. Subsequently, the report will be submitted to the Steering Committee, NICs and CIE for comments and approval. The TDA report is expected to be finalised at the end of June 2013.

Case studies will not be rounded off in June; they will rather continue to link TDA and preparation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP). The acquired knowledge on issues of transboundary concern needs to lead to the most adequate SAP to tackle the identified issues.

### **3.2 Environmental status indicators (2)**

A proposal for Environmental status indicators was prepared. These indicators will allow the countries to monitor, in a harmonized way and in the long-term the evolution of the system and its reaction to the various stress reduction measures and interventions that countries may undertake in the future within the SAP implementation context or otherwise. Currently, an additional check of state of variables that make up indicators is being checked; a feasibility of indicators is crucial for their final acceptance (see also Targets & Monitoring below).

### **3.3 A multi-country consultative body - CIE (3)**

The Terms of Reference for the CIE (a regional Consultation and Information Exchange body) are prepared by the Project Management Team and adopted by the Steering Committee in April 2012. The first CIE meeting will be organised after NiCs meetings (where the country representatives to CIE will be selected) and it is foreseen for the end of June 2013.

### **3.4 Environmental quality targets & joint monitoring programme (4)**

Environmental quality targets will be suggested once the list of (feasible) environmental status indicators is finalised. The preparation of the Monitoring Programme is on-going, to be completed in the first quarter of 2013. An initiative is taken to develop a harmonised monitoring programme for DIKTAS karst aquifers and alluvial aquifers of Sava River Basin.

### **3.5 A coordination mechanism with other projects (5)**

Cooperation with other projects is primarily determined by project issues of mutual interest to be shared and by eagerness for cooperation (which could vary from project to project). There are very few on-going projects in the region with overlapping project topics and tasks. DIKTAS has taken initiative and established cooperation with GEF projects Neretva & Trebišnjica Project, MedPartnership and Skodra/Skadar project. The intensity of cooperation is not considerable but it is sufficient for a coordination and information exchange purposes.

Modalities are investigated to establish a closer cooperation with a pilot project related to nomination of the Dinaric Karst as UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### **3.6 National inter-ministerial committees - NIC (6)**

The Terms of Reference for NICs are prepared and adopted by the Steering Committee in April 2012. In meantime, a process of NIC member nomination is completed in two countries and nearly completed in the other two countries. The first NiC meeting was held in Montenegro in December 2012. The other initial NIC meetings are planned for the period January-February 2013.



### **3.7 Stakeholders Analysis and info & communication activities (9)**

A several stakeholder-related activities took place in the first half of 2012 (four national workshops, equerries, interviews), resulting in the thorough analysis recorded in an exemplary report prepared by WG4.

Stakeholders and Public Participation Strategy (SPPS) is updated but still needs to be interpreted in terms of concrete project activities.

In the second part of the year, a level of stakeholders related activities substantially decreased, awaiting for the project results (i.e. TDA report) to be shared with stakeholders.

One electronic newsletter was published; a flyer about DIKTAS collaboration mechanisms was prepared and the content of web-portal was regularly updated with new DIKTAS documents and events (also from the project partners). At the moment, the web-portal is undergoing a major content update and restructuring. The project brochure needs an update.

Two papers about the project's hydrogeology were written and presented during a congress of IAH (International Association of Hydrogeologists), held in Niagara Falls in September 2012. During the congress, DIKTAS hydrogeologists also participated in a meeting of the IAH Karst Commission and announced new DIKTAS activities (a karst summer school and the conference).



### **3.8 Targeted capacity building programmes (10)**

The only capacity building activity in 2012 was organised in the framework of the *Horizon 2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme*; a training course *Linking waste water management to ICZM and IWRM, with emphasis on Karstic coastal areas* took place in Split, Croatia in March 2012. More attention needs to be paid to capacity building in the coming two years, preferably in conjunction with DIKTAS case studies and DIKTAS related activities in the region.

### **3.9 IW:LEARN activities & webportal (11)**

In 2011, DIKTAS provided a major contribution IW-LEARN at the 6th GEF Biennial International Waters Conference in Dubrovnik (next GEF IW conference is planned for 2013 in the Caribbean region). In 2012, DIKTAS joined a newly launched GEF Groundwater Community of Practice that is still in an initial phase.



DIKTAS and IW-LEARN are working together to customise IW-LEARN Map Viewer in order to serve as a part of the DIKTAS information- and decision support system.

## **4 Conclusions and closing remarks**

2012 was - in general- a successful year for the DIKTAS project. The project structure has proven to be suitable to serve execution of activities as prescribed in the Project Document. The Working Groups (organised across countries) and National Execution Units (grouping various disciplines) were able to deal with complexity of issues and regional spreading of the Project Team. The DIKTAS meetings were quite efficiently used to harmonise activities and make new agreements.

Follow through on agreements and deadlines were less effective. Consequently, there is a slight delay (circa three months) in preparation of the TDA. It can be compensated for if the deadlines agreed at the last Project Team meeting in December 2012 are respected.

A general impression about the DIKTAS project in the region is quite positive also due to a quite successful communication with stakeholders. Yet, much more needs to be done, especially regarding the capacity building in the region. Also, once the TDA report is ready, its results should be widely communicated and discussed among stakeholders. An update of the project PR material is required and should include TDA results.

A process of setting up NICs and CIE is progressing and needs to be handled with care. The NICs need to meet twice in 2013 and CIE at least once. The discussion on TDA will be the first test of their effectiveness and the warming up for a real project challenge: the SAP - Strategic Action Programme.