



DIKTAS II – 2nd SCOM meeting

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PROGRAMME (SAP) OF
THE DINARIC KARST AQUIFER SYSTEM: IMPROVING GROUNDWATER
GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RELATED ECOSYSTEMS

Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 9 July 2025

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Objectives

- Project progress between 1st and 2nd SCOM meeting
- Conclusions of the 1st SCOM meeting and update on the achievements
- Decision to be made and next steps

Background documentation for the meeting

- Approved GEF Project Document
- Inception Report
- 1st SCOM Meeting Minutes
- 1st SCOM Meeting Presentation



Meeting Participants

—Ms Shpresa Mezini	Director General of the General Directorate of Economic and Support Services, Ministry of Tourism and Environment	Nominated Representative of the Steering Committee Member from the Republic of Albania
Ms Tamara Brajović	Acting Director General of Directorate for Climate Changes and Protection of Nature	Steering Committee Member from Montenegro
Ms Rada Milisav	Head of the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Steering Committee Member from Bosnia and Herzegovina
Ms Mirela Hahn	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development	Nominated Representative of the Steering Committee Member from the Republic of Croatia
Mr Vladimir Mamaev	Regional Technical Advisor, Water & Ocean Governance Programme, BPPS, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub	
Mr Siniša Šešum	Head of Antenna Office in Sarajevo, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe	
Ms Francesca Bampa	Project officer, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe	
Mr Boban Jolović	DIKTAS II Project Manager, UNESCO Antenna in Sarajevo, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe	
Mr Želimir Pekaš	DIKTAS II International expert in Hydrogeology	
Mr Zoran Nakić	DIKTAS II National expert in Legal policy	

Day 1 – 9 July 2025

The 2nd Steering Committee (SC) meeting was held in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 9th 2025.

The meeting was officially opened by Mr Siniša Šešum, Head of Antenna in Sarajevo, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe. At the beginning of the meeting Mr Šešum, thanked the Members informed that the minutes of the first meeting were approved by consensus in July 2024.

After proposal, the SC adopted the Agenda, based on three sessions:

- **Session 1:** Informative session on the progress of the project components between 1st and 2nd SCOM meeting
- **Session 2:** Conclusions of the 1st SCOM meeting and update on the achievements
- **Session 3:** Decision to be made and next steps

Session 1: This session had informative character. In general, Mr Šešum introduced the SC members on the project achievements in the period between 1st SCOM (July 2024) and 2nd SCOM (July 2025).

In focus were the following components/outputs:

- *Component 1. Facilitating multi-country cooperation*

Output 1.1: Joint multi-disciplinary thematic expert groups established by project countries and the support of Project agencies.

Output 1.2: Draft multilateral agreement on the establishment of Consultation and Information Exchange Body (CIE) and its Secretariat prepared for governments approval.

Output 1.4: Stakeholder involvement plan formulated and implemented, including special focus on gender issues and women empowerment.

- *Component 2. Institutional strengthening for improved GW governance*

Output 2.1: Groundwater governance diagnostic analysis in all project countries, including a stocktaking of the governance situation — actors, legal framework, policies and plans, adherence to the EU WFD and GWD, available knowledge, enforcement capacity — and an assessment of gaps and opportunities.

- *Component 3. Monitoring of karst waters and dependent ecosystems*

Output 3.1: Design of DIKTAS-wide groundwater multi-purpose monitoring network, including: purpose, variables, network design and optimisation, data management, institutional arrangements, harmonised across the countries.

- *Component 5. Awareness raising and gender mainstreaming*

Output 6.1: Awareness raising events, dissemination products and education.

Output 6.2: Gender analysis conducted in project countries water sector.

Output 6.3: Participation in IW LEARN activities.

In addition, it was emphasized that each progress in components/outputs would have been presented in detail by Working Groups (WG) coordinators during the subsequent expert meeting.

Session 2: This session was devoted to conclusions of the 1st SCOM meeting and updating on the achievements. In line with this, Mr Šešum informed the SC members on the following:

- Project Manager selection: selection process was done during the period November 2024 – February 2025. Mr Boban Jolović was selected and started the role in full capacity after the Contract took into enforce in March 10th 2025
- Project Management Unit (PMU) is established in Trebinje. Public Institution “Vode Srpske”, same as in DIKTAS I, hosted the project management unit at the address Srpska 2, 89101 Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the moment, furniture and IT equipment acquisitions are in process, intend to put the PMU in full functionality.
- SC is established and each country officially nominated two representatives, primary SC member and substitution. During 2nd SCOM each participating country was represented, 3 in person (MN, B&H and CRO), one in online mode (AL).
- Inception Report update was provided just after 1st SCOM and delivered to SC members. Update was prepared based on SC members’ suggestion and there is no any further objection. Thus, the Inception report corrected after 1st SCOM is considered as final one.
- As proposed during the Inception meeting (April 2024) and 1 SCOM necessity of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) update emerged as one of the priority activities. Thus, one of the first activities after DIKTAS II Expert groups establishing was the TDA update. During the Expert meeting (followed the 2nd SCOM) detailed presentation on the update was provided.
- Selection of groundwater monitoring pilot sites selection was discussed: criteria for selection of the 2 monitoring sites were sent to SC members after 1st SCOM. During 2nd SCOM criteria were presented once again, to facilitate decision of the selection during session 3.

Session 3: the session focused on decision to be made and next steps

- Key project dates adjusting, including mid-term evaluation

Key project date identified in DIKTAS II Project Document (GEF project ID number 9919) are the following:

- Planned start date: 15/11/2022
- Expected date of Mid-Term review: 15/5/2025
- Expected end of the project: 15/11/2027

Based on key dates listed above it is clear that redefinition of the dates is necessary, because delay in the project start date.

As Mr Vladimir Mamaev (UNDP) pointed out a maximal delay in Mid-Term review is 12 months, after this milestone it is possible to request project extension for maximal 12 months.

It was concluded the following:

- The Project Manager and the Implementation Agency - UNESCO (represented by Mr Šešum) will elaborate proposal to be submitted to UNDP for review with the aim to postpone the Mid-Term review until May 2026;
- Groundwater monitoring pilot sites selection

Based on the selection criteria delivered after the 1st SCOM meeting (main criteria is that each country must be involved in one out of two monitoring pilot sites) :

1. Cijevna/Cemi transboundary aquifer (TBA) is selected for Albania, and consequently, also for Montenegro (this is due to the fact that Albania only share this TBA in DIKTAS II project area).
2. Based on proposed criteria, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina need to select one of the three TBAs for the comprehensive monitoring program: Una; Cetina or Trebišnjica.
3. SC members from these two countries proposed that Project Manager, together with the Expert Group 1 should prepare a clear explanation on which one could be most and the least suitable to be selected.

Proposal will be sent to SC members from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia for final approval until September 15.

- Opening of the GIS expert position in DIKTAS II

The project document did not foresee a position for a GIS expert, same as in the project phase 1.

Based on the experience of the project phase 1, the Project Manager stressed that GIS expert is one of the key positions, in the aim to provide consistency in data acquisition and processing, but also to facilitate visibility of the project at national and international scale.

Consequently, project partners proposed to SC opening of a GIS expert position.

The SC members warmly appreciated this proposal and approved it.

The project manager will prepare the ToR for the position to be reviewed by the SC. Upon endorsement of ToR, UNESCO will proceed with the recruitment for this position. It is expected that selection of the expert will be finalized in before the end of September 2025.

- Expert group denomination adjustment

Considering several requests received by the experts to adjust the title of the group “for *Biology*” to “for *Biodiversity*”, the SC adopted this proposal.

The Sub-Group of the Working Group 1, is now called “for *Biodiversity*”.

- UNESCO/Green Climate Fund/Adaptation Fund initiatives and possible synergies with DIKTAS II - Unlocking Climate Finance for Cultural Heritage, Water, and Biodiversity in South-East Europe

Mr Siniša Šešum introduced the SC members to the UNESCO/Green Climate Fund/Adaptation Fund initiative.

South-East Europe faces increasing vulnerability to climate change. From floods and water scarcity to biodiversity loss and cultural heritage degradation, the challenges are escalating. Despite this, the region receives a disproportionately small share of global climate finance. In response, UNESCO has stepped forward to bridge this gap, harnessing its unique mandate spanning science, culture, education, and environmental protection. As a pre-qualified Readiness Delivery Partner of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and advancing toward reaccreditation with the Adaptation Fund (AF), UNESCO is leveraging its expertise to support countries in defining, developing, and delivering climate adaptation solutions rooted in local realities and global standards.

This segment is shared with the members of the SC for information only, while UNESCO will keep the SC members on the further development, especially in the view of the important data deriving from DIKTAS II project that could be beneficial for elaboration of the eventual proposal for GCF and AF financing.

- SDG Achievements and EU Accession

The project will further provide evidence of the advancement in achieving SDGs. Furthermore, the relevant WG through their works will provide necessary evidence and proposals how project might support advancement of EU path for Albania and Montenegro, as well as for Bosnia and Herzegovina once negotiation process with EU would be open.

AOB

- Mr Mamaev (UNDP) informed SC that he will retire in August 2025 and that a substitute will be nominated