

Final Report

Ex-post Impact Study Environment in Southeast Europe 2007 - 2013

by the Austrian Development Agency

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
ADC	Austrian Development Cooperation
BMEIA	Budget of the Ministry for Europe, Intergration and Foreign Affairs
CDI	Community Development Initiative (Kosovo)
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EEAP	Energy Efficiency Action Plan
ENVSEC	Environment and Security Initiative
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Unites States)
ESCO	Energy service company
EU	European Union
GDI/ DIE	German Development Institute
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIZ/ GTZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (former GTZ)
GWh	Gigawatt-hour
IMPEL	Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (EU network)
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LEDS	Low Emissions Development Strategies
MAPP	Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects
MFA	Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (Austria)
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt-hour
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NAS	National Adaptation Strategies
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSSD	National Strategy for Sustainable Development

ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REC	Regional Environmental Centre
RWC	Regional Water Companies (Kosovo)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Switzerland)
SEE	Southeast Europe
SLED	Low Emission Development Strategy Project
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (EC)
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Executive Summary

The unit "Themes and Quality" of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) commissioned FAKT Consult in April 2015 to conduct an "Ex-post Impact Study - Environment in Southeast Europe between 2007 – 2013". This study was made to assess the impact of interventions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) - that were implemented by ADA together with public institutions, development organisations and private companies in the Western Balkans - regarding the improvements or deterioration of the environment and the natural resources.

Instead of focusing on each single project's effectiveness and impact as is usually the case in a classical evaluation, this study predominantly aims to look at the environmental results of the ADA interventions in Southeast Europe (SEE) as a whole. For this environmental impact study ADA selected 37 projects with different environmental approaches in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Multinational Programmes. For 24 of the interventions, the study team had a closer look during field-trips to Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. The other 13 interventions were assessed through desk-reviews, all information was stipulated in fact-sheets.

Impact measurement faces a lot of methodological challenges, as it would not be sufficient to describe only the changes that occurred but it is also necessary to understand the underlying causes for any changes in the environment, because these changes may be taking place irrespective of the intervention. Thus a context orientation approach is a promising one to meet the methodological challenges. The first step in this approach is to analyse the development trends within a sector which have occurred. The second step is to find out if these changes can be attributed to the intervention or to other causes. The participative methodology MAPP (Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects) has been applied in this study, and is one way to attribute changes or trends to interventions, and interviews with experts and the review of documents are other possible sources of information.

There are diverse environmental problems in the Western Balkan region. These include threats to biodiversity, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, degradation of water resources, high levels of air pollution, contamination of soil and water, and weak law enforcement for example in the areas of disposal of waste and recycling. However, the environmental sector also has potential for enhancing regional cohesion and establishing efficient cooperation which are very relevant aspects for a region that has been characterized by wars, ethnic conflicts and overall instability in the last 25 years. The European Union (EU) integration process is currently the main political driver of change in the region. Some progress has been reported in the alignment with the environmental *acquis communautaire*, however, implementation and enforcement remain issues.

The four thematic operational fields that were outlined in the ADA "Strategic Guideline on Environment and Development in Austrian Development Policy" serve as the basis for this impact analysis.

With respect to the environmental impact of the first operational field "Sustainable natural resource management" the following can be stated: Projects concerned with organic agriculture have shown the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and

other negative environmental impacts of conventional farming. However, two very large regional development projects have not sufficiently used their potential to take up environment-friendly agricultural practices. Projects that aimed to improve resource conservation had a moderate impact on the environment, some of them through interesting and appealing new approaches, e.g. enhancing regional cohesion. But the impact could possibly be greater if the improved knowledge could be anchored beyond the project structures in e.g. the Municipalities.

The projects supporting the operational field “Safe handling, trade and disposal of chemicals and waste management” show strong effects on the environment. They were successful in improving waste collection, oriented investments in remediation and clean-up activities in different mining sites, and possibly reduced the use of chemicals on farms. Three out of seven projects were also active on the national level to improve one of the major environmental challenges which is weak law enforcement for waste disposal and recycling, in particular for mining waste in some areas.

Compared to the preceding projects, the projects that were attributed to the operational field of “Climate protection” show a significantly lower impact on the environment. Unquestionably there were conducive measures to reduce CO₂ emissions. However, several aspects were not considered in project designs which proved to be obstacles for better project success, as for example neglecting to take energy framework conditions into consideration which made projects unprofitable and thus placed their sustainability in danger. Other projects fell short because they did not involve policy-makers and legislation level actors and therefore had no impact beyond the limited project sphere.

The projects belonging to the field of “Water and sanitation” that mainly were executed in Albania, significantly improved the water quality through improvements in the water supply service and the sewerage system. The support is creating competent institutions to operate and sustain the infrastructure, and successfully influenced the political framework conditions. This coherent approach to hedge the success achieved on the local level through advice on the micro-, meso- and macro-level should be taken as a model for other countries, where the portfolio is sometimes fragmented and good initiatives on the micro-level lose momentum because there is no support on the meso- and macro-levels.

In terms of sustainability, results are mixed. It has to be stated that there is no ADA wide exit strategy applied generally to the projects to preserve their success. Yet, there are successful projects especially those which addressed the felt needs of the beneficiaries, like an improved water – or waste collection system. At the intermediary level sustainability is achieved through creating ownership and leadership for the development process among the concerned organisations, an aspect that sometimes felt short in the project design. When it comes to projects that are located on the macro-level of advising policy, there were some sustainable projects in the portfolio. One is a teaching tool that had been officially introduced in schools to create a broader understanding of the concept of sustainable development, the other is a sector strategy that is highly appreciated by experts, and used as a reference document by government officers and donors. But there are also quite a few projects where impacts could scarcely be found after some years.

From all these examples, we can conclude that there are definitely impacts on the micro-, meso- and macro-level, although it has to be admitted that we are skating on thin ice

when trying to determine precise effects due to methodological problems and the almost complete absence of a monitoring system that goes beyond just counting outputs.

Impact could be even greater and achievements could be consolidated if recommendations were followed as e.g. realize a consistent country portfolio that offers counselling for the selected sector on the micro-, meso- and macro-level during a considerable life-span inter alia on how to mainstream environmental objectives.

1 Introduction

1.1 Objectives and scope of the ex-post impact study

The unit "Themes and Quality" of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) commissioned FAKT Consult to conduct an "Ex-post Impact Study - Environment in Southeast Europe between 2007 – 2013". According to the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1) the purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the interventions of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) that were implemented by ADA together with public institutions, development organisations and private companies in the Western Balkan regarding:

- Improvements or deterioration of the environment and the natural resources (in the context of the relevant programmes and projects),
- Sustainability of immediate results and of the change processes initiated,
- Possible conflicts of aims,
- Circumstances that have contributed significantly to the success or failure of the various interventions.

The results of the study will be used both for institutional learning about the planning and steering of future projects and for informing the ministries involved and the Austrian public about the effectiveness of the interventions of ADA. Furthermore, the results should be discussed with interested stakeholders in the respective countries.

It is important to highlight that, contrary to a classical evaluation that would mainly focus on each single project's fulfilment of the five criteria for evaluation formulated by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), this study predominantly aims to look at the environmental results of the ADA interventions in Southeast Europe (SEE) as a whole. For this purpose, 37 projects (some of them Phases 1 and 2) in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Multinational Programmes were selected by ADA (see list of projects in Annex 2). The projects took very different approaches – water, energy, education, agriculture, etc. - but all of them supposedly had a positive influence on the environmental situation in the region. For 24 of the interventions, the study team had a closer look during ten days field-trips to Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, that took place between the end of June and mid of July in 2015 (see list of activities Annex 3). The other 13 interventions were assessed through desk-reviews, some of those additionally included interviews with resource-persons. All information was stipulated in fact-sheets that have been attached to this report (Annex 9). The study team in each country always consisted of a woman and a man, and an international and a national expert. The teams were Hans Hartung and Elira Jorgoni in Albania, Annette Schmidt and Fatmir Selimi in Kosovo, and Alexandra Huber and Saso Klekovski in Macedonia. As the team leader, Annette Schmidt also travelled to Albania and Macedonia. The team received additional support from Bernward Causemann, Jochen Currlé and Christine Lottje, who with their professional knowledge contributed to the desk study.

The study team would like to thank participants of the ADA reference group for their guidance and constant support during this assignment. An important contribution to the

field mission was provided by the resource persons interviewed in Vienna and in the three different countries, to whom we express our warm thanks. Naturally we extend special thanks to all the workshop participants who served this assessment in multiple ways.

1.2 Austrian Development Cooperation in environment and development

In addition to poverty reduction and peace-keeping, environmental protection with sustainable management of natural resources is included in the three objectives formulated by ADC. These objectives and their underlying principles are enshrined in the Austrian Federal Development Cooperation Act of the year 2003 and constitute the framework of the ADC.¹ The medium-term policy for ADC is formulated through several Three-Year Programmes, elaborated upon by the Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (MFA) and approved by the Councils of Ministers. In the last edition for the years 2013-2015, a “mission statement” was included that also identified “environment-friendly planning and implementation”² as one of the five ADC priorities. Environment and climate change – together with gender and education/ capacity development – are presented throughout the entire document as cross-cutting issues. As a consequence of the relevance given to environmental issues in the different framework documents, a “Strategic Guideline on Environment and Development in Austrian Development Policy” was coherently formulated among different Ministries and also endorsed by the Council of Ministers in 2009.³ This document lays out the four operational fields on which the Austrian government primarily focuses in the interface between environmental and development policies:

- (i) Sustainable natural resource management, combating desertification and preserving biodiversity,
- (ii) Sustainable chemicals and waste management,
- (iii) Climate protection,
- (iv) Water and sanitation.

These thematic operational fields and their related 17 formulated aims will substantially guide the study presented here.

In the year 2013, the implementation of the Guideline and the matrix that contains more than 100 ADC projects were reviewed on behalf of ADC. One of the main questions of the review was: “To which extent could the goals formulated in the matrix be implemented?”⁴ An unambiguous answer could not be given, because quite a few of the projects objectives were formulated fairly vaguely, and indicators needed to measure environmental progress were often not devised. Additionally, the review team were not fully convinced of the particular selection of the four operational fields, and also complained that the aims of the Guideline were not defined explicitly enough.

1 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009), p. 11.

2 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2012), p. 6-7.

3 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009).

4 Austrian Development Agency (2013), p. 15.

Other policy documents with an environmental focus in addition to the Guideline on Environment have been drawn up by ADC, e.g. documents on climate change, energy for sustainable development, biodiversity, water and sanitation, etc.⁵ And it goes without saying that ADC is committed to the UN environmental conventions, European Union (EU) policy principles and to the OECD Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The approach to dealing with the environment varies greatly in the strategies of the six countries relevant to this study. Four out of six strategies were formulated at a date later than the “Strategic Guideline on Environment and Development” where it says: “In this strategic guideline, environment is not seen as a sector on its own but as part and parcel of sustainable development. Only a balanced strategy that comprises all aspects of sustainable development can succeed in the long run. Austria therefore adopts a so-called mainstreaming strategy for the consistent and systematic integration and promotion of environment as an issue in development cooperation at all levels.”⁶ But even so, it seems this statement was not taken into account, as the environment is only discussed as a cross-cutting issue in the Strategy of Kosovo, and there only briefly. In the Strategy of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the subject is hardly mentioned, in the Strategy of Montenegro environment is presented as a so-called “non-focal area”, and in Macedonia environment is one of three areas of intervention. In the two older country strategies that were formulated before the “Strategic Guideline on Environment”, environment is referred to peripherally in some aspects (Serbia), whereas in Albania it is listed as one of three areas of intervention, water, sanitation and environment.⁷

In 2013 Austria’s official development assistance (ODA) amounted to 882 Mio. Euro, the equivalent of 0,27% of its gross national income (<http://www.entwicklung.at/zahlen-daten-und-fakten/>). The share of the bilateral aid that is programmed at the country level remains small, accounting for 10% (85 Mio. Euro). ADC concentrates on seven regions and ten priority countries. Two of them are Kosovo and Albania, which are among the six Western Balkan Countries that are relevant for this study. Kosovo and Serbia belong to the top ten recipients of ODA, having received 9,3 Mio. Euro (Kosovo) and 8,5 Mio. Euro (Serbia) in 2012. From that amount for Kosovo, 2,4 Mio. Euro was country programmable aid (for Serbia this data is not available).⁸ Albania received 7,6 Mio. Euro in 2013, of that amount, 1,5 Mio. Euro went to ADA. According to the recent peer review conducted by the OECD-DAC, in 2011-2012, only 10% (40 Mio. Euro) of any bilateral ODA had environment as a principal or significant objective, which is below the DAC average of 27%.⁹ This figure therefore stands in sharp contrast to the claims in the different strategic documents.

In the projects belonging to the sample chosen for this assessment, Austria invested 29 Mio. Euro between 2007 and 2013¹⁰, and they can be allocated to the following Environment - and Rio markers:¹¹

5 <http://www.entwicklung.at/en/publications/strategies-for-implementing-and-focus-papers/>

6 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009), p. 12.

7 Austrian Development Cooperation (2013a, 2011, 2010, 2010a, 2006) and Österreichische Ostzusammenarbeit (2007).

8 OECD (2015), p. 43.

9 OECD (2015), p. 44.

10 Some of the projects are still ongoing and their budget is also included in this 29 Mio. Euro. Additionally, at least in one project in Albania, the significant EU financial support of 2,3 Mio. Euro which is administered by ADA through an EU delegated cooperation is listed in the ADA statistics, as if the money had come from the ADA budget.

11 <http://www.oecd.org/development/stats/rioconventions.htm>

Table 1: Environment marker and Rio markers

Country (number of projects considered)	ENV (Environment)			FCC (Mitigation)			ADP (Adaptation) ¹²			CBD (Biodiversity)			CCD (Desertification)		
	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2
Level ¹³	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2
Albania (7)	2	4	1	6	0	1	6	1	0	7	0	0	7	0	0
Bosnia-H. (3)	1	2	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	0
Kosovo (5)	2	2	1	5	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	1	5	0	0
Macedonia (6)	0	1	5	0	3	3	5	0	1	3	0	3	3	1	2
Montenegro (4)	0	2	2	2	1	1	4	0	0	2	2	0	4	0	0
Serbia (5)	0	1	4	3	2	0	5	0	0	3	1	1	5	0	0
Multinat. Program. (7)	0	0	7	1	4	2	3	3	1	2	1	4	6	1	0
Total (37)	5	12	20	20	10	7	31	4	2	22	6	9	33	2	2
% (37 projects=100%)	14	32	54	54	27	19	84	11	5	60	16	24	89	5	5

Between 2007 and 2013, of the 37 projects selected for this study, 54% of them had environment as their principal objective (environment marker 2), and 32% as a significant objective (environment marker 1). Regarding budget, 36% and 36% (= 72%) of the selected projects belong to ENV 2 or ENV 1 (see Annex 4). Due to a lack of detailed information about the total number of projects in the Western Balkans, a stronger focus on environment in the region for ADC can't be substantiated with the data. However, it can be assumed from the data available: With 72% of the projects having an environmental focus, the selection for this study is far beyond the average 10% of all ADC projects. If we roughly calculate that 1/3 of the projects were selected, and even if we assume that all of the rest of the projects have no Environment or Rio marker, the average is still over 20%. This allows us to deduce that there is a focus on environment in the region.

¹² Marker introduced in 2010.

¹³ 0=no targeting, 1=significant objective, 2=principle objective.

2 Methodological Approach and Overview of the ADA Portfolio

2.1 General approach to the analysis of impacts

The debate about aid effectiveness is not at all new. It has been present ever since the question was raised whether support from outside can be effective to push development processes in poor countries. But the debate gained momentum with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2001. Every relevant OECD-DAC conference in the last ten years has revolved around the issue of aid effectiveness. The orientation of development assistance towards results is an obligation for state-owned development agencies but also for non-governmental organisations (NGOs). International agreements to improve the results orientation of development measures have been adopted. In addition, donors, parliaments and the public expect reliable and valid information about the effectiveness of foreign aid. These discussions and ambitious demands consequently have had an influence on the planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes. Everywhere new methods have been developed that have oriented development measures towards results and have helped to use information about results for steering projects better.

Unfortunately, the definition of results, impacts, outcomes, effectiveness etc. is not wholly standardized. But most of the donors refer to the OECD-DAC terms for evaluation and results-based management, yet these are also not free of contradictions.

Table 2: OECD-DAC terms¹⁴

Results	Effects	Planning	Monitoring and evaluation
		Overall goal	Impact
		The higher-order objective to which a development intervention is intended to contribute.	Positive and negative, primary and secondary long term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.
		Objective	Outcome
		Intended impact contributing to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental or other benefits to a society, community or group of people via one or more development interventions.	The likely or achieved short term and medium term effects of an intervention's outputs.
		Output	Output
		The products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.	

To avoid misunderstandings, when we talk about an impact study we do not only refer to impacts at the level of the development cooperation's overall goal, but also to impacts at

¹⁴ OECD-DAC (2002): Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, p. 24.

the level of its objectives. This means that both, policy as well as changes in institutions and the target group are taken into focus in this investigation.

Impact measurement faces a lot of methodological challenges. It would be not sufficient to describe only the changes. It is also necessary to explain the causes for the changes, because the changes could have also happened without the development intervention (counterfactual analysis). And there is no one single development intervention that causes changes. On the contrary, a mixture of influences may inhibit, promote or neutralize each other. Therefore, the scientific community differentiates between “gross results” – these are changes that include the so-called deadweight results that would have happened without the project or programme – and “net results”, also called impacts, that can clearly be attributed to a specific project or programme.¹⁵ These net results can only be described qualitatively. Due to the huge number of variables that influence them, quantification is not feasible or practical. All impact studies should go through a process of assessment as to whether changes can be attributed to development interventions or not. Studies that do not undergo this process are not very likely to be considered reliable. But the attribution process itself is very difficult, especially when it comes to impacts on the society in general, where there is no clear target group or where there are a lot of different influences. A promising approach is the context orientation, which means that not the development intervention is the first to be analysed, but instead the development trends which occurred in the sector. Attribution of the described trends or changes to development intervention or to certain other causes is then carried out as a second step. The changes have to be seen against the background of the following general trends: (i) intensification of a positive trend, (ii) attenuation of a negative trend and (iii) reversal of a negative trend. The general notion of change may therefore even include the maintenance of the status quo, especially in the environmental sector, where in many aspects state involvement continues to deteriorate. The reference in that case is the counterfactual question: “What would the situation be like if there had been no intervention?”

The participative methodology MAPP (Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects), which will be explained in the next Chapter, is one way to attribute changes or trends to interventions. The methodology is especially effective when the interventions focus directly on improvements in the quality of beneficiaries’ lives. For interventions focussing on changes at the policy level, particularly in the multinational programmes, other methodologies have to be applied, such as interviews with experts. But they will follow the same two steps of observing the changes first and attributing the observed change to the interventions second.

The analysis of impacts in this study will be based on a target system that comprises different levels, from output to outcome to impact, where the levels of impact and outcome are the most relevant for aid effectiveness studies. In a first step, key criteria will be defined that describe the target system. Most of these key criteria were taken from ADA “Strategic Guideline on Environment and Development in Austrian Development Policy” (see column two in the fact-sheet Annex 5). In a second step, indicators or categories that help to measure or describe the key criteria were developed (see column three “explanation” in the Annex 5). What is important is that the target system is not a

¹⁵ Rauscher, Olivia et.al (2012): Social Impact Measurement and Social Return on Investment (SROI-Analyse). Wirkungsmessung neu? Working paper, p. 6.

mono-causal system and that it is open also for negative or unexpected results. The target system, the key criteria and the indicators/ categories for this study provide the structure for the fact-sheet and the questionnaire (Annex 6).

2.2 Methods for data collection applied to the desk studies and the field missions

24 interventions were analysed on-site, among them seven multinational programmes (some of them Phases 1 and 2 of the same programme). The remaining 13 interventions were investigated based on desk studies only. Because cross checking (triangulation) of any findings from different angles was indispensable for acquiring reliable information, the following different data collection methods were successfully applied:

Analysis of documents (applied to all 37 projects)

Because political processes and the situation at the outset in a country have a strong influence on the development interventions and their impacts, the analysis of documents that identifies the various contexts of the different projects was an important step to carry out. In addition, different data sources, such as planning documents, annual reports and thematic papers were worked through to become familiar with the details of the projects. All relevant documents were available, although in some cases certain products of the projects, such as strategy documents, were not delivered automatically. Some of the projects were very extensively documented, e.g. the “Integrated Regional Development in the Municipality of Suharekë/ Suva Reka in the Sector of Agriculture” (8134-01/2007), where the offer consisted of 130 pages, a mid-term evaluation 80 pages and some of the yearly progress reports more than 40 pages. As the study team had to deal with 37 projects, the overwhelming number of documents was a burden that might be comparable to what ADA desk officers or country representatives face. Some projects were only documented in German, which excluded the national team members from reading them. So the question as to how partners deal with this problem would be justified.

Collection of data from the beneficiaries’ perspective (applied to one project in each country visited)

Method for Impact Assessment of Programmes and Projects (MAPP)¹⁶

Experience has shown that an evaluation oriented toward the beneficiaries or actors can provide constructive information. This is largely because beneficiaries, who are concerned with the projects as a matter of their daily existence, can judge in detail about impact. Therefore, a methodology called MAPP was developed by Susanne Neubert, from German Development Institute (GDI/ DIE) in Bonn, as a participatory method for the empirical analysis of de facto impacts. MAPP is based on group discussions and offers a logical sequence of tools for data collection and interpretation. The existence of a baseline is not necessary, because MAPP can be applied retrospectively. By using MAPP, the first step is to analyse the relevant development trends. The second step is to attribute them to specific interventions and/ or external factors. This context-oriented analytical direction

¹⁶ For further information see <http://www.ngo-ideas.net/mapp>

allows for discovering all positive, negative, and surprising trends and impacts. Although it is specifically designed for investigation at the beneficiary level, some of the tools can also be applied at the institutional level.

MAPP mainly consists of the following tools:

- **Life curve** - to identify the relevant exogenous criteria determining quality of life,
- **Trend analysis** - to identify detailed trends in relevant development and/ or poverty dimensions (for instance: standard of living, access to resources, knowledge, rights and power),
- **Activity list** - to determine important actors and donors in the community, to identify the most relevant programmes from the perspective of the community, to assess the relevance of the intervention for the target groups and evaluate the contributions (labour and/ or financial) of the beneficiaries,
- **Influence matrix** - to evaluate the influence and impacts of the development intervention on each criterion for determining quality of life,

Comparison of the “trend analysis” with the “influence matrix” contributes to identifying the “net effect” of the intervention. The “trend analysis” helps to assess to what extent the change observed is an intensification of a positive trend, an attenuation of a negative trend, or a reversal of a negative trend. The “influence matrix” can then demonstrate the quality and strength of the specific contribution made by the intervention. This allows for assessing to what extent the intervention was essential for the factual change observed. In the case of a lack of factual change, to what extent the intervention helped to stop a negative trend can be analysed.

MAPP workshops were held in each country visited by the study team. In Albania, a MAPP-workshop was conducted with beneficiaries from the project “Water Supply Shkodra - Consolidation in Cooperation with Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) & State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO) (7813-04/2007) (documentation see Annex 7). In Kosovo, the workshop participants were the farmers that benefited from the project “Integrated Regional Development in the Municipality of Suharekë/ Suva Reka in the Sector of Agriculture” (8134-01/2007). And in Macedonia, primary teachers that were familiar with the tool “The Green Pack, Awareness on Sustainable Development for Schools in Macedonia” (8103-00/2005) and “The Green Pack Junior” (8103-01/2009) participated. Even though participation in the workshops was very satisfactory in all three countries, there were certain time constraints among the participants. This meant that although all planned MAPP instruments could be carried out, there was not much time left for reflection and discussion. Nevertheless, the information gathered was very fruitful for the study team, and feedback from the participants regarding the methodology was very positive.

Interviews with key people (applied to all 37 projects)

Before, during and after the field missions, interviews with key people were conducted (see Annex 8). The objective was to interview a wide range of stakeholders with varying perspectives, for example, ADA sector experts in Vienna and people with a profound knowledge about the projects or programmes in the partner countries. Depending on the issue of the project, these were ministry officers, representatives of the local administration, the project managers, representatives from other donors engaged in the same sector, NGOs, etc. ADA representatives in the countries were also interviewed, but

surprisingly, the ADA coordination offices were neither responsible for the business partnerships nor for the multinational projects and therefore not knowledgeable about details of these projects. A careful selection of the interview partners was essential to obtain a broad view of the issue. Some critics of the projects could also be included. The semi-structured questionnaire was prepared before the field mission, but was supplemented in response to situations on-site. As there were five to six national projects to be reviewed in each country, plus the multinational programmes, the number of people interviewed for each project was very limited and can't be compared to what is standard in evaluations. However, the objective of the study justifies this procedure, as fulfilment of each project outcome was not the major focus of the study team, rather, the environmental impact as a whole. People were generally very willing to be interviewed, agreed to appointments even at short notice, and seemed to be open for critical reflection. However, it was difficult in some countries to find resource persons, who were not the implementers themselves, who had sufficient knowledge of the multinational projects. For one of the projects in Kosovo that received very limited financial support from Austria (6.500 Euro), an interlocutor could not be found during the field mission.

Quantitative analysis (applied to all 37 projects)

Experimental methods based on large samples and control groups could not be applied to this impact study, as they require considerably more preparation, bigger samples, more time and hence more funds. Therefore, this study has a strong qualitative emphasis along with the quantification of qualitative assessments through MAPP. Nevertheless, quantitative data were also collected to crosscheck the information. Some of these data were taken from the ADA documents and reports; others had to be collected during the mission.

Visits on-site (applied to some of the 24 projects studied during the field mission)

Visits to project sites like water schemes, model farms, greenhouses, a geothermal plant, etc., gave the study team insights into the success of projects and their installations. Important conclusions about the usefulness and the sustainability of the projects could be drawn from these visits.

2.3 Interventions selected for the sample

For the field mission, ADA selected Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. The reason for choosing the first two countries was that they are both priority countries for the ADC. While Austrian support to Macedonia has run out, it had a strong environmental focus and its environmental performance is of high interest, therefore Macedonia was selected. Additionally, projects executed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia were analysed through desk-studies.



Figure 1: Map Western Balkans

The study was designed as an ex-post study, since the time frame covers the period from 2007 to 2013. The reason for this choice was the well-known fact that impacts on the environment require staying power and do not succeed immediately. However, the ex-post time frame criterion was not strictly applied. This was due to the situation that 16 projects, of which 15 were visited by the study team, were still ongoing, either through ADA funding, or through funding from other donors or from business partnerships.

Which projects were finally selected? All the projects that had an ENV 1 (12 projects) or an ENV 2 (20 projects) marker (see Chapter 1.2) in the region. An additional 5 projects with ENV 0 were taken into the sample. The reason for their inclusion was that, judging from their topics – water, energy or regional development - these projects clearly had an environmental orientation, even though they had been classified ENV 0. Because all of the projects that met the defined criteria were chosen for the study, the question of the selection by ADA or any possible bias is of no concern.

Based on the four thematic operational fields established in the “Strategic Guideline on Environment”, the 37 projects selected can be clustered as follows:

Table 3: Classification of selected projects

Country	Sustainable natural resource management, combating desertification and preserving biodiversity	Sustainable chemicals and waste management	Climate protection	Water and sanitation	Not clearly assignable
Albania	1			6	
Bosnia-H.	2			1	
Kosovo	3	1		1	
Macedonia			3		3
Montenegro			1		3
Serbia	1	1			3
Multinat. Pro.			1		6
Total	7	2	5	8	15
% (37 projects=100%)	19	5	13	22	41

15 projects (41%) could not be assigned clearly to one of the operational fields, some because they address more than one of the four thematic fields, others because they did not at all fit into the system, although twelve of that group were classified as ENV 2 and three as ENV 1, which meant that environment was or should be part of the target system. Two conclusions could be deduced from this situation: (i) the established thematic operational fields have a more traditional view of the environment as a project topic and do e.g. not reflect new developments in the work on formulation of strategies and financing being mostly done by multinational projects (ii) the “Strategic Guideline on Environment” was not consulted even when projects with a strong environmental focus were being developed.

A very positive note is that out of the 15 projects that could not be assigned, clearly only two – out of the eleven total – are business partnerships. This means that business partnership projects fit quite well into the environmental strategy.

To avoid misunderstandings, it needs to be made clear that the difficulties with the assignment of the 15 projects to one of the four operational fields is not a statement about the quality or relevance of any of these projects. On the contrary, some of them are innovative, and their contributions to the improvement of environmental issues will be assessed in Chapter 4.1 – 4.4., wherever a certain project fits or in the additional Chapter 4.5.

ADA has various financing instruments¹⁷, three of them were relevant for our study (see list of projects in Annex 2):

(i) Initiatives funded under country and regional strategies. In its priority countries and key regions, ADC supports governments in implementing national development plans or regional strategies. Increasingly important factors are implementation through national

¹⁷ <http://www.entwicklung.at/en/funding/>

systems, programme-based approaches and funding agreements with organisations and institutions in partner countries. 23 projects selected for this study belong to this group.

(ii) Business partnerships fund projects for enterprises from Austria or the European Economic Area that provide long-term investments in developing countries and take active measures to improve local social, ecological or economic conditions. Eleven projects selected for this study belong to this group.

(iii) EU financed projects. Apart from the portfolio covered by ADA's core budget, that is, the Budget of the Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA) which is dedicated to bilateral Development Cooperation, ADA is also managing funds from other sources. Among these sources are funds from the European Unions Development Cooperation, which are in line with the EU's policies and strategies in the respective country or region. Two projects selected for this study belong to this group.¹⁸

The projects taken as a whole deal with a huge group of different stakeholders: farmers, water users, environmental officers and inspectors, teachers, political decision-makers, the whole population of one town, etc. Quantification is not possible, because there is no clear differentiation made between direct and indirect beneficiaries. In some projects only the very direct beneficiaries are counted as the target group, and in others the beneficiaries of a whole region where the project is active are added.

2.4 Limitations and data quality

Again, to avoid misunderstandings, it should be reiterated that this is not a classical evaluation that gives details about each and every outcome of the projects. Rather, the study focuses on the understanding of any environmental impact as an outcome of the ADA portfolio in the Western Balkans.

There is no denying that the study had to deal with some difficulties: For example, in Kosovo we had to review five national and three multinational projects, some of them with a time span of ten years, and we had only eight days in the field. The analysis could thus only be a type of "fly-by". The question has to be raised whether you can do justice in such a short time to a project like, e.g., the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) that has six different cooperation partners, has been running since 2005 in six different countries and is pursuing a huge number of different activities.

Another challenge that faced the study can be drawn from Table 3: "Classification of selected projects" in Section 2.3. The cluster makes obvious that – with the exception of Albania – the portfolio is fragmented. This provides a methodological problem for the study, because one of the questions to be answered is how does the ADC support environmental improvements in the respective countries? But if there are only one or two projects per operational field, some of them with a very limited financial support, can a relevant impact really be expected?

Regarding the target system of the project, the following comments may be allowed: The formulation of the overall goal – although in most cases in line with international standards – seemed to be "written for its own sake" because in a lot of the project

¹⁸ One project is co-financed by the EU (another instrument) with 6.500 €.

documentation there is no further reference made to the overall goal. So it is not clear whether the development intervention was really able to contribute to the overall goal. Regarding the formulation of objectives, some of them are formulated too much like outputs. In some of those projects marked ENV 2 and ENV 1, the environment topic is not necessarily anchored in the target system, even though this is required by OECD as part of the policy marker system. The indicators are sometimes very vague, others are purely output indicators that, e.g., count only workshop participants but do not report about newly acquired knowledge and its implementation. Baselines are often lacking, so the information given in the yearly progress documents only very seldom report along the outcome indicators. Instead, mostly outputs are described. To sum it up, the existing project planning and monitoring system provided too little support for us to always be able to make clear statements in our review about the projects' impacts.

What did the project team do to close this gap? For the projects where the target system was not well designed and the monitoring and reporting system restricted, we tried to find evidence for outcomes and impacts somewhere in the documents provided and in the interviews. This was of course a lot easier in those countries to which we could travel and talk to people.

In spite of these obstacles, the study team got the impression that we were able to dig deeply into the topic in all of the countries and to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the issues we were asked by ADA to address. We give a great deal of credit to the extremely profound regional and thematic knowledge of our three national experts. Our own extensive work experience also contributed to the thoroughness we were able to achieve.

And last but not least: The following scoring scheme was applied for rating the environmental impact:

Table 4: A seven-step scale for rating the impact

Description	Score
Extremely strong	7
Very strong	6
Strong	5
Moderate	4
Weak	3
Very weak	2
None	1

Up to the rating of 4, the impact can be considered good. It has to be mentioned that due to the time constraints and limitations of the study the assessment marks given by the study team should only serve as an orientation and should not be seen as carved in stone. The task of this study was to "only" assess the environmental impact of the projects. So we encountered some very successful projects that unfortunately neglected the environmental aspects and therefore did not receive very good marks. The other way round it was also true that some not so good projects received good marks, because at least the environmental issue was well developed.

3 Environment and Development in Southeast Europe

3.1 Environmental protection

The region of the Western Balkans features diverse ecosystems, ethnic groups, religions, cultures, economies and kinds of social fabric. It spans over four of Europe's biogeographical areas: Mediterranean, Central European, Alpine and Pannonic. The region has been characterized by wars, ethnic conflicts and overall instability. Environmental pollution in the Balkans has many features that include industrial and urban infrastructure, waste as well as military remnants, such as mines and unexploded ordinances. Competition over natural resources has also led to violence and instability. The environmental sector has great potential for enhancing regional cohesion and the establishment of efficient regional cooperation. Indeed, environmental insecurity has been a catalytic issue (e.g. shared watersheds) whenever regional cooperation has been nurtured through awareness raising, civil society engagement and international support.

Apart from ethnic conflicts and wars, several other factors have contributed to environmental degradation in the region, such as weak or recovering economies with limited budgets, widespread poverty, political instability and state-building processes. Some of the key environmental challenges in the region include threats to biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, threat to river systems (e.g. energy production), degradation of water resources, high levels of air pollution, contamination of soil and water, and weak law enforcement for protection and use of water resources, waste and recycling.

The western coast of the region faces a series of pressures, including marine transport of petroleum and natural gas, natural gas extraction and overfishing. Coastal zones also face significant pressures, including wastewater and solid waste from urban and tourist areas, eutrophication of coastal waters and sprawl in many coastal areas.

The EU integration process (e.g. *acquis*, in particular chapter 27 on environment or the EU Water Framework Directive) is currently the main political driver of change in the region. While the EU enlargement process provides opportunities for improving the environment in the region, it also underlines certain challenges for the candidate countries (Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia) and potential candidate countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo). The 'Copenhagen criteria' pose a great challenge to candidate countries, as national legislation has to be implemented and enforced in order to meet EU's environmental protection requirements.¹⁹

¹⁹ Chapter based on Mihajlov, Andjelka (2008), Göteborg Universitet (2012) and European Commission (2014): Different Country Progress Reports.

3.2 Status and trends in the sustainable management of natural resources

Countries of the region share many river basins and water resources. Water scarcity is a problem, particularly in the summer and in southern parts of the Western Balkans, as well as in coastal zones. Regions and catchments of the Balkans feature large intact river landscapes. Up to 30% of the large rivers are still near-natural, some even pristine and of very high conservation value. Over 60% of the rivers in Albania and Montenegro are in such a clean state, while in Germany only 10%, in Switzerland 7% and in Austria 6%. Almost 50% of the Balkan rivers are only slightly or moderately altered – in Germany, for comparison, this is the case for only 30% of the rivers.

Many of the region's water resources are shared: about 60% of Croatia's territory and over 70% of Bosnia-Herzegovina's lies in the Danube River basin. In Serbia, over 90% of the water resources flow from neighbouring countries. Macedonia's main river basins flow through Albania into the Adriatic Sea and through Greece into the Aegean Sea.

Urbanisation, land abandonment, overexploitation of resources due to poverty, intensification of agricultural and forestry practices, changes in the water regime due to construction of dams and irrigation as well as pollution are some of the main concerns in the region. Coastal zones, rivers and wetlands are particularly vulnerable in the short run, but in the longer term the mountain meadow ecosystems are also considered vulnerable.

The EU integration process is encouraging river basin approaches to water management based on the Water Framework Directive. International frameworks for the Danube and Sava river basins are also promoting this approach.

A wave of planned hydropower plants is reported throughout the region. Numerous planned dams will severely impact the freshwater ecosystem services of the region.

In terms of bio-diversity, the Western Balkans feature rich and numerous ecosystems that are well preserved. Oak, beech, and conifer forests nestle alongside outstanding plant diversity – important sanctuaries for large carnivores such as the lynx, the European brown bear and wolf. The Eastern Adriatic is one of the richest fishing grounds in the Mediterranean, and commercial fish species, whales, dolphins and marine turtles thrive there. The area extensive network of rivers and lakes in Europe, wetlands of international importance, such as the Neretva delta in Bosnia and Croatia, and Shkodra lake in Montenegro and Albania as well as Ohrid lake in Macedonia and Albania.

Countries in the region have also been affected by droughts, but floods are also becoming a frequent risk in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.²⁰

3.3 Conflicts about the use of resources

Countries in the Western Balkans face many threats to social cohesion, especially in terms of tensions between rich and poor. They also point to strong perceptions of social injustice and concerns about corruption. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and to some extent in

²⁰ Chapter based on Eca watch Österreich and Euronatur (2012), Göteborg Universitet (2012) and European Commission (2014): Different Country Progress Reports.

Kosovo, inter-ethnic tensions are also present. In some of the countries the issue of land ownership is not resolved, claims to restitution and compensation due to an agrarian reform (Albania) or ethnic cleansing (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo) have been brought before the court and are still pending. Such cases undermine tenure security and the development of functioning formal land markets. In addition, internal migration waves produced new informal settlements, complicating even further the property right situation. The governments of Albania and Kosovo are trying to address the situation of informal owners by legalizing the large number of informal buildings.

In terms of potential conflicts, the Trepca mine in Kosovo has been subject to clashes for the rights over its production, as it is located in the northern part of Kosovo, mostly populated by a Serbian minority. Plans for the construction of a dam on the Macedonian side of the river Drinos sparked protests in Albania in 2014, as the construction would have resulted in an alteration of the river flow. Waste management affecting the pollution of Lake Ohrid has also appeared to be an issue for Macedonia and Albania.²¹

3.4 Access to energy and resources

Energy and poverty in the Western Balkans constitute an interesting nexus. More than 16% of the people in the Western Balkans region are exposed to energy poverty, meaning they do not have access to sufficient energy services to ensure a healthy lifestyle for themselves and their families. High-energy prices and high-energy consumption accompanied by inadequate building insulation and low-efficiency appliances, particularly stoves and boilers, put heavy pressure on the household budget of poorer segments of the population, often leaving insufficient funds for adequate food, clothing and education.

Governments in the region have used various tools to address the issue of energy poverty. Electricity prices in Bosnia-Herzegovina are uniformly low, facilitating access to energy services but distorting the operation of the energy market. Albania (until recently), Serbia and Kosovo have applied block electricity tariffs with a lower first-tier level of pricing. These are designed to provide households with a minimum of electricity supply at affordable prices while avoiding a subsidy on all consumption. In Macedonia, the government intends to replace general energy subsidies (which result in relatively low electricity prices for all consumers) with a more targeted social assistance scheme. In Montenegro, electricity tariffs reflect a cross-subsidy between industry and households; the government plans to eliminate the cross-subsidies over the next five years and replace them with targeted subsidies for the poor.

Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia are parties to the Energy Charter Treaty and in October 2007, SEE countries, including the Western Balkans, signed a Memorandum of Understanding that recognizes the social effects associated with energy market reforms. These include: the impact of increasing energy prices on vulnerable groups; the impact of mine closures and of the re-structuring/ privatisation of energy companies, including

21 Chapter based on Japiec, Lidia (?) and European Commission (2014): Different Country Progress Reports.

overall reduction of employment; the related impact on cities and municipalities that depend on local energy supply companies.²²

3.5 Awareness and action to mitigate climate change and to adapt to it

Although the Western Balkans are currently conceived of as low emitters of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), with an average of 4,6 metric tons per capita compared to 7,8 for Austria, they are projected to increase in the coming years. A major source of greenhouse gas emissions is the energy sector. It is also a source of air pollutants, oil spills, and nuclear waste. The energy sector is one of the most polluting sectors of the regional economy.

Most of the countries in the region are net importers of energy. The main domestic sources of electricity generation in the region are lignite and hydropower. Fuel wood still remain an important heat source, and wood is used extensively as a furnace fuel, often in low efficiency stoves that release fine dust as e.g. poly-aromatic hydrocarbons that create cancer risks.

There are emerging policies and actions to increase the efficiency of energy production and consumption and switch to low or zero-carbon energy sources. They are, however, being overwhelmed by the fast growth in energy use. Obstacles to improvement include lack of investment in efficiency measures for power generation, transport, buildings, and industry, relatively low levels of awareness among consumers, vendors, and policy makers, and a lack of up-front capital for new energy efficient equipment.

However, renewable electricity provides a significant share of the consumption of electricity in the Western Balkan countries. Almost all the renewable electricity in the region comes from large hydropower plants. Hydropower production is strongly affected by climate factors such as low rainfall – which occurred in 2002, 2003 and 2006. The World Bank estimates that summer rainfall will decline in the region by about 10% by 2020 and 20% by 2050, resulting in a large impact not only on hydropower production but on agriculture as well. Other vulnerabilities countries experience in terms of climate change are higher air temperatures and frequent floods.

Some of the countries have adopted a national climate change strategy to address mitigation and adaptation, others haven't. In some countries climate change issues have been integrated into strategic environmental documents. But the enforcement level is low in all the SEE countries, due to limited financial resources. All countries (excluding Kosovo) ratified the Kyoto Protocol to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and are eligible for the application of one of the Protocol's mechanisms – Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), but they don't have any emission reduction obligations.

The countries have associated themselves with most of the formal EU positions on Climate Change in the international context, and in line with their commitment a list of sector Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) are prepared. Albania, Serbia and Macedonia have also been part of the Enhancing Capacities for Low Emissions Development Strategies Programme (EC-LEDs) financed by USAID. However, there are

²² Chapter based on International Energy Agency (2008).

still considerable efforts needed in this field. The proposed measures and strategies elaborated depend on external funding. The countries' capacities for monitoring, reporting and verification in this area remain weak and should be considerably strengthened. Significant efforts are also needed to raise awareness at all levels of society, and to promote cooperation among all relevant stakeholders.²³

3.6 Functionality and strength of governmental organisation and NGOs

All countries have a Ministry of Environment but in several countries this Ministry is the one with the smallest budget (e.g. Kosovo 0,6% and Macedonia 0,4% of the total budget). In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia there has been little progress in the area of environment, while Albania, Montenegro and Serbia have achieved some progress and continue in their alignment with the environmental acquis. In general, however, implementation and enforcement of the national legislation remains a concern and need significant strengthening (particularly related to water management, industrial pollution control and risk management, nature protection and air quality). The strengthening of administrative capacity and inter-institutional cooperation is reported to be a priority.

While there has been some progress in alignment with the acquis in the field of environment, there was overall very little progress in the field of climate change. While legal alignment driven by the EU accession agenda is reportedly progressing well, implementation and enforcement remain issues across the region. Other governance aspects that are prioritized in the approximation process – such as regulatory quality, government effectiveness, rule of law and control of corruption, have an impact on the ability of the governments to perform the necessary legal changes, and on their institutional capacity needs associated with implementation and enforcement.

Certain vested interests work against reforms for controlling industrial pollution or deforestation, and at the same time accountability mechanisms are rather weak. Constituencies, such as affected communities, unions and environmental organisations, are considered to be not very vocal.

There has been little progress on energy (security, efficiency and renewable energy) in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Serbia. Although some legislation remains to be adopted, the most substantial efforts that remain to be made relate to implementation, for instance of energy efficiency and renewable energy plans. Progress in Bosnia-Herzegovina is hampered by a lack of state-level strategic planning and a roadmap for transposition of relevant EU legislation. In Kosovo, challenges remain in the formulation and implementation of energy policies which would strengthen the role of the regulator, improve resource efficiency, diversify supply including renewable resources, and modernise infrastructure.

In terms of protected areas, it is clear that the region's functional systems for efficient management of protected areas are still developing. Inadequate local participation in establishing protected areas, and insufficient or non-existing dialogue and lack of

23 Chapter based on Göteborg Universitet (2012), European Environment Agency (2010), worldbank.org/countries and www.unfccc.org

transparency in management are obstacles to coming to satisfactory management solutions and achieving successful transboundary cooperation.

Taken together and compared with one another, the individual civil society organisation (CSO) framework laws bear considerable similarities in their structure and content in the Western Balkan countries. NGOs from SEE have already established a model of cooperation. In 2006 they signed the Declaration for Regional Environmental Cohesion as one of the five ADC priorities, as an instrument to achieve sustainable development and accelerated association with the EU in Belgrade, actively put forward as an initiative for environmental regional cohesion. But still there are differences in the countries, e.g. regarding the number of NGOs with an environmental focus. There are, for example, a very limited number of NGOs in Kosovo compared to a bigger and more influential number in Macedonia. In addition, the highly competent Regional Environmental Centre (REC) is active in the regions of SEE in supporting civil society organisations that aim to strengthen their institutional capacities for addressing crucial environmental concerns. REC is supporting joint projects on water management, biodiversity and trans-border protected areas.²⁴

3.7 Improved possibility of implementing multilateral environmental agreements

All of the SEE countries have begun cooperating on conservation issues to some degree in accordance with various European and international conventions. Among the most important international conventions are the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which all SEE countries except Kosovo have ratified and have prepared national communications and inventories (see also Chapter 3.5). The UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD) has also been ratified by all SEE countries, but the level of ratification of its Protocols varies and the implementation and integration into national policies is still in early stages. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) has been ratified by all countries except Kosovo. The UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes is in different stages of ratification in the SEE countries except Kosovo and Macedonia – they have not started the project yet. In June 2015 Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia signed a Joint Declaration for co-operation in which they state their commitment to strengthen partnership and co-operation among the 13 Aarhus Centres in Southeast Europe in order to reinforce the promotion and implementation of the Aarhus Convention, to facilitate a dialogue of civil society organisations across borders, and to more effectively address common environmental concerns.

²⁴ Chapter based on Göteborg Universitet (2012) and Env.net blog.

4 Assessment of the Impact regarding the Thematic Operational Fields^{25 26}

4.1 Assessment of the impact in relation to the improvement of natural resource management

Introductory remarks

The review in this section covers 12 projects all in all²⁷. Two projects belong to the sector of rural development (Albania 8140-01/2010 and Kosovo 8134-01/2007). One project comes from the sector of agro-industries (Bosnia-Herzegovina 2550-03/2009), one from the sector of agricultural services (Bosnia-Herzegovina 2550-12/2010), one from the agricultural development sector (Kosovo 2550-09/2013) and one from the agricultural policy and administration sector (Serbia 8220-01/2010). Two multinational programmes will also be reviewed in this section, the forestry policy and administrative management initiative Themis (Phase 1 8284-00/2011, Phase 2 8284-01/2014) and the environment policy and administrative management projects ENVSEC (Phase 1 8071-00/2005, Phase 2 2579-00/2009, Phase 3 8071-01/2012). Two projects dealing with tourism policy and administration in Montenegro also belong to this section (8163-01/2009 and 7942-03/2009). Finally, projects from two more related thematic fields will also be presented here, the environmental education/ training programme Green Pack (Macedonia Phase 1 8103-00/2005 and Phase 2 8103-01/2009), and the comprehensive multisector aid project (Serbia 6526-00/2011).

Propagating ecologically appropriate, diversified agriculture and promoting organic agriculture

Although the Western Balkans have some advantages compared to other middle-income economies in the production of high-value horticulture and dairy products, as the countries there have ample supply of agriculture labour, proximity and free market access to the EU, and a relatively good climate, there are still several challenges that this geographical area faces which limit great potential. These are unfavourable farm structures, holdings too small for profitable cultivation for most rural households, and outdated farm technologies. Farm management practices pose another problem, as well as the suboptimal use of resources, weak rural infrastructure, a rudimentary rural advisory system and limited access to credit and investment capital. Moreover, agricultural imports from trading partners, which receive production and export subsidies, place the farmers in the region at a competitive disadvantage, and their agro-food trade deficit has been widening. Kosovo, for example, is one of the largest importers of food per capita in Europe.

²⁵ Further details about the projects, their contract amounts, objectives, outcomes, etc., and the study teams' assessment can be found in the related fact-sheets (see Annex 9). For better orientation: all projects starting with a 2550 number are business partnerships.

²⁶ As we are dealing with 37 different projects, there were more than 500 sources/ documents that were examined for the study. Not all of them could be enumerated in the bibliography of this report, but all sources are named in the specific fact-sheets (see Annex 9).

²⁷ Projects with several phases, e.g. ENVSEC for which only one fact-sheet was developed, were counted as one project only, whereas when we talk about the number of 37 projects each phase was counted as a different project.

Organic agriculture has no significance yet in any of the countries. However, the first steps in that direction have been made. Laws on organic agriculture have been approved and adopted, which to a large extent involved harmonization with EU regulations. Awareness of the real benefits of organic production is still limited, and for the time there are no important returns coming from the market.

Despite the difficulties, three projects have not been deterred from pursuing organic interests. Thanks to the "Organic Food Production Support in South Serbia (OFPS)" (8220-01/2010) four project beneficiaries-processors have certified their products, while 15 farmers have been included in organic production and three farmers have found entry as organic producers. Thus the area under organic agriculture in Serbia increased by 15,44% between 2011 and 2013, reaching 7.200 hectares. The "WP-BiH-RETTTER Cultivation and Processing of Pomegranates on an Organic Basis (2550-03/2009)" project established production-, processing and marketing structures for an organic value chain, which could be transferred into the portfolio of products of already existing farms. It thus extended economic options for organic agriculture and provided an incentive for conventionally producing farmers to switch into the organic modus. Unfortunately, the Bosnian business partner became insolvent and the project could not be completed. The "Organic Agriculture in Bosnia-Herzegovina" project (2550-12/2010) provided support for the establishment of an organisation that should be in a position to gather and process a specific range of organic products. The organisation was also trained to certify agricultural products and production processes as organic. There are external owners of this entity, and they are ready to market organic products of Bosnia-Herzegovina. These features are an important precondition for the propagation of organic agriculture. How successful and, above all, how sustainable the project is in fact could not be detected within the framework of this study. Although these three projects had to face difficulties in their implementation they prepared the way for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other environmental impacts of conventional farming.

Unfortunately the two comprehensive projects "Regional Development Programme (RDP) - Northern Albania" (8140-01/2010) and "Integrated Regional Development in the Municipality of Suharekë (Kosovo) in the Sector of Agriculture" (8134-01/2007) did not strive for a strong ecological focus. In Albania, an indirect contribution to environmental protection may be assumed, since one of the criteria for prioritization of regional development projects states, that the project promotes sustainable environment objectives expressed by the Regional Plan on Environment Impact. The above mentioned project in Kosovo has very successfully managed to support businesses in the Suharekë region, with emphasis on economic development. It contributed to sustainable management of natural resources through its grant programme e.g. by supporting rational water use, manure management, some activities which promoted organic production, such as raising free range chickens and collecting some forestry products. At the same time, the project's propagation and support of heating systems in greenhouses is highly questionable, because farmers use the cheapest source of energy, which is coal. The government is working on legislation to improve the situation and remove this option, but so far the use of coal continues.

To sum it up, organic agriculture was not a crosscutting issue in these two projects. The management should give more emphasis to environmental protection and use of natural resources. The same holds true for the business partnership project "Establishment of

Structures for Sustainable Fruit Cultivation in Kosovo” (2550-09/2013) which except for its appreciated commitment to ban dangerous chemicals (see Chapter 4.2), so far has no ecological approach. According to several interview partners, there is no market for organically produced fruit in Kosovo, because the higher costs of organic production would imply higher prices, which the consumers are not willing to pay. Furthermore, the farmers’ knowledge about fruit production is still very limited and not sufficient to be able to handle the challenges of organic production. But there is also a minority convinced that there will be a demand for organic products in Kosovo in the near future and that with the help of the donors farmers should prepare themselves. The free range chicken producer we met in the MAPP workshop in Kosovo who cannot meet the demand in supermarkets for free range eggs, shares this opinion.

Advocating precaution in the use of genetically modified organisms

According to legislation in the Western Balkans, agriculture production based on the use of genetically modified organisms is forbidden. Nevertheless, there is considerable need to monitor and trace their trade and use and conduct through risk assessments. For instance there is a lack of detailed regulations about the import of biotech feed, which is common in the West Balkan countries. This thematic field was of no concern in the reviewed projects.

Contributing to secure land and use rights and to sustainable long-term land-use planning

In Albania, land rights are an issue by reason of a land reform in the early 1990s. The reform resulted in too small farms and generated property rights insecurity with an overlap of claims between pre-collectivization “old owners” and post-1990 “new owners”. In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo the wars led to disputes about land rights. The fragmentation and small size of the agricultural parcels in most of the SEE countries make sustaining adequate agricultural outputs almost impossible, leading to higher cost of production and thus a lack of competitiveness in the market. The selected projects only touched on the subject of sustainable long-term land-use by providing some support of small and medium scale farmers to become commercial farmers in order to use their land longer term (8134-01/2007).

Securing protected areas and promoting innovative incentives for resource conservation and supporting sustainable forest and timber management

The region is characterized by many borders that cut across ecosystems and areas of high natural value, often dividing the continent along natural barriers. Border areas are frequently the most favoured regions in biodiversity terms. Natural areas shared by neighbouring countries are a common responsibility, and ecological problems occurring in border areas cannot be solved by one country alone. Due to ethnic tensions in the past, and for other reasons, transboundary and regional cooperation in SEE has not yet been very well developed. The same holds true for environmental crime (waste, pollution, illegal wildlife trade, illegal construction, illegal logging, etc.). Awareness about such activities as criminal is scant among policymakers, the staff and the enforcement agencies of the Ministries of Environment/ Forestry, etc., and among representatives of justice (judges and prosecutors). But not only cooperation, knowledge and awareness are

lacking, there is also a lack of effective institutional structures and no legal framework. There is an absence of law enforcement, participatory policy development and implementation, and monitoring of resources such as the forests. Cases are only very slowly prosecuted if at all, sanctions are seldom and the enforcement authorities lack both human and financial capacities.

There are two multinational initiatives that tackle these issues. One is the ENVSEC multinational initiative (8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012) whose overall goal is to contribute to the reduction of environmental and security risks through increased cooperation both among and within countries in the SEE region. In the current phase the project concentrates on the way prevention and mitigation of transboundary environmental risks are interlinked with security risks, particularly those relating to the management of transboundary risks from hazardous activities, management of shared natural resources, adaptation to climate change and promotion of participatory and informed decision-making and implementation processes.

The other multinational initiative is Themis (8284-00/2011, 8284-01/2014) whose aim is also to strengthen regional cooperation in the SEE countries, but with an emphasis on increasing the administrative and institutional capacity of the national authorities to enact environmental legislation and to combat environmental crime related to natural resources and forestry, such as illegal logging.

Although these two multinational projects, especially the ENVSEC initiative, are very bureaucratic and have not been able to achieve several of their ambitious targets, they have had a considerable impact on the environment, although sometimes hard to quantify. ENVSEC contributed to the establishment of nature transboundary parks in Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo. Activities which supported the establishment of protected areas in the Sar Mountains of Macedonia supported by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) were not as effective, due to opposing development interests between environmental protection and the use of natural resources. An agreement between Kosovo and Macedonia on joint management of the River Lepenec could be established between the two governments. According to different progress reports and interviews, the willingness among the different countries to work on transboundary environmental issues and their collaboration has improved significantly. Data and information on several environmental sectors have been collected and shared. Joint actions - especially for the Drin river basin - were planned, and cross-border dialogues have been initiated. The Themis programme was successful in strengthening cooperation, raising awareness and improving knowledge about a so far not very well known issue - environmental crime - in the involved Ministries of Justice and Environment, among the judges and prosecutors, the practitioners from the enforcement agencies (police, customs) and environmental inspectors. For example, in Macedonia, an interview partner mentioned as valuable the reduction of the existing gap between the police officers in the field and the prosecutors and judges. Furthermore, Themis improved the cross-border regional cooperation in the South Eastern European countries. It made efforts to enforce the legal systems and to improve environmental governance through national cooperation among enforcement institutions in the Themis member countries. Mutual support and exchange of knowledge, e.g. among environmental inspectors of different countries, are commonplace in the network. A spirit of fighting together against environmental crime is palpable among the highly committed members of the network.

Two unexpected impacts of the initiative should also be mentioned. One is that people who had lived in conflict for many years have now regained a kind of normalisation in their relationship. While in the first meetings - according to an interview partner - the Serbians left the meeting room when the Kosovo-Albanians talked and vice-versa - they now sit peacefully together and share a common objective. For Kosovo, which is not ratified by the UN and as a consequence is excluded as a country from membership in a lot of relevant (environmental) organisations, the participation in Themis even had a further political impact: Themis opened the door for Kosovo to participate in IMPEL (European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law). Besides the support that can be received from the organisation, this can be seen as a step towards political normalization.

Enhance the environmental awareness of the population

Environmental awareness of citizens of the Western Balkans is generally low. There are many reasons for this: little information on citizens' rights, little information on governmental responsibilities and a limited legal basis for environmental protection. Environmental education, as a permanent and integral part of continuous education is still in the fledgling stage. Printed and electronic media do not show enough interest and knowledge in local environmental issues and problems. The presence and strength of civil society organisations working on environmental protection is still weak in SEE, and the work is mainly dependent on donor support and inclusion in different projects.

Several of the projects encountered by this study work on the issue of environmental awareness. For examples, ENVSEC supports the Aarhus Centres (see 4.2), and within the scope of the "Serbian Organic Food Production Support" project, a campaign for promoting the concept of organic agriculture in all 13 municipalities of the target districts was started and disseminated information to more than 1.000 people. But there is one project that put a special emphasis on environmental awareness, the environmental education programme "The Green Pack, Awareness on Sustainable Development for Schools in Macedonia" (8103-00/2005) and the "Green Pack Junior" (8103-01/2009). The aim of the project was to improve the environmental education base in Macedonia by developing a modern model of environmental education for the national education system, according to globally acceptable standards. The model will be recommended as a teaching module for primary schools. The study team became convinced by the high quality and the appealing look of the teaching material. The teachers that participated in the MAPP workshop showed strong enthusiasm and highly appreciated the educational kit and the training they received. Compared to the numerous other environmental initiatives teachers are "forced" to follow which sometimes overload their lesson planning, the Green Pack is well received, because it offers ready-made teaching material that can be applied in class without further elaboration. Green Pack was officially introduced in primary schools in Macedonia as a teaching tool to create broader understanding of the concept of sustainable development. It explains the effects of local environmental issues on the global environment and the pupils' role in protection of the environment among Macedonian students, teachers and citizens. Visible changes in awareness related to environmental issues have taken place in the last couple of years, but this cannot be directly linked solely to the Green Pack, as this is a rather small part of the whole. Unfortunately, a study to accompany the implementation and measure the

improved knowledge of the pupils and the teachers was not commissioned. Therefore judging the real impact on the environment is difficult, but the initiative is highly appreciated by the study team.

Develop sustainable tourism concepts

This topic is not included in the “Strategic Guideline on Environment”. Nevertheless, tourism projects were selected because they do indeed have an environmental approach, and tourism is a fast developing sector.

This is especially true in Albania but also in Montenegro and Serbia. The Government of Montenegro made tourism a high priority for economic development. A tourism masterplan was developed that included a tourism strategy and a hiking-biking tourism concept. Eco-tourism is also an element of this strategy. But so far the infrastructure focus is mainly on the coastal areas and is poorly developed in the mountainous areas and in the five national parks. Financial resources from the state budget and revenue from tourism are barely sufficient to finance operating costs and basic maintenance work of the national parks. Public underinvestment in the parks is significant.

Serbia has a rich cultural heritage that is insufficiently exposed to international visitors, when it could be an important export market. Official tourism statistics show that Danube-Serbia had just over 1 Mill. visitors in 2011, around half of Serbia’s total number, of which 47% were domestic and 53% were foreign. But Danube-Serbia doesn’t currently have any identity as a tourism location. The region’s tourism has to be reinvented, rebranded and restructured to attract the attention of international tour operators. This means offering competitive and easily accessible tourism packages which are differentiated from the competition. Danube-Europe needs to work jointly with its neighbours and address identified weaknesses in hospitality, transport infrastructure, quality of natural environment and price competitiveness to meet visitors’ expectations. The Government already recognises the role that tourism can play in writing the country’s economic and social success story and has published The National Tourism Development Strategy (2006-2015). The strategy mentions environmental protection and nature conservation in the goals, but only quite generally, when in fact its valuable natural resources represent the most strategic potential of Serbia.

Two tourism projects were supported in Montenegro. For this study the following project phases were selected: “Regional and Tourism Development in Northern Montenegro (Phase 3)” (7942-03/2009) and “Development of Tourist Location in the Hinterland of Montenegro: Promotion of a Sustainable Tourism in the Lake Skutari Area (Phase 2)” (8163-01/2009). The approach of the two projects is similar: Strengthening institutions and building the capacities of regional tourism agencies is one focus. Cooperating with local municipalities and increasing community participation in decision-making is another focus. Innovative projects are prepared and implemented, such as agro-tourism, sustainable mountain tourism, cultural tourism, etc. The goal is to improve the tourism offers in the regions involved and at the same time protect the environment as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism. The project in Northern Montenegro in an assessment of environmental impact reports that due to the activities offered for tourists such as biking trails, fly-fishing, and two botanical gardens, the population has become involved in environmental issues. People have learned to do practical work and come to

better understand the value of nature and national parks. Two national parks have been strengthened in infrastructure and in management. Some general awareness-raising initiatives were undertaken. Tourist guides were trained and it can be assumed that this training touched environmental issues. The economic value of the environment was considered to have increased and should have created a constituency with an interest in protecting natural ecosystems or managing them more sustainably than would otherwise be the case. Unfortunately, no results like these are documented.

Regarding the Lake Skutari park project, it was mentioned that the protected areas were better secured than before, better fishery management was reported and increased controls and more awareness of the population and small businesses regarding environment protection was stated. The reason for this success was seen in the fact that ownership in the effort and leadership were strengthened from the beginning. The population, the park management, the rangers, the engaged NGO which took care of an art trail, the Green Boat association, etc. were involved in many ways: Consultations, awareness raising, offering new income, etc. The National Park of Skutari is now successfully marketing and managing the tourism in the region, and the number of visitors to the park has significantly increased. All of these initiatives have raised the awareness of the population and the likelihood that environmental regulations will be adhered to.

In Serbia, ADA is financially supporting and also implementing the voluminous EU financed "Socio-economic Development of the Danube Serbia Region" project (6526-00/2011). Here we will have a closer look at only one grant scheme (one component out of five) financed with 1 Mill. Euro by ADA. Although the project was given the ENV 2 marker, there is no specific environmental approach noticeable, environment is not part of the target system. The overall goal of the project is to exploit socio-economic development opportunities for the Danube Serbia Region by maximizing private sector investment, in turn developing accompanying job creation potentials and increasing the attractiveness of the region to foreign investors through infrastructure development. It would not do justice to the project to present it as a tourism project as such, but in the scope of the project a tourism strategy was developed. Regarding the grant scheme six out of the 17 projects launched by civil society and local governmental actors are related to the tourism sector, two out of the 17 had an environment focus. However, the goals and approaches of these six projects vary from cycling routes, to festivals, to capacity building, and it is not possible to assess the relative impact of these different initiatives based on the available documents. Therefore, a statement about whether each project, or the overall project had any impact which helped to improve the Serbian tourism situation or especially the environmental situation cannot be given.

Concluding remarks

Projects concerned with organic agriculture have the potential to reduce GHG emissions and other negative environmental impacts of conventional farming. The three projects described more detailed were scored for strong impact ("5") (2550-03/2009, 2550-12/2010, 8220-01/2010, based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.1), although it has to be mentioned that one of the projects could not be finished due to financial and technical problems, and that the assessment of the other two projects is based only on the available documents and not on visits on-site. This relatively good score for this section

“Propagating ecologically appropriate, diversified agriculture and promoting organic agriculture” was highly attenuated by the two rural development and agricultural projects that did not concern themselves with ecologically appropriate agriculture (8140-01/2010, 8134-01/2007).

The two projects contributing to “Resource conservation” had a moderate impact (“4”) (ENVSEC 8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012, Themis 8284-00/2011, 8284-01/2014 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.1). On the one hand, there are circumstances that have contributed significantly to this success, as in the case of Themis with its strong example of the interesting and appealing new approach of bringing people from different professions and from different countries together, and letting them develop solutions for problems seen from their different angles. Themis also used the great potential of the environmental sector to enhance regional cohesion and the establishment of efficient regional cooperation. On the other hand, the impact could possibly be greater if the beneficiaries shared their practical knowledge, for example in the case of Themis with municipalities. They could also include among their participants people who have more lobbying power to fight for the needed changes in environmental policies.

Regarding the aim “Enhance the environmental awareness of the population” the score was strong impact (“5”) (8103-00/2005, 8103-01/2009, 8220-01/2010, ENVSEC 8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.1) although it has to be mentioned that it is difficult to assess these impacts without more comprehensive studies and baselines.

From the two projects that supported the aim of “Sustainable tourism” the lake Skutari project which made a huge effort to involve different stakeholders and to create ownership was given a slightly better score “4” towards “3” (8163-01/2009, 7942-03/2009 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.1).

4.2 Assessment of the impact in relation to improvement of sustainable chemical and waste management

Introductory remarks

The review in this section covers two waste management projects (Kosovo 2550-02/2012 and Serbia 2550-13/2010) that could be clearly assigned to this section. Five other projects are additionally included in this section: one agricultural development and one rural development project (Kosovo 2550-09/2013 and Kosovo 8134-01/2007), one environment policy and administrative management project (Multinational project ENVSEC Phase 1 8071-00/2005, Phase 2 2579-00/2009, Phase 3 8071-01/2012), one industrial development project about certification (Serbia 2550-08/2009) and a project promoting environmental management in companies (Serbia 2550-01/2010). However, for the last project the possibility of including it in the analysis was limited. While it was clear from the available documentation that the project had a waste management component, the information provided on the measures promoted and implemented was so scarce that it was hardly possible to deduct any conclusions from it about the improvement of sustainable chemical and waste management.

Supporting safe handling, trade and disposal of chemicals and raising awareness in politics and society

The Western Balkans are very rich in mineral deposits, so that mining and mineral processing have played a vital part in their history and economy. But their capacity for development has suffered due to neglect during the 1990s, damage caused by the wars, and political fragilities. Today a lot of the abandoned mines, tailing dams and chemical sites are classified as hazardous pollution hotspots. Due to the ENVSEC initiative (8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012), stakeholders acquired the capacity to analyse environmental and security risks, to develop proposals about how to deal with these risks and to monitor the potential clean-up process. Concrete investment was made in remediation and clean-up activities at different mining sites, e.g., for rehabilitation of tailing dams and acid mine drainage, which significantly reduced local and regional environmental and human health risks. Unfortunately, funds for concrete investment are limited. Between 2003 and 2013, only a total of 10 Mill. US dollars were spent on 32 different projects, and all those resources came from donors.

Parts of society and some political bodies have recognized the problems arising from hazardous pollution and hotspots, particularly abandoned mines, as transboundary environmental risks. Unfortunately however - according to the ENVSEC evaluation of 2013 - mining sector issues haven't been treated with enough importance in national policies and strategies and haven't been dealt with by many international development aid efforts. The influence of ENVSEC on the governmental bodies of the respective countries seems to be limited. The linkage to national institutions working on environmental issues - at least in Kosovo and Macedonia where the study team was present - is not very well developed. Although ENVSEC is designed to wield influence on the highest political level, in some of the countries the interest of the Ministries is not up to the level needed for successful implementation of concrete projects. According to the ENVSEC evaluation of 2013, one of the strengths of ENVSEC is that a "strong and coherent network of local and regional stakeholders, professionals and policy makers" could be developed, thanks to the many exchanges, workshops, seminars, etc. The study teams from Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania have expressed objections to this statement: Although the network on the regional level might be strong, and there are indeed local networks in some countries, there is no evidence that ENVSEC can claim credit for this achievement. As an example, the Focal Point representative position in the Environmental Ministry of Macedonia has not been occupied for several months, and the other Focal Point representative has only a formal role. It was a challenge in Macedonia and Kosovo to find resource persons for interviews regarding ENVSEC outside of the implementer REC. Even on the environmental scene or among the people working in the respective ministries, ENVSEC is not well known. The objective of "an increased civil society involvement in addressing environment and security challenges ... and the development of effective consultation and cooperation mechanisms between governments, civil society organisations and private sector on environment" due to ENVSEC activities was not achieved in at least in the two countries mentioned. In other countries where, thanks to ENVSEC Aarhus Centres were operational, the situation seems to be different. These Aarhus Centres have been actively promoting environmental activism in the region. According to the ENVSEC evaluation of 2013, they work closely with the local administrations and facilitate cooperation with the communities. Possibly the ENVSEC

engagement prepared the way for a Joint Declaration which several SEE countries signed in 2015 pledging their co-operation to reinforce the promotion and implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

In Serbia, the laws on chemicals and on biocidal products adhere to the principal concepts of the corresponding EU legislation. Moreover, Serbia has also ratified the Rotterdam Convention on the prior informed consent procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade. Kosovo is officially implementing international agreements regarding safe handling, trade and disposal of chemicals, mainly through laws and regulations implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment. However, in both Serbia and Kosovo, capacity constraints hamper progress, for instance in implementing the legislation needed for prevention of chemical accidents. In practice, a lot of chemicals that should not be used, because they are harmful to humans and the environment, are still in use. Knowledge, for instance that of the farmers, regarding the proper use of chemicals is limited, and overuse is common. In Kosovo, especially the business partnership project “Establishment of Structures for Sustainable Fruit Cultivation” (2550-09/2013) makes a huge effort to ban dangerous pesticides and fungicides that come both legally and illegally into the country. The objective is to convince farmers to apply only the chemicals permitted by the EU. They receive training sessions on the proper use of pesticides in fruit cultivation and on safe handling, trade and disposal of chemicals. Similar efforts are reported from the project “Integrated Regional Development in the Municipality of Suharekë in the Sector of Agriculture” (8134-01/2007). Together with the Ministry of Agriculture, the fruit cultivation project is developing a list of chemicals that are allowed to be applied, because they are in compliance with EU directives. This could be considered to be an important step in reducing serious health and environmental problems based on the use of toxic substances. But other steps, like supporting the control of (illegal) trade and disposal, informing the chemical producing industry about the effects of the chemicals, monitoring the presence of chemicals in humans and the environment, strengthening legislation and the institutional setting for chemical management, etc. have to accompany this specific project effort for successful “supporting of the safe handling, trade and disposal of chemicals”.

Contributing to cleaner production in agriculture, trade and industry and raising awareness in politics and society

The aspect of organic production has already been dealt with in section 4.1. Here the issue of cleaner production refers only to one business partnership project in Serbia, “Certified Quality and Environmental Management in the Furniture and Food Sector” (2550-08/2009). So far, no legislation exists in Serbia requiring environmental management (ISO 14001). The interest of nine small and medium-sized food-processing companies in participating in the trainings, capacity building and certification offered by the project is a result of the requirements of international food companies like Metro who are demanding International Food Standard Certification. There was no success in trying to raise a demand for international certification among wood manufacturing companies, as initially planned. Possible positive impacts on the environment could be increased product safety for consumers, reduced resource use and pollution due to certification, and training of the environmental management in the pilot companies, but there is no evidence given in the reports to confirm these impacts.

Supporting sustainable waste management and raising awareness in politics and society

Most SEE countries lack proper waste management for virtually all solid waste types (domestic, industrial, health care, and hazardous). Collection, classification, recycling, and treatment systems as well as infrastructure are paltry. Cost recovery for services is low. Illegal landfills and inappropriately constructed and managed industrial landfills abound, appropriately constructed hazardous waste facilities are lacking. These shortfalls have serious health and environmental impacts on ground water and air, either from uncontrolled or poorly controlled waste disposal facilities, or from the large amounts of waste simply uncollected, dumped at illegal dumpsites or burned. There is insufficient awareness of waste generators for proper waste management; insufficient education of the community, public and employees of the companies in charge of waste management; insufficient knowledge about the practices of waste management and trends that are currently implemented in the EU; unclear definition of responsibilities and competences for waste management; unchecked creation of illegal municipal waste landfills; etc.

The waste management in Kosovo is regulated by the waste law. The country developed a "Strategy on Waste Management 2013-2022" as well as a "State of the Waste and Chemical Report" that set guidelines and goals in the field of waste management. In spite of these initiatives, the EU Commission states the following: "The implementation of legislation to address increasing environmental challenges in Kosovo remains incomplete. (...) The Ministry of Environment drafted a master plan for waste management and is considering private sector involvement. The government approved secondary legislation on the state of the waste catalogue and on the cadastre of environmental pollutants. The basic waste management concepts and definitions need to be developed, including recycling and recovery. There are serious challenges to implement the 2012 law, since the capacity of municipalities, waste and landfill operators and overall funding for investments is still very low."²⁸

The waste management in Kosovo was decentralized in 2012, and the responsible municipalities are now overwhelmed with the tasks entrusted to them. The business partnership project "WP-KOS-MOSER- Capacity Building and Consciousness Raising in Kosovan Waste Management" (2550-02/2012) between the Austrian Moser GmbH and the Municipality of Gjilan, which created a new waste management company, was set into motion. This company covers about 95% of the households in the city of Gjilan with its service and about 80% in the villages belonging to Gjilan, 20.000 households all together. The payment rate could be improved by 80%, from fewer than 50% of the households and 30% of the businesses, which is the highest payment rate in Kosovo (average between 30% and 40%). The high willingness to pay for the service can be seen as an indicator of the population's great satisfaction and acceptance of the service provided. This implies a substantial reduction in illegal waste dumping and backyard burnings, and hence improves the situation of the environment. Unfortunately, the landfill in Gjilan, where the company has to deliver the collected waste, and which was built by required standards with money from the European Commission, has operating problems and has as a result turned into an environmental pollutant. But according to the State of Waste Report, the situation has improved lately.

28 European Commission (2014): Progress Report Kosovo, p. 41.

The company was successful in raising awareness and explaining the relationship between waste and environment to the population through spots on TV, articles in newspapers, company presence at major events and face to face information. Awareness activities with 300 school pupils were conducted. The first municipal government of Gjilan was cooperative and supported the efforts of the company to improve the management skills of the Municipality. Those first municipal leaders could see that this effort would lead to the local government's being able to assume their tasks and responsibilities for conducting the waste management services, their implementation and organisation. Unfortunately, after a change in the municipal government, the tide has turned and barriers have developed, so that operating successfully is now a challenge for the company. The company is actively involved in an association of waste disposal companies which is supporting the establishment of an appropriate legal framework for waste management. The management of the company has also developed a proposal on how to deal politically with the debt problem inherited from the predecessor companies. All the newly established waste companies now face this debt problem, and therefore the proposal will tend to influence national waste politics.

One of the strengths of the project is the capacity development of the personnel. They are now able to effectively handle the waste management both administratively and technically (customer communication, fees collection, vehicle and equipment maintenance). Due to lack of interest on the part of the Municipality and the company's fear of being over-challenged, the company only just recently started a project to collect waste separately, although there were already formal recycling companies in place. An earlier start of this project would have had improved its environmental reporting. And, as the project has attracted the interest of other companies due to its high fee collection capacity and is supposed to be a model, it could have been a positive example for other companies and regions earlier as well.

In 2011, Serbia had aligned its legislation with the key EU policies on waste and hazardous waste management, introducing the principles of waste prevention, reduce, reuse and recycle. The country also substantially aligned its legislation with the EU acquis on packaging and packing waste and on specific waste streams. Implementation has started. Legislation providing for waste separation is likewise in place. Still, law enforcement is hampered by low rates of waste collection in rural communities, thousands of illegal dumpsites and the absence of treatment facilities for hazardous waste. But the situation has improved in the last few years, the collection rate of household waste has increased to 80%. A new regional waste management centre has been opened in Sremska-Mitrovica-Sabac covering a population of approximately 200.000 households. Serbia has now seven regional sanitary landfills that are EU compliant.

The business partnership project "Establishing a Sustainable Value Chain for Collecting and Recycling PET Waste" (2550-13/2010), with the corresponding awareness raising campaigns in six communities, has contributed to a high amount of PET collection. The project was timely for some of Serbia's problems in 2010, especially the lack of waste separation at source, segregated collection and pre-treatment in sorting plants to guarantee recyclable materials. It definitely has had an influence on the positive developments in waste collection and separation since then. Other factors certainly are the support at the policy level and the market demand caused by the internationally growing market, though these were not directly influenced by the project. But what is definitely

model-like about this project is that it integrates Roma, who in Serbia are highly marginalized, as workers in the project thus providing them with a secure job. This combination of a profit-oriented project with social aspects has up-scaling and out-scaling potential. As this project's approach can be well replicated elsewhere, this would mean an overall larger impact on the environment as CO₂ emissions can be reduced through recycling, raising awareness for ecological aspects and the inclusion of a discriminated population group.

Concluding remarks

The projects supporting "Safe handling, trade and disposal of chemicals" and "Waste management" show strong both effects on the environment ("5") (2550-02/2012, 2550-13, 2550-09/2013, 8134-01/2007, ENVSEC 8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012, 2550-08/2009, 2550-01/2010 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.2). The circumstances that have contributed significantly to this success are due to the highly committed management that is leading the projects. This holds especially true for Kosovo "Waste management" (2550-02/2012) and Kosovo "Rural development" (8134-01/2007). On the one hand five out of the seven projects were successful in improving the environment in the region where they were active, e.g., through improved waste collection, investments in remediation and clean-up activities in different mining sites, and possibly the reduced use of chemicals on farms. On the other hand, three out of seven projects are also active on the national level to improve one of the major environmental challenges, and that is the weak law enforcement for waste and recycling, in particular for mining waste in some areas. The projects tend to support the establishment of a legal framework for waste management, the development of a list of chemicals that are allowed to be applied and the anchoring of the mining waste problem on the highest political level. This effort of trying to influence the national framework could even be increased if ADA would get on board with these initiatives and reinforce them with more strategic support on the municipal and government level. This could possibly come true at least for the waste management project in Kosovo, where GIZ (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) is planning to support the Municipality of Gjilan with their project "Development of Sustainable Local Public Services". Unfortunately, the start had to be postponed due to the financial and legal problems between the waste company and the Municipality. So far the existing initiatives on the macro level seem to be more random and isolated and are based on the individual interests of the (business partnership) project management. Another aspect that needs further attention is the huge challenge that political changes in the municipalities and the local governments mean for project implementation. Strategies such as stronger civil society involvement in the project design have to be developed to avoid the paralysis of project activities after a political change.

4.3 Assessment of the impact in relation to the improvement of climate protection

Introductory remarks

The review in this section covers seven projects: Three environment policy and administrative management projects (Multinational project ENVSEC Phase 1 8071-00/2005, Phase 2 2579-00/2009, Phase 3 8071-01/2012, multinational project Low Emission Development Strategy Project (SLED) 8306-00/2013 and one project in Serbia/ Novi Sad 2550-01/2010), two multisector aid projects for promoting energy-efficient housing (Macedonia 2550-04/2007 and Montenegro 2550-03/2007), a geothermal energy project in Macedonia (Phase 1 8022-00/2005, Phase 2 8022-01/2009) and a power generation/renewable source project in Albania (2550-09/2011).

Contributing to improved energy efficiency and dissemination of renewable energy

Energy efficiency and appropriate renewable energy approaches make an important contribution to emissions reduction. Although greenhouse gas emissions from the region are significantly below the level of most developed countries, they are expected to rise, as energy intensive industry will grow and traffic will also increase in the coming years. The general characteristics of the energy infrastructure in the SEE are (i) obsolete technologies and lack of investment in maintenance, modernization and expansion of the existing capacities, or in construction of new capacities; (ii) high losses of electricity (both technical and commercial); (iii) low energy efficiency; (iv) unfavourable environmental, economic and supply security structures for the production, import and consumption of energy and (v) existence of monopolized structures in specific segments of the sector. In all of the countries policies and actions are emerging to increase the efficiency of energy production and consumption and to switch to low or zero-carbon energy sources. In 2009 the European Commission adopted a new directive, EU 2009/28/EC, on renewable energy that set a target of more than a 20% share of energy from renewable sources in final energy consumption by 2020, and a 10% share of renewable energy in the transport sector. The Western Balkans, as candidate countries for membership in the European Union, are obliged to achieve the adopted targets.

The share of renewable energy sources in total primary energy production in Macedonia was at 10% very low in 2007, and the government had great interest in improving this situation, especially because a major part of the renewable energy share went to firewood, largely used as a heating source in a very inefficient and unsustainable way. Therefore, the “Geothermal Energy Kocani 2” (8022-00/2005) and the “Ecologic Sanitations and Energetic Rationalization of the Geothermal System 'Geoterma', Kocani – Consolidation” (8022-01/2009) fit well into the national strategy. ADA supported the expansion and modification of an existing geothermal plant for heating purposes, with the goal of contributing to a reduction of CO₂ by 3.600 t/ year. Data are not available to confirm whether or not this goal has been reached. Investment in the project additionally helped to reduce an environmentally harmful side effect of this energy production: Instead of discharging the highly mineralised and hot used water into the river which endangers both flora and fauna and is a waste of energy, the plant now reinjects the water into the aquifer. This contributes to the environmental protection of the river and the sustainability of the geothermal plant. Besides some technical problems that impede the

full utilization of the plant, the major hindering factor that limits the usage is the pricing policy of the municipality. As energy costs for heating increased by 400% in the last three years, the main customer, a greenhouse company that is using 80% of the energy provided by the plant, is about to shut down its whole vegetable production due to lack of profit. The remaining 20% of the plant's energy is used by six municipal buildings, but there is no other customer for the energy in sight.

Another project that has also been negatively affected by the political conditions is the “Strengthening and expansion of the small hydropower plant sector” (2550-09/2011) project in Albania. Albania's own electric energy production consists of 95% hydropower and 5% diesel generators, but the country imports 39% of its electricity and is therefore interested in expanding hydropower. An Austrian hydropower company constructed a plant in Albania and was given support for (i) raising awareness for small hydropower; (ii) training qualified local personnel; (iii) detailed planning and (iv) community development. What can be stated is that the plant is well constructed and running as planned, the electrical grid is stabilised and mitigation has been achieved. Although there is no data available, the study team calculates the reduction to be 15.000 t CO₂ per year.²⁹ An Albanian Hydropower Association has been founded and the head of the Austrian company is vice chairman. Unfortunately, due to national regulations, hydropower electricity was not at all remunerated for a while. Now remuneration has been lowered by the government from 0.7 € ct/kwh in the previous years to only 0.45 € ct/kwh which doesn't cover the cost anymore and thus puts the economic sustainability of the plant at risk.³⁰ And another problem has been created: a conflict has arisen with the local farmers about the use of a 4.5 km long stretch of the river, which now runs with very little water in the summer due to the hydropower plant. Whether this residual water runs or does not depends only on the good will of the hydropower plant owners. Therefore, the hydropower project has a negative impact on the environment of the river and adjacent food production. To avoid such problems, it would be useful ADA would carry out environmental appraisals also for business partnership projects.

Energy efficiency has played an increasing role in the construction of new buildings and the restoration of old ones in Macedonia for the last 20 years, due to the EU accession process and relevant investment in the sector triggered by this process. As the building sector in Macedonia is with 29% the second top energy consumer and therefore a significant source of GHG emissions, the business partnership project with Sto building material company “Promoting Energy-Efficient Housing” (2550-04/2007) is fitting. Within the project, multipliers such as architects and planners were trained in the areas of energy efficiency in buildings and of passive house construction methods. Manuals were developed, and the foundation was laid for a self-financing passive house centre in Skopje. Whereas the training sessions and the technical expert literature were requested and successful, the passive house centre is not visible enough to experts. NGOs which are active in the energy sector have not taken notice of the passive house centre as such. It is almost impossible to make a statement about the environmental impact of the project, because the number of passive houses constructed and the number of houses renovated

²⁹ Based on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) calculation <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/refs.html>

³⁰ It could not be found out whether this is an individual problem for this plant or a general problem for all hydropower plants, because at the end of 2014, Albania's power regulator raised the price of electricity for businesses and scrapped its cheaper rate for households to help companies in the sector pay off debt to meet criteria set by international lenders.

making use of new technical methods of insulation are unknown. Supposedly, the scope is limited, as only owners with the financial means and investors are able to put the available knowledge into practice. As far as the study could find out, the project was not active on the governmental level where, for instance, advice regarding such issues as conditions for energy efficient construction could be made more generally accessible. Therefore, it is unclear to what extent the project has contributed to any significant progress Macedonia made in the implementation of the energy efficiency acquis in 2013 and 2014, including that of the update in primary and secondary legislation.

Holzcluster GmbH followed a similar approach with the project “Energy Consultation and Education in the Kolasin Region of Northern Montenegro” (2550-03/2007). The objective was to give support for the training of energy efficiency advisors and auditors for the building sector, specifically to transmit knowledge about regional wood value chains and life cycle analysis. Contrary to the Macedonian project, here the use of wood for construction was promoted which is not as cost intensive as the Sto insulation materials. This development measure corresponds with the Energy efficiency strategy adopted as early as 2005 where is stated: “The building sector is the 2nd largest electricity consumer ... estimated energy saving potential, based on building insulation improvement is 110 Gigawatt-hour (GWh), i.e. 4 Mill. Euro.”³¹ In 2010 the introduction of energy efficiency in different sectors was part of the governmental programme, but a lack of capacity building possibilities was identified as one of the limitations. Contrary to the project in Macedonia, here the governmental and civil society actors were involved from the beginning, as well as GTZ (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), who also worked on energy efficiency. This may have – together with other initiatives – contributed to the increase observed in competence among authorities on environmental matters, and early involvement could possibly also have contributed to the improved energy efficiency situation. Montenegro adopted a first Energy Efficiency Action Plan (EEAP) for 2010-2012 followed by a second for 2013-2015. The report on the implementation of the first EEAP states that “initial calculations forecasted that 45% of the indicative energy saving target until 2012 will count for the residential sector” and that “energy efficiency measures related to the building sector are the most important ones to be dealt with in the 1st National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP)”³²

The objective of the Serbian “Novi Sad ecoProfit Project” (2550-01/2010) was to enhance the sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in Novi Sad by fostering environmental management practices and building relevant capacities of public institutions. Hence, both the Municipality of Novi Sad and private companies participated in the offered training sessions. With ecoProfit the companies learned how to identify, plan and realize measures systematically to reduce costs and environmental impact. The role of the Municipality was to apply a grant-programme aiming at stimulating ecoProfit activities among local corporations. The planned outcomes were partly achieved, in that the participating companies (although fewer than planned) did learn to identify, plan and realize measures in the areas of energy, waste, water and other environmental issues. According to the documents, a total of 1,8 Mill. Euro was invested, yielding a yearly saving of 11.120 t of CO₂, 341 Megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity and 53 t of waste, as

31 Ministry of Economy and EPCG of Montenegro (2005).

32 Ministry of Economy, Sector Energy Efficiency of Montenegro (2012).

well as 15.000 Euro per year in monetary savings for the companies. Unfortunately, after active participation during the first year of the project, the newly elected Municipality withdrew their support and the grant programme ended. A sustainable strengthening of governmental institutions through capacity building could not be achieved due to indifference and fluctuation in municipal staff. It can be supposed that the companies at least partially continue to implement the planned measures and that the environmental impact continues even after the funding has ceased - yet there is no information available on the concrete measures undertaken by the companies.

Energy is also dealt with in the multinational initiatives, the so-called SLED-project “Development Frameworks of Low Emission Development Strategies and Identification of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions” (8306-00/2013)³³. This project takes up an important international trend by supporting Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo in the elaboration of Low Emissions Development Strategies (LEDS) and NAMA as a prerequisite for accessing international funding for their implementation. Component 2 is only oriented towards Kosovo, which is coordinating its activities in cooperation with the European Commission (EC) Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) mission “Assistance in the development of a concept towards a low carbon policy within Kosovo institutions” that started in September 2013. One output of the intervention is the development of a Climate Change Strategy and related action plans. The project is also working on strengthening Kosovo’s capacity for low emission climate resilient development at the national and local levels, and on the promotion of sustainable energy policies and programs along with enhanced public awareness concerning energy efficiency. As the project only started in 2013 it is too early to assess any environmental impact. But the prognoses are cautiously positive, as the approach is not only to focus on the governmental level, but also to work with municipalities and local NGOs, as well as to raise awareness within local population. The impact of the project will also largely depend on external factors, especially if Kosovo is able to acquire legal status as a member of the UNFCCC, thus acquiring access to GEF funds, or if Kosovo is able to find an intermediate solution, which seems likely.

Reducing emissions from land use, land use changes and forest management

Significant possibilities to reduce greenhouse gas in the Western Balkans are organic agriculture and the reduction of fertilizers, both of which have already been dealt with in Chapter 4.1 and 4.2.

Providing assistance in adapting to the impacts of climate change

Adaptation to climate change does not appear to be a priority issue for ADA in Southeast Europe at the national and local level. Although ADA improved farming systems that may support adaptation to the impacts of climate change, there were none classified in the project documents as such and as no evidence of a concrete linkage to climate change adaptation could be traced in the documents, they are not presented in this section. The reason that none are mentioned, at least for some of the older projects, may be that the discussion on climate change adaptation has long been focussing on Africa, Asia and

³³ Project financed by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management as part of the Austrian „Fast Start Climate Financing“ Initiative under the UNFCCC.

Latin America and only recently also been taken up in Eastern European countries. Common adaptation strategies like climate-related changes in agricultural practices or disaster risk reduction measures based on risk assessments were not given any support during the time span chosen for this study. However, the two regional projects ENVSEC (8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012) and “Development Frameworks of Low Emission Development Strategies and Identification of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions” (8306-00/2013) both have an adaptation component which show that ADA has started to work on adaptation on a regional and most recently also on a national policy level.

A warming biosphere means that people are confronted by an increasingly unstable world in which they are more and more exposed to severe floods, drought, heat-waves, water shortages, etc. The Western Balkans terrain is particularly prone to natural hazards such as the devastating floods in the early summer of 2014, caused inter alia by intensive building activity on the one hand and a complete absence of land-use planning on the other hand. Higher air temperatures and a decline in summer rainfalls are expected to have a large impact on hydropower production as well as agriculture. Some of the countries have adopted a national climate change strategy that also addresses adaptation, but so far it is a largely neglected issue, enforcement is low and specific National Adaptation Strategies (NAS) have not yet been formulated.

Therefore, the ENVSEC initiative (8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012) is most welcome. Through regional dialogue, cooperation, numerous consultations, workshops and comprehensive stocktaking of available information, ENVSEC has assessed climate change. In the process, all aspects in different sectors have been considered and pointed out vulnerabilities and potential priority actions, all of which has resulted in a variety of publications. The prioritized activities have been raising awareness and creating information to facilitate best practices for making climate change adaptation possible in the SEE region, mostly in the mountainous and transboundary areas.

The already presented multinational SLED-initiative is also active in adaptation efforts through its component two. This component is only oriented towards Kosovo. The project is cooperating with the Kosovo Disaster Risk Reduction Initiative implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Kosovo, as well as with a regional GIZ project concerning flood and drought management. One output of the intervention is the development of a Climate Change Strategy and related action plans. The project advisory team included adaptation in the Climate Change Strategy and in so doing raised the political awareness of the need for adaptation, which involves the concept of vulnerability and risk assessments. It remains to be seen whether and how sensitivity for the adaptation issue will be translated in the future into the development of new policies and the implementation of projects in this field, as this is dependent on external funding.

Helping to improve the basis for informed planning, institutional frameworks and capacities

Several of the projects develop documents as a basis for identifying effective climate protection and adaptation measures, for examples, brochures of the Macedonian energy-efficient housing project, the vast number of studies and reports commissioned through ENVSEC, the Climate Change Strategy for Kosovo, etc. Maybe the most sophisticated

basis for taking decisions on climate change policy was developed within the scope of the SLED-project. The objective of the project is to provide assessment of and options for low emission development transformation in the electricity sector, as well as to identify potential NAMAs. For that purpose, stylized scenarios will be developed which simulate operation of a European electricity wholesale market. This model allows for the assessment of cost-efficient decarbonisation options in a more holistic manner, where cost and benefits are measured taking into account the price impacts on the actors involved and on the whole region. Along with the scenario model, further important factors, such as the timing of the policy instruments applied, will also be assessed. This methodology can provide the academic basis for informed policy making and development of policy measures. The level of impact will depend on the quality and appropriateness of the results (which cannot be assessed yet), and on the level of governmental support.

Concluding remarks

Compared to the chemical and waste management projects, the energy efficiency and adaptation projects show regarding their “Contributing to improved energy efficiency and dissemination of renewable energy” significantly lower impact scores, between moderate and weak (“3,5”) (8306-00/2013, 2550-01/2010, 2550-04/2007, 2550-03/2007, 8022-00/2005, 8022-01/2009, 2550-09/2011 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.3). Nevertheless, there is no doubt at all that energy efficiency is a most relevant project approach, and all projects have undertaken good measures to improve the environmental situation. CO₂ emissions could be significantly reduced through the effort of most of the projects in this category. Some of them followed a seminal approach by integrating representatives from the micro-, meso- and macro-levels (e.g. SLED component 2). But there are several circumstances that were neglected in project designs and therefore proved to be obstacles for better project success, and in turn improved environmental impact. As examples, in two projects, the framework conditions for energy pricing were not considered, and risk analyses and political feasibility studies were not undertaken. These omissions made the theoretically good geothermal project in Macedonia and the hydropower project in Albania unprofitable and thus makes their sustainability questionable. The same holds true for neglecting the unfavourable economic development in Serbia in that project design, which is the reason why companies are hesitant to make larger investments in reducing the environmentally harmful impacts of their production (ecoProfit Project). This case clearly shows that the national and regional market situation should be thoroughly assessed before starting a business partnership. Other projects fell short because they did not involve policy-makers and legislation level actors and therefore had no impact beyond the limited project sphere (Passive house project in Macedonia). The case of the Albanian hydropower project also shows that renewable energy projects can have negative environmental impacts which underlines the need to look not only at the mere reduction of CO₂. Some projects would definitely have needed a longer implementation period than only two to three years to win more perspective, e.g. in order to develop adequate advocacy work. And finally it has to be admitted that we are skating on thin ice when trying to review the effects. Because as already mentioned in Chapter 2.4, the almost complete absence of a monitoring system that goes beyond just counting outputs makes declarations about a project’s impacts a challenge, and more than that, assailable.

Regarding the aspect of “Providing assistance in adapting to the impacts of climate change” only two projects were taken into consideration and the score for both projects is “4” (ENVSEC 8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012, SLED 8306-00/2013 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 9.3)

4.4 Assessment of the impact in relation to the improvement of the water and sanitation situation

Introductory remarks

The review in this section covers seven projects. Five of them are located in Albania. They are the water supply and sanitation project in Shkodra (7813-04/2007) and the four water resources policy and administration projects: “Technical Assistance to the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector” (6525-00/2011) and the respective preparation project (8139-00/2010), “Supporting Implementation of National Water Supply and Sewerage Services Sector Strategy in Albania” (8294-00/2012), and “Raising Awareness and Increasing Participation of Civil Society in Country Policies on Water Issues” (8189-00/2012). Additionally there are two water supply and sanitation projects in the sample. One is a business partnership project in Bosnia-Herzegovina (“Water Supply in Modra Village” 2550-07/2007) and one is located in Kosovo (“Rural Water and Sanitation Support – Southeast Kosovo Phase 2” 8207-00/2008).

The subchapters in this thematic operational field do not follow exactly the aims formulated in the “Strategic Guideline on Environment”. Instead, the ADC “Water, Water Supply, Sanitation, Water Resources Policy Document”³⁴ from 2009 was taken as the reference document.

Improvements of basic services and health (sector objective)

“The improvement of basic services and public health, thereby freeing up human potential which is limited by the burden of fetching water and by periods of illness is one of the four sector objectives of the ADC.” More precisely, this means (i) “Sustainable and affordable access to a safe drinking water supply for all, in sufficient quantity, at acceptable distances and at all times and (ii) access to adequate basic sanitation for all, to improve hygienic conditions and to prevent the transmission of diseases ...”³⁵

For Albania the situation presents itself as follows: Drinking water (piped onto the premises) is covered in urban areas at about 91%, whereas in rural areas it is only 63%. From other improved sources, 6% of the urban population and 31% of the rural population are covered. 95% of the urban population is covered for sanitation with improved facilities, and 86% of the rural population. Any others have to share facilities or have to use unimproved facilities. The quantity of water has increased in the last few years. But generally speaking, this sector still remains far behind because of its inefficiency.

For more than 15 years, ADA supported the Municipality of Shkodra and the Water and Sanitation Utility of Shkodra first alone and from 2007 onwards through the project

³⁴ Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009a).

³⁵ Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009a), p. 18.

“Water supply Shkodra - Consolidation in Cooperation with KfW & SECO” (7813-04/2007). The aim of the project was to improve living conditions for the population by developing a favourable framework for the local economy of Shkodra through rehabilitation of the drinking water supply system. 18 Mill. Euro in total has been invested. The expected outcomes were (i) improved service provided, (ii) financially viable operations of the Water Utility and (iii) attention to poverty aspects. Due to the project’s efforts, the water supply and the sewerage system have now markedly improved. The majority of the city is supplied with water for 24 hours, and the quality is excellent. Unfortunately, the operation is not yet financially viable even though collection efficiency has improved from 54% in 2009 to 82% in 2015. There was evidence that the consultancy services for the Water and Sanitation Utility of Shkodra was not fully successful. For instance, the sophisticated and up-to-date leak detection equipment, which had been delivered, is not used because it was claimed that the training for using it was not sufficient. As a result, there is still a very high percentage of water loss (69%). 5.000 of the 15.000 water meters could not be installed, as customers rejected them. The leadership of the Shkodra Municipality has been weak, as well as the management of the Water Utility. Due to a lot of disharmony and quarrelling between the Municipality and the donors, KfW has decided not to continue with another phase, although this was originally planned.

According to the Climate Change Strategy published in 2014, the water industry in Kosovo is still weak, showing deficiencies in most of performance indicators such as service coverage, which is at the level of 78%. Around 68% of the rural inhabitants still use well water and only 2.5% of these wells are chlorinated, the rest are likely to be contaminated by sewage and chemicals. A research conducted by the World Health Organisation in 2000 describes Kosovo as the region in the Balkans with the highest morbidity rate in Europe in terms of diseases transmitted by water. The project “Rural Water and Sanitation Support - South Eastern Kosovo - Phase 2” (8207-00/2008) significantly improved this situation. By the end of Phase 2, all planned projects were functioning and provided a 24-hour supply of drinking water to 96.396 inhabitants, which is 5% of Kosovo’s population. But the beneficiaries we talked to during the study mission in the different villages in Gjilan complained about the water quality, most of the people do not dare drink the water. According to the NGO that implemented the water project the water is drinkable. These contradictions could not be resolved during the study.

Unfortunately, the business partnership project in Bosnia-Herzegovina “Water Supply for Modra” (2550-07/2007) that aimed to supply 580 inhabitants of Modra with water was not at all successful. Financial difficulties of the construction company, the unwillingness of land owners to give permission for the power connection of the pumping station and the fact that construction materials were diverted to other construction sites made completion impossible. Thus there will be no further mention of the project in this section.

Securing livelihood and economic development (sector objective)

Water as a key factor for socio-economic development, in particular for agricultural production, was not a major concern of the water and sanitation projects in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. However, a statement is made that due to a lack of maintenance and poor management of irrigation infrastructure in Albania, the time and quantity needs for irrigation are currently not met.

In the MAPP workshop in Shkodra representatives from shops and small industries expressed their satisfaction with the water supply on which certain businesses depend, such as soft drink and dairy production. The functional and reliable water supply has increased the standard of living for these producers.

Protection of water resources (sector objective)

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a process, which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems. ADC is committed to the principles of IWRM and promotes the process in all water sector projects. This approach, however, faces great difficulties in some of the Western Balkan States, because the competent institutions, the legal instruments and the political will that is required for successful implementation are weak or lacking. Not so in Albania, where the new water law that entered into force in December 2013 and has progressed well in developing bylaws. There is evidence that IWRM is a priority and is based on the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), but enforcement is (still) low. Austria has contributed through policy dialogue and supported Albania in strengthening the Integrated Water Management concept and the Technical Secretariat of the National Water Council. Austria led the donor coordination of the water sector from 2010 to 2013.

Thanks to the Shkodra project, environmental protection in the area has increased significantly. The project had considerably positive impact on the quality of the water in the Shkodra Lake. The sewerage system is now discharging into the outflow river of the lake and not into the lake anymore, a small wastewater treatment plant has been constructed on the opposite side of the city close to the lake, and a sewerage pumping station has been rehabilitated. Tourism, an important business branch in the region, can be further developed, fish from the lake can again be consumed. The city is no longer flooded with sewage. Possibly the most important environmental impact of the above mentioned "Water Supply Shkodra" project is that the 400 illegal houses that were constructed in the well-field, jeopardizing the water protection zone, have been provided with a sewerage system. In the scope of the "Technical Assistance to the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Program" (6525-00/2011) project, which will be presented in more detail in the next section, an excellent wastewater treatment plant in Durres has been given operational support. This could serve as a model and teaching plant for the country.

As for Kosovo, all rivers are reported to be polluted, which is mainly due to the fact there are no wastewater treatment plants in Kosovo except one. Existing sewerage networks are assessed to be in poor condition. A lot of the households that do not have access to a sewerage system are using septic tanks or discharge their wastewater into nearby rivers and creeks. This lack of sewerage networks and of adequate wastewater treatment is increasing the stress on fresh water resources. Water resources are not used in an efficient way, water is wasted and there are leakages in a lot of the water supply systems. The villages covered by the water project had partly been connected to a sewerage network, mostly they use septic tanks. Protection of water resources is better than before the project started, but it is far from being good. The dramatic situation of discharging wastewater without treatment has not improved. Water resources management is crucial for a successful water project. Wastewater evacuation and treatment should be integrated at

least at the planning stage when water supply is implemented, so that a future wastewater system could be developed without major construction problems.

Structured and equitable management of water resources (sector objective)

“A holistic, orderly, equitable and sustainable management of water resources is a requirement for coordinating the three other goals as well as a contribution to conflict prevention and good governance.”³⁶

So far there have been problems in Albania with illegal connections, a lack of a legal basis for tariffs (especially for social tariffs), inefficient collection of fees, a lack of ownership and weak institutions. Also, water management is highly politicised, so it frequently happens that Water Utility Managers are changed after elections. One important development in the institutional framework and water resource management has taken place in the last few years. The main responsibility for water matters shifted from the Ministry of Public Works to the Ministry of Environment, other ministries are involved as well in water matters, such as the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (urban areas) and the Technical Secretariat of the National Water Council under the Prime Minister’s Office. Later, the establishment of the State Secretariat for Water Resources shifted the Technical Secretariat from the Ministry of Environment to the Prime Minister’s Office. But still the administration is weak, roles in the government as well as inspections are not defined, awareness of water issues and education are not well developed. The huge number of existing water laws partly contradict each other and need to be harmonized.

Three projects in Albania are concentrated together to work on the issue of good governance, made possible by a considerable financial contribution. The overall title is the “Technical Assistance to the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Program” (6525-00/2011). It provides support to the respective Ministries and 13 Water Utilities with consultancy to help set up a comprehensive capacity development programme. It is meant to strengthen and complement ongoing activities at national, regional and local levels, such as the envisaged Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2010 plans, as well as to initiate new ways of strengthening the sector’s water and sanitation capacities. The project has three components which aim to (i) support the regionalization process, (ii) strengthen the management and operational capacities of the Water Utilities in the general provision of water and sanitation service and (iii) support the General Directorate of Water Supply and Sewerage in the development of its capacities for management, planning, data analysis, and human resource development. Regarding the first component, many of the planned outputs have not been achieved to date due to changes in the Government and the uncertainties created by the Territorial Administrative Reform process. Components two and three have been successful. However, the time for the rather big programme was too short to absorb the 4,6 Mill. Euro. Financial resources had to be shifted and were invested in equipment, the necessity for which is somewhat questionable. Coordination within the water sector fell short. The project did not fulfil the “harmonisation and alignment” criterion of the ADC, competition and overlaps with other water programmes (e.g. GIZ) could be detected. Even so, the project plays an important, supporting role in the ongoing process of policy orientation. The relevant ministry intends to include a training unit, which will be based on a capacity development programme developed with the support

36 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009a), p. 18.

of the project. Also of great interest is the affordability policy paper supported by the project.

Thanks to the “Raising Awareness and Increase Participation of Civil Society in Country Policies on Water Issues” project (8189-00/2012) the capacities of civil society to participate in reforming the water sector in terms of service and environment could be improved. The combined approach of providing civil society training in hands-on skills as well as in understanding and communicating with the main actors in the Water Utilities, the Ministry, Regulation Offices, etc. seemed to be exceptional successful and could serve as an exemplary model. Not only the CSOs, but also state authorities and water specialists showed great interest in the workshops and training sessions. As a result of bringing different stakeholders together, the CSOs were invited by the Ministry of Environment to help draft a policy document and to participate in its presentation in a Parliamentary Commission.

In the scope of the project “Supporting Implementation of National Water Supply and Sewerage Services Sector Strategy in Albania” (8294-00/2012) the previously written strategy was improved, finalised and distributed among the water sector stakeholders. To promote sector dialogue, a conference was held to improve knowledge about the water sector strategy and exchange experience about how to achieve better results. The project has been successful in achieving its overall goal. The study team can testify that the short and precise strategy was widely distributed, all relevant experts quote and refer to it, donors base their projects on it and the government offices use it.

In Kosovo the increased demand on water infrastructures in the rural areas has created the need for consistent improvement of the legal framework and for more efficient management of the (rural) water supply systems. During Phase 2 of the Kosovo project in 2009, the Regional Water Companies (RWC) had no legal obligation to manage rural water systems, and a lot of the systems were neglected. The project implementer Community Development Initiative (CDI) was involved in policy issues for establishing a clearer legal framework to govern the relationship between rural household consumers vis-à-vis their RWC. They organized workshops and discussions on the formation of new water-related policies that reflect rural realities in the water sector, all of which finally had an impact on the legal framework: RWC is becoming the owner of all water system projects, and now has the mandate to manage all systems. Capacity-building and training sessions on operational maintenance and protection of water resources for all seven RWCs in Kosovo, organized through CDI, helped to improve their performance. Hence, management of the water resources has improved significantly, although there is still room for improvement. This impact can be attributed to the commitment of CDI. The undisputed strength of CDI was their effort to involve all relevant stakeholders in taking decisions. The RWCs, municipalities and villages were all linked together. In a later stage, even the Ministry was involved.

Minimization of risks (overall goal)

Minimizing risks through the mitigation of the consequences of climate change and through the development of adaptation strategies was not a major concern of the selected water projects. However, the impact of climate change may further aggravate the quality of water sources, particularly during summer months, when it is expected that the

variation in precipitation and increases in temperature will affect the lower river streams. Future water projects should take this risk into consideration.

Cross-cutting issues

Cross-cutting issues such as democracy and good governance, conflict prevention and the environment need to be treated as integral elements and quality criteria of the development process in the water sector.³⁷ These issues have already been dealt with in the previous sections. Other in the ADC policy paper mentioned cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, special consideration of disadvantaged groups, and the promotion of human rights did not receive any specific support in the projects. These crucial issues require more than the individual initiative of a single person, such as the impressive effort of the Water Utility manager in Shkodra Rural to increase work opportunity and to contract predominantly Roma and other poorer people of the region for watchman and other services to “reduce migration” as he put it.

Concluding remarks

The approach in Albania and the single project in Kosovo show good results with their scores between “4” (moderate) and “5” (strong) (7813-04/2007, 6525-00/2011, 8139-00/2010, 8294-00/2012, 8189-00/2012, 8207-00/2008 based on assessment of fact-sheet chapter 4.4) for impact on the seven different environmental aspects. The unsuccessful Bosnia-Herzegovina project was not counted. A couple of strengths in Albania are the infrastructure measures that significantly improved the water supply service and the construction/ improvement of a sewerage system that improved the water quality in Shkodra. The workshop participants in Shkodra mentioned several times that the city is much cleaner now. But the soft aspects that have to do with good governance in the broader sense also receive good marks. Although it has to be admitted that it is indeed relatively easy to assess the concrete impact of a sewerage system on the water quality, it is almost impossible to measure the environmental impact, for instance, of a sound water sector strategy. But the study team assumes that if all aspects identified to be relevant in reaching the sector goals are taken together in the approach, there is no doubt that there will be a positive impact on the environment. The marks were given based on this assumption. These relevant aspects are (i) the creation of competent institutions to operate and sustain the infrastructure; (ii) the development of regulatory mechanisms and a legal framework; (iii) the support of ownership; (iv) the initiation of sector dialogue to include non-government stakeholders; (v) and raising awareness in the population regarding their rights and duties in the water sector. The circumstances that have contributed significantly to the success of the intervention in Albania is the consistent portfolio with a strong emphasis on the water sector that enables ADA to cover infrastructure and good governance aspects on the micro-, meso- and macro-levels. This approach should be taken as a model for other countries, where the portfolio is sometimes fragmented and good initiatives on the micro-level lose momentum because there is no adequate support on the meso- and macro-levels. But there is still room for improvement even in Albania, involvement could be better encouraged, alignment with other projects could improve, IWRM, mitigation and adaptation aspects have not yet been sufficiently considered. The

37 Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (2009a), p. 18.

nexus approach coordinating water, energy and food security has been an intensively discussed topic within ADA for the last several years, but it was not yet an issue when most of the water projects were designed. However, in the most recent “Technical assistance” project it could have been taken into consideration, but it was not. In Kosovo, the time of intervention was much too short, and the “fruits could be harvested” only because Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) continued the project.

4.5 Cross-cutting approaches: environmental institutional capacity building

Introductory remarks

Those projects that did not fit into any of the operational fields will be presented here. These are the two environment policy and administrative management projects “Website on Eco-Finance Institutions” (Multinational project 8214-00/2007) and “Elaboration of the National Environmental Investment Strategy in Macedonia” (8197-00/2007) and the public sector and administration project “Fostering sustainable development in Montenegro - Institutional Capacity Building and Technical Assistance” (8276-00/2010).

Project presentation

The aim of the multinational project “Website on Eco-Finance Institutions” (8214-00/2007) could be formulated somewhat as “Improve the visibility and information on funding mechanisms for environmental protection in SEE”. The website was setup as follows: (i) a section with detailed information about individual eco-finance mechanisms, (ii) a section containing analysis and comparison of featured eco-finance mechanisms, (iii) a section containing selected analytical documents and guidelines and (iv) a guestbook, feedback and e-newsletter section. The website does not exist anymore and it is unclear how long it was online. However, the website and specifically the profiles of domestic eco finance institutions were used in several publications in the years 2008 to 2012 regarding eco-finance in SEE. Therefore it appears that the website did in fact contribute to better visibility and information on national funding sources and thus may have contributed to improve the conditions for other environmental projects. Probably the intervention would have needed longer duration, preferably anchored within an established institution which could have promoted it better, linked it to other processes (instead of just being based at a consultancy in Western Europe) and updated it.

The overall goal of the project “Fostering Sustainable Development in Montenegro - Institutional Capacity Building and Technical Assistance” (8276-00/2010) is to strengthen the national and local capacities in the field of sustainable development in Montenegro. It thus provides support to the Office for Sustainable Development of the government of Montenegro in the revision of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD), in clearer drafting of policies, in monitoring, in Project Cycle Management, and also in backstopping projects financed by the ADA, as the ADA coordination offices were to be closed. The Office is also responsible for verifying realisation of the NSSD through annual implementation reports. These reports showed progressive achievement, with 56% of the measures implemented or almost fully implemented. In addition, 80% of the rules and regulations proposed by the Office (through NSSD) were adopted in 2013, which shows

the support on the political and governmental level. The drafting of the Montenegro +20 document as well as the draft version of the revised NSSD from the year 2012 represent an improvement in quality, because they take a cross-cutting, horizontal approach focussing on a few key issues instead of just listing a large number of measures. This improvement in quality is mainly due to the capacity building done by the intervention. However, it must be noted that it is not possible to find the new NSSD in the internet, which could mean that it was not finalized/ adopted. Regarding any contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation, etc., it is likely that the intervention did have effect due to measures or policies in this area, but they are not documented and the impact can therefore not be assessed.

In Macedonia a comparable project received support, "Elaboration of the National Environmental Investment Strategy" (8197-00/2007). The objectives of the project were (i) to contribute to the development and implementation of a framework for sustainable development, (ii) to contribute to Macedonia's progress towards accession by helping the country to identify and meet the complex obligations of EU environmental legislation and (iii) to provide a sustainable, comprehensive framework for activities in all sectors that will facilitate moving towards gradual improvement of environmental standards and public health. The formulated Strategy was intended to provide a mechanism for the allocation of national funds to priority environmental sectors, as part of the overall national programming process. The Strategy itself could be completed, but according to the final report it was difficult to trace its application, due to the scattered information on expenditures and projects in the country.

Concluding remarks

All three projects might be good initiatives and may have had impacts. However, because they are not tied to another project and are only planned for a single phase their impact could not be consolidated.

5 Sustainability of Immediate Results and of the Change Processes Initiated

In general, it is difficult to assess concretely to what extent the outcomes and impacts of the interventions to improve the environment will be sustainable in the long run, as most of the documents available, if they deal with the subject at all, only make assumptions about sustainability. Of the 24 projects visited on-site, 16 were still ongoing, either through ADA funding, or through funding from other donors or from business partnerships. So the sample of completed projects is not very broad, and that is why general assumptions about sustainability cannot be expected. It is more the case that good and not so good single experiences can be described. It has to be stated that there is no ADA wide exit strategy applied generally to the projects to preserve the successes, although in some individual projects interesting strategies to maintain the achievements have been put into place.

The probability is high for continued long-term benefits when needs felt by the beneficiaries have been successfully addressed. This was true, for example, for the “Rural Water and Sanitation Support” (8207-00/2008) in Kosovo. Based on the few interviews and the short visits to some sites, the study team was able to find evidence that the results are still positive six years after the end of the funding from ADA. The water supply continues to function, although some beneficiaries question the quality of the water. Whether this is justified could not be found out during the study. Presumably, the beneficiaries’ own extensive financial contribution and their empowerment have motivated them to take care of the system. Water and sanitation committees received training to manage the service themselves. The legal mandate of the Regional Water Companies for the system and its improved capacity also contribute to sustainability, as well as the continuation of the programme made possible by support from SDC. It can be assumed that similar statements could be made for the Organic Food Production Project in Serbia (8220-01/2010), where the farmers are successful on the market and when there is at the same time a competent organisation advising the farmers about organic agriculture and business management. The study team is sceptical about the “Fruit Cultivation” project in Kosovo (2550-09/2013). The financial investment in the model orchard is very high, which therefore cannot be repeated by every apple farmer. Also, the location of the model orchard is more than 30 km away from other growing regions, which could negatively impact the development of a fruit cluster in this region.

Intermediary sustainability is achieved when local partner organisations assume ownership and leadership for the development process. Empowerment is crucial for sustainability. This has shown to be true in the context of the Montenegrin tourism project (8163-01/2009). According to the final document, sustainability is expected because the National Park has assumed ownership and leadership in managing the park. But this could neither be confirmed nor called into question by the study team.

The sustainability of almost all of the projects might be threatened by various external influences, for example by high staff turn-over, which poses a serious risk to the continuation of the results deriving from capacity-building activities. Political changes with new priorities, change of personnel, budget restrictions and unclear division of responsibility may also jeopardize the long-term sustainability of the project results. A lot

of projects in the Western Balkans face this challenge, especially the multinational projects that are located at the policy advice level, such as Themis, SLED and ENVSEC. But as well also projects having municipalities as counterparts, like the “Novi Sad ecoProfit Project” (2550-01/2010) and the Kosovan “Waste Management Project” (2550-02/2012) face the challenge that political change presents. In some cases, sustainability is doubtful because unfavourable political framework conditions like those for energy pricing (Hydropower Albania 2550-09/2011 and Geothermal Energy Project in Macedonia 8022-00/2005, 8022-01/2009) were not taken into consideration or could not even have been foreseen at the moment of planning the project. Thus the projects’ profitability is put at risk. The sustainability of the multinational project “Website on Eco Finance Institutions” (8214-00/2007) was questionable from the beginning, as it would have needed to be anchored within an established institution to be able to update the website on a continual basis.

When it comes to projects that are located on the macro-level of advising policy, there are definitely two sustainable projects in the portfolio. One is the Macedonian “Green Pack” project (8103-00/2005, 8103-01/2009) which was officially introduced into schools in Macedonia as a teaching tool. The other is the “National Water Supply and Sewerage Services Sector Strategy in Albania” (8294-00/2012) that is highly appreciated by water experts, and used as a reference document by government officers and donors.

What makes some policy advice sustainable and some not? This is hard to judge, but it must certainly have to do with the quality of the counselling and how well the support is connected with national discussions or strategies. And being in the right place at the right time to find committed allies that are willing to push the issue should not be underestimated for successful sustainability of any change processes initiated.

6 Conclusions

As stated several times over, impact measurement faces a lot of methodological challenges. The detection of environmental changes on the one hand and the clear attribution of outcomes caused by the project measures to these environmental changes on the other hand are not uncomplicated tasks. Results can always be questioned. The specific situation of the ADA projects, which did not have clearly formulated environmental targets, even in the ENV 1 and ENV 2 marked projects, and which had deficiencies in their monitoring and reporting systems, did not make this task any easier. Nevertheless, the study team is convinced that the following statements about environmental impacts are well founded. Other impacts which the projects certainly may exert, such as increased income and reduced poverty, were not subject of this study.

Projects create results on the level of the population or the target group, but they also have impacts on institutions or organisations and on the policy level. In the following section, the environmental impacts on these different levels will be briefly summarized.

Environmental impacts on the micro-level

For the projects that fit into the improved natural resource management approach, environmental improvement on the micro-level can be described specifically as reduced pressure on the ecosystems. This is achieved in four countries through supporting rational water use, manure management and activities which promote organic food production. However, most projects have not used their potential to take up environment-friendly agricultural practices sufficiently enough (Albania 8140-01/2010, Bosnia-Herzegovina 2550-03/2009, 2550-12/2010, Kosovo 2550-09/2013, 8134-01/2007, Serbia 8220-01/2010).

The waste projects in Kosovo and Serbia contributed to a cleaner environment in the villages and cities through improved waste collection and disposal along with raising awareness, to reduction in air pollution through diminishing backyard burning of waste, to improved groundwater by reducing the illegal dumpsites and to enhancement of the recycling rate (Kosovo 2550-02/2012, Serbia 2550-13/2010). The two projects that dealt with safe handling of chemicals helped to reduce contamination in agricultural products, soil and water in Kosovo (Kosovo 2550-09/2013, 8134-01/2007).

Energy efficiency projects that intended to encourage individual responsibility towards climate protection were the two projects promoting low-carbon housing (Macedonia 2550-04/2007, Montenegro 2550-03/2007). What these projects concretely achieved in reducing CO₂ emissions could not be fully clarified.

Environmental improvements on the local level in the water and sanitation sector are found in Albania, yet again very concrete improvements cannot be measured. Water quality and water supply have improved, leakage and thus wastage of water could be reduced. The concerned cities are cleaner and the rivers and lakes are less polluted, thanks to the improvement or construction/ rehabilitation of sewerage systems. By applying the IWRM approach, wells are better protected and thus less contaminated. The functional and reliable water supply has increased hygienic production standards of small food producers (Albania 7813-04/2007, 6525-00/2011, Kosovo 8207-00/2008).

Almost all projects that had their activities focused at the local level also invested considerable time and money in awareness-raising campaigns, but mostly about the specific activities themselves, like in the waste and water projects where the environment as such was mostly dealt with indirectly. The environmental awareness level in citizens of the Western Balkans remains low. Impact studies to measure the success of projects' awareness- raising efforts are not known.

Environmental impacts on the meso-level

Projects belonging to the group of improving sustainable resource management supported the Municipalities and/ or private organisations in acting more consistently with the issue of environment in mind. The organic agriculture projects supported organisations that established production-, processing- and marketing-structures for organic products. Some of them were also trained for certification. Unfortunately, not all projects with municipalities and organisations were striving for a strong ecological focus (Albania 8140-01/2010, Bosnia-Herzegovina 2550-03/2009, 2550-12/2010, Kosovo 2550-09/2013, 8134-01/2007, Serbia 8220-01/2010). In the scope of the tourism projects emphasis was placed on strengthening institutions and building the capacities of regional tourism agencies and the park management. Environment was a major topic, and first improvements regarding environmental protection and recovered animal population were reported (Montenegro 7942-03/2009, 8163-01/2009).

Both waste management projects had as their major project partner the Municipalities. The projects supported the authorities in getting along with the challenging tasks of waste management entrusted to them. Innovative approaches were attempted, which also had the definitive objective to improve the environmental situation (Kosovo 2550-02/2012, Serbia 2550-13/2010).

To enhance the share of renewable energies, different facilities were supported that followed this objective. They received technical and organisational support, mostly to improve energy productivity. Data as to whether this improvement could be achieved were not available. In two countries, unfavourable political conditions thwarted the success (Albania 2550-09/2011, Macedonia 8022-01/2009). The ENVSEC multinational project put a strong focus on regional dialogues, consultations, workshops and comprehensive stocktaking of available information regarding climate change, SLED supported the development of energy efficiency plans in 40 municipalities. Whether these can be put into practice and will finally have a real environmental impact is hard to predict (Multinational Programmes 8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012 and 8306-00/2013).

Some of the water projects had a strong emphasis on the meso-level. They gave support for the creation of competent institutions and the development of ownership among Water Utilities (Albania) or Regional Water Companies (Kosovo), through fostering good technical and managerial performance. This had an impact on the service provided, which in most cases has markedly improved, also in terms of environmental indicators. However, there is room for improvement. The sometimes highly politicised management in a lot of the Water Utilities is over challenged with problems that also affect the environment, problems like illegal connections, a lack of legal basis for tariffs, low collection efficiency, etc. (Albania 7813-04/2007, 6525-00/2011, Kosovo 8207-00/2008). The

success of one innovative project in Albania mentioned earlier in improving the capacities of civil society to participate in dialogues and reform of the water sector, which led to their helping to draft a policy document and participate in its parliamentary presentation, is one indication of successful environmental emphasis on the meso-level (Albania 8189-00/2012).

Environmental impacts on the macro-level

Impacts on the environment through counselling on the policy level are sometimes hard to recognize. Some elements are mentioned below, in many cases they can only be assumed but never be proved.

Two multinational initiatives that were assigned to the operational field of sustainable natural resource management concentrated their work on the national level. They focused on increasing the administrative and institutional capacity of national authorities to enact environmental legislation and to combat environmental crimes related to natural resources and forestry. They have been successful in creating awareness of the issue; environmental crime can now be identified as environmental crime. The legal systems are partially enforced, but whether this leads to less environmental crime is hard to judge (Multinational programme Themis 8284-00/2011, 8284-01/2014). The other multinational initiative contributed to the establishment of nature transboundary parks in Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo. An additional emphasis of its work is the orientation of donor money toward remediation and clean-up activities at different mining sites, which has significantly reduced local and regional environmental and human health risks (Multinational Programmes ENVSEC 8071-00/2005, 2579-00/2009, 8071-01/2012). However, both projects are struggling with the limited interest in environmental issues on the upper policy level, and their influence on the governmental bodies of the respective countries seems to be limited. High staff turnover is another challenge projects that work on the meso- and macro-level have to cope with. These problems are the reasons why the implementers – in the case of Themis, ENVSEC and SLED – RED and UNEP assume the responsibility for the initiative and why no real ownership for the initiatives in the ministries can be developed. This is a dilemma that cannot be easily resolved. Several of the projects work directly on the issue of environmental awareness. One in Macedonia was particularly successful, because the environmental education programme and the teaching material developed was officially introduced into schools as a teaching tool. All pupils have to go through these lessons and will hopefully develop an understanding for environmental interrelations and their own role in protection (Macedonia 8103-00/2005 and 8103-01/2009).

Surprisingly, two business partnership projects, one active in the agricultural sector and the other one active in the waste sector (both Kosovo) also influence policies on the national level. One project advises the Ministry concerned in its effort to ban dangerous pesticides and fungicides that come both legally and illegally into the country. Together with the Ministry, the project is developing a list of chemicals that are allowed to be applied in agriculture, because they are in compliance with EU directives. This could be considered to be an important step in reducing serious health and environmental problems caused by the use of toxic substances. The other example is the waste company that is actively involved in an association of waste disposal companies fostering the establishment of an appropriate legal framework for waste management. The

management of the company has also developed a proposal on how to deal politically with a debt problem inherited from predecessor companies, which all the newly established waste companies in Kosovo now face. The proposal will tend to influence national waste politics for some time to come (Kosovo 2550-09/2013 and 2550-02/2012).

Two more projects have also been effective on the national level. The objective of one has been to strengthen national and local capacities in the field of sustainable development, and the other one supported the elaboration of the National Environmental Investment Strategy. The lack of a monitoring system makes a study of the impact almost impossible (Montenegro 8276-00/2010 and Macedonia 8197-00/2007).

When it comes to the water sector, the influence of ADA on the national water policy of Albania (policy dialogue and lead in the donor coordination of the water sector) and related good governance is visible. A technical assistance consultancy led to a comprehensive capacity development programme, which should strengthen and complement ongoing activities at the national, regional and local levels in the water and sanitation sectors. The Ministry is establishing at this moment a training unit based on this development programme. This project is as well involved in developing recommendations for a new clustering of water utilities in the country according to the newly drawn up boundaries between municipalities. Due to the ADA support, the Water and Sanitation Sector Strategy has been finalized, distributed among the water sector stakeholders, and an ongoing sector dialogue has been initiated (Albania 6525-00/2011, 8294-00/2012). To sum up, the engagement of ADC in Albania on different counselling levels is paying off. In Kosovo the project implementer was involved in policy issues, trying to establish a clearer legal framework in order to govern the relationship between rural household consumers vis-à-vis their Regional Water Companies (Kosovo 8207-00/2008). This is clear evidence that conscious environmental efforts are being made at the macro-level.

7 Recommendations

Based on their findings and conclusions, the authors of the impact study make the following recommendations:

1. Orient the portfolio towards projects that combine the creation of jobs and income and the sustainable management of natural resources, e.g. regional development - or tourism projects. This could help to overcome the limited interest of these countries in environmental protection insofar as they have to prioritize the serious economic and social problems. In case these projects are successful, they will in the long run push for more environmental protection, and that can generate more awareness of the environment within the societies. These sectors could become strategic movers for the whole environmental issue in the six countries, because they can show the economic advantages of environmental protection, and because they will have their own economic means to promote the issue.
2. Promote where feasible environmental protection and organic agriculture more strongly in the areas of regional development -, agriculture – and business partnership projects.
3. Assess the political regulations and the (energy) pricing situation through a feasibility study before starting a (business partnership) project to avoid the situation that the projects most relevant to climate protection in the end are not profitable and thus would not be sustainable.
4. Up-date the existing Environmental Strategy from 2009. Reflect the perspectives and needs of the Balkan countries more strongly and avoid a one-sided focus on tropical countries. Newly emerging policies like adaptation, a stronger focus on climate change, the development of environmental strategies and financing instruments have to be added. The objective should be that the Environmental Strategy provides orientation when reshaping country portfolios and designing new projects.
5. Develop a tool or guideline to mainstream environmental objectives, in those projects where it is not a concern in itself. This guideline should provide practical advice on how to orient and manage projects in order to make them more environmentally effective. The tool should be applicable not only for the country programmable aid but should be shared by other Austrian actors engaged in development cooperation.
6. Make sure that the recommendations formulated in the Environmental Appraisal are in English and really reach the project implementers, and apply the instrument also in business partnership projects, to avoid potential harm being done to the environment.
7. Develop clear guidance for a target - and also a monitoring system that provides sufficient support for steering and evaluating projects by improving the more strategic formulation of outputs, outcomes and overall goals according to international standards and by applying indicators that focus less on outputs and more on outcomes. Environmental topics should be included in the target system and in the indicators for all projects classified with the environmental marker ENV 1 and ENV 2.

8. Accompany newly introduced instruments or awareness raising initiatives with the necessary baseline studies and monitoring efforts to be able to give information about the success.
9. Streamline reporting formats, try to avoid overly long documents, insist on English documentation so that partners can also read the reports. Concentrate on reporting about achieved outcomes and contributions to the overall goal. Reduce pure output documentation.
10. Develop an exit strategy applied generally to the projects to preserve the successes and to improve sustainability.
11. Avoid contingent aspects and fragmentation of the portfolio. Try to concentrate on the already determined country priorities and attempt to include business partnerships and other instruments in these strategies. Try to offer advisory services to stakeholders of one sector on the micro-, meso- and macro-level. This pays off as the approach in Albania shows, and this approach should be continued.
12. Support the existing good and relevant environmental initiatives on the local level to improve their environment with strategic support and policy advice on the meso- and macro-level to hedge results, expand them and make them sustainable.
13. Strengthen the role of ADA country officers in order to be better informed about the different Austrian initiatives existing in the countries, to develop more consistency between the different instruments and to make the portfolio more coherent.
14. Take into consideration in the portfolio programming that environmental projects need a long life span to be effective so that the often good initiatives that were started, can be consolidated.
15. Reduce the risk of coming into fishtail when the political orientation and subsequent legislation changes by widening the number and type of project partners, which means including the relatively more stable civil society and business partners where possible. This helps to safeguard results in cases where the policy level withdraws from cooperation.
16. Contribute to the strengthening and advocating capacities of the civil society and environmentally interested NGOs by not always contracting the same organisation with the implementation of projects but giving others also a chance.

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