

Implementation of the SAP of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System: Improving Groundwater Governance and Sustainability of Related Ecosystems

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

9919

Countries

Regional (Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia)

Project Name

Implementation of the SAP of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System: Improving Groundwater Governance and Sustainability of Related Ecosystems

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

5/24/2019

Review completed by PM

2/4/2020

Program Manager

Steffen Hansen

Focal Area

International Waters

Project Type

FSP

PIF ☐

CEO Endorsement ☐

Project Design and Financing

1. If there are any changes from that presented in the PIF, have justifications been provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(SHansen 6.26.19): No significant changes.

Response to Secretariat comments

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. As a general comment. Please look at the portal submission and:

A) make sure that text has been provided for all the portal headings - e.g. text is missing for the headings ?2) The baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects?; ?5) Global environmental benefits? and ?6) innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up?);

SH (7.16.19): Not addressed.

- The submission lacks a clear description of information pertaining to innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up. Please address.

- The submission lacks a structured section pertaining to expected contributions from other baseline projects, including information on how ongoing or planned projects (funded by e.g. IFIs or bilateral donors) directly/indirectly supports the objective of the project. In addition, please make sure that the list of baseline projects is reflected in the targeted stakeholders? involvement plan presented at inception.

- In relevant sections, please use the term Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs).

- Please delete headings from the portal submission which do not contribute to the flow of the text. Note that there should not be headings in the portal submission which only contain the text "NA".

SHansen (11.6.2019): all of the above points have been addressed.

B) eliminate duplicate headings which have been copy pasted from the agency project doc?s and into the portal submission.

SH (7.16.19): Please see above comment.

SHansen (11.6.2019): addressed.

C) Insert a new version of figure 2. Currently the figure is not showing in the portal submission.

SH (7.16.19): Not addressed. Figure 2 appears as an empty box. Note that it might be necessary to talk to GEF IT support to fix this technical glitch.

SHansen (11.6.2019): addressed.

Additional comments:

2. Regarding output 3.1 and 3.2: Please explain how the project is securing the long-term sustainability of the groundwater multi-purpose monitoring network? Long term sustainability is expected to be closely linked to costs and resource mobilization with links to both national budget codes and bilateral support.

SH (7.16.19): Addressed. It is understood that the monitoring network is a commitment of the countries as indicated in the Strategic Action Program. Realizing that public and donor funds are often scarce, the project from its inception phase and onward should actively evaluate what actions can be undertaken to secure the long-term financial sustainability of the envisioned multi-purpose monitoring network.

3. Regarding project outcome 2 and source protection zones: Rightly so the project prioritizes the establishment and enforcement of source protection zones around springs and wells utilized for public water supply etc. Within this context, please explain:

- A. A) How the project will secure the constructive involvement of agriculture and animal husbandry sectors? Such stakeholders are critical when developing and implementing policy/legal frameworks that feature both elements of 'polluter pays' and 'cost recovery' principles along with potential government sponsored incentive schemes. In general, it is concerning that the tourist, agriculture and animal husbandry have been under-represented and consequently not identified in the stakeholder analysis. Appropriate mitigation actions should be put in place during project implementation.

SH (7.16.19): Addressed.

- B. B) It remains to be seen to what extent overlap between new protection zones and e.g. wastewater discharge sites/historical pollution hot-spots/ uncontrolled landfills etc. will occur. Has the project considered to what extent it can help facilitate resource mobilization activities (e.g. via the NICs) targeted the clean-up of heavy pollution such as PCBs, heavy metals, chlorine, lead etc. SH (7.16.19): addressed.

SH (11.13.19): **Gender.** Please incorporate in the results framework an indicator which captures the number and percentage of men and women actively participating in consultations, workshops, and committee meetings.

SH (11.13.19): Annex ANNEX I 'Results of the capacity assessment of the project implementing partner and HACT micro assessment' and ANNEX H. "UNDP Risk Log" seem to be missing from the UNDP project document. Please add these annexes. Finally, signatures seem to be missing from the ANNEX E. "UNDP Social and Environmental and Social Screening Template". Please explain?

SH (12.09.19): addressed.

SH (2.18.20):

1. Type of Executing Partners is wrongly classified ? please amend.

SH (4.2.2020): Cleared.

2. Core Indicators: please choose the right aquifer from the drop-down list for each of the sub-indicators under indicator 7.

SH (4.2.2020):

Not cleared.

Indicator 7.1: Note that the current list of freshwater ecosystems (Trebišnjica, Neretva, Cetina, Bilecko Lake, Cijevna, Una) is too long. For Indicator 7.1, please consider only selecting the "Dinaric East Coast Aquifer" and/or the Dinaric Littoral (West Coast aquifer).

Indicator 7.2: Based on the revised indicator 7.1, please update.

Indicator 7.3: Based on the revised indicator 7.1, please update.

Indicator 7.4: Please readjust this indicator to the value 1.

SH (7.24.2020): Cleared.

3. On the M&E Plan: GEF-6 projects have to report on Core Indicators, not on Tracking Tools. As needed, please amend CEO Portal/PRODOC sections and their annexes. Further, note that time/funding required for populating the portal Core Indicators at MT and TE stage is covered by the GEF agency fee.

SH (4.2.2020): Not cleared. Please note that time/funding required for populating the portal Core Indicators at MT and TE stage is covered by the GEF agency fee (not project resources). Please amend the M&E budget accordingly.

SH (7.24.2020): Cleared.

4. On the budget in ProDoc (page 90 onwards): for each of the 5 components there is a budget item titled "local consultants" and amounting \$980,000. Further, there are also budget lines for int consultants. As per the explanation provided in "A" (*International Consultants: This includes regional and international consultants working on project activities, Midterm review and Terminal evaluation (MTR/TE) consultants including PCU staff*) and "B" (*experts working on project activities and PCU staff working on technical and management activities*). Please provide a breakdown of such budget lines in a way that it will be possible to understand the details of activities of each consultant.

There seems to be a disconnect between the budget notes and the provided TORs, which doesn't provide a justified explanation to help understand what component of the budget, including PMC, is to cover for what positions, be it technical or management related.

Please revise the budget notes to clearly indicate how UNDP prorates PMC cost from technical consultants, preferably based on a better defined TORs for consultants (both international and national). Further, please make clear where the Project Manager and Project Monitoring and Evaluation Officer are budgeted from? Please note that staff

who manage the project e.g. manager, director, finance, admin and procurement officer should be charged to PMC, and technical staff to project components.

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Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

1. All portal headings are now displayed / completed correctly in portal0

2. Text added in Prodoc at Page 60, and in the CEO Endorsement at page 49.

?The Consultation Mechanism will continue to support the project countries and will continue to serve the project Countries after the completion of the Project for the effective management of the shared karstic waters and the dependent ecosystems. The long-term sustainability of the monitoring network is a commitment of the countries as clearly indicated in the Strategic Action Program. The Consultation mechanism will facilitate the sharing of the monitoring information.?

3A. Text added in the ProDoc at page 66 & CEO at page 54.

?As noted in the baseline section, stakeholders from the tourism, agriculture and animal husbandry sectors were less represented during the TDA. Since then countries have identified these sectors as important ones in future development scenarios. Special attention will hence be given to their involvement during project execution starting with their participation to the project Inception meeting.

3B. The project aims that implementing the priority action foreseen in the SAP, among them the regional harmonization of policies for sanitary protection zones and the setting up of a modern monitoring network that will enable countries to detect pollution sites and trends. Remediation actions will follow and will be responsibility of each country, with the exception of already identified areas of transboundary concern where the

project will define specific action programs for the mitigation of transboundary concerns including pollution.

UNDP response, 6 September 2019

2) text has been added at page 18 of the Request for Endorsement (similar text is present at page 68 of the PD)

- 5) and 6): text can be found on page 48, 49

Some of these comments were addressed in the previous resubmission and some we understand that they were not taken into consideration as they had not appeared correctly in the portal submission.

All portal headings are now displayed / completed correctly in portal

UNDP Response, 4 december 2019

- The percentage of the men and women which will be involved and actively participating in workshops etc has been added in the results framework page 76-77 of Prodoc.

- Reference to Annex I was included in the Prodoc only by mistake and is now deleted; Annex H was prepared at the time of original submission in May 2019, but was not submitted to GEFSEC by mistake. Now is a part of Prodoc, at page 147.

- Signed version of Annex E is now added in Prodoc, at page 119.

UNDP Response, 18 March 2020

1. this is now corrected in the gef portal

2. the core indicators 7 are now updated as requested

3. corrected

4. Budget notes were updated to provide more details on the breakdown of these costs

UNDP response, 6 July 2020

2. Core Indicator and portal submission are now updated reflecting both the Dinaric East Coast and Littoral Aquifers

3. M&E Plan updated accordingly

4. A breakdown of budget lines related to the amounts dedicated to International and regional consultant (A) as well as local consultants (B) and their functions has been provided in a table following the budget breakdown, entitled: 'budget notes' (pages 95-96). Furthermore, the consultancies have been aligned with Annex C where the minimum requirements have been set

A pro rata approach has been used to identify the technical assistance part that the Project Manager and Evaluation Officer will offer for the various outputs and is presented in the 'budget notes'. Furthermore, the ToRs for the Project Manager in Annex D have been expanded to align the budget that will be used per output for her/his salary. The rest of the funds for Project management comes from the homonym part of the budget.

3. Is the financing adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objective?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request (SHansen 6.26.19): Yes

Response to Secretariat comments

4. Does the project take into account potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, and describes sufficient risk response measures? (e.g., measures to enhance climate resilience)

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. Please consider expanding the risk response matrix. As an example, to what extent is it a risk that during PPG the agriculture and animal husbandry sectors were not extensively consulted? Are there risks associated with the varying level of capacity across the participating countries?

SH (7.16.19): Addressed

Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

1. The only risk that can jeopardize the implementation of the priority actions agreed upon by the countries in the SAP is the loss of the strong political support demonstrated so far by the countries. The support received during project preparation has confirmed the initial assessment of this risk as LOW. All stakeholders will be consulted during the project execution and in particular in the areas of transboundary concern, and the capacity across the participating countries will be harmonised by the project in a number of ways in particular for what concerns the monitoring.

5. Is co-financing confirmed and evidence provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request (SHansen 6.26.19): Yes

Response to Secretariat comments

6. Are relevant tracking tools completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. Please populate indicator 7.2 and 7.3. Please also consider if the project contributes towards other indicators such as indicator 4 and 11?

SH (7.16.19): indicator 7.4 is set at 4. Please readjust to 1.

SH (11.13.19): **Indicator 11.** As per GEF Core Indicator [guidelines](#), this indicator should capture the total number of direct beneficiaries including the proportion of women beneficiaries. As an example, the # of people benefiting from the targeted regional/national capacity building workshops should be captured by this indicator.

SH (12.09.19):

Not addressed. The current estimate of 3,667,000 direct beneficiaries seems too high. Please see the GUIDELINES ON CORE INDICATORS AND SUB-INDICATORS (http://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Results_Guidelines.pdf) and amend indicator 11, while providing an explanation in the portal as to how the final number was reached.

The guidelines state the following:

11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

Definition: This indicator captures the total number of direct beneficiaries including the proportion of women beneficiaries.

Details: This indicator captures the number of individual people who receive targeted support from a given GEF project/activity and/or who use the specific resources that the project maintains or enhances. Support is defined as direct assistance from the project/activity. Direct beneficiaries are all individuals receiving **targeted support** from a given project. Targeted support is the intentional and direct assistance of a project to individuals or groups of individuals who are aware that they are receiving that support and/or who use the specific resources.

Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

1. Indicator 7.2 and 7.3 are completed in the document ?GEF Core Indicators.?

Indicators 4 and 11 were not filled in given the very large size of the project region, where new policies and the better knowledge of the karst aquifer system will enable improvements of the land and water use management.

UNDP response, 6 September 2019

Indicators 7.2, 7.3 have been populated as requested

Indicator 7.4 revised as requested

Indicator 4: the project will promote new aquifer protection policies and tools throughout the Dinaric Karst System which includes very large sections of the territory of the project countries (>8m ha). This will indirectly have favourable impacts on karst biodiversity and land management. However, none of the sub-indicators seems to apply to this case.

Indicator 11: See above. The numbers would equal the total number of the project countries population, which seems excessive.

UNDP response, 4 December 2019

The total number of direct beneficiaries has been added in the Core indicator 11.

UNDP response, 21 January 2020

During the 5-year project it is estimated that approximately 50,000 people from Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina will benefit from the project. This number has been calculated taking into consideration the demographics specific to the project pilot sites, but also the project capacity building activities. Equally men and women from local institutions and authorities, will participate in the joint multi-disciplinary thematic expert groups and in other bodies which will be developed for the purposes of the project; in training courses and other capacity building events including IW-Learn activities; consultants which will be contracted for the needs of the project.

7. Only for Non-Grant Instrument: Has a reflow calendar been presented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(SHansen 6.26.19): NA

Response to Secretariat comments

8. Is the project coordinated with other related initiatives and national/regional plans in the country or in the region?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. See previous comments. Also, the Knowledge Management section should contain a short description of how baseline initiatives will be incorporated into the overall project KM approach.

SH (7.16.19): Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

1. Text modified in Prodoc page 62 and CEO ER - page 60

Awareness raising and knowledge management are important aspects of the project, directly incorporated into several of the project outputs. The knowledge enhancement process will ultimately produce a number of knowledge tools and communication /

dissemination materials which include consideration of the ongoing activities being implemented by each country and relevant to the objective of the present project. Etc.

9. Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request (SHansen 6.26.19): Yes

Response to Secretariat comments

10. Does the project have descriptions of a knowledge management plan?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request (SHansen 6.26.19): Yes

Response to Secretariat comments

Agency Responses

11. Has the Agency adequately responded to comments at the PIF stage from:

GEFSEC

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. Please include in the re-submission a LOE from Montenegro signed by the current GEF OFP.

SH (7.16.19): Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

New LOE from Montenegro signed by current GEF OFP is now included in the resubmission package

STAP

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. Overall yes. However, the project portal submission contains the following text: ?The CIE shall be open to other Dinaric countries including but not limited to Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia, Italy and Slovenia, sharing the Karst aquifer system, upon their request and approval from the CIE Secretariat.?.

Within this context please specify if the PPG phase was used to establish a dialogue with the above-mentioned countries as to facilitate a formal request to the CIE Secretariat? If this is not the case, then please consider adding text in the project document which specifies the intention of the project to establishing such a dialogue during the project inception phase.

SH (7.16.19): Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

Text regarding the participation of other countries sharing the Wider Dinaric Karst System has been added in different parts of the ProDoc and CEO Endorsement document:

ProDoc page 56 & CEO ER page 46

Outcome 1.

?The CIE shall be open to other Dinaric countries including but not limited to Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia, Italy and Slovenia, sharing the Karst aquifer system, upon their request and approval from the CIE Secretariat. Dialogue with the countries will be initiated during the project inception meeting to which they will be invited to participate?.

ProDoc page 60 & CEO page 50

Outcome 4.

?If possible, Serbia and North Macedonia will also be invited to join the monitoring network.?

ProDoc page 61 & CEO page 50

Outcome 5.

?The Action Programs will be submitted for adoption at governmental level. Serbia and North Macedonia will also be invited to join.?

ProDoc page 62 & CEO page 51

Outcome 6.

?Serbia and North Macedonia will also be invited to join these activities.?

GEF Council

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(SHansen 6.26.19):

1. Overall yes. However, the project portal submission contains the following text: ?The CIE shall be open to other Dinaric countries including but not limited to Serbia, Republic of North Macedonia, Italy and Slovenia, sharing the Karst aquifer system, upon their request and approval from the CIE Secretariat.?.

Within his context please specify if the PPG phase was used to establish a dialogue with the above-mentioned countries as to facilitate a formal request to the future CIE Secretariat? If this is not the case, then please consider adding text in the project document which specifies the intention of the project to establishing such a dialogue during the project inception phase.

SH (7.16.19): Addressed.

Response to Secretariat comments
UNDP Response, 11 July 2019

See responses above.

Convention Secretariat

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request (SHansen 6.26.19): NA

Response to Secretariat comments

Recommendation

12. Is CEO endorsement recommended?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request
(SHansen 6.26.19): Please address comments and resubmit.

SH (7.16.19): Please address comments and resubmit.

SH (11.13.19): Please address comments in box 2 and 6 and resubmit.

SH (12.09.19): Please address comments in box 6 and resubmit.

SH (2. 4.2020): Please address comments in box 2 and resubmit.

SH (4.16.2020): Please address comments in box 2 and resubmit.

SH (7.30.2020): Please incorporate COVID-19 considerations into relevant project documents and resubmit.

SH (1.4.2021): Please address the below points and resubmit.

? Please resubmit and include the Checklist for CEO Endorsement Template duly filled out for this project.

SH (6.8.21): A populated checklist has been submitted.

- ? ? Please revise the project budget so that pro rata costs for the project technical lead are fully captured in the project budget notes A category. Currently such expenses are spread across project budget notes category A and B.

SH (6.8.21): Cleared.

? Please expand annex H (risk -log) and include additional information specific to (a) plans in place to manage a possible re-instatement of COVID-19 containment measures and (b) how the project will manage potential changes in project implementation timelines and/or changes in capacity of executing entities.

Note information in annex H must also be reflected in the Risk section (PRODOC pp 70

and Portal submission section A.5). Finally, please insert text in the stakeholder section confirming that the Stakeholder Engagement Plan planned for adoption at the first Steering Committee Meeting will contain ample consideration of mobility and stakeholder engagement under a constrained COVID scenario.

SH (6.8.21): The above comment is cleared. PM recommends the project for CEO Endorsement.

Response to Secretariat comments

UNDP response, 18 March 2020

Please note that some text in chapters VI-VIII of the Project document and relevant text of CEO ER (pages 56-59) has been updated according to the newest Project document template from January 2020 as requested by UNDP GEF HQ. In both documents these revisions are highlighted with green.

UNDP Response, 22 October 2020

Text considering COVID-19 was added to following sections of Project document: 3.RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS, 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) PLAN, 11.RISK MANAGEMENT and ANNEX H. UNDP Risk Log and into relevant section of CEO ER

UNDP Response 10 May 2021

Request: Please resubmit and include the Checklist for CEO Endorsement Template duly filled out for this project.

Response: Duly signed checklist is attached to the package and uploaded to the GEF portal.

Request: Please revise the project budget so that pro rata costs for the project technical lead are fully captured in the project budget notes A category. Currently such expenses are spread across project budget notes category A and B

Response: Budget revision completed.

Request: (a) plans in place to manage a possible re-instatement of COVID-19 containment measures

Response: The project document in Annex H has already identified plans in place to manage the COVID-19 containment measures, assessing and responding to:

- a) the risk of not being able to hold meetings and trainings by planning to hold these sessions virtually and the shift of travel related costs to purchasing telecommunications related equipment that will guarantee this

- b) The risk of not being able to get data: by using data UNESCO and other International Organizations have in their databases and ensuring online related demands to the appropriate Governmental Authorities

Request: (b) how the project will manage potential changes in project implementation timelines and/or changes in capacity of executing entities

Response: An additional entry was added to reflect the response to this request in Annex H. In particular, a dual approach will be used. One that uses the Steering Committee mechanism and another that will use UNESCO's daily operations. For the former, potential changes in project implementation timelines and/or changes in capacity of executing entities will be frequently discussed during the regular PSC meetings, with a view to discuss and agree in a commonly agreed action. For the latter, the situation will be continuously assessed using the capacities of UNESCO's Regional and Local offices, who are in continuous contact with Governmental Authorities in the implementation of other Programmes and projects. The close monitoring of the situation and the bilateral discussions will be used to raise 'red flags' related to potential obstacles in implementation. The identified challenges will be either dealt with by UNESCO, when it is a purely simple project management issue, or they will be brought up to the PSC for discussion and decision.

Request: Note information in annex H must also be reflected in the Risk section (PRODOC pp 70)

Response: All relative information from Annex H are now reflected in the PRODOC (p 70)

Request: Please insert text in the stakeholder section confirming that the Stakeholder Engagement Plan planned for adoption at the first Steering Committee Meeting will contain ample consideration of mobility and stakeholder engagement under a constrained COVID scenario.

Response: A new sentence was introduced in the PRODOC (p 67), to reflect the inclusion of the mobility and stakeholder engagement under a constrained COVID scenario within the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. In particular, it is proposed that a specific agenda item will be introduced in the discussions.

Review Dates

	Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review		6/26/2019
Additional Review (as necessary)		7/16/2019
Additional Review (as necessary)		11/13/2019

**Secretariat comment at CEO
Endorsement Request**

**Response to
Secretariat
comments**

Additional Review (as necessary)	12/9/2019
Additional Review (as necessary)	2/4/2020

CEO Recommendation

Brief Reasoning for CEO Recommendations

Project title: Implementation of the Strategic Action Program (SAP) of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System: improving groundwater governance and sustainability of related ecosystems

GEF Grant: 5,145,000; Total confirmed co-financing: 15,050,000

Background: The Dinaric karst system represents a geologically heterogeneous, south European orogenic belt of the Alpine mountain chain and is considered as the classic karst region worldwide. Although all of the West Balkan countries have freshwater resources sufficient to meet the needs of sustainable development, climate change is expected to further disrupt already highly variable water regimes. Also, as the requirements for drinking water grow especially during summer months, and the demands for hydropower production and irrigation generally increase, the water resources of the region may come under pressure from users with conflicting interests.

The Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) showed that the state of groundwater in the DIKTAS project region is generally good in terms of both quantity and quality with a few exceptions, but with a number of serious potential threats. The main threat to the overall groundwater quality in the DIKTAS region is solid waste and wastewater disposal. For the vulnerable karst environment of the Dinaric region, which has a limited auto-purification capacity, this is the most serious present and future threat to the system. To a lesser degree, karst groundwater resources in the region are also contaminated by agricultural and industrial activities.

The Project's Theory of Change evolve around four main objectives:

- ? Institutionalize consultation and information exchange mechanisms among countries sharing the DIKTAS groundwater resources;
- ? Introduce sound groundwater governance principles;
- ? Harmonize and modernize DIKTAS wide monitoring networks and protocols;
- ? Build awareness, disseminate good practices, and promote gender equality in water resources management.

Innovation, Sustainability and Scaling up: The project aims at introducing regional reforms to harmonize present national policies and plans, keeping in mind the transboundary implications of the shared nature of the Dinaric Karst system. The project

assumes that by launching a package of interventions identified and endorsed as part of the GEF supported Ministerial Endorsed Strategic Action Plan (SAP), the countries will be on a path towards facilitating the systematic implementation of sustainable groundwater governance and protection measures throughout the Dinaric Karst region. While the applied approach is highly collaborative and innovative for the region, it's also has replication potential across other Karst areas.

COVID-19 considerations: Short-term constraints on travel and group gatherings will be considered in project planning, and on-line or remote learning and communication options will be used where necessary, adjusting some of the equipment related costs to ensure equal opportunity to all beneficiaries. It is foreseen that successful pilot testing, will strengthen the countries' ability to build institutional capacity and make a better (science-based) 'case' for investments and reforms that would not have been viable beforehand. In addition, proposed pilot projects must address and/or accommodate risks and impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic, particularly in areas related to livelihoods. Longer-term economic impacts will be analyzed where relevant and factored into efforts to finance the continued implementation of the SAP, and monitoring activities following the conclusion of the project.