

# NEWSLETTER

No2

## KOSOVO WATER

#ujëpërkosovën

Agreement for the Creation of a  
New Master Programme on Integrated  
Water Resources Management in Kosovo

The University of Prishtina 'Hasan Prishtina' and the Swiss-funded 'Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo' Program (IWRM-K), on 20 October 2021, have signed a Letter of Agreement for the implementation of a new Master Programme on Integrated Water Resources Management (MP-IWRM).

The MP-IWRM will be hosted by the University of Prishtina 'Hasan Prishtina' (UPHP) in partnership with the University 'Haxhi Zeka', Peja, and other international partners.



Integrated Water Resources  
Management in Kosovo



# EDITORIAL



**LAURENT TORCHE**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SWISS COOPERATION  
OFFICE - KOSOVO



**ARDIANA EFENDIJA ZHURI**  
SENIOR NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICER / SWISS  
COOPERATION OFFICE - KOSOVO

## TAKING THE KOSOVAN - SWISS RELATIONS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

By building upon the decades-long, friendly bilateral relations and significant cooperation, Switzerland has committed to supporting a new multi-year, multi-million Program for "Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo" (IWRM-K). The Program will play a key role in building on the excellent progress achieved so far in securing safe water for the people of Kosovo via a variety of other Swiss-supported initiatives.

The new Program embarks on an ambitious roadmap for transforming the way water resources are managed in the country by placing a well-balanced emphasis on the economic growth needs, environmental protection objectives, and socio-cultural considerations. Placing the institutions and people of Kosovo at the center of our Program design implies that considerable in-country capacities are already present and that the society is ready for the new generation of result-oriented transformational initiatives.

In such context, Switzerland provides critically important funding, as well as know-how on the state-of-the-art concepts and approaches to water resources management, accumulated over many years of experience. Most importantly, such Programs serve as conduits for sharing Swiss values when it comes to appreciation of natural resources and the high standards in environmental protection.

IWRM-K is one of the Swiss flagship initiatives in Kosovo whose success will largely depend on the involvement of many stakeholders – institutions, CSOs, other donors and projects, as well as the people of Kosovo. We are very happy to support the creation of such a newsletter which is intended to provide the space for the exchange of ideas, initiatives, and results in addressing Kosovo's most pressing water challenges among the stakeholders.

At the end, we are thankful to the multitude of partners and supporters of this Program in Kosovo, Switzerland, and abroad, and we wish them a Happy New Year, many successes, and a sustainable (water) future.



## SKAT CONSULTING – FOUR DECADES OF DEDICATION TO THE WATER SECTOR

Skat Consulting Ltd. is an independent Swiss resource centre and consultancy company. Since 1978, Skat has provided technical expertise, management, and methodological support to international projects, programmes, and institutions in a large variety of countries and for a large variety of clients. Over the past four decades, Skat Consulting has evolved from a small association attached to the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, to an owner-operated, leading Swiss company specialised in international cooperation.



With its headquarters still in St. Gallen, Skat Consulting has successfully spread its international engagement to Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Western Balkans region, engaging around 20 people in the head office and around 100 field staff working throughout the regions. Skat Consulting is dedicated to making basic services available and ensuring dignified living conditions and a healthy environment for all. Its mission is to support governments, the private sector and civil society around the globe in improving people's

lives by facilitating lasting solutions in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), Energy and Climate, Building and Settlements, and Governance.

Skat Consulting provides services on technical, managerial, conceptual, and strategic levels, to include: supporting and implementing projects and programmes; backstopping, coaching, and mentoring of stakeholders; providing technical advice and experts' support; facilitating policy dialog and strategy development; conducting assessments, monitoring, and evaluations.

The company has an extensive track record and experience in implementing long-term mandates for development projects in transitioning and developing countries, such as Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine, Tajikistan, the Great Lakes Region in Africa and others.

Skat Consulting has been involved in different institutional and capacity development efforts in Kosovo since 2007, namely providing backstopping services for the design and performance of the Swiss-funded Rural Water and Sanitation Support Programme (RWSSP). This entailed, among other things, assisting the Water Services Regulatory Authority (WSRA) in strengthening its capacities and implementing its functions; assisting the National Institute of Public Health (NIPHK) in improving its data management; and establishing a public and European Commission reporting mechanism on drinking water quality.

Skat Consulting further provided Swiss funded backstopping support (2009-2020) to the Inter-Ministerial Water Council (IMWC) advisors on sector coordination, reform, and policy work at the highest political levels.

In 2019, Skat Consulting, in collaboration with the Environment Agency Austria (EEA), was awarded the mandate to co-design and execute the Integrated Water Resources Management in Kosovo (IWRM-K) Program, Phase 1 by SDC (May 2020- April 2024).



A photograph of three people standing in a snowy field. They are wearing winter jackets and hats. The person on the left is wearing a blue and white jacket. The person in the middle is wearing a red jacket. The person on the right is wearing a dark jacket and a scarf. They are standing in front of a snowy background with some equipment on the ground.

## Environment Agency Austria – Long Experience and Commitment in Setting High European Standards

### **Water protection knows no borders**

The Environment Agency Austria (EAA) has been strengthening water protection in the new member states and EU candidate countries for many years. The EAA can point to successful projects in more than 60 countries – from the EU member states to the Western Balkans, the Middle East, the Maghreb, and Asia. One priority region for joint projects is the countries of the Western Balkans.

The EAA has been supporting Kosovo for several years in adapting to European standards for the protection and use of water, air, biodiversity, or in dealing with climate change. Cooperation and knowledge exchange between Kosovar and EAA experts takes place within the framework of projects, but also over several years in international working groups, such as those of the European Environment Agency or Eurostat.

### **Environmental Agency Austria: Internationally sought-after environmental advisor**

The Environmental Agency Austria is the largest expert institution for the environment in Austria and one of the leading environmental consultants in Europe. Experts from over 55 fields work together under the umbrella of the EAA. Interdisciplinary work is part of everyday life at the EAA, with the focus of consulting activities being on environmental consulting and institutional capacity building. The EAA laboratory plays a leading role in the development of new water analysis methods. In cooperation with water experts, the IT team develops customized database systems for our clients. The central topics of the IWRM-K program – such as creating methods for the protection of groundwater resources or developing solutions for a water information system – are core tasks of the EAA water experts. Coupled with more than 30 years of experience in environmental consulting, this know-how is in demand internationally.

### **Common basis: EU water law**

A major advantage is that water management in Kosovo and Austria share the same legal basis: EU water legislation and, in particular, the EU Water Framework Directive. As a result, the lessons learned in Austria during implementation may be effectively communicated and transmitted to Kosovo, while taking into account an adaptation to the local conditions.

The IWRM-K Program uses the peer-to-peer approach as a methodological technique for knowledge transfer and support. The focus is on the joint development of solutions by Kosovar and EAA experts to solve current problems. Practical experience and application to actual situations take precedence over theoretical treatises. The first joint steps in the first implementation phase of the IWRM-K Program are promising and give good prospects that its goals can be achieved.



# WATER BALANCE STUDY FOR KOSOVO – NEW KNOWLEDGE FOR BETTER DECISION-MAKING

The IWRM-K Program presented the Water Balance Study to the Ministry representatives. This is the first comprehensive national-level research of its kind, and it will provide the following information to Kosovo's water stakeholders:

- a better understanding of the water quantity-related stresses across Kosovo's main river basins.
- enhanced knowledge base and a better understanding of priorities regarding quantitative aspects of integrated water resources management (e.g., allocations of water in space and time considering socio-economic and environmental protection priorities, including environmental flows).
- improving the understanding of the key water resource economics for Kosovo.

The study combines analyses of water resource data (e.g., availability and demand/use) and water stress assessment (e.g., quantification of the (mis-)match between availability and demand), all in the context of climate change scenarios.

The study preparation was based on extensive data collection and synthesis into multiple use databases on meteorology, hydrology, and water use. Advanced models such as SWAT, HEC-HMS, and WEAP, were also used to prepare the research. All of these may be employed as decision-making support systems and tools by relevant authorities in the future.

In order to fill out the major data gaps, the study relied on the use of remote sensing data from different satellite platforms. The updated datasets provide reliable data for making more accurate projections of the water resources availability in light of the likely climate change scenarios for the region.

According to the Water Scarcity Index (Falkenmark and Lindh, 1974), all other river basins are under water stress, with the exception of the Drini i Bardhë River Basin. The condition in the Morava e Binçës River Basin is concerning, as is the situation in the Ibër River Basin, which may be classified as water scarce as a result of climate change.

For more information on the study please write to: [kosovo@skat.ch](mailto:kosovo@skat.ch)





## WATER EDUCATION FOR BETTER FUTURE

In support of the Master Programme on IWRM-K, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) will provide a grant of EUR 150,000. The funding made available through the IWRM-K Program will be used by the host and partner university to build the capacities necessary for the successful organization of the study programme.

“We are delighted to establish this unique partnership that will result in a state-of-the-art academic curriculum. The new study programme will seek to equip water professionals of Kosovo and the wider region with knowledge and skills necessary to guide the future societal responses to the most pressing water management challenges in light of the ongoing unprecedented global changes”, said Prof. dr. Naser Sahiti, Rector of University of Prishtina ‘Hasan Prishtina.’

The signing ceremony was attended by Mr. Laurent Torche, Deputy Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office. He stated: “This master programme we see as one of the most important Swiss investments in the water sector in Kosovo. It is an investment in the future of Kosovo and especially in young people who will be able to take on responsibilities in water resources management based on best skills and practices.”

The master’s study will be created and accredited over the next 1-2 years, after which it will begin admitting the first students who will become specialists in Kosovo’s water resources management.

### IWRM-K TRAINING PROGRAM: LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR LONG-TERM KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN KOSOVO



In order to strengthen and apply the modern approach to capacity-building in water resources management, the IWRM-K Program entered into a partnership with the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA) via a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU defines the cooperation framework and share of responsibilities between the parties in the joint efforts to develop and implement the Training Program on IWRM (TP-IWRM), targeting Kosovo’s relevant state administration/civil servants and other water professionals.

The contracted international consultants (Deltares, The Netherlands), following a training-needs assessment, identified major themes and topics to be included in the TP-IWRM. It emerged that the emphasis is more on sustainability, distribution, and management of water resources for efficient water use and protection, with improved water policy, legislation, gender, people’s participation, and information management. By referring to several worldwide training programs, the TP-IWRM curriculum has been finalized and is suited for country circumstances. The pedagogy of the TP-IWRM includes lecture sessions, tutorials, case study analysis, role plays, and videos followed by group discussions on the water sector themes as well as field visits. A Training of Trainers will be delivered early next year.



# Partnership between Young Water Professionals in Kosovo (YWP-K) and IWRM-K Program

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Program and SHUKOS/Young Water Professional Group in Kosovo (YWP-K) provides the strategic direction for building a long-term partnership through targeted investments in the capacity of future water professionals of Kosovo. The Program support so far includes the Strategy and Programme of Work for YWP-K (2022-2024) and Internal Regulation.

These two important strategic/regulative documents set out the vision, mission, and corresponding priority actions, which also reflect their greater commitment to the country's IWRM agenda and the internal rules that will help achieve the YWP-K mission. The cooperation is expected to further expand through the active participation of YWP-K in different Program activities, such as training and grant-supported project activities.

## Improving permitting procedures an important step toward greater transparency of MESPI

During 2021, the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure (MESPI) has made important progress in improving water permitting procedures. The MESPI has created a special tracking system for permit applications and worked on improving the internal coordination mechanisms for a more efficient issuing of permits.

The entire exercise involved mapping of procedures and identification of bottlenecks (both for applicants and the administration), updating the permit requests databases, and strategizing future expert support to improve the quality and effectiveness of permitting. The process has resulted in the visualization of procedures and step-by-step guidance documents that should make it easier for operators to fulfill the requirements for getting the necessary permits.

Based on the results so far, MESPI will continue to upgrade the system by engaging the necessary technical expertise, providing more specific guidance documents for operators on how to further improve the quality of applications, and further increasing the enforcement capacity.

The entire reform is motivated by the requests of the operators, as well as the Ministry's aim to improve the transparency of its work.



## SUPPORT TO THE WATER INFORMATION SYSTEM (WIS)

The IWRM-K Program has drafted a comprehensive Roadmap for the Further Development of the Water Information Management Platform for MESPI. This Roadmap has been validated by the respective Working Groups.

The Roadmap is intended to serve as a guidance document, identifying the key steps to implementation, building capability, and establishing governance arrangements for further developing the WIS.



Figure: Conceptual architecture of the future/upgraded WIS as envisaged by the Program

### ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITIES WITH THE PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS

During November 2021, with the support of WWF Adria, the IWRM-K Program organized a series of round tables with various stakeholders from Ibër, Morava e Binçës, and Lepenci river basins. The purpose of these sessions was to present the Program activities, propose models for the establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Participation Mechanism, and address, consult and advance the process for the better management of water resources, including River Basins Management Plans.

Roundtables have brought together mostly the representatives from municipalities and CSOs/NGOs, but also from non-formal groups, environment activists, farmers, businesses, and other interested groups or individuals linked directly or indirectly with the water sector in Kosovo. During the roundtables, the Program enabled thematic and very open discussions to deeper understand multi-stakeholders needs, opinions, and ideas. Additionally, Program Experts offered training curricula for all stakeholders as well as information on the grant scheme for CSOs, which is expected to be implemented in the next couple of years.

IWRM-K Program, jointly with WWF Adria, will continue its close cooperation with the MESPI, in particular with River Basin District Authority, to finalize the most acceptable model of stakeholder participation in IWRM, with the objective to ensure effective and comprehensive involvement of all interested parties relevant to water management in the three river basins.





# HEARTH OF YOUTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENTHUSIASTS

## NGO EKOVIZIONI

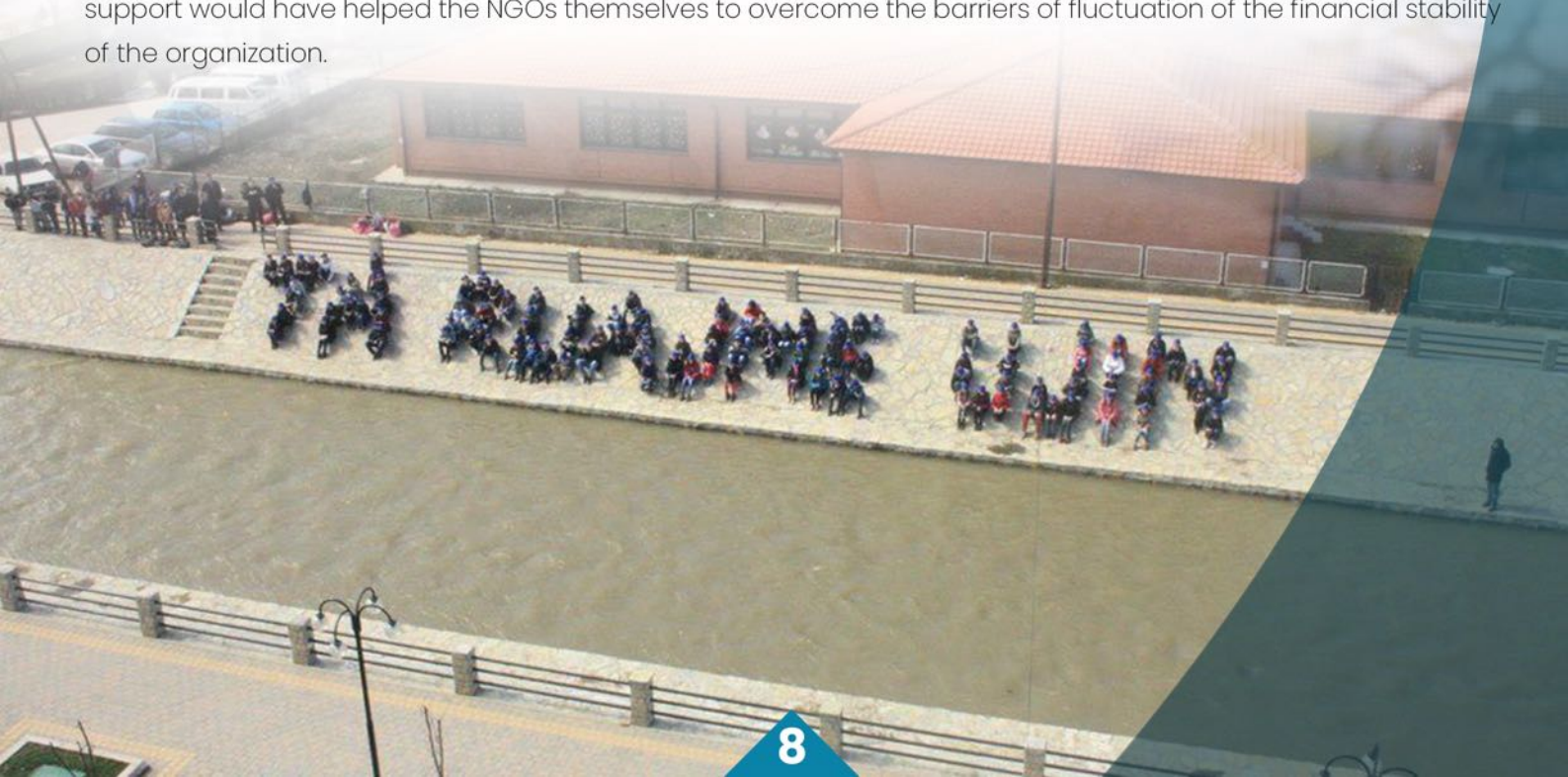
NGO Ekovizioni was founded in 2004 and operates mainly in the municipality of Podujeva. There are approximately 60 different projects from local and international donors that characterize Ekovizioni's portfolio. Witnessing a deteriorating environmental situation, Ekovizioni is constantly committed to fulfilling its vision:

**A clean environment in Kosovo and citizen's awareness of environmental protection, in line with European standards.**

The Executive Director of Ekovizioni, Mr. Shpend Sopa, describes the gradual steps of extending the activity of the organization not only in the municipality of Podujeva, but throughout the territory of Kosovo. The decision to expand the organization's activities in other municipalities came as a result of the lack of local-level CSOs dealing with environmental protection and the lack of addressing the voice of citizens to solve problems. There are three main pillars on which Ekovizioni operates, namely environmental policy, waste management, and sustainable development.

When it comes to the hydrography of the municipality of Podujeva, Mr. Sopa proudly emphasizes the river Llap, which originates in the municipality with a length of 61 kilometers, or for a total of 82.7 kilometers up to the estuary of the river Sitnica. The entire hydrographic network of the municipality of Podujeva drains the waters in the direction of the Black Sea basin. Mr. Sopa's concern is seen when he talks about water pollution, which mainly occurs from the discharge of untreated wastewater into the riverbed, both from households and businesses and also by the industry.

Although Ekovizioni has implemented some projects directly related to water, still, according to Mr. Sopa, donor support for water projects, which has been small so far, needs to be increased. Long-term projects of water resources management and environmental protection, in general, would have been a great help in creating more advanced environmental policies and programs in environmental protection. At the same time, this donor support would have helped the NGOs themselves to overcome the barriers of fluctuation of the financial stability of the organization.





## For a Green and Clean Kosovo NGO Let's Do it Peja

It has been almost a decade since Let's do it Peja was founded as a community-based organization that later registered as an NGO. The executive director of "Let's do it Peja", Mr. Urim Xheravina, talks about the involvement of the organization in the implementation of various projects and activities under the Mission, **"We Advocate, Educate and Cooperate for Environmental Protection in Kosovo"**, collaborating with partners and donors, both local and international. The focus of the next five-year activity of "Let's do it Peja" are specific thematic areas like air, water, soil, waste, energy, and biodiversity.

Mr. Xheravina emphasizes that "Let's do it Peja" has the capacity and expertise to assist the relevant authorities in drafting and implementing water resources management plans in Kosovo. Furthermore, this experience comes from the projects and activities developed in the Drini i Bardhë river basin and its tributaries. During the monitoring of the state of water flows in the Drini basin, Mr. Xheravina considers that in the vast majority, the rivers are polluted and the beds degraded. In general, the situation is alarming not only in the Drin River basin but also in other water basins of Kosovo. Such pollution can be encountered even at the highest mountain points in the protected areas of National Parks. Therefore, it is very important for NGOs to be accepted as equal partners by the relevant institutions, to be continuously active, and to contribute more to raising public awareness.

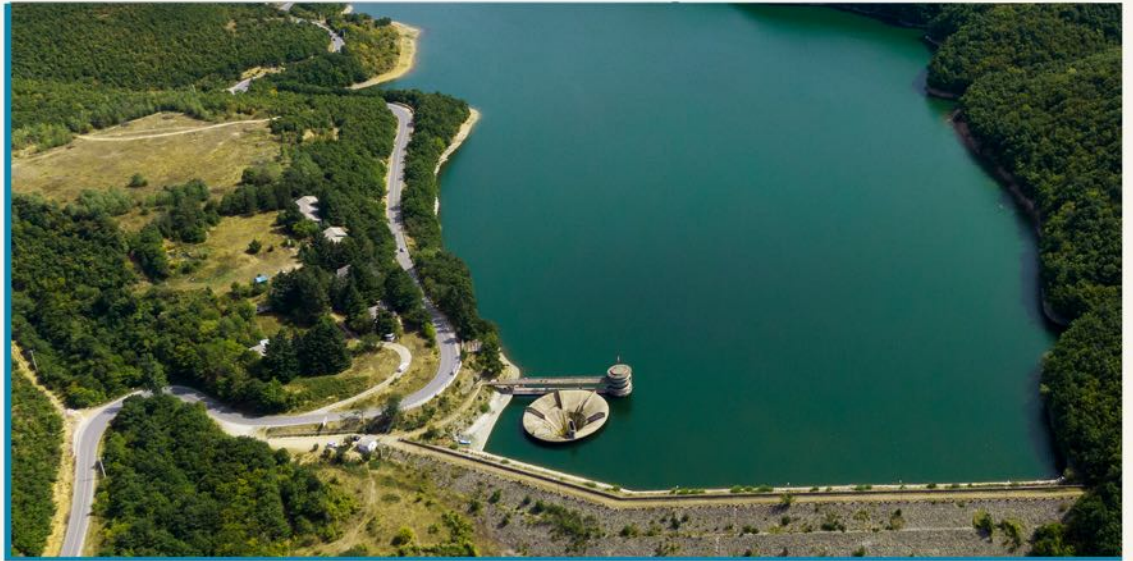
Environmental NGOs encounter challenges in different ways but the biggest challenge is organizational and financial sustainability due to the short lifespan of the project with a relatively small budget. In these circumstances, continuity cannot be ensured, as the staff also continuously is looking for other job opportunities either with government or international organizations in Kosovo.

Mr. Xheravina encourages civil society organizations dealing with environmental issues to be as involved as possible in the management of Kosovo's water resources. This is done within their human, organizational, and financial capabilities, by cooperating with relevant institutions and thus establishing partnerships for the good of the general public. This entails providing clean water for drinking, biodiversity survival, agriculture, and livestock as well as other economic activities.





## STRATEGY AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL SERVICES IN KOSOVO



The approach towards a clear vision on the development of Kosovo hydro-meteorological services and responsible institutions in focus has brought the need to design a strategy that will contribute to the safety and well-being of people, sustainable development, and environmental protection within Kosovo and neighboring countries.

The need for this strategy is based on a series of legal documents starting from the Law on Hydrometeorological Activities (Law No. 06 / I-035), the Climate Change Strategy 2019-2028, etc., considering also Kosovo's aim to join the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as a full member.

The strategy is being developed in cooperation with international and local expertise, the Kosovo Hydrometeorological Institute (KHMI), and GIZ. The strategy, among others, aims to increase the technical and institutional capacity of KHMI to meet the standards set by the WMO while aiming to connect with international hydrometeorological services to improve data.

The strategy is supported by the Program on "Climate Change Adaptation and Flood Management in the Western Balkans", funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.



# #SOCIALMEDIAPOSTS



Co-creating the future of water management together with youth 🌟  
Youth Engagement with a pinch of innovation & empathy have been key ingredients in moving towards a water secure world for all.

Progress in 2021 looked like 👉

#GWPAtAGlance

Groundwater provides a 'natural solution' for change change adaptation. Groundwater management needs 'strategic rethinking' to ensure resource reliability in an uncertain future.

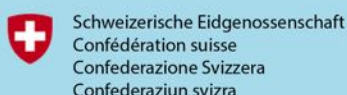
#WorldWaterDay



## 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](#):



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC



Integrated Water Resources  
Management in Kosovo



Republika e Kosovës  
Republika Kosovo - Republic of Kosovo  
Qeveria - Vlada - Government

**skat** Swiss Resource Centre and  
Consultancies for Development

ENVIRONMENT  
AGENCY AUSTRIA **umweltbundesamt**<sup>U</sup>

## Follow Us

Facebook: [iwrn\\_k](#) Instagram: [iwrn\\_k](#)  
linkedin: [iwrn\\_k](#) twitter: [iwrn\\_k](#)

[www.iwrn-k.com](http://www.iwrn-k.com)

## Contact Us

Skat Consulting Ltd.  
Integrated Water Resources  
Management in Kosovo  
136 Pashko Vasa Street  
Floor I. No.5, Pejton  
Pristina, Kosovo  
Email: [kosovo@skat.ch](mailto:kosovo@skat.ch)