

First Meeting of the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM)

pursuant to art. 14 of the Agreement

24 June 2022, Pyli Thematic Centre, Prespa Greece

Summary Minutes

At the invitation of Ms. Maria Gkini, Head of Directorate for the Protection and Management of Aquatic Environment of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece, the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) held its first regular meeting in the Information Centre of the Prespes National Park in Pyli, Greece, on June 24, 2022.

Representatives of the Water Resources Management Agency (AMBU) and the National Water Supply and Sewage Agency (AKUM) from Albania, representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP) and the Municipality of Resen from North Macedonia and representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MEE) and the Decentralised Administration of Epirus - Western Macedonia from Greece and representatives from the European Commission, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia attended the meeting.

1. Opening session by the Chair Ms. Gkini

The Chair welcomed the participants and highlighted the issues to be discussed at the meeting, including promotion of transboundary cooperation, water quality and quantity issues. She also presented the main provisions of the Agreement related to water management and the WGWM.

The agenda of the meeting was then presented and approved.

2. Introductory remarks from WGWM members on their expectations from the Agreement's implementation

All participants commented on the need to harmonize water management plans across the basin.

The representative from the MoEPP in North Macedonia mentioned that the implementation of the Agreement is expected to address water quality issues, leading to a coordinated or a common water management plan for the entire Prespa basin, incorporating the guidelines of EU directives and important international conventions; in addition, the implementation of the Agreement is expected to involve scientists and NGOs and attract support from donors. At the same time the representative from the Municipality of Resen highlighted the fact that efforts on waste water management and eco-tourism should be coordinated.

The representative from the AKUM in Albania mentioned that special attention is provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy with a project starting on infrastructure for drinking water for seven villages around the Municipality of Pusteci having received funds, while it is expected that the implementation of the Agreement will lead securing funds for the improvement of water quality by addressing also sewage treatment in the area. The representative from the AMBU in Albania added that the Drin Buna River basin project prepared a transboundary water resources plan, which identified pressures and included measures for the Prespa area, while the promotion of sustainable tourism and the improvement of social economy receives special attention. Expectations from the implementation of the Agreement relate to supporting measures to reduce pressures over the next 6 years, in monitoring of water quality parameters and through continuous data sharing (via an appropriate mechanism).

of transboundary
cooperation
across the
watershed
assessment
enforcement

The representative from the European Commission mentioned that the implementation of the Agreement and the operation of the WGWM is an opportunity to gain insights to problems and opportunities. It is expected that gradually a single integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Plan will be produced, while it is also expected that consultants of the two water resources management plans that are under revision in Greece and North Macedonia will cooperate to streamline efforts and outcomes. Finally, he mentioned that expectations are high for the exchange of information and cross-coordination among committee members, while it is also expected from Greece to transfer know-how on planning, implementation and ~~assessment~~ to the other two countries.

Finally, a representative from the Ministry of Environment and Energy in Greece identified the overall objective of the WGWM as the need to coordinate efforts to achieve environmental targets, endorsed the expectations expressed by the other members and highlighted the importance of identifying priority issues for coordinated action.

The representative of the Municipality of Resen from North Macedonia provided an update on action taken at the local and transboundary level relating to water resources management and commented on the need to increase capacity at the local level and agreed on the expectation expressed already toward harmonization of plans, cooperation across all administrative levels and exchange of experience and know-how, as well as securing of funds for joint action.

Finally, on the issue of attracting financial resource, the representative from the European Commission highlighted the need to switch from a project-based approach towards a sector-based approach and organize funding steps and opportunities in subsequent meetings.

3. Presentation of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the WGWM

Ms. M. Gkini presented the ToR for the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM). One clarification was added that the working documents of the WGWM are also to be drafted in English. Mr. Mirta further proposed that the meetings of the WGWM should follow the rotation of venue of the PPMC. All WGWM members consented on this proposal. It was finally agreed that the possibility of Greece covering the costs of WGWM meetings in the neighboring countries should be explored after the meeting. In case this is feasible, the ToR of the WGWM should be accordingly amended by the PPMC in its December 2022 meeting.

The ToR of the WGWM, as approved by the representatives of the Parties at the 1st PPMC (Pyli, 23/06/2022) are included here as Annex I.

4. Exchange of information on the state of Prespa waters and the implementation of relevant water management plans in the 3 littoral countries

The Chair gave the floor to Mr Mirta from MoEPP in North Macedonia, who presented an overview of different transboundary collaboration schemes across the Drin River Basin and highlighted the need for collaboration and dialogues among the different institutions. He also highlighted that it is important to ensure sustainable membership and financing of the joint bodies, as well as establishment of the Drin commission.

Ms Gkini from the MEE in Greece presented the status of the water bodies of the Prespa Park are in the Greek side, with the lakes being in Moderate ecological status, as well as the current stage of management planning, which is at the second revision cycle. She also presented the program of measures applicable in Prespa.

Mr Bixio mentioned that the experience of capacity building of farmers should be shared with the other two countries, who are currently establishing similar capacity building projects.

5. Prespa Water Forum: Concept Note on the design and pilot implementation of coordinated water monitoring in the Prespa Park Area

Ms Vasso Tsiaousi from the Greek Wetland/ Biotope Centre (EKBY) briefly presented the results that have been produced over the last decade from monitoring water quality of both lakes. Then she presented the

concept note that has been prepared by the scientists involved in Prespa water monitoring under the national monitoring systems (Prespa Water Forum) for the implementation of coordinated water monitoring in the Prespa Park Area.

Regarding fundraising, Mr. Mirta said that the MoEPP can put forward this project concept to international donors asking for financing.

The concept note was endorsed by the representatives of the Parties of the WGWM and is attached here as Annex II.

6. Identification of priorities in water cooperation for Prespa for 2022

The following priorities were identified:

1. Exchange of data collected and information
2. Creation of a platform for exchange of information (or build upon the same as the PPMC)
3. Monitoring systems and status assessment with harmonized methodology
4. Inventory of identified pressures
5. Investigation of ecological consequences of water level drop of Great Prespa
6. Information exchange on public utilities and decentralized treatment
7. Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources
8. Inventory of measures that are planned or in implementation for achieving good water quality status
9. Creation of a road map for the above priorities by the next meeting

A road map should be created for the above priorities by the next meeting of the WGWM in December 2022.

It was further agreed that more priorities might be agreed by remote communication in the next two weeks after the meeting. Otherwise only the above priorities will remain in the minutes.

7. Closure of the Meeting

7.1. Conclusions and next steps

1. All participants commented on the need to harmonize water management plans across the basin and coordinate efforts to achieve environmental objectives.
2. Regarding the ToR of the WGWM that were presented by the Chair, one clarification was added, that the working documents of the WGWM are also to be drafted in English. It was further proposed that the meetings of the WGWM should follow the rotation of venue of the PPMC. All WGWM members consented on this proposal. It was finally agreed that the possibility of Greece covering the costs of WGWM meetings in the neighbouring countries should be explored after the meeting. In case this is feasible, the ToR of the WGWM should be accordingly amended by the PPMC in its December 2022 meeting.
3. National delegations exchanged information on the state of Prespa waters and the implementation of relevant water management plans in the 3 littoral countries, as well as national priorities.
4. The Concept Note on the design and pilot implementation of coordinated water monitoring in the Prespa Park Area presented at the meeting was unanimously endorsed by the WGWM. It was further indicated that the MoEPP can put forward this project concept to international donors for financing.
5. The following priorities in water cooperation for Prespa for 2022 were identified:
 - a. Exchange of data collected and information
 - b. Creation of a platform for exchange of information (or build upon the same as PPMC)
 - c. Monitoring systems and status assessment with harmonized methodology
 - d. Inventory of identified pressures
 - e. Investigation of ecological consequences of water level drop of Great Prespa
 - f. Information exchange on public utilities and decentralized treatment

- g. Cooperation among the three countries for achieving at least a coordinated management plan or ultimately a common management plan for water resources
- h. Inventory of measures that are planned or in implementation for achieving good water quality status

A road map should be created for the above priorities by the next meeting of the WGWM in December 2022.

It was further agreed that more priorities might be agreed by remote communication in the next two weeks after the meeting. Otherwise only the above priorities will remain in the minutes.

7.2. Date and place/format of the next Meeting

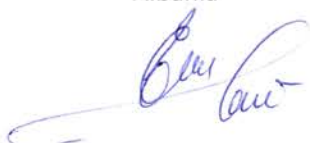
It was unanimously decided that the next WGMW meeting will take place online, in the beginning of December 2022, and it will be organized by the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Greece and NECCA in cooperation with the PPMC Secretariat, as foreseen in the road map for the implementation of the Agreement and in the workplan.

7.3 Closing remarks

The Chair thanked all WGWM members and invited observers for their contribution and declared the meeting closed.

The minutes of the First Meeting of the Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) were finalized, agreed upon and signed by the representatives of the Parties.

Ermela Kraja
Water Resources Management Agency
Albania



Ylber Mirta,
Head of Department for Water
Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
North Macedonia



Maria Gkini,
Head, Directorate for the Protection and Management of
Aquatic Environment
Ministry of Environment and Energy
Greece



Davide Bizio
Programme Manager for Environment and Water
Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of
North Macedonia
European Commission



Annex I

Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Water Management

Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area

Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) of the Prespa Park Management Committee

Rules of Organization and Procedure – Terms of Reference (ToR) as approved by the PPMC on 23.06.2022

Article 1

Functions of the WGWM

1. The WGWM is a standing expert group of the PPMC and operates under the auspices of the latter. More specifically, the WGWM will assist the PPMC in identifying and obtaining the water management information required for policy-making purposes and will provide expert technical support to the PPMC, primarily by ensuring that all available water management information is presented to the PPMC in an agreed and accessible manner.

2. The overall objective of the WGWM is to facilitate coordination of efforts for development and implementation of an integrated transboundary Prespa River Basin Management Plan as envisaged by the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). This objective will be pursued by providing technical expert support to the PPMC and by issuing recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management. In this context, the WGWM will facilitate cooperation and exchange of water-related information and will pursue the harmonisation of the water management plans among the three countries based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation.

Article 2

Tasks of the WGWM

1. Pursuant to article 14(4) and taking into account article 5 of the Prespa Park Agreement, the specific tasks and mandate of the WGWM are defined as follows. The WGWM will:

(i) Support the work of the PPMC in the preparation of discussion / decision papers on issues related to water protection and management.

(ii) Prepare a four-year workplan for the prioritization of the tasks and activities to be pursued, in accordance to the PPMC requests.

(iii) Facilitate the establishment of data-sharing mechanisms and agreements for the regular and ongoing exchange and assessment of available water management information, including: a) data on monitoring and quantification of water resources; b) data on current water use and discharge and impacts on water quality and quantity; and c) data on surface water status (ecological and chemical) and on groundwater status (chemical and quantitative) as specified in the EU Water Framework Directive.

(iv) Facilitate the development of a transboundary water monitoring scheme with the collaboration of all national institutes responsible for the national water monitoring programmes applicable in the basin.

(v) Exchange information on existing or planned water uses that could affect the ecological character of the Prespa Lakes Basin and discuss possible remedial actions and alternative solutions.

(vi) Inform and update on the development in any part of the basin of technical works

which might cause impacts in the Prespa Lakes basin; evaluate relevant environmental impact assessments, in accordance with appropriate international standards.

(vii) Facilitate the coordination of activities in order to ensure consistency and harmonisation of the water management plans in the Prespa Lakes Basin based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation. In specific, facilitate the coordination of activities towards the following objectives:

- a. Set environmental targets and adapt to these the water uses in the river basin
- b. Development of consistent reference conditions and water quality elements for the surface and groundwater resources
- c. Adoption of appropriate joint emission limits for wastewater and threshold values for groundwater according to EU legislation
- d. Identification of Significant Water Management Issues which can directly or indirectly affect the quality of the surface and groundwater resources
- e. Elaboration of an inventory of Protected Areas according to the EU Water Framework Directive requirements
- f. Coordination of programmes of measures among the three countries

(viii) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms and procedures to facilitate transboundary cooperation and exchange knowledge among the water management authorities and interested stakeholders at the river basin level.

(ix) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate cooperation in scientific research programmes.

(x) Facilitate the coordination of activities and make related recommendations towards the establishment of early warning systems and procedures and facilitate related preparatory work towards the development of risk management and contingency plans for extreme events of floods and droughts.

(xi) Facilitate better understanding of the law and policy context for water management activities, including analysis and exchange of information on relevant EU legislation, national law, international law and standards on transboundary waters and protected areas.

(xii) Liaise in respect of technical matters with the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee.

Article 3

Composition of the WGWM

The WGWM will consist of a total of 7 members, including:

- a. one representative of the national water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties who may be assisted by national experts,
- b. one representative of the regional water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties,
- c. one representative from the European Commission, DG ENV, Water Unit (or relevant regional Commission official)

The members of the WGWM are appointed – and replaced if need arises - by the Minister for the Environment of each State Party and by the European Commission, respectively.

Each member may have an alternate, appointed and replaced as above mentioned, and fully authorised to replace her/him in case of inability to attend meetings or follow related

WGWM work.

Article 4

Organisation of work of the WGWM

1. *Meetings:* The WGWM will convene twice a year, in the same country. The venue of the WGWM meetings will rotate among the three State Parties. It is specified that during the first four years of operation, the WGWM meetings will be convened in Greece since according to article 14 (5) of the Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, the operational costs of the WGWM shall be covered for the first four years of its operation by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy. Their dates will be agreed at the end of the previous meeting. Extraordinary meetings may also be held upon request of the PPMC and whenever deemed necessary by any of the three State Parties or the European Commission. It is further provided that one of the two annual meetings of the WGWM under the same chair might be organized via teleconference following the relevant decision of the PPMC.

2. *Decisions and recommendations:* The Working Group on Water Management will propose recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management, as reflected in the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), for the adoption by the PPMC.

Recommendations of the WGWM to the Prespa Park Management Committee will be based on consensus and shall be included in the Minutes of the WGWM.

3. *Chair:* The WGWM will be chaired on a rotational basis for a period of one year by each of the national water authority representative. The annual rotation of the Chair of the WGWM follows the rotating Chair of the PPMC even if the WGWM meetings convene in Greece during the first four years of the WGWM operation. It is further specified that the chair continues to serve as the chair of the WGWM for the duration of the year i.e. not only during meetings but also in between and until the next country takes over. In case of absence of the state representative, the meeting will be chaired by his alternate. The powers and duties of the Chair shall be to:

a. Convene the regular meetings of the WGWM.

b. Prepare the draft agenda for the meeting in consultation with the members. Any member may propose agenda items.

c. Preside over each meeting of the WGWM.

d. Review the Minutes summarizing the main conclusions and outcomes of the meeting, prepared in the English language by the PPMC Secretariat; ensure their review by all members of the WGWM at the end of the meeting; incorporate feedback; ensure signing of the final Minutes by all representatives of the national water services / Ministries of Environment of the three State Parties and the European Commission; ensure that Minutes are sent to the PPMC through the Secretariat; and that copies of the signed Minutes are circulated to representatives of the national water services of the three State Parties and the European Commission.

e. Ensure the observance of the present Terms of Reference.

The PPMC Secretariat will assist the chair in performing the above duties.

4. *Working language:* The working language of the WGWM is English.

5. *Communication:* Internal communication among members of the WGWM between meetings will be conducted through electronic means (preferably e-mail, web meetings etc).

6. *Technical expertise:* In the event that the WGWM lacks sufficient technical expertise on a relevant issue or specific thematic area on an agenda item: f. Relevant expert(s) (from the Parties or international experts) may be invited to participate in the meeting(s) on an ad hoc basis ; and/or

g. Ad hoc Task Groups may be established to contribute to the work of the WGWM, upon guidance by the latter.

7. *Attendance of meetings:* The WGWM meetings will be open to the PPMC and Secretariat members. Interested parties and stakeholders may be invited to participate in the meetings on an ad hoc basis upon mutual prior consent by all the WGWM members.

Article 5

Expenses of the WGWM

1. The operational costs of the WGWM (i.e. accommodation expenses and meals of all WGWM members during meetings taking place in Greece and organisation of meetings thereof) shall be covered for the first four years of its operation through funding provided by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.

2. After the end of this period, the PPMC will cover the costs of operation of the WGWM by its core budget, the Party in whose territory a WGWM meeting will be organised shall bear the cost of organizing the meeting, and each Party shall in principle bear the expenses associated with the participation of its members (i.e. travel and accommodation expenses) in the WGWM meetings.

Annex II

Design and pilot application of a
transboundary monitoring scheme for the
Prespa basin - Approved Concept Note

Design and pilot application of a transboundary monitoring scheme for the Prespa basin

Concept note

1. **Project title:** Design and pilot application of a transboundary monitoring scheme for the Prespa basin
2. **Timeline:** 36 months
3. **Geographical scope:** The transboundary Prespa basin (Albania, Greece, North Macedonia)
4. **Background**

Water is the most vital element for the health and richness of biodiversity of the international Prespa basin – an area notably known for its global ecological importance. The two main lake water bodies forming the basin, Great and Lesser Prespa, are shared between Albania, Greece and North Macedonia and face particular challenges in each side of the shoreline. Indeed, unsustainable human practices have resulted in the deterioration of the water resources, while scientific research indicates alarming signs of eutrophication in both lakes.

As water recognizes no borders, the successful protection and management of the freshwater resources and valuable ecosystems of Prespa requires cross-border collaboration in order to meet both ecological and human needs across the basin. Transboundary cooperation in international river basins is also required by the European water legislation (the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC - WFD) which calls neighboring countries to work together for the production of joint river basin management plans for their shared resources.

Over the past two decades, the trilateral cooperation initiated by the [prime ministerial declaration](#) in 2000 and consolidated with the international [Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area](#) signed by the three countries and the European Commission ten years later, has been strengthened and evolved. However, joint water planning, monitoring and effective water management are still a long path. Indeed, despite the fact that water monitoring systems are set in all three sides of the basin, the big picture is largely unknown, as the monitoring systems and methodologies applied in each side of the basin are not harmonized – even though they all comply with or approximate the EU WFD requirements.

Acknowledging the fact that good knowledge and a common understanding of the water resources' status and challenges is the most fundamental step for the development of appropriate water management policies, water monitoring scientists across the basin are, since 2018, working together in order to close these knowledge gaps. Over a series of face-to-face workshops and e-communication, through the online discussion forum set-up for the enhancement of their joint work, the experts of the voluntary network, the Prespa Water Forum, have concluded that the establishment of a transboundary monitoring scheme that would provide valid scientific information at basin level is fundamental for wise water

management planning in Prespa. It is also commonly agreed that this scheme should be aligned both with the ongoing national monitoring systems and with the WFD requirements. What is more, the design and pilot implementation of a transboundary monitoring scheme is especially crucial in view of the operation of the transboundary water management working group, the institutional policy mechanism laid down by the international Prespa Park Agreement entered into force in May 2019.

Based on the commonly agreed strategy, a proposal for a joint pilot transboundary monitoring exercise should be designed and implemented in order to examine expertise, capacities and gaps across the basin and provide useful insight for improving data comparability.

5. Goal

Set-up and implement a transboundary monitoring scheme for the Prespa basin that will provide a holistic scientific understanding of the water status and challenges and enhance water policy management within and across the borders.

6. Objectives

- Improvement of cross-border water dialogue and exchange of information in the Prespa basin
- Enhancement of scientific knowledge and understanding of the surface water resources status and main threats across the basin
- Harmonisation of water monitoring across the transboundary Prespa basin and setting a scientific basis for the assessment of status and the best planning of appropriate management measures
- Promotion of EU water policy implementation in the Prespa international river basin which extends beyond the Community boundaries

7. Activities

Phase A (8 months since project start)

A1. **Kick off meeting** of the project, Greece (1 month since project start)

A2. Identification of **best practices** in transboundary lake ecological status monitoring and mapping of laboratory capacities and gaps across the basin (3 months since project start)

A3. Design of a **pilot joint water sampling strategy for selected parameters**, aligned with the WFD requirements and adjusted to the ongoing water monitoring programmes in each side, including the design of rotational tour visits to national laboratories to exchange know-how and training (6 months since project start)

A4. Design of a methodology aiming to understand the **ecological requirements** of lake biodiversity in Great Prespa in relation to water level (e.g. criteria, identification of water dependent species/habitats) (8 months since project start)

Phase B (months 9 to 32 since project start)

B1a. **First technical meeting** and demonstration of water sampling (**physicochemical parameters and phytoplankton**) in Greece (9 months since project start)

B1b. Sampling campaign on **physicochemical parameters and phytoplankton** (3 samplings) (12 months since project start)

- Implementation of the first sampling campaign in Albania and North Macedonia with the participation of EKBY to transfer on the spot knowledge on WFD requirements from EU to candidate countries. The lake campaign will take place during the warm period. Sampling will also take place on the main tributaries to Prespa Lake for physicochemical, hydromorphological parameters and macroinvertebrates. HCMR will provide technical assistance for the tributaries sampling. At least two sites per tributary will be sampled (one close to the Lake). HCMR will also install 4 automatic, telemetric monitoring stations for water level, pH, water temperature, dissolved oxygen and electrical conductivity in the main tributaries and the lake (2 in North Macedonia, 1 in Albania and 1 in Greece).
- Two subsequent sampling campaigns in the transboundary Prespa basin during the next two months of the warm season (independently in each side) for physicochemical and phytoplankton sampling.

B2. **Visit of experts from Albania and North Macedonia to laboratories in Greece** to exchange know – how and training (13 months since project start).

B3a. **Second technical meeting**, Stenje, North Macedonia (14 months since project start) to discuss results, exchange know-how on assessment methods and plan for the next sampling campaign for **aquatic macrophytes**. Visit of experts from Albania and Greece to laboratories in North Macedonia to exchange know – how and training.

B3b. Transboundary lake survey for **aquatic macrophytes**, in Albania and North Macedonia, complementary to the Greek monitoring – demonstration and training in each side of the basin during the vegetative period, by EKBY. At the same period another sampling in the main tributaries of Prespa Lake will be organized to record physicochemical, hydromorphological parameters and macroinvertebrates. (17 months since project start)

B4a. **Third technical meeting**, Albania (18 months since project start) to discuss results, exchange know-how on assessment methods and plan for the next sampling campaign for **benthos (macro-invertebrates)**. Visit of experts from North Macedonia and Greece to laboratories in Albania to exchange know – how and training.

B4b. Transboundary lake **survey for benthos**, in Albania and North Macedonia, complementary to the monitoring in Greece – demonstration and training in each side of the basin during spring season. The last monitoring campaign in the main tributaries will be conducted at the same time period focusing on physicochemical, hydromorphological parameters and macroinvertebrates. (21 months since project start)

B5a. **Fourth technical meeting**, North Macedonia, (22 months since project start) to discuss results, exchange know-how on assessment methods and plan for the next sampling campaign for **diatoms and fish**.

B5b. Transboundary lake **survey for diatoms and fish**, in Greece and Albania – demonstration and training in each side of the basin during spring season (25 months since project start)

B6. Identification of aquatic species, data processing, and overall **assessment of ecological status** of transboundary Lake Prespa [EKBY] and main tributaries [HCMR] (30 months since project start).

B7. Completion of study of **ecological requirements of lake biodiversity** in Great Prespa in relation to water level (32 months since project start).

Phase C (months 33 to 36 since project start)

C1. **Fifth technical meeting**, Thessaloniki, Greece, (33 months since project start) to exchange know-how on the overall assessment of ecological status, lake biodiversity in relation to water level, national capacities, discuss input on how to **streamline** management measures at transboundary level, and plan the next steps.

C2. **Adjustment and design of the complete transboundary water monitoring scheme** for the Prespa basin, including proposals to improve capacities of national laboratories (36 months since project start).

8. Results/ Outputs

- a. Cross-border water dialogue, exchange of information, scientific knowledge and understanding of the surface water resources status and main threats across the basin has increased
- b. Best practices in transboundary lake and river ecological status monitoring are recorded
- c. Laboratory capacities and gaps across the basin are identified/ mapped
- d. Discrepancies in water monitoring, protocols, parameters and methodologies are resolved
- e. Water data comparability between the three sides of the basin has improved
- f. Pilot joint water sampling strategy for selected parameters, aligned with the WFD requirements and adjusted to the ongoing national water monitoring programmes, is designed and tested
- g. Understanding of biodiversity requirements in relation to water level has improved
- h. EU water policy implementation in the Prespa international river basin has been advanced

9. Partner organisations

Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre, Greece (EKBY)

Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece (HCMR)

National Environment Agency, Albania (NEA)

PSI Hydrobiological Institute – Ohrid, North Macedonia (HIO)

Society for the Protection of Prespa, Greece (SPP) – as project manager

10. Budget

Approximately 450.000€ in total