

NEWSLETTER

No1

KOSOVO WATER

#ujëpërkosovën

Minister Murati signed the agreement on the Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo - Phase I Program with the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Kosovo, Thomas Kolly





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EDITORIAL

ON A MISSION TO PROVIDE SAFE WATER FOR EVERY CHILD, WOMAN, AND MAN IN KOSOVO

This is the first-ever newsletter dedicated to water in Kosovo. Supported by the SDC's and Government of Kosovo's Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo Program (IWRM-K), it offers a platform for discussions about water resource management in Kosovo. This newsletter will provide the latest water news, address important topics and relevant developments, and offer solutions to ongoing and future challenges.

IWRM-K's mission is to Engage (people, resources), Prototype (solutions), Catalyze (transformation), and Scale results towards tangible positive long-term change in water resources management in Kosovo. Its ultimate goal is to ensure "safe water for every child, woman, and man in Kosovo."

The newsletter brings together key water stakeholders – institutional, civil society, affected communities – as well as international supporters who share the same enthusiasm for creating a brighter future for Kosovo through improved environmental protection and better water resource management. It will help all these actors to better align their visions of the future and coordinate actions that maximize and effect meaningful change.

By subscribing to this newsletter, readers stay up to date on the results and progress of the IWRM-K Program. The Program team welcomes feedback on how to improve this publication.

MAIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

SWITZERLAND HELPS KOSOVO TO IMPROVE ITS WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



Switzerland throughout the centuries has gained a great deal of experience in the water sector. In the last 15 years, Switzerland has assisted Kosovo in providing water to 600,000 people. Now, Switzerland helps Kosovo improve its management of water resources. This important contribution preserves natural resources and supports a more sustainable economy. My country is happy to share this experience with Kosovo.

Fresh water is a limited resource. Climate change, population growth, and new consumption patterns are putting pressure on world's water supply. There is no alternative to water. This Program is paving the way to a more sustainable water future for everyone in Kosovo and will keep institutions, experts, and citizens of both countries connected.

Thomas Kolly
Ambassador of Switzerland to the
Republic of Kosovo

BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT FOR KOSOVO FUTURE



This Program will provide us with the long-awaited support on our path to fundamentally improved water management in Kosovo. Our expectations from the partnership we have built with Switzerland are very high, as high as our determination to continue with the ambitious reform agenda that the institutions and the people of Kosovo have set. By building capacities to tackle multiple challenges, this Program will help to provide enough water for our people, economy, and ecosystems.

We are embarking on an ambitious transformation process, and the combination of Swiss expertise and EU-based reform will further help the country take big steps towards meeting its sustainability agenda. Hundreds of thousands of farmers will grow crops, raise livestock, and earn a decent living more easily. A sustainable modern model of water governance will secure a water future for all people in Kosovo.

Liburn Aliu
Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning
and Infrastructure

IWRM – WATER FOR KOSOVO AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Water is of great economic importance to Kosovo, especially to its industry and agriculture, but is unequally distributed, affecting national economic growth trends. Over 62% of the country's population lives in rural areas, where agriculture is one of the main economic sectors. Farmers in Kosovo currently face various challenges related to soil pollution, irrigation, drainage, and the degradation of fertile land, among other issues, because of the lack of efficient management of water resources. These challenges will worsen in the future with climate change.



Therefore, there is a need for an integrated approach that connects water resource management and sustainable development, thereby achieving economically efficient water use and social equity, as well as environmental and ecological sustainability.

ABOUT THE IWRM-K PROGRAM

The Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo (IWRM-K) Program is a 12-year transformational initiative that addresses the root causes of Kosovo's water-related challenges. In its ongoing first phase (2020–2024), the Program will establish a planning framework, the knowledge and the institutional capacities needed to transform the country's water resource management.

OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, THIS PROGRAM IS HELPING DEVELOP A SHARED VISION OF WHERE PEOPLE WANT KOSOVO TO BE IN 12 YEARS FROM NOW, THROUGH:



PLANS AND MEASURES:

To gain a better understanding of water stresses, their root causes, and corresponding management responses – all of which will be incorporated into the country's first-ever River Basin Management Plans.

The Program is mapping all successful water actions undertaken to date and will scale up measures that successfully addressed systemic deficiencies.

Grant schemes are being designed to support practical solutions that reduce pollution and water use in farming and industry.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND AWARENESS RAISING:

New stakeholder participation mechanisms will ensure democratization of water resource management.

Stakeholders and CSOs are being empowered to partner with the Government on water resources management through targeted training and grants.

A series of communication and awareness-raising activities at the national and local levels will spur action and make water resource management a top priority on the country's political agenda.

LEGISLATION, INSTITUTIONS AND KNOWLEDGE:

Modern water legislation will be developed and introduced.

Institutional and organizational capacity development for water resource management is being supported among partner institutions through a series of trainings and peer-to-peer exchanges.

Top water science courses are being introduced at national universities, which also creates on-the-job training opportunities for young professionals, experts, and researchers.

Current water monitoring and water information systems are being upgraded.

All of this will lead to a sustainable modern model of water governance – securing safe water for every child, woman, and man in Kosovo.

WORKING GROUPS (WGs)

The Program has established Working Groups that will facilitate inter-institutional dynamics and cooperation during the drafting of River Basins Management Plans (RBMPs). The outputs of the Working Groups (WGs) will be beneficial to key institutions, starting with the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure and its River Basin District Authority (RBDA). The working groups will also contribute to effective stakeholder participation and partnerships that assist in the coordinated development and implementation of the RBMPs.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT & AWARENESS

Important complements to the RBMPs are stakeholder identification and involvement, including the creation of innovative participation mechanisms. Non-institutional stakeholders, such as CSOs/NGOs, farmers, academia, business, and vulnerable groups, will receive special consideration. The Program is close to completing the Model for Stakeholder Participation Mechanisms relevant to Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo. The Program is also supporting communication and awareness-raising activities to reach key stakeholders and the general population of Kosovo.

WATER EDUCATION

The Program is developing an introductory but comprehensive training program on the IWRM-K Program. The main aim of this activity is support to the knowledge and skills development of state (water) officials, young (water) professionals, academics, researchers, CSOs/NGOs, and other stakeholders. The training program will be defined by themes, learning objectives, teaching material, and delivery methods.

The Program will also support the development of an interdisciplinary Master Program in IWRM. The Master Program aims to compile interdisciplinary knowledge among a diverse target audience with diverse educational backgrounds and professional experience, including engineering, economics, ecology, environmental science, social science.



RIVER BASINS MANAGEMENT PLANS AND WATER BALANCE ASSESSMENT

The River Basins Management Plans (RBMPs) will effectively design and efficiently implement sustainable management solutions that use water resources fairly and balance conflicting interests in water management. The IWRM-K Program will cover three river basins (Ibër, Morava e Binçës, and Lepenc) and will fundamentally improve the capacities of the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure (MESPI) and its River Basin District Authority (RBDA).

The ongoing Water Balance Study will provide detailed country-level and basin-scale analysis of the availability of water resources in space and time, economic analysis of water resource management, and capacity development support to Kosovo Hydro-meteorological Institute (HMI).

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Water pollution remains one of the most serious problems for the health of citizens and the environment in Kosovo. Contamination and degradation of the water sources worsen overall water management. Diffuse pollution is among the challenges especially associated with agricultural activities. To help to address this issue, the Program will help farmers in priority areas of one or more of the target river basins modify their farming practices, such as better control the use of agrochemicals and irrigation water, prevention of the loss of nutrients from land to water bodies, and erosion processes. The Program has already launched a Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS) targeting farmers across the country.



WOMEN AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN FARMING



People with disabilities who use water for agriculture face various challenges to their productivity, health, and quality of life. Ms. Fatime Limaj lives with her family in the village of Banja, Malisheva Municipality. Although a person with disabilities, she is a successful farmer dedicated to enhancing the value chain of agricultural products, from production to final consumption. She is the founder and president of the Fatjona Women's Association, which employs five workers, processes vegetables, and produces pickles. These products have markets in Kosovo and Germany. She dedicates all her success to her husband, also a person with disabilities, who has supported her in every step of her life. The two co-own 0.3 hectares of land, while Ms. Limaj has taken land from her brother-in-law to use for 10 years and registered it in her name. Therefore, she can more easily obtain grants and subsidies to expand her work.



Near the house where Ms. Limaj lives is a large greenhouse where she mainly grows cucumbers and tomatoes, while she cultivates peppers and cabbage in an open field. Unfortunately, she and her husband do not have access to an irrigation system; they have only one well. Without rain, they cannot water all their plants in a timely manner. She is convinced that a Kosovo-wide water management plan would improve crop yields, improving her family's economic status and that of the community in which she lives. A high-quality organized irrigation system would have a positive effect by maximizing the yields of the crops she cultivates.



WATER MANAGEMENT AT SMALL-SCALE AQUACULTURE BUSINESS (FISHERY)

Along the Lumbardhi River and above the Rugova Gorge in Malaj, Mr. Alban Lajqi owns a business resort called Rugova Camp. Operating since 2000, it is among the first family businesses in this area. During the seasonal peak, the resort hosts thousands of visitors who enjoy natural beauty combined with traditional food and local hospitality. There, Mr. Lajqi has built a farming pond to raise trout fish for his customers. He has adopted a friendly environment system, where fresh water enters the pond from the river and circulates normally without having any negative impact on the environment. Still, Mr. Lajqi is facing sustainability challenges, from water quality monitoring and proper feed amounts and time to fish seed quality and availability management. Like Mr. Lajqi, other fish farmers in Kosovo need to address internal and external challenges to sustain their products. They need large-scale support from their government to enhance their capacities and achieve sustainable aquaculture business practices in Kosovo.



AGREEMENT SIGNED

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN KOSOVO - PHASE 1

SWISS GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT KOSOVO WITH ABOUT 20 MILLION SWISS FRANCS



On September 3, 2021, the Minister of Finance, Labour and Transfers Hekuran Murati, after successful negotiations with the Government of Switzerland, represented by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, today an agreement with Ambassador Thomas Kolly on the project "Integrated Management of water resources in Kosovo - Phase 1".

This program is expected to be funded by the Swiss Government with about 20 million Swiss francs (over 18 million euros) and will be developed in three phases, where the first phase, from 2021 to 2025, is about 8.5 million (about 8 million euros).

Whereas, the Government of Kosovo is expected to have co-financing about 6 million Swiss francs (over 5 million euros) for the entire project, while for phase 1 there will be a contribution of 1.7 million (over 1.5 million euros).

UN WEATHER AGENCY WARNS OF WATER CRISIS WITHOUT URGENT REFORMS

Climate change is expected to increase water-related hazards such as droughts and floods while the number of people living with water stress is expected to soar due to growing scarcity and population growth, the report warned.

"We need to wake up to the looming water crisis," said Petteri Taalas, secretary-general of the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization.

'The State of Climate Services 2021: Water', a collaboration between the WMO, international organisations, development agencies and scientific institutions, estimates that the number of people with inadequate access to water will top 5 billion by 2050 versus 3.6 billion in 2018.



#SOCIALMEDIAPOSTS

Water Innovation Week 2021

Organized by: Imagine H2O
The water innovation accelerator
- empowering people to develop
and deploy innovation to solve
water challenges globally Nov 3-4,
2021



Do we take water supply for granted?

Well, certainly not in #Pristina, #Kosovo's capital, where the #water shortage problem has been overcome with funds from the #EU.

Now there is a reliable water supply.

Did you know that #educating people & communities is essential in ensuring long term #watermanagement? @unescoWATER works with #teachers/#trainers as part of its #WaterEducation action to enhance stakeholder capacities. On #WorldTeachersDay2021 we thank them for their support.



The 2021 State of Climate Services Report: Water, highlights the need for urgent action to improve cooperative water management, embrace integrated water and climate policies and scale up investment in this precious commodity which underpins all the international goals on sustainable development, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. #ClimateChange threatens us all and often plays out through water:


Extreme rainfall, floods, drought, glacier and ice melt etc

We need better water management, monitoring, early warnings and investment. We are not doing enough to avert the looming crisis.

This **NEWSLETTER**

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Integrated Water Resources
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