

NEWSLETTER

No3

KOSOVO WATER

#ujëpërkosovën

The River Basin District Authority (RBDA) has a central role in the management of water resources across the country. Upgraded RBDA capacities make them effective vehicles for introducing water resources management that will work for the environment, the economy, and the people of Kosovo.



Integrated Water Resources
Management in Kosovo

EDITORIAL



FRANK WIEDERKEHR
DEPUTY CEO OF SKAT & IWRM-K PROGRAM
DIRECTOR

THE IWRM-K PROGRAM CAN BECOME A MODEL FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

The “Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo” is one of Skat Consulting’s flagship programs. It is the fruit of the decade-long partnership between Kosovo and Switzerland in water resources management. We at Skat Consulting feel honored to have been entrusted by the Swiss Government and its Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) with the financial means and the responsibility to catalyze systemic improvements to Kosovo’s water sector.

On this journey to help the Republic of Kosovo establish a sound and sustainable water management system, we partner with several organizations from Austria and Switzerland that bring highly valuable experience and expertise into the Program that Kosovo institutions and other local stakeholders can easily access. To facilitate the desired change, we put in place our Program Facilitation Unit of competent senior and junior professionals, highly motivated to support the country’s progress and sustainable future.

The Program’s innovative design and the hard work of all involved actors over the past 20 months have already delivered results that raise the prospects of greater success. The combination of research, data collection, and planning documentation, backed by capacity development support and targeted investments, mobilizes stakeholders in a process that will secure a sustainable (water) future for Kosovo.

If implemented as envisaged, the Program can also grow into a regional and international model for other countries and projects to benefit from.

Last but not least, broader stakeholder participation and community awareness achievements are key to any lasting change. None of this would be possible without the motivation of our key partner institutions, most of which are part of the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning, and Infrastructure. The importance of the Program has been recognized by the official governmental signing and the parliamentary ratification of an agreement between Kosovo’s Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, and the Swiss Cooperation Office. This agreement offers the promise of valuable and substantial local financial contributions.

In this regard, we are happy to provide you herewith with the third issue of the Kosovo Water Newsletter. We hope it serves as a useful platform for the exchange of ideas, experiences, and successes related to the implementation of different initiatives to support Kosovo’s environmental and water resources management agenda.

We are looking forward to presenting some great results in the upcoming issues of this newsletter.

THE ROLE OF THE RBDA IS IRREPLACEABLE IN THE WATER SECTOR

Interview with Mr. Naser Hafizi

Deputy Head of River Basins District Authority – RBDA

Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure – MESPI



• **The importance of the establishment of RBDA and the role of this Authority in MESPI and the Government?**

Management of water resources at the basin level is a necessity of the time.

Until 2017, in Kosovo, water management at the central level was administered by the Water Department within the MESPI. The establishment of the RBDA as a competent authority (Law on Water) has been an immediate need justifying the great importance that this body has for the water sector in Kosovo. However, the RBDA still operates as the only department within the MESPI with a small staff of only 13 civil servants.

It is a legal obligation for the RBDA to be restructured into an agency with executive competency with a larger number of professionally trained staff, to perform its legal and administrative obligations. This objective, from 2021 (including this year), has been included in the main priorities of the Government of Kosovo.

• **The role of RBDA in the entire water sector/industry in Kosovo?**

The RBDA, in the field of water, especially in the development of economy and industry in Kosovo, has a central and irreplaceable role.

As in all other developed countries, but also developing ones like our case, the granting of the water right for the use/discharge of water, as well as the extraction of sediments from riverbeds is in the competence and responsibility of the RBDA. However, we must not forget the fact that the right to drinking water is a fundamental right and inviolable. Acquisition of water rights for economic operators in Kosovo is realized with a water permit and concession.

Currently, according to RBDA data, hundreds of public and private companies have the right to use and discharge water, starting from RWCs (water supply and sewerage companies) of all regions, hydropower companies/hydropower plants, water bottling companies, swimming pools, the dairy industry, concrete production companies, etc.

- **The challenges you face, as a Deputy Head but also the RBDA as a whole?**

In the RBDA, in the capacity of Deputy Head, I was appointed at the end of September 2021. Initially, I was faced with many challenges such as the lack of a system of water payments and capital projects, as well as problems of non-collection of financial obligations. After several months of engagement with officials within the RBDA, a solid system of water payments and legality in the implementation of capital projects in the field of water was achieved.

Other obstacles that can not be neglected are: a lack of staff to perform legal duties, lack of river basin management plans, hundreds (about 300) of requests/applications for water acts, implementation of capital projects contrary to legal procedures, lack of valid and reliable databases, numerous problems with water properties, and many, many other issues.

- **Cooperation with IWRM-K Program and other donors in the water sector.**

Currently, despite the deficient staff that RBDA has, we have very good cooperation with the IWRM-K Program. For MESPI and in particular RBDA, the drafting and finalization of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) remain the main objective in this cooperation. The drafting of RBMPs for the three basins (Ibar, Lepenc and Morava e Binçës) started last year, thematic working groups were established, the pace of which, because of restrictions by COVID-19, has slowed down a bit, but I believe that we will have an increased level of activities in achieving the objectives of the Program.

In the water sector, donations have never been lacking and there are a considerable number of them since the post-war period.

- **Goals and plans for the future**

The restructuring of the RBDA in the Agency, which I hope will happen very soon, is the goal for starting the works that await the water sector. According to the priorities of the Government and MESPI, it is a "year of dams" because, this year, the project of the second phase of IBER-LEPENCI is being started, which envisages the construction of the Firaja dam, which will be completed in 2025 and then the Shtime dam ending in 2031. Also this year, the loan agreement with the World Bank for the FLOWS project for the Kika - Kremenatë dam was ratified. There are over two million euros in the budget of Kosovo for this year for the drafting of feasibility studies for some dams such as Pollata, Dragaçina, Drelaj, etc.

Other goals likely to contribute to the sustainable management of water resources are: systematic training of public officials of RBDA, improving the quality of water acts, creating a software system of water payments, legality in the implementation of capital water projects, the definition of water properties, and inter-institutional cooperation with all stakeholders.

Water is our heritage, let us leave a testament

Dr. Laura Kusari, Associate Professor
Hydrotechnical Department, Faculty of Civil Engineering,
University of Prishtina



I shall begin with a quote from National Geography: "All the water that will ever be is, right now". Unfortunately, not only are we experiencing water scarcity now as a result of well-known realities, but our water resources are also degraded. Water resources management is a global challenge, necessitating the education and employment of specialists with extensive and diverse knowledge.

Established in 1979, the Hydrotechnical Cathedra at the University of Prishtina helps Kosovo solve its current water resources management problems.

Since 2002, the Hydrotechnical Department's study program has been organized in accordance with the Bologna Declaration with a two-cycle higher education system. Hydrotechnical department offers bachelor's and master's degrees, allowing for the recognition of qualifications and learning across Europe.

The Bachelor of Science in Hydrotechnics degree aims to prepare students in water engineering by addressing fundamental engineering principles, such as fluid mechanics, hydraulics, hydrology, hydrogeology, water supply, dams, and other related courses. Students have the opportunity to combine theoretical lectures with a more practical approach during these studies through class exercises, laboratory work, and field trips organized throughout the study years. Collaboration with industry is very important, and it is promoted through an internship program that assists students in developing their network and opportunities to work in a variety of water-related fields.

The Hydrotechnical Department's master-level students receive more in-depth knowledge, both theoretical and practical. At this program, students can enhance their knowledge in a variety of fields through a modern curriculum, including research and academic writing skills, advanced hydrology, hydraulic modelling, water treatment processes, river engineering, irrigation and drainage engineering, water resources management, and flood protection, amongst others.



Our Academic partnership recently signed an agreement with IWRM-K Program which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Skat Consulting Ltd (Switzerland), in consortium with the Environment Agency Austria (EAA) to implement the Master's Program in Integrated Water Resources Management.

We have developed a modern curriculum with the assistance of our partners that includes a broad range of water resources management topics and are in the process of program accreditation.

The MSc in IWRM is expected to enhance our knowledge of the current water resources challenges and to deepen and develop and strengthen the scientific and technical capabilities necessary to meet those challenges.

Completion and modernization of the Hydraulics Laboratory have been emergencies and requirements that will be realized within the Program.

There is significant demand for young water professionals in the workforce. The skills that our students acquire during their studies prepare them for careers in water-related industries.

Our graduates are employed by a variety of private and public organizations involved in water-related activities. The Hydraulics Department's two master's programs will prepare future water scientists and professionals for the worldwide water resources network.

Numerous graduates have continued their academic and professional careers throughout Europe and serve as inspiration to their first-year colleagues.

Our alumni are therefore symbols of pride for us.

DELTARES – LONG EXPERIENCE IN KNOWLEDGE SHARING, SMART SOLUTIONS, AND INNOVATIONS

Deltares is an independent not-for-profit institute for applied research in the field of water and the subsurface. Throughout the world, it works on smart solutions, innovations, and applications for people, the environment, and society. Deltares applies its knowledge in the Netherlands and all over the world.

In short, Deltares addresses three “too’s”: too much water, too little water, too dirty water. “Too much water” means we help with flood prevention by making plans and developing infrastructure. “Too little water” means we help to prepare for droughts, a task which will become more and more important now under climate change. “Too dirty water” means we work on water quality, in relation to ecology. We combine knowledge of chemical substances, effects on aquatic organisms and humans, estimation of emissions, modelling where substances end up, what local effects are likely to be. In the Netherlands, we supported the ministries and regional water authorities with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, including the Groundwater Directive. We were active in EU-working groups where we shared experiences with other member states and with candidate member states. We want to share this knowledge.

Deltares has a long tradition in developing and applying models. In principle, all these models are free, open-source, and available for anyone. Our business model is to share.

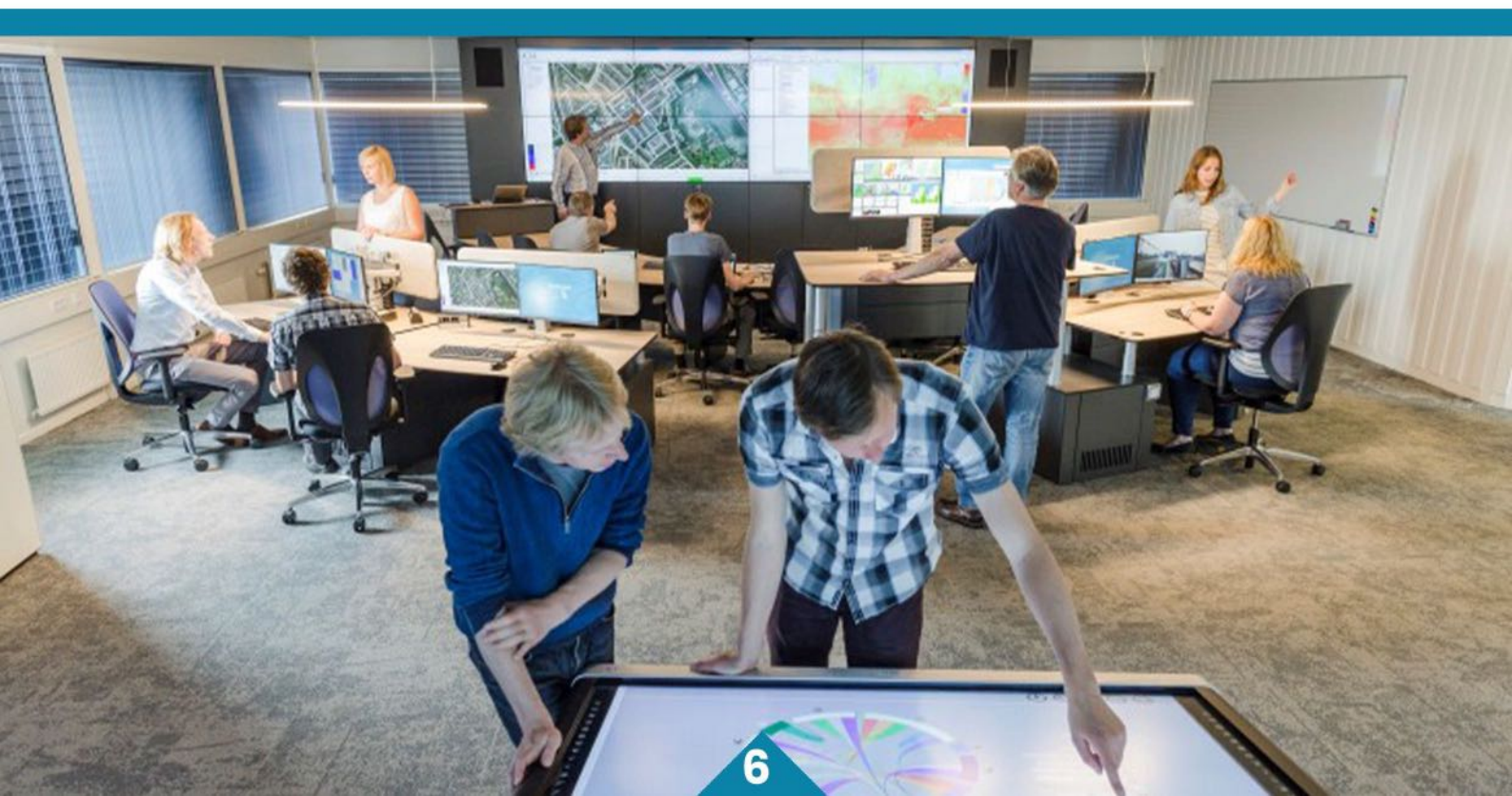
History

Deltares (or its constituent bodies) has been operating in the Netherlands and abroad for over ninety years. It was formed in 2008 from the merger of the following organizations: Delft Hydraulics (founded in 1927), GeoDelft, the Soil and Groundwater department of TNO, and specialist research departments of the Dutch Department of Public Works, Transport and Water Management. With an annual turnover of more than EUR 100 million, Deltares now employs over 800 people in the Netherlands across two locations in Delft and Utrecht. Abroad, Deltares has offices and affiliates in Singapore, Indonesia (Jakarta), Australia, Abu Dhabi, Latin America, and the United States of America (Deltares USA Inc., Silver Spring).

Regional engagement

In recent years, Deltares has been increasingly supporting government agencies in the Western Balkans as they adapt to both current and future water-related challenges. This has included projects to strengthen local capacities to implement the European Water Framework Directive in North Macedonia and Serbia; develop and deliver an operational flood forecasting and warning system for the Sava River Basin; support local governments in Serbia in water management planning and the development of DRR plans, and improving the climate resiliency of road assets in Albania.

Deltares is enthusiastic about its current engagement in the IWRM-K Program in Kosovo and is looking forward to exchanging knowledge on water resources management and river basin planning together with its Kosovo partners.



“WHAT DOES WATER MEAN TO YOU” ESSAY AND PHOTO COMPETITION

On February 4, 2022, the IWRM-K Program organized a small ceremony to announce the best photos and essays in the challenge entitled "What does water mean to you?" The purpose of the challenge was to raise awareness among youth and students about the importance of water in Kosovo.

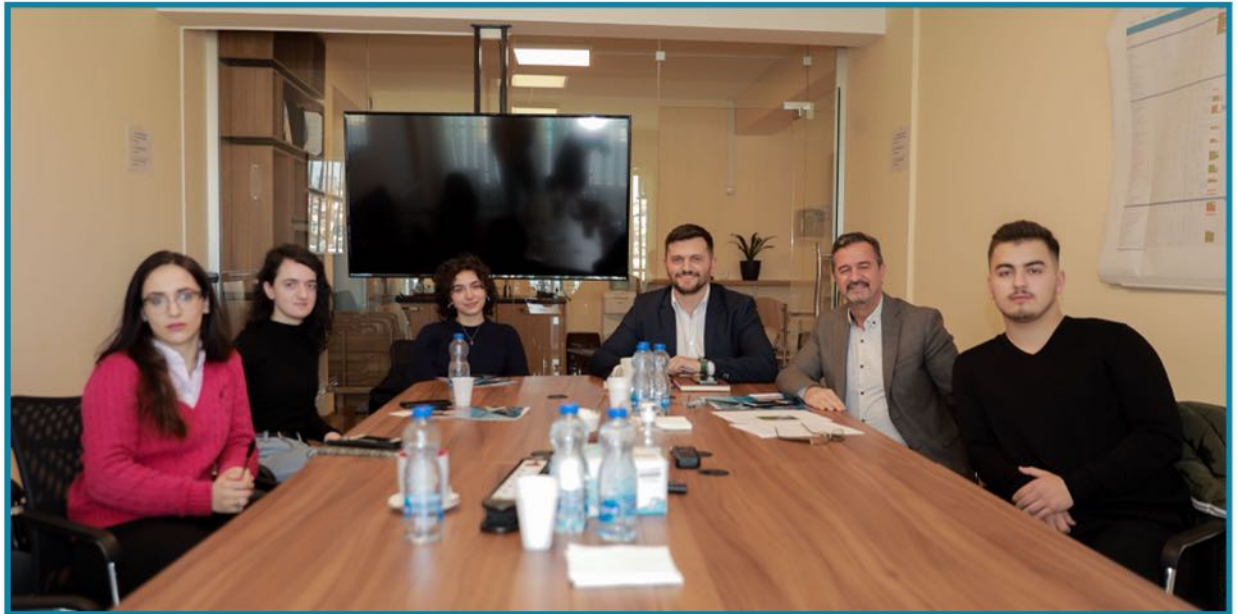
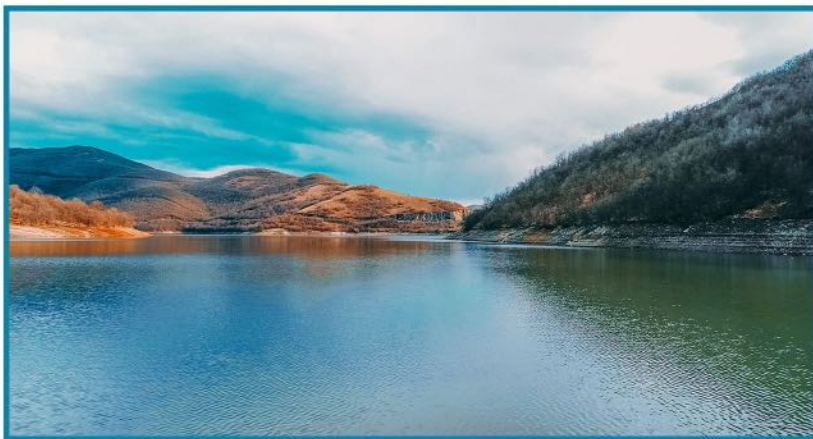


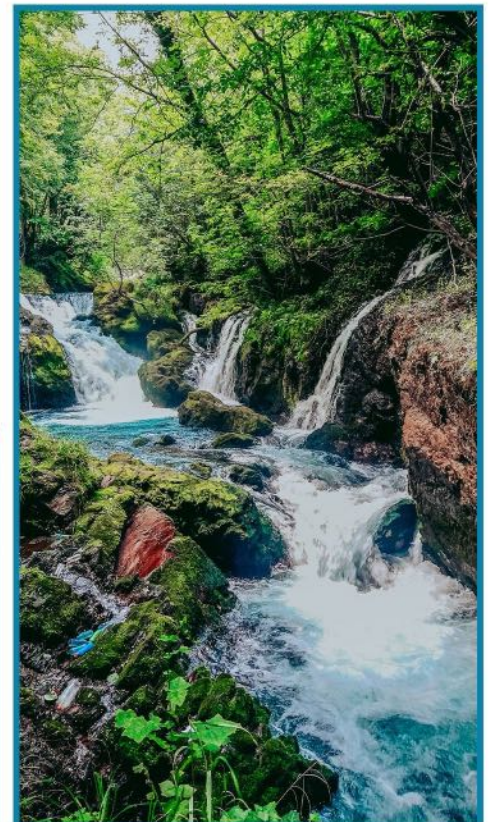
PHOTO COMPETITION



LEART BRAHA - BADOVCI



GRESA GRECI - PESTOVA



MOLIKA HAJRIZI - RADAVC

“WHAT DOES WATER MEAN TO YOU” ESSAYS COMPETITION

Shqipe Krasniqi, Student

U, J, and Ē, only three letters, which form the word with the most magnificent power UJĒ (WATER), without which, the world would be a dead place. A very simple substance, tasteless, odorless, and colorless can be called the solution to many problems. At the same time, the lack of water often leaves us with our hands tied. When you turn on the tap and no water comes out, you are thirsty. Or when you climb a mountain and the first thing that comes to mind as soon as you arrive is to take out the bottle and drink so much water, but what if the bottle is dry? All the time you will feel that absence, not even being able to enjoy the beauties you are attached to. A bottle of water carried hand in hand quenches the thirst of many children after those long games in the neighborhood, or when you come back in the evening and take a shower with warm water.

Many times in that summer heat, you get inside a pool swimming through the freshwater. Or, you have in mind that most important day that awaits you the next day, and it cleans the clothes you choose to wear. Or after bad news, it soothes the face with its freshness. Sometimes, even the coincidence of that dog on the street, who seems thirsty and gets water to drink and does not hesitate to drink immediately, makes you possess magical happiness.

Relaxing melodies create raindrops on the umbrella you are holding. Or the crash of those sea waves at your feet, while you are looking at that wonderful sea beauty and the whole “plain water.”

Ermira Gashi, Student

Water is the basis of life. The greatness of water is shown in oases, while an indicator of the importance of water in the progress of human labor are aqueducts from the Roman Period. Not in vain, historical civilizations were created along the great rivers: The Nile, Tigris, Euphrates ... It covers 70% of the Earth's surface but is still inaccessible to a large part of the world's population. One of the most sensitive elements to climate change is water, in particular, its purity, since precipitation will manifest in the form of rain, then rain frequency brings floods thus causing erosion.

One of the indicators of a country's development is the amount of water utilization. Water abuse reflects the global water crisis. The combustion of fossil fuels for electricity generation has negative effects on the environment and health. However, this does not mean that energy from water remains the only optimal solution. The effect of water on the morphology of the relief is great. Powerful rivers have created canyons, caves in karstic rocks, modification of sea surfaces, glaciers, and so on. Pollution of rivers, discharge of sewage into them, have also ruined their recreational function.

Water surfaces, pleasing to the eye, calming the soul, are also museums for artistic creativity. Water is vital for the development of the life of all living organisms! Proper use, protection from pollution scream from the future!

Besijana Kurti, Student

We all know it as the “Blue Planet,” but not all of us are aware that this planet that has all this water surface is threatened by the crisis. Water is life, true, but to have it, we must preserve it. As a community, we must strive to know the value of every drop of water. Explaining why humanity will face a water crisis when the amount of water is the same since the beginnings of life on Earth is a bit difficult. Water already, as a result of direct pollution, air pollution, soil pollution, global warming, acid rain, is passing into forms that are unusable for living beings or need high financial cost to make them usable. We are witnesses to what water has been and is the source of diseases and this proves to us that it is not all just quantity, but it must be quality as well.

Nor is our country immune from water scarcity and pollution. The renewable energy sector should be directed to other areas as well, such as wind, solar, geothermal energy, and not only to hydropower plants. This is directly affecting the biodiversity of the areas and the well-being of the inhabitants, as they use it for irrigation of agricultural lands.

We, as a society, only when we have water shortages, know that we have irrigated the plants, cleaned the yards, the streets, and the cars with drinking water, left the taps open while brushing our teeth, cleaning our clothes, and washing our bodies. Not to mention when we have to buy water in plastic bottles, and we do not know how long it stayed in it and whether it was stored properly.

Therefore, let us save water today, lest we pay for it tomorrow. And it is never too late to change the bad practices that can cost us.

#SOCIALMEDIAPOSTS



#GenderInequality starts where one would not first expect: hidden in people's minds where negative #stereotypes can find fertile soil.

However, #GenderEquality can be cultivated there with help of awareness raising & #education.

We can - We must- We will do better!

#IDWGIS

Diarrhoeal disease is preventable with safe water, yet it kills one child every minute: <http://wrl.d.bg/wee550HRhak>

#IValueWater
#SDG6



This **NEWSLETTER**

Is supported by the SDC's IWRM-K Program co-funded by the Government of Kosovo and implemented by Skat Consulting Ltd., St. Gallen, Switzerland and the Environment Agency of Austria.

If you want to watch the first IWRM-K promotional video click [here](#):



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Integrated Water Resources
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