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A literature review focusing on the impacts of tourism on water bodies and transboundary water management in Albania and Montenegro

Project (DRIMON): Interdisciplinary assessment of water resource management in two transboundary lakes in South Eastern Europe

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Integrated water resources management in South Eastern Europe: **A literature review focusing on the impacts of tourism and transboundary water management in Albania and Montenegro**

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Summary:
This review mainly addresses the tourism and its impacts on the water bodies in the South Eastern Europe (SEE), with special focus on Albania and Montenegro. This is followed by an overview of the governance issues, problems related to transboundary co-operation in the eastern European states and finally the constraints and ways forward for an integrated approach to water management. The review looks at the special efforts being undertaken by national and international agencies to improve water resources management in the transboundary water bodies in the Balkans. The review is made in connection with the DRIMON Project (www.drimon.no) funded by the Norwegian Council for Research.

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Contents

1. Abstract

The DRIMON project[1] through water resources management research in Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Norway, intends to provide an improved framework for integrated land and water resource management in transboundary catchments of the South Eastern Europe, with particular emphasis on erosion and sedimentation, pollution control measures and related transboundary problems. Research is being carried out in two lakes namely Lake Prespa (shared between Greece, Albania and Macedonia) and Lake Skodra/Skadar shared between Albania and Montenegro. In the latter, the main pressures are from tourism, followed by agriculture in the catchment areas. In Lake Prespa, the main pressures are from agriculture, followed by municipal waste and tourism. One of the main tasks in the project is stakeholder involvement and transboundary cooperation. This includes assessment of stakeholder responses to ongoing environmental changes in the two lake basins, the main pressures responsible for these changes, their experiences and suggestions for improved management to assist in the recommendations for setting environmental goals for the lake basins.

It is well established that tourism is expanding in the SEE, including the Balkans, and the growing number of tourists will have an impact on the natural resources including the water bodies. Therefore it is essential to establish a policy and management strategies for sustainable development of tourism that could bring economic gains to the region, employment to the local people and at the same time protect natural resources. Protection of natural resources, especially transboundary water bodies requires special efforts to develop management strategies. At the international level, some frameworks have been developed to facilitate dialogue between countries to co-operate and manage water bodies. The two lakes, namely Prespa and Shkodra are covered under formal transboundary agreements for co-operation. These agreements are not supported by actions in the field and funding. As observed in Lake Shkodra, management officials from the two sides, Albania and Montenegro do not conduct joint monitoring or lake development and protection activities.

It does not make sense to develop policy or legal instruments and not implement the instruments. In order to implement these instruments the partners should develop an institutional framework. The first step in transboundary co-operation and sustainable tourism development is to establish a stakeholder dialogue forum that provides opportunities for various stakeholders to meet and resolve differences and develop joint management frameworks. The process may begin with the information sharing and joint objective setting among the cooperating institutions and organizations within the basin. Establishing an active stakeholder dialogue forum can provide a critical factor for success of cooperation.

[1] DRIMON (2006-2009) is funded by the Norwegian Council for Research.

2. Introduction

The DRIMON project through water resources management research in Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Norway, intends to provide an improved framework for integrated land and water resource management in transboundary catchments of the South Eastern Europe, with particular emphasis on erosion and sedimentation, pollution control measures and related transboundary problems. A particular goal of the DRIMON proposal will therefore be to develop methods to integrate results from three different scientific standpoints. These are (i) a natural science perspective, involving studies of nutrient and sediment loads and its impact on ecology (ii) an information perspective, involving studies of ways to improve the communication of environmental information, and (iii) an institutional and policy science perspective, involving studies of institutional and policy instruments, and public participation. Institutions matter and a greater understanding of the institutions within which governance can be developed is an important aim of this project. Here it is important to bear in mind the differences between different institutional forms, and that a 'prevalent distinction of institutions is between rules of the game, or settled practices, and the formal organizations who are the players and who have formal hierarchies of decision-making (Young 1999). Research is being carried out in two lakes namely Lake Prespa (shared between Greece, Albania and Macedonia) and Lake Skodra/Skadar shared between Albania and Montenegro. In the latter, the main pressures are from tourism, followed by agriculture in the catchment areas. In Lake Prespa, the main pressures are from agriculture, followed by municipal waste and tourism.

One of the main tasks in the project is stakeholder involvement and transboundary cooperation. This includes assessment of stakeholder responses to ongoing environmental changes in the two lake basins, the main pressures responsible for these changes, their experiences and suggestions for improved management to assist in the recommendations for setting environmental goals for the lake basins. Through institutional analyses, the project will provide recommendations for integrated policy models for improved transboundary water management. In addition, the project will analyse the possibilities for mutual transfer of know-how and technology with regard to integrated water management in general and transboundary water regimes in particular.

2.1 Problem definition and aims of the report

Tourism is one of the growing sectors contributing to economic growth in the SEE region and heavily impacting the natural resources. The negative impacts are assumed to occur due to a combination of human pressures, institutional weaknesses, weak law enforcement, political and economic changes and governance failure that are often among the root causes of environmental depletion (Marques et al., 2003).

As mentioned earlier in the report, the transboundary nature of water courses makes the situation more complex. For example, Lake Shkodra waters are shared between Albania and Montenegro which have different management approaches. The uncoordinated sectoral policies and development activities at the national level lead to degradation of the natural values of the system and also pollution export to the Adriatic sea. Climate change also influences the water bodies increasing the pressures for water withdrawal for irrigation and other uses that might further exacerbate the potential for conflicts over water allocation across

sectors and uses in the future. However, due to time and resource constraints, climate change impacts will not be addressed in this report.

Establishing co-operation between different stakeholders within and across political boundaries is a key issue or hurdle for the sound management of the environmental impacts of tourism. Sudden expansion of tourism leads to impacts that may be difficult for the governments to handle, especially when their economies are weak and politically unstable. The main problems that are of interest to this review are integration between sectors and transboundary co-operation, where water bodies are shared by two or more countries whose institutional and policy approaches are different towards environmental management. Tourism and environment fall under different agencies and though tourism is important for the economy, there is lack of co-ordination to address the tourism impacts on environment and vice-versa. The latter is important, since tourism and environmental quality are correlated, and tourists prefer areas where water quality is better and environment is clean (Markandya, 2000).

Goal, questions and structure of this report

The review will mainly address the tourism and its impacts on the water bodies in the South Eastern Europe (SEE), with special focus on Albania and Montenegro. This will be followed by an overview of the governance issues, problems related to transboundary co-operation in the eastern European states and finally the constraints and ways forward for an integrated approach to water management. The review will look at the special efforts being undertaken by national and international agencies to improve water resources management in the transboundary water bodies in the Balkans.

2.2 Background

Integration is the buzzword in natural resources management today, to address the various social and environmental impacts of development interventions on water bodies. However, according to some researchers, the term is often used without clarity and wider considerations (Biswas, 2004; T.Allan., pers.comm.). Integrating the competing interests of different sectors, disciplines and users can be very political. Management is also often political in that within the apparently rational implementation of a given agenda there will be the need to allocate (or more precise re-allocate) water between various conflicting interests and user groups. The allocation or use is in turn influenced by the changing economic, political and market conditions. It is often the sector or user group having the greatest economic and political influence that manages to get the major share of the water resources. Rapid changes in the political and economic situation across many regions in the world are becoming common. The emergence of the new states in the Eastern Europe and elsewhere provides evidence of how new political regimes influence the management of natural resources and open themselves to new markets. The impacts of such changes are no longer local, due to globalization and phasing out the trade and economic barriers. Such political and economic changes can provide opportunity for integrated management and co-operation. At the same time, development can lead to new demands and conflicts. In many parts of Europe, tourism has been expanding quite rapidly, providing employment to local people and contributing to the local and regional economy, but at the same time competing with other sectors for limited resources including water.

In certain regions of the Mediterranean, tourism has more priority over other sectors leading to re-allocation of water from the agriculture sector, thus depriving farmers of irrigation water. Within the agriculture sector, water is diverted from one region to another growing crops for export. Such re-allocations not only cause conflicts between sectors within a region or a country, but also between different administrative provinces or countries. Portugal and Spain are examples of countries with such competing interests and government favouring the tourism sector due to economic reasons. Water conflicts have increased in the recent years, due to the transboundary nature of the water courses. In such situations, integrated management is continuously being seen by academicians and managers as the way to address the conflicts and improve co-operation across sectors and political boundaries. However, in practise there are many challenges to integrated approaches. Some water policy scientists argue that integrated management is a mere theoretical framework and not possible to be implemented at a river basin level. Conflicting sectoral interests and the transboundary nature of water courses makes it more difficult to adapt to integrated management. Often, the countries sharing water resources have different political and economic interests and tend to use the water resources indiscriminately. Co-operation is however a necessity if the negative socio-economic and environmental impacts of fast growing sectors such as tourism is to be addressed.

2.2.1 Transformation and tourism trends in South Eastern Europe

Each Central, Eastern and South Eastern European (SEE) country has its own and divergent cultural characteristics and aspirations, patterns of historical evolution, levels of economic and infrastructural development, spatial structures, environmental attributes and political constructs (e.g. see Hall & Danta, 2000). Such differentiation has sharpened with the break-up of former socialist federations (Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia), and the choice of many of the new, often relatively small, independent states, for example Croatia, Montenegro, Latvia, Estonia etc., to express their individual national and cultural identity. International tourism and marketing has been one of the means through which such identity has sought expression (Hall, 1999). Politically, they may have had relatively similar ideology, but they are culturally and socially diverse. For example, the two countries Yugoslavia (1948) and Albania (1961), both of which had substantial tourism potential, proceeded to develop their political economies, and the role of tourism within them, in markedly contrasting ways (Hall, 1990). However, political instability in one, and the state control in the other, has not attracted many tourists to these destinations. In contrast, coastal tourism development in Croatia has witnessed rapid growth since mid 90s, and can be seen as a good example of how political economy influences the economic growth.

Political and economic transformation in the SEE region has coincided with a global growth in demand for smaller-scale specialised niche tourism experiences that can create high value-added market segmentation and providing opportunities for new local based small scale companies. During the 1990s, this need increased as the industry in the region gained experience of responding to incoming tourist market demands. By contrast, the countries of the south eastern European region were not so well positioned to respond to such changes in consumption aspirations (Cabrini, 2003). However, instrumental in complicating tourism development and management priorities has also been a rejuvenation of the mass tourism demand cycle from within the region, notably from the more advanced states of Central Europe and from Russia (Brown, 1998:120–121). This has, for example, provided mass markets for the post-Yugoslav war Dalmatian coast, as illustrated by Jordan (2000).

More than the transformation of political systems and of the economies, the enlargement of the European Union to include Central, Eastern European and SEE countries, the opening of borders to travel and goods, and the introduction of a common currency, has resulted in tourism growth in the region. A typical case is that of Croatia where tourism has increased many fold. The enlargement of the EU with the incorporation of 10 new countries is a historical event. The new EU member states will be less urban and more rural. The EU enlargement is expected to have a political impact, stability and good governance, an economic impact, higher growth and increased welfare, and a socio-cultural impact and increase in EU's diversity. In turn, all these elements will have an impact, both positive and negative, on sectors like tourism (UNEP, 2000).

The Commission is paying particular attention to the harmonization of regulations regarding competition, the elimination of information barriers and consumer protection in particular relating to health and food safety. All these elements tend to favour directly the development of tourism in the SEE. In addition, a series of initiatives taken by the EU in education, culture, environment and new technologies help tourism to grow, as these areas are closely related to tourism. Two of the most important sectors for the EU are agriculture and transportation, which are closely linked to tourism expansion (UNEP, 2000). Although tourism is not identified as such in these programs, several projects concerning rural and/or urban development have direct impact on the growth of tourism.

Of all European sub regions, Central, Eastern and South eastern Europe are more dependent on intraregional tourism. In 2002, Europe was the origin of 93.7 per cent of international tourist arrivals to the sub region, corresponding to almost 61 million arrivals (Cabrini, 2003). On the other hand, in 2002, Central and Eastern Europe was the only sub-region in Europe that saw arrivals from outside the region increasing (4%). As for accesses, and although Europe is already one of the most integrated areas regarding transports, improvements have been registered in many destinations, mainly in the South and Eastern countries as airport and road infra-structures are concerned, but also in terms of border/visa requirements. As a consequence, tourist numbers doubled from 2005 to 2006 in the Montenegrin part of Lake Shkodra, one of the study areas of this project (according to a study made by CEED, 2003).

Although tourism provides employment and contributes to economic growth, it has at the same time negative consequences for the environment if it is not managed properly. Environmental problems are likely to aggravate, given that many of the natural ecosystems, including water courses have now become transboundary due to the formation of new states. The transboundary nature of the water bodies adds to the management problems which the governments are already facing. In addition, new countries like Montenegro do not yet have the adequate infrastructure and management capacities necessary to cope with the rapidly expanding tourist numbers. A proper institutional framework is necessary to manage the resources in a sustainable manner. Continuous co-operation and planning between neighbouring provinces and countries is essential to address the impacts of rapid changes in tourism and other sectors.

2.2.2 Transboundary water bodies in South Eastern Europe

In the SEE region, that includes Balkan states, thirteen rivers basins are transboundary, i.e. shared between two or more countries. This illustrates the high relevance of developing appropriate management tools and policy strategies tailored to address transboundary water resource issues in this region. Approximately 90% of the area of the SEE countries falls within transboundary river basins. On average, the regional dependency on transboundary

water resources is 66 percent (GWP, 2006). SEE Region is also characterized by a large number of transboundary groundwater aquifers that are often karstic in their nature. There are three major lakes in the SEE region: Prespa, Ohrid and Shkoder.[2] These water bodies and their watersheds along with Drim/Drini and Buna/Bojana Rivers comprise an interconnected groundwater and surface hydrological system.[3] It covers almost 1/5 of the BalkanPeninsula, in a geographical area (approx. 18,000 sq.kms) that includes Albania, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Greece.

The watershed of the Drini Basin can be considered as the "connecting body" of the system of South Western Balkan Peninsula, linking the Lakes, wetlands and other aquatic habitats into a single ecosystem. The only way to manage the shared water bodies in a sustainable manner is to improve communication between the countries sharing the water courses, by establishing regular meeting forums and transboundary management bodies. There are several problems and challenges for the management of transboundary water bodies, as a result of water pollution due to untreated wastes, use of water for agriculture, tourism etc. by one country that impacts users in others, the issue of who pays the costs of pollution and excess use, water quality management, water sharing, environmental flows and user conflicts.

The "Athens Declaration concerning Shared Water, Shared Future and Shared Knowledge" provides a framework for a long-term process to support cooperative activities for the management of shared water resources specifically in the SEE and Mediterranean regions(Gooch and Stålnacke, 2005). The Athens Declaration Process was intended to assist SEE countries, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, to prepare IWRM and water efficiency plans for major river basins and lakes, including a range of complementary interventions, with a coordinated mechanism to allow for exchange of information and experience between activities. In addition, the Petersburg declaration and the roundtable discussions that followed, including the one at Lake Ohrid in October, 2006 addressed the transboundary management issues in the region covering Lake Prespa and Lake Shkodra.

[2] The Prespa basin includes two lakes separated by a naturally formulated narrow strip of land: Macro Prespa and Mikro Prespa. From this point forward we will be referred to the system of the two lakes as Prespa.

[3] The Lake is called "Skadar" in Montenegro and "Shkodër" or "Shkodra" and also sometimes "Scutari" in Albania. From now on the English name of the lake – Lake Shkoder – will be used to avoid the usage of two – at least names – when referred to it.

3. Environmental and social impacts of tourism

Rapid tourism expansion in any area often leads to significant environmental and socio-economic impacts. The main environmental impacts are often in the form of pollution leading to loss in air and water quality, land occupation, increased demand for water, besides competing for the use of natural resources with other sectors. The situation is alarming in the Mediterranean and parts of Eastern European region where tourism industry has witnessed unprecedented growth in the last decade (UNEP, 2000).

It is clear that tourism has important economic, social and environmental implications that should not be overlooked in evaluating the impacts of the tourist industry on a region. Moreover, environmental quality may form an important part of the consumer's consumption decision in the future, especially when we are talking of eco-tourism. The issue of monitoring and information of tourism impacts on water resources arises in this context, whereby it is difficult to re-establish a reputation for good environmental quality once this is lost (Dixon et al, 2001). It is important that continuous monitoring of the impacts is done to inform the authorities and the public about the environmental impacts of tourism and act accordingly.

The linkages between tourism and environmental damage have been reviewed in a number of publications (Lindbergh and Johnson, 1997; Davies and Cahill, 2000; Hall 2000; Markandya 2000; OSPAR 2006). Markandya (2000) concluded that environmental quality was the most common factor highlighted as an issue. The author also finds that the number of tourists visiting a certain area definitely correlates with environmental changes, often in-direct in nature. The impacts of tourist-generated traffic congestion on local communities were studied by Lindbergh and Johnson (1997) for the case of Oregon. According to their study, high densities of tourists lead to extreme pressures on wastewater treatment, waste disposal, and land based pollution such as emissions from vehicles. Such costs need to be considered when planning for tourism development. Costs can for instance be internalized through levying a tourist eco-charge or taxes.

A study was conducted by the OSPAR Commission in all its member countries in 2006 to assess the impacts of tourism. The large majority of countries responded describing their environmental impact assessment system for projects, including tourism projects like marinas/harbours, hotels, camping sites and housing. The major type of environmental impacts reported for marinas were pollution, changes in tidal flows and turbidity, noise disturbance, and damage to the conservation status of species/habitats. The impacts from hotels were mostly in the form of visual intrusion, sewage disposal and pollution, eutrophication and damage to the conservation status of species or habitats and changes in coastal landscapes. Impacts of restaurants and camping sites near water bodies and coastal sites impacts were summarized as follows: noise disturbance, visual intrusion, increase of the litter amount and pollution. With regard to housing expansion along the coastal areas the study concluded that, use of public spaces, pollution, habitat alteration and human disturbances to ecosystem were casuing negative impacts. The study recommended that if negative impacts of tourism have to be reduced, proper planning and involvement of stakeholders in the planning and management is essential. At the same time, continuous monitoring to measure the environmental impacts should be a regular feature to inform the managers.

The World Tourism Organization's (WTO) core indicators are generally useful as a starting point to establish a basis for assessment of key impacts due to tourism (WTO 1993, 1995, 1999). The study of western Lake Balaton, Hungary, and further regional workshops were the next building block in the WTO-led international effort to develop and implement indicators for the tourism industry to enable managers in the Eastern European region to better control the interface between tourism and the environment (WTO 1999). The project used a Multiple Stakeholder Dialogue approach to bring together various agencies and jurisdictions in the region to come together, map the situation, the stakeholders, their interests and conflicts, and used their knowledge and experience to address and resolve problems. The study recommended that, indicators developed at the Lake Balaton project workshop could be used for other tourist destinations in the region that share similar pressures.

There is a major gap in literature on the relationship between tourism and the environment in eastern and SEE region (Hall, 2000). Notably, the focus in the SEE region regarding tourism's impacts on the environment is inadequate, as compacted to the reality and image of environmental degradation constraining tourism development. Certainly, heavy concentrations of atmospheric emissions, water pollution and acid rain damage to forests (Klarer & Moldan, 1997) have been acute in several of the region's existing and potential tourism areas.

For the lack of relevant literature concerning the project region, the following discussion refers to general aspects highlightened in the literature about the environmental and social impacts of tourism, that might be of relevance to DRIMON project. .

3.1 Environmental impacts

Negative environmental impacts from tourism occur when the level of tourists is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change. Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as soil erosion, increased pollution, discharges into the sea, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species and heightened vulnerability to forest fires. It often puts strain on water resources, and it can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources. Tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce.

3.1.1 Increased demand for water

Water, and especially fresh water, is one of the most critical natural resources. The tourism industry generally overuses water resources for hotels, swimming pools, golf courses and personal use of water by tourists. This can result in water shortages and degradation of water supplies, as well as generating a greater volume of waste water. It has been estimated that the average tourist in Spain uses 440 litres of water a day (up to 880 when one includes swimming pools, golf courses) compared to the average Spanish resident consumption of 250 litres (WWF, undated). According to Plan Bleu (1999), aquifer overexploitation is considerable in many Mediterranean countries: 13 % in Cyprus, 24 % in Malta (in 1990), 29 % in Gaza, 32 % in Israel (in 1994) and 20 % in Spain (25 % in the Júcar basin, 4 % in the Balearic Islands). Its main consequence is the decrease in the groundwater table, which negatively affects wetlands whose hydrological dynamics are directly linked to aquifers.

Similar trends can be observed in parts of SEE, with the increase in the number of tourists that has not been recorded so far.

The increase in demand for water due to growth of tourism is often associated with the search for complementary water sources to satisfy the great demands on water for this economic sector. The combination of water needs for agriculture and tourism has lead to the construction of a significant number of structures including dams that alters the water courses. Dams can have an extremely detrimental effect on people, with displacement of the local population and deterioration of freshwater ecosystems, necessary for their livelihoods (e.g. fisheries), both close to the water infrastructure and downstream, where the effects on the river dynamics are heavier. The main water infrastructure of the Spanish Hydrological Plan approved in 2001 (and recently revoked due to social pressure) was a 900 km-long transfer of 1050 hm3/year of water from the Northeast to the Southeast of Spain, where the tourist sector has grown 50% in the last five years (WWF, 2003), increasing its competing role for water with intensive agriculture.

3.1.2 Water pollution

Pollution of water is one of the main negative environmental impacts due to tourist activities and clearly an issue of concern to local authorities and national governments. Water pollution may be due to discharge of solid and liquid wastes due to tourist activities into the surrounding areas. In the empirical literature, some work has been carried out to estimate the impacts of such pollution arising from tourism. These impacts include:

- Impact of cruise ships and recreational vessels on the water bodies may be significant due to dumping of waste (Davies and Cahill, 2000).
- Hotels and restaurants contribute to substantial waste and place a significant burden on wastewater management.(Kamp, 1998).

Insufficient, inefficient or non-existent waste water treatment systems have a direct negative impact on the quality of water and therefore on the ecosystems associated with them. However, the lack of staff training and the seasonal aspect of wastewater production is causing operational problems, which reduce the effectiveness of treatment (EC, 2000). The situation is serious around water bodies in SEE where hotels, restaurants and domestic building let out sewage directly into the lakes and nearby coastal areas. There are a very few sewage treatment plants that can treat sewage water before it is discharged into the surrounding areas.

Tourists have been shown to generate a more than proportionate quantity of waste, both solid and liquid. A World Bank study by Dixon et al (2001) found that in St Lucia, tourists generate approximately twice the amount of solid waste that residents generate. The total level of waste generated by tourists may be less than that of local residents, due to the time scale of the tourist season. However, the waste generated may have important impacts as waste is generated in areas where waste is likely to affect environmental quality and the concentration of tourist generated waste around the peak season means it is likely to cause more damage to the tourist industry (Dixon et al, 2001). According to EEA (2000), tourists consume up to 300 litres (up to 880 litres for luxury tourism) and generate around 180 litres of waste water per day. In the Rimini province (Italy) the production of wastes and wastewater in summer is three times higher than in winter. Indeed, the largest proportion of water is not consumed but used and disposed of as waste. The result is large volumes of sewage discharged to sewage treatment plants, or to the sea and rivers, because many tourist

facilities are in isolated areas and are not connected to the water treatment network. In all cases, if water is not treated, recycled or disposed of properly, it causes pollution.

According to a study of Ramsar sites (Frazier, 1999), pollution, water regulation, and urbanization and settlement impacts were among the five most frequently recorded change factors in Ramsar wetlands over the world. Of these, pollution was the most important one in Eastern and Western Europe.

3.1.3 Land degradation and threat to wildlife

Habitat can be degraded by tourism leisure activities. For example, wildlife viewing can bring about stress for the animals and alter their natural behaviour when tourists come too close. Safaris and wildlife watching activities have a degrading effect on habitat as they often are accompanied by the noise and commotion created by tourists as they chase wild animals in their trucks and aircraft. This puts high pressure on animal habits and behaviours and tends to bring about behavioural changes. Tourism may have diverse impacts on the ecological system within a country. Such impacts are difficult to measure, as presented by Hughes (2002) in evaluating environmental indicators for the case of the impact of tourism on aquatic biodiversity. Dixon et al (2001) note that "the simple presence of tourists can have adverse environmental impacts in some particularly sensitive ecological systems".

Tourist development may, if left unregulated, have significant impacts on wetlands and forest habitat. Davies and Cahill (2000) give examples of the impact of infrastructure development, with Jamaica having lost 700 acres of wetlands due to tourist development since the 1960s (Bacon, 1987).

Several studies on tourism and the environment stress that several coastal areas around the Mediterranean are under extreme pressure from the high number of tourists they receive every year, but there is little detailed information of the impacts on the coastal and marine environments. One study cited by EEA (2001), however, suggests that three quarters of the sand dunes between Spain and Sicily have disappeared as a result of urbanisation linked to tourism development. Building tourist infrastructures too close to the shore and especially on the shore dunes is accelerating the process of beach erosion, the occupation of *sebkhas* areas and the alteration of water dynamics that, for example in case of flash floods, causes significant damage. Hence, urbanised areas and other economic activities are moving to wetlands, especially in coastal areas. Wetland disappearance or degradation contributes to the decline of species that depend on them to survive: the number of water birds has decreased by 46% during the last 15-20 years and twenty globally threatened bird species live in the region (UNDP, 1999). For the Mediterranean, WWF (undated) suggests that over 500 plants are threatened with extinction and face pressure from tourism development in some overbuilt destinations. The impact is not limited to flora, with monkseal populations being threatened and sea turtles having their nesting grounds disturbed.

3.2 Socio-economic impacts

3.2.1 Economic development

Tourism may have significant benefits in terms of overall economic development, employment generation, foreign investments and infrastructrure development. It also creates funds for the preservation of cultural heritage sites and the environment, which may not be possible with the national funds. A significant change observed in many developing countries

is the improvement in infrastructure to cater to the growing tourism industry that also benefits the locals. The spin off effects can be more fetching in the long run, than the direct income generated by tourism.

A number of countries have experimented with tourist charges, and the contribution that tourists make to the tax revenues of visited countries is increasing. At the same time, tourism may also increase the cost of living in the area, making it difficult for the locals with meagre incomes.

3.2.2 Urban development

Tourism leads to urban development because it needs facilities not only to host, feed and entertain tourists, but also to transport them, care for them (e.g. hospitals), treat their wastes etc. Moreover, economic growth is normally associated with growth of the local population that provides services to tourists. All these facilities occupy land and transform the landscape and the natural dynamics of wetlands located near tourist resorts. Accommodation (80% of all tourism and leisure construction) has a major impact on water resources, land use and ecosystems (EEA, 2000). The Ravenna coast (Italy) is suffering from significant subsidence and alteration in sedimentation dynamics due to human activities such as beach tourism, the regulation of rivers, leading to a decrease in transported sediments and the progressive extending of Ravenna Port jetties. The existence of more than 100 bathhouses on the 10.5 km of beaches of the area have damaged and destroyed the dune bar and are having a heavy impact on the existing residual dune bars and on the pinewood. Illegal constructions often within the sensitive areas can cause serious damage to the habitats for wild animals.

3.2.3 Competition for land

There are numerous examples where local residents have lost access to local natural resources because of tourism development. In the Mediterranean coast, vast areas of pastures and private land have been converted to golf courses that compete for and consume large amounts of water, fertilizers and chemicals. Several islands in countries like Philippines, Tanzania, Madagascar, Ecuador have been bought by outside corporations, generating a crisis in water supply and only limited infrastructure benefits for residents. Similarly, in Bali, Indonesia, prime agricultural land and water supplies have been diverted for large hotels and golf courses (http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism/soc-drawbacks.htm).

3.2.4 Degradation of heritage sites

There is always a tension between the preservation of cultural heritage and the emerging demand for tourist access to the respective sites. Impact of tourism on the cultural heritage of a nation or region has been the subject of some debate in the literature. It is possible that, if properly managed, tourism may provide positive effects to local communities, with increased community pride, sense of identity, support of the local economy and increased employment opportunities. However, where inadequate care is taken, tourism may result in problems of cultural commodification, higher living costs, displacement, increased crime, undermining of traditional ways of life and pollution (Jamieson, 2000). Cultural considerations must be taken into account in the promotion of sustainable tourism.

3.3 Cultural impacts

Cultural impacts will arise if tourism brings about changes in value systems and behaviour, and thereby threatens indigenous identity. Furthermore, changes often occur in community

structure, family relationships, collective traditional life styles, ceremonies and morality, due to exposure to new values and lifestyles and erosion of local culture. Rapid tourist expansion in small coastal towns and villages can lead to loss of sense of community and loss of younger people from the local areas. But tourism can also generate positive impacts as it can serve as a supportive force for peace, foster pride in cultural traditions and help avoid urban relocation by creating local jobs. As often happens when different cultures meet, socio-cultural impacts are ambiguous: the same objectively described impacts are seen as beneficial by some groups, and are perceived as negative - or as having negative aspects - by other stakeholders.

3.4 Extreme seasonality of tourism

During the summer months, in particular a four to five week period during July and August,extremely high numbers of people visit tourist sites in the Eastern European region (WTO 1999). As a result, many commercial establishments are only economically viable during this short period or are only marginally viable during the shoulder season. Seasonality, therefore, puts pressure on the infrastructure, facilities and establishments around the lakes or coasts for a short time and leads to poor economic prospects during the off-season. The challenge is to smooth demand into other months, in part by providing or encouraging the use of tourism attractions other than those associated with the beaches. While tourism brings some jobs to the region, many cease at the end of the season.

The approaches for managing the negative impacts of tourism, particularly concerning transboundary water bodies, are presented in the next chapter.

4. Environment, tourism and governance

Two management approaches are relevant in the context of tourism impacts in South Eastern Europe and attempts will be made to integrate them in the DRIMON project: The concepts of Sustainable Tourism and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), both based on the approaches of sustainability and improved governance. The core aspect of sustainability is the idea that the life of future generations may not be negatively affected by today's generation. Governance as applied to water refers to 'the capability of a social system to mobilize energies, in a coherent manner, for the sustainable development of water resources. The notion includes the ability to design public choices (and mobilize social resources in support of them) which are socially accepted, which have as their goal the sustainable development and use of water resources, and to make their implementation effective by the different actors/stakeholders involved in the process (Solanes/Jouravlev 2002). In order to be effective, governance must be transparent, open, accountable, participatory, communicative, incentive-based, sustainable, equitable, coherent, efficient, integrative and ethical.

4.1 Sustainable tourism

Growing concerns about the negative impacts of tourism have led to moves towards the concept of sustainable tourism in recent years, particularly as the numbers of tourists and the distances they travel have increased. Sustainable tourism may be defined as "the optimal use of natural and cultural resources for national development on an equitable and self sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life through partnership among government, the private sector and communities." (OECS, undated).

Sustainability in the concext of tourism aims to embrace
a) the support of social, economic and cultural stability and development in rural, peripheral and minority areas,
b) assistance for long-term urban and regional rejuvenation,
c) the funding of ecological and built heritage conservation,
d) general support for the enhancement of environmental conditions through local planning and management of water, sewage, energy and transport use and exploitation, and
e) assisting education and information provision, to enhance local participation in, and management of, development processes (Hall, 2000).

Sustainable tourism aims to make optimum use of resources, while minimising the ecological, cultural and social impacts and maximising the benefits to conservation and local communities. It should also satisfy the tourists on a high level and raise their awareness about sustainability issues. The participation of all relevant stakeholders and strong political leadership is required to ensure that benefits are equally distributed between different stakeholders (UNEP 2006).

The development towards sustainable tourism has included eco-labelling, for example the use of ecotourism, and the raising of taxes on tourists as observed in a few Mediterranean countries including Spain and Croatia, in order to raise the revenues to correct the environmental damage caused.

4.2 Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

Integrated management of water bodies is seen as the way forward to address the problems of conflicting interests and sectors. The modern concept of IWRM is primarily conceived for the purpose of promoting sustainable water management. At the International Water Conference in Mar del Plata (Argentina), 1977, the emphasis was on coordination between water sectors primarily at a national authority level (Snellen & Schrevel, 2004). The need for sector coordination and holistic approaches was given further attention at the 1992 Dublin conference, preparing for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Later important milestones were the Millenium Development Goals 2000, and the Johannesburg Conference (UN 2002). These conferences advocated that IWRM should go beyond the co-ordination of sectors and agencies, and interaction between ground and surface water, but also include the carrying capacity of the natural environment and demand management (Koudstaal et al. 1992).

Far from being an accepted and easily understood notion around which there is consensus, a unanimously agreed definition of integrated water resource management (IWRM) has yet to appear. The Technical Advisory Committee of Global Water Partnership (GWP-TEC, 2000) has adopted the following definition that so far has received the far most quotations: "*IWRM is a process, which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximise the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems."*

Key points here are *process, coordinated,* and the relationship between *sustainability* and *economic and social welfare.* The definition does not, however, give us much indication of how this co-ordination (and integration) is to be achieved as pointed out by Gooch & Stålnacke (2003). Recently other authors have also argued that the IWRM approach, as it is defined by the GWP, cannot be implemented in practice generally due to operational questions and related problems of establishing measurable criteria (e.g., Jeffrey and Gearey, in press, Lankford and Cour 2005; Biswas, 2004).
Recently, Pahl-Wostl and Sendzimir (2005, unpublished) summarised the following main limitations of IWRM:

- Lack of clarity and vagueness of the concept
- integration of many topics/issues and management of a system for a specific purpose cannot be realised simultaneously
- the claims for change in management practice made by the promoters of IWRM seem to be based on normative claims rather than a sound scientific base that would provide evidence of these new management approaches
- emphasis on process without clearly defined and measurable targets for the goals to be achieved.

The other related questions include the viability of IWRM in large river basins and basins which are closed. In the latter, there is no more water left in the basin to meet new demands.

Successful IWRM is generally found in basins where the political climate is favourable for creating river basin organisations (e.g. commissions, councils). Good examples would be the Rhine and the Danube Commissions. Bi- or multilateral cooperation between riparian river basins countries have normally been based on legal agreements. It is important that future agreements take account of principles of IWRM as outlined above, and that new knowledge and data on shared water resources, as well as present and future water demands, are disseminated openly between the parties.

4.3 Transboundary IWRM

IWRM becomes a particularly complex and challenging task when two or more countries share a water body and its drainage basin. About 261 transboundary basins covering 45.3% of the earth's continental land-surface (excluding Antarctic) have been identified (Wolf et al. 1999). These figures illustrate the high relevance of developing appropriate management tools and policy strategies tailored to address transboundary issues in an IWRM system. The lessons learned are also applicable to a smaller scale, since transboundary issues can also be raised in drainage basins shared by two or more states within countries (Marques 2002; Marques et al. 2002).

The management of the water bodies in South Eastern Europe goes beyond the adoption of suitable and effective management on behalf of the sovereign states. Transboundary management should follow an integrated approach and would need integrated management planning, to address upstream and downstream concerns over different sectoral interests at the scale both of the basin of each water body and the hydrographic system. This also requires the existence of a well planned and efficiently enforced framework of laws, well organized institutions, adequate human capacity and sustainable financing. It demands cooperation involving not only riparian but also basin countries.

An example for a functioning co-operation for the management of a water body shared by three countries is the International Commission for the Protection of Lake Constance (IGKB). The commission was founded in 1960 for the purpose of the riparians' common and coordinated efforts for keeping the lake clean. Members of the commission are the two German states of Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bayern, the Republic of Austria, and the Swiss cantons Thurgau, St. Gallen and Graubuenden. The commission carries out the following tasks:

- Monitoring of the water level in the lake
- Identification of pollution causes
- Defense against environmental damage
- Recommendation of coordinated countermeasures
- Recommendation of prevention measures
- Provision of advice for the riparians
- Discussion of planned sea uses
- Public communication

The Commission meets once a year and is supported by 3 expert groups, which consist of members of research institutes and public authorities and meet 5-6 times per year:

- Department 'Lake': representants of the direct riparians
- Department 'Watershed': representants of countries/states within the watershed of the lake
- Department 'Defense against damage'

(IGKB, undated).

However, although Lake Constance is strongly characerised by tourism, this topic is not directly present in the IGKB. It may still serve as an example as it has successfully managed Lake Constance for nearly 50 years. However, in the context of South Eastern Europe, it has to be discussed to which extent riparians should also cooperate with the aim of promoting sustainable tourism.

4.4 Interdisciplinary Challenges for transboundary IWRM

A major challenge in IWRM is to integrate perspectives from the natural and social sciences and to create conditions and methods to improve stakeholder participation. DRIMON will address the integration of disciplinary knowledge towards improved water management in the study areas. Natural scientists focus on the different fundamental processes (physical and biogeochemical) in river basins and water systems. Social scientists, on the other hand, have their starting point in the social and institutional issues governing water use and not the river basin *per see*. Both can potentially contribute to basic information for policy-making and policy development, e.g. joint management plans for the water bodies, management plans for tourism.

4.4.1 Institutions and Institutional framework

Water management is faced with rapidly evolving and intricate problems that demand complicated choices between possible solutions, often under conditions characterised by uncertainty. Faced with these dilemmas, it is sometimes claimed that governance can provide possible solutions to problems of ecosystems and sustainability. A vital role is played here by institutions. Institutions matter and a greater understanding of the institutions within which governance can be developed is an important aim of this project.

North claims that institutions create society's structural incitement and that economic achievements are built to a large extent on economic and political institutions (North 1998). North also states that individual's and group's beliefs, which determine their choices, are a result of learning over time, from generation to generation. North sees institutions as '… made up of formal constraints (for example, norms of behaviour, conventions, self-imposed codes of conduct) and their enforcement characteristics. Together they define the incentive structure of societies…' (North 1998, p.248). In this case the institutions are informal.

Members of an institution are also considered to hold common values (Peters 1999). In this respect, '(I)institutions, defined as webs of interrelated rules and norms that govern social relationships, comprise the formal and informal social constraints that shape the choice-set of actors…institutions reduce uncertainty in human relations' (Nee 1998, p.8). Formal institutions (or organisations) can be said to be associated with change and action, informal institutions with stability and durability. Rowlinson (1997) claims that organisations (formal institutions) are enclosed by (informal) institutions and social structures, such as laws and state legal systems. However, '(t)he boundary between institutions and organisations is clearly not fixed, since it is through purposive collective activity, that is, organisation, that actors are able to change the routines and rules, that is, the institutions, within which they organise' (Rowlinson 1997, p.89).

In recent years, concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of (formal) institutions and the ethics of those who run them. These growing levels of doubt may be attributed to the increasingly globalised society and to the apparent weakening of the political and social institutions that underpin liberal democratic values and provide normative support for law.

In 1999, the Committee on Global Change Research highlighted a number of research imperatives for the coming decade (Committee on Global Change Research 1999, p.294). Among these imperatives were 'understanding institutions…' and 'improving methods for decision making…'. The report also stated the need to 'identify specific combinations of policy instruments…' and to 'identify specific international and national institutions that can effectively link the international, national, and local levels…' (Committee on Global Change

Research 1999), p.318. The DRIMON project is set within this frame. The project will carry out an analysis of the stakeholders and institutions which could lead to increased knowledge of the role of institutions in water management in the East European region, especially the West Balkans, where water management institutions are currently weak due to a long standing political instability. Much has to be done to strengthen new institutions and develop new institutions in some of the newly constituted states such as Montenegro. Efforts will be made to bring together the primary and secondary stakeholders through a Multiple Stakeholder Dialogue forum to discuss the IWRM and transboundary issues concerning the Lake Skadra/Skhodra. Here the project will bear in mind the differences between different institutional forms, and that a 'prevalent distinction of institutions is between rules of the game, or settled practices, and the formal organizations who are the players and who have formal hierarchies of decision-making (Young 1999).

4.4.2 Need for a legal framework

The current crisis over water sharing has often been described as a *crisis of governance. (*Rogers & Hall 2002) Throughout the numerous references to the need for improved *water governance*, the centrality of an adequate legal framework is clear. (Water–A G8 Action Plan). For instance, the 2001 International Conference on Freshwater in Bonn, stressed that '*the* essential key is stronger, better performing governance arrangements.' Such legal frameworks must transcend individual nations and extend beyond national borders. The role of law must therefore be assessed at various levels, including international (treaties, customary law) and national (domestic laws and regulations) (Allan & Wouters 2004). At the international level, the law has evolved in tandem with changes in uses of transboundary waters. Most recently, following close to 30 years of consideration, the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (1997), was adopted on 21 May 1997. At the heart of the convention is the right and obligation on States to utilise their transboundary waters in an equitable and reasonable manner, which is a reflection of customary law (Wouters 1999). Numerous existing international watercourse agreements embrace the principle of equitable and reasonable utilisation, although there remain a number of transboundary river basins where no agreements are in place (Hammer & Wolf 1997). At the regional level, several agreements have proved influential in strengthening the legal frameworks for transboundary waters, and lessons can be learnt from how States have transposed the provisions of these regional agreements into basin regimes, as well as national legislation. Such agreements include the EU Water Framework Directive (European Union 2000) and the UN ECE Helsinki Convention (Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, 1992). However, despite regional advances, a major challenge remains throughout the world to ensure that the adequate legal and regulatory mechanisms are in place to implement principles such as equitable and reasonable utilisation, and integrated water resources management, at the regional, national and local levels.

In Albania, the 1996 Law on Water Resources is the basis for water governance and a new institutional setup for water resources management was established. Two important decisions were made by the National Water Commission (NWC) of Albania. The first decision was for the establishment of a water basin council and an implementing agency for each one of the six basins but it was never implemented. The second decision defined the responsibilities of the water basin councils and water agencies regarding the issuing of abstraction permits. This decision again was not implemented since the water agencies were not in place. Despite its efforts, the NWC has made limited progress in the implementation of the 1996 Law. Evidence for this is the limited progress in the introduction of a water strategy, the lack of an

inventory of water resources, and the failure to issue any authorization or permit for the use and discharge of water. Implementation mechanisms are not in place and more importantly, decisions in the water sector are not backed up by the necessary financial resources.

4.4.3 Information availability and dissemination

One of the pre-requisites for IWRM is a good data base and information, based on which future management plans can be prepared. At present, in many areas of the world, no adequate information systems concerning water quantity and quality are available. There is an urgent need for reliable, current data and information about water resources to help in future planning. This has for example been recognised by the UNEP/GEMS who initiated a global data collection drive with a specific call for inland water quality data to all water authorities around the world (GEMS/Water, 2004). Key geographic areas include among others the Eastern European Region where most water bodies are shared by more than two countries. This initiative is important for all water quality monitoring institutions in every country, including Governments, universities and research centres (GEMS/Water, 2004).

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, reaffirmed the pledge they had made in the 2000 Millennium Declaration to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water by 2015. Water quality is an important determinant of availability, and in order to comply with the above mentioned goal, information about it should be available (Robarts, 2004).

4.5 Current approaches to environmental governance in the Balkans

Following the transformation in the Eastern Europe and SEE region, the economic and political context within which environmental problems were addressed earlier radically shifted and the priority accorded to the environment was likewise expected to change. But due to weak economic and unstable political conditions effective environmental policies have not yet not been developed in several countries. Weak enforcement of environmental legislation, fiscal uncertainty, and often inadequate information about environmental damage and its costs have been notable amongst these (Shahgedanova, 2000). Given these problems, implemenation of the EU Water Framework Direcitves will be a challenge in the Balkans.

The EU is trying to to help through financial and technical help, as new States sought to address their environmental problems as part of the restructuring process of post-communist transformation. Further, the effectiveness of institutions for environmental protection has been compromised by the way in which international economic advisors underestimated the difficulty and importance of their establishment (Zamparutti & Gillespie, 2000). Often governments have been slow to adopt key elements of ‘good governance’ – such as transparency and accountability – and to introduce mechanisms to implement these in public administration. Many countries have decentralised powers and responsibilities, including those for environmental management, but often without providing adequate support in terms of financial provision or taxation authority. Further, regional authorities have often lacked competent and motivated staff. National environmental action programmes have faced difficulties in trying to integrate environmental goals into other areas of government policy, for example Tourism that has direct impact on the environment or vice versa. This reflects the low political priority accorded to the environment in the region, especially the Balkan states. The problem of integration is another hurdle as mentioned earlier in the report, as agencies pursue their own sectoral interests.

Integration has been noticeably limited in areas where difficult trade-offs need to be made between environmental and sectoral goals. Reflecting this dilemma, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 1999) examined the decision-making structures of a number of countries in Eastern Europe, in terms of institutional capacity to pursue sustainability policies. While it identified the presence or development at the national level of a number of sustainable development coordination bodies and policy frameworks, explicit institutional response to the needs of Local Regional Agenda 21 and other aspects of local sustainability appeared relatively poor. It was also found that environmental indicator programmes and green accounting practices tended not to be broadly conceived.

The recent agreements signed between Albania and Montenegro (in 2003) for the management of Lake Shkoder; betweem Albania, Greece and Macedonia (in 2000) for the management of Lake Prespa are rather encouraging for the future (Global Water Partnership 2006). To some extent they reveal the existence of *political will* of the governments and *trust* between littoral countries, which are two pre-requisites for transboundary co-operation. The agreements provide legitimacy and a formal basis for enhanced cooperation and eventually transboundary management in the two Lake basins. The agreements also provide a good platform for a Multiple Stakeholder Dialogue at various levels. In practise, several initiatives are required to take the process forward and involve the stakeholders actively to enhance trust. Dialogue between different stakeholders needs to be established through a Multiple Stakeholder Dialogue and such a Forum should be kept active and dynamic if results are to be evident. Establishing broader cooperation between the basin countries of the hydrological system of the South Western Balkan Peninsula will lead the way to water allocation that considers all uses and the rights of upstream and downstream communities, and the sharing of benefits. The involvement of the international community (including the European Union, Donor countries, International organizations such as the Global Environment Facility, World Bank and other Intergovernmental and Non-governmental organizations) through the undertaking of a series of initiatives for promoting transboundary cooperation is noteworthy[4].

UNEP (2002) has recommended the integration of tourism into overall policy for sustainable development in each country. This includes tourism to be part of national strategies, focus on co-ordination between different agencies and an integrated approach to management of natural resources that attract tourists to the region.

UNEP emphasizes that governments should ensure balanced tourism within broader economic, social and environmental objectives at national and local level by setting out a national tourism strategy that is based on knowledge of environmental and biodiversity resources and is integrated with national and regional sustainable development plans. To this end the respective countries are supposed to:

- Develop and establish a national tourism strategy that is updated periodically and a master plan for tourism development and management.

- Integrate conservation of natural resources into tourism stategies and plans

[4] The Petersberg Process (since 1998) and the more recent Athens Declaration Process (since 2003) which through their joint action and cooperation with GEF and IW:LEARN, seek further enhancement of progress in transboundary management (Appendix 11).

- Propose measures for economic development and employment while maintaining protection of the environment.

- Provide support through policy development and commitment to promote sustainability in tourism and related activities.
- Improve interagency co-ordination at all levels both within and across countries and define the responsibilities
- Organize joint meetings, monitoring activities, stakeholder workshops and awareness campaigns
- Involve all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of tourism plans

Countries like Croatia and Montenegro have opened their doors for donor and international agencies to help them prepare National tourism plans and infrastructure development. However, the real commitment has to come from governments and the state departments to implement the plans.

4.6 Developing frameworks for transboundary management

A major constraint often observed is the lack of communication and dialogue between countries or partners sharing common water resources. The first step in transboundary co-operation and sustainable tourism development is to establish a stakeholder dialogue forum that provides opportunities for various stakeholders to meet and discuss the problems. The process may begin with the information sharing and joint objective setting among the cooperating institutions and organizations within the basin. Establishing an active stakeholder dialogue forum can provide a critical factor for success of cooperation. The forum should have the necessary political support at all levels and the freedom to take decisions on their own. In addition it should be backed a clear policy. Once they manage to get the political mandate it becomes easier to integrate the environmental and tourism goals into the national development strategy. Since the mid 90s, a series of conferences and roundtable discussions formed the basis for transboundary co-operation in the Balkans. The following processes or declarations have paved the way for dialogue at the international level in the Balkans:

1. Petersberg Process – Phase I (March 1998): a ministerial level roundtable discussion initiated jointly by the German Government and the World Bank, resulted in the "Petersberg Declaration" which supports "water as a catalyst for cooperation." This was followed by a series of discussion of senior level experts on transboundary river basin and lake management (Berlin), lessons learned from management of transboundary waters in the Baltic Sea Region (Vilnius), experience in the Rhine River Basin (Bonn); and a special meeting on transboundary water management to support preparation of the World Bank Water Resources Strategy (Berlin).
2. Petersberg Process – Phase II: Although the first Petersberg Process was more global in scope, the major focus of the Phase II was focusing more in the Balkans, and was intended to support the current developments and opportunities for future cooperation on transboundary river, lake and groundwater management, and transform them into actions.
3. The Athens Declaration Process (May 2003): This process was jointly coordinated by the Government of Greece and the World Bank, and was launched during the major International Conference on Sustainable Development for Lasting Peace: Share Waters, Shared Future, Shared Knowledge, May 2003, Athens, Greece. The Athens declaration process aimed at providing a dialogue forum for the countries in the Eastern and SEE region on transboundary water management.

4. The Rudesheim follow up process (2004): This was basically to focus on basins of transboundary rivers lying south of Danube, which flow into the Adriatic, the Ionian, the Aegean and the Black, Seas, and on the set of transboundary lake basins in the same area. The main objective was to build capacity and share experience on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the respective countries, and to develop IWRM plans for the shared water bodies taking into consideration the targets set at Johannesburg Summit, 2002.

5. The Berlin Roundtable (December, 2005): It was a milestone in the Petersberg Process Phase II / Athens Declaration Process. Several participants, including representatives of competent Ministries of the countries of the Eastern European region, water stakeholders, World Bank, GEF, European Commission, UNESCO, UNECE, UNEP, GWP-Med, participated. A Concept Paper was presented at the Roundtable on Protection and Sustainable Use of Transboundary Waters in South Eastern Europe (Berlin, Germany, December 2005). The Concept Paper presented the background of the process, updates on activities undertaken and synergies with on-going initiatives and future orientation and next steps foreseen.

6. The Roundtable conference Ohrid (October 2006): The "International Roundtable on Integrated Management of Shared Lake Basins in Southeastern Europe was organized in *Ohrid,* 12–13 October 2006. It was jointly organised by GWP-Med and the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee, recently established by Albania and FYR Macedonia, and is primarily supported by *GEF IW:LEARN*. The Roundtable addressed issues of integrated management of lake basins and the linkages to river basin and coastal management; that would build on related ongoing work in the region and to be linked to the GEF supported Lake Basin Management Initiative. A series of Lakes (i.e. Ohrid, Prespa and Skhoder and the Drin River), creating an interconnected complex hydrological system in the South Western Balkan Peninsula, were presented and discussed as case studies.

7. The Global Water Partnership (2006): The GWP initiated an official cooperation for the management of the shared lake basins in all three lake basins of focus and is in different stages of development. It resulted in :

- a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Albania and Montenegro in 2003 also providing for the management of Lake Shkoder;
- a Declaration of Lake Prespa as a trilateral protected park, was signed by the Prime ministers of Albania, Greece and FYR Macedonia in 2000, while an agreement for the management of the Lake and its Basin is underway;
- an Agreement was signed for the management of Lake Ohrid and its Watershed by Albania and FYR Macedonia in 2004 and ratified by the parliaments of the two countries in 2005.

The *Petersberg Process Phase II / Athens Declaration Process* has become a reference for many other processes and activities in the Eastern European region. The process is expected to complement the ongoing European Union (EU) integration processes, the Stabilisation and Association process of the European Union and other initiatives in the region. It contributes directly to the scope and objectives of the Mediterranean Component of the EU Water Initiative.

The discussions at the Berlin, 2005, meeting reviewed the progress on cooperation in the field of Transboundary Water resources management (TWRM) in the region and underlined its importance for succeeding stability and sustainable management in the region. It emphasized the importance of agreements within the Phase 11 Petersburg process/ Athens Declaration Process. The ongoing GEF IW:LEARN (2005-2008) project**,** in cooperation with the World

Bank, the Governments of Germany and Greece, and GWP-Med is supporting synergy in the Petersberg Process Phase II / Athens Declaration Process, and contributions of practical experience from GEF projects working in transboundary river, lake and groundwater in the SEE region as well as elsewhere in the world (Gooch and Staalnacke, 2005).

The Ohrid (2006) conference identified three issues that could be crucial for establishment of transboundary water resources management frameworks: the development of legal instruments agreeable to all countries sharing common water resources, recognition of an extended timeframe for addressing institutional issues and adoption of arrangements for funding of transboundary management bodies. Timely adoption of legal instruments agreed by all parties and their implementation is necessary. Otherwise, it does not make sense to develop policy or legal instruments and not implement the instruments. In order to implement these instruments the partners should develop an institutional framework. The partners may seek funds from donors initially, but subsequently the respective countries should find a way to finance the transboundary water management.

In practical terms, these processes and declarations have led to organization of a series of capacity building workshops for senior officials, decision makers and experts, and through the facilitation of an internet-based information network establishing a community of practice on transboundary water resources management with a particular focus in SEE.

5. Conclusions

It is well established that tourism is expanding in the SEE, including the Balkans, and the growing number of tourists will have an impact on the natural resources including the water bodies. Therefore it is essential to establish a policy and management strategies for sustainable development of tourism that could bring economic gains to the region, employment to the local people and at the same time protect natural resources. Protection of natural resources, especially transboundary water bodies requires special efforts to develop management strategies. At the international level, some frameworks have been developed to facilitate dialogue between countries to co-operate and manage water bodies. The two lakes, namely Prespa and Shkodra are covered under formal transboundary agreements for co-operation. These agreements are not supported by actions in the field and funding. As observed in Lake Shkodra, management officials from the two sides, Albania and Montenegro do not conduct joint monitoring or lake development and protection activities.

Of particular concern in development of transboundary water resources management frameworks is the prompt availability of adequate data and information to assess the basin condition and priority? Measures should be taken to avoid large numbers of study programs and initiatives that result in redundant action plans. The development of implementable and affordable policies and an adequate assessment of the financial and institutional feasibility of these frameworks should receive priority attention. Integrated planning approaches provide a means to incorporate environmental management concerns as basic elements of physical and spatial planning, which is an important administrative tool at multiple levels within the Region. In some locations, this has already included support for river basin-based activities, lake management programs, and integrated coastal zone management.

Usefulness of Scientific Results in transboundary waters management

Another key problem may be that information and the data produced is rather weak. Information is also subject to varied interpretations and the varying interpretations are often key elements in conflicts over resources (Timmerman et al., 2001). Still, surprisingly few studies have systematically analysed environmental information management systems and their role in the decision-making and management of river basins (Adams et al. 2003).

Working together at the regional and local level

Although national level policies and frameworks are established, the actual implementation takes places at the regional and local level. Networking of organizations at these levels is important to ensure that implementation takes place. Networks can be formal or informal and drawn from both civil society and the government. Local government and end users are the most important stakeholders to be involved in the management process. The final implementation of any activity has to be done at their level

The management of transboundary water resources should be undertaken from the perspective of their integration into spatial management systems, where all hydrological, ecological and land use aspects are jointly considered. This is different from what they are used to traditionally, where different agencies have been using the water bodies with different objectives.

Institutional strengthening efforts should include dissemination and sharing of information on the current situation of and expected benefits from cooperative management, to make institutions real stakeholders in the process and mobilize their political support and feedback. Establishment of mechanisms to facilitate sharing of experiences and networking among institutions should be considered, as well as some means of formal training for local staff and officials who may be faced with decisions for which they may not yet be prepared.

In the SEE, the focus so far is on economic transition at the macro-level. There is very less emphasis on addressing local socio-economic issues. Tourism has the potential to provide employment to local communities. Development strategies should take note of this and develop local plans incorporating the employment generation potential and detailed plans in that direction.

The effective management of transboundary waters requires adoption and use of both top-down and bottom-up approaches on a case-by-case basis to identify issues, develop solutions, undertake actions and monitor their impacts:

- Top-Down. The traditional top-down approach should be applied to issues such as cooperation at the political level; establishment of legislation and regulations; control of point sources of pollution; creation of protected areas; and the work of expert advisory teams.
- Bottom Up. The bottom-up approach may prove more effective in addressing issues related to preparation of development strategies and spatial plans; integrated coastal zone management; programs for control of non-point sources; design and conduct of public participation plans; and provision of feedback mechanisms among various levels of operation.

This use of a mixed approach is especially important where public participation is still not part of the culture, especially in some rural areas in the Region. In all cases, measures should be taken to ensure transparency and information sharing in cooperation with government, community-based organizations, NGOs and civil society.

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7. Appendix

Annexure 1

Skadar/Shkodra Lake Activities

Cross-border Cooperation: Vision and its Realisation workshop
July 10-12, 2001, Bar, Montenegro

A regional workshop was organised for different agencies representing Albania,l Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of Montenegro. The purpose of the workshop was to come up with a joint vision for each of two sites, as well as to discuss ways to reach that vision.

At the workshop both Albania and Montenegro agreed on the following:
- a common vision in which Shkoder Lake was recognised as a unique cross-border protected area.

- a bilateral protection and a joint management plan for Shkoder Lake.

Supporting tourism in Skadar Lake National Park, Montenegro efforts were made to:

- develop new information tools
- make entrance passes containing a map and basic information about the park were made available for local tour boats.
- Develop trail markers for foot paths in the area around the old monastery of Vranjina, the peaks of Vrsuta (1,183 m) and Rumija (1,595 m), and the vicinity of the old fisherman's village, Rijeka Crnojevica.
- To prepare a special hiking guide, with descriptions of the trails, and briefly presenting the natural and cultural values of the lake and its surroundings in both English and Serbian.

Workshop for representatives of local tourist businesses

Representatives of tourism businesses, relevant ministries and local NGOs met October 14-15, 2005 at a workshop organised by the REC Field Office in Montenegro and Skadar Lake National Park. The workshop concerned sustainable tourism, and covered possibilities for the sustainable use of natural resources in tourism development, current trends and initiatives, and relevant plans of the national park. It is recognised that tourism activities around the Skadar Lake increase day by day, but development is going in many different directions. To ensure that Skadar Lake remains an interesting and unique tourism destination with long-term prospects, it is important to link tourism businesses together and help them exchange ideas and learn about innovative approaches successfully applied elsewhere.

Cooperation between Albanian and Montenegrin tourism faculties

The co-operation was so far was limited to exchange of faculties of tourism in Shkodra, Albania and Kotor, Montenegro in May 2005. The trip included a meeting with the dean of the tourism faculty in Kotor, lectures, and presentations by experts from both Albania and

Montenegro on the potential of Skadar/Shkodra Lake for tourism development. It also included a guided field trip through the old town of Kotor, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Source: http://www.rec.org/REC/Programs/REReP/Biodiversity/skadar/suu.html