

Trans boundary cooperation in the case of Vardar/Axios RB

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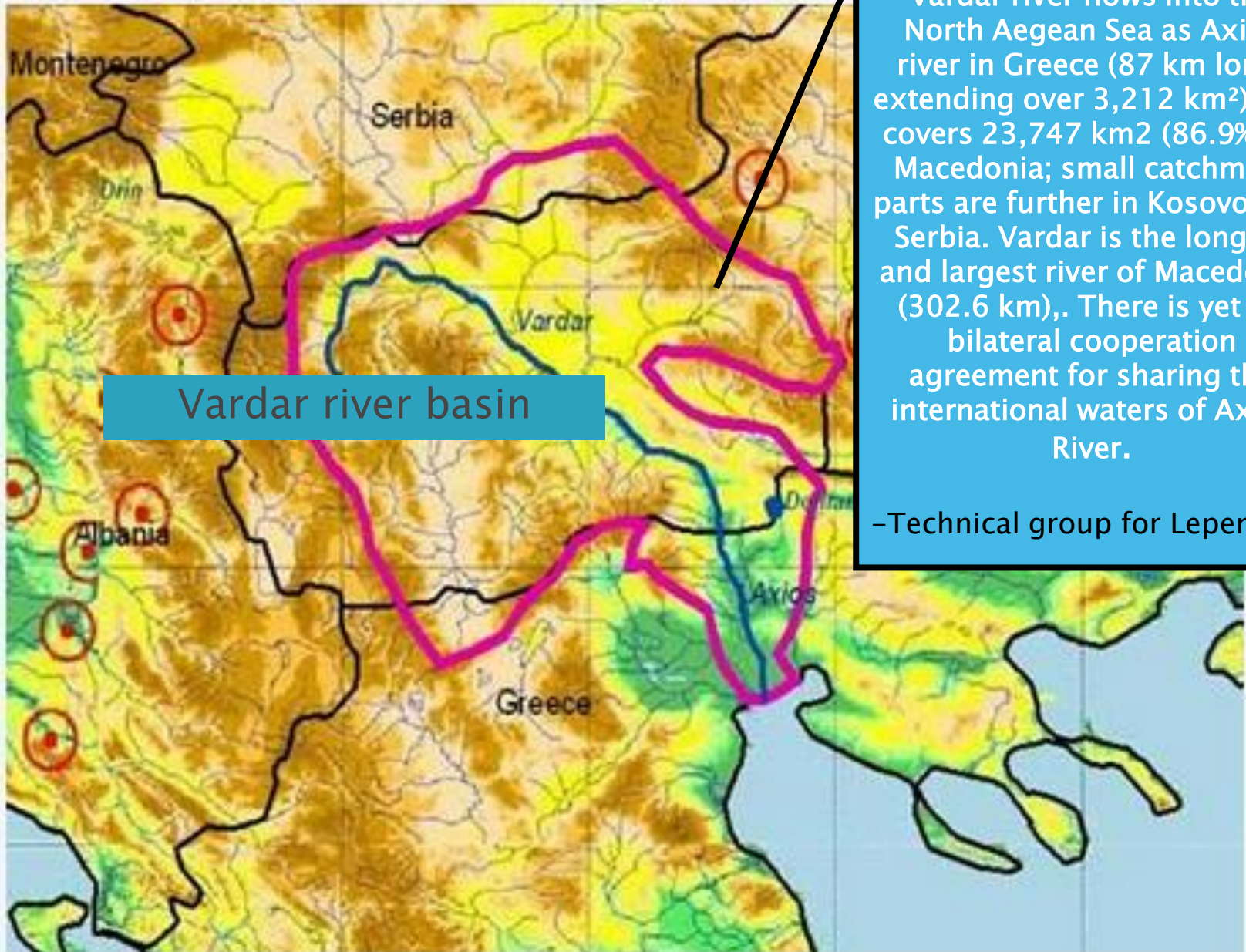
Trans boundary cooperation



The country is divided hydrographically into four river basins:

- Vardar
- Strumica
- Crni Drim and a small part of the
- South Morava river basin.

All the river basins in the country are international, shared with neighbouring countries



Vardar river basin

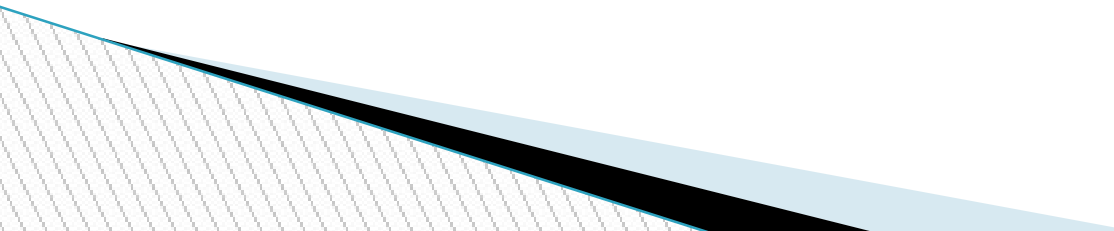
Vardar river flows into the North Aegean Sea as Axios river in Greece (87 km long, extending over 3,212 km²) and covers 23,747 km² (86.9%) of Macedonia; small catchment parts are further in Kosovo and Serbia. Vardar is the longest and largest river of Macedonia (302.6 km),. There is yet no bilateral cooperation agreement for sharing the international waters of Axios River.

-Technical group for Lepenec

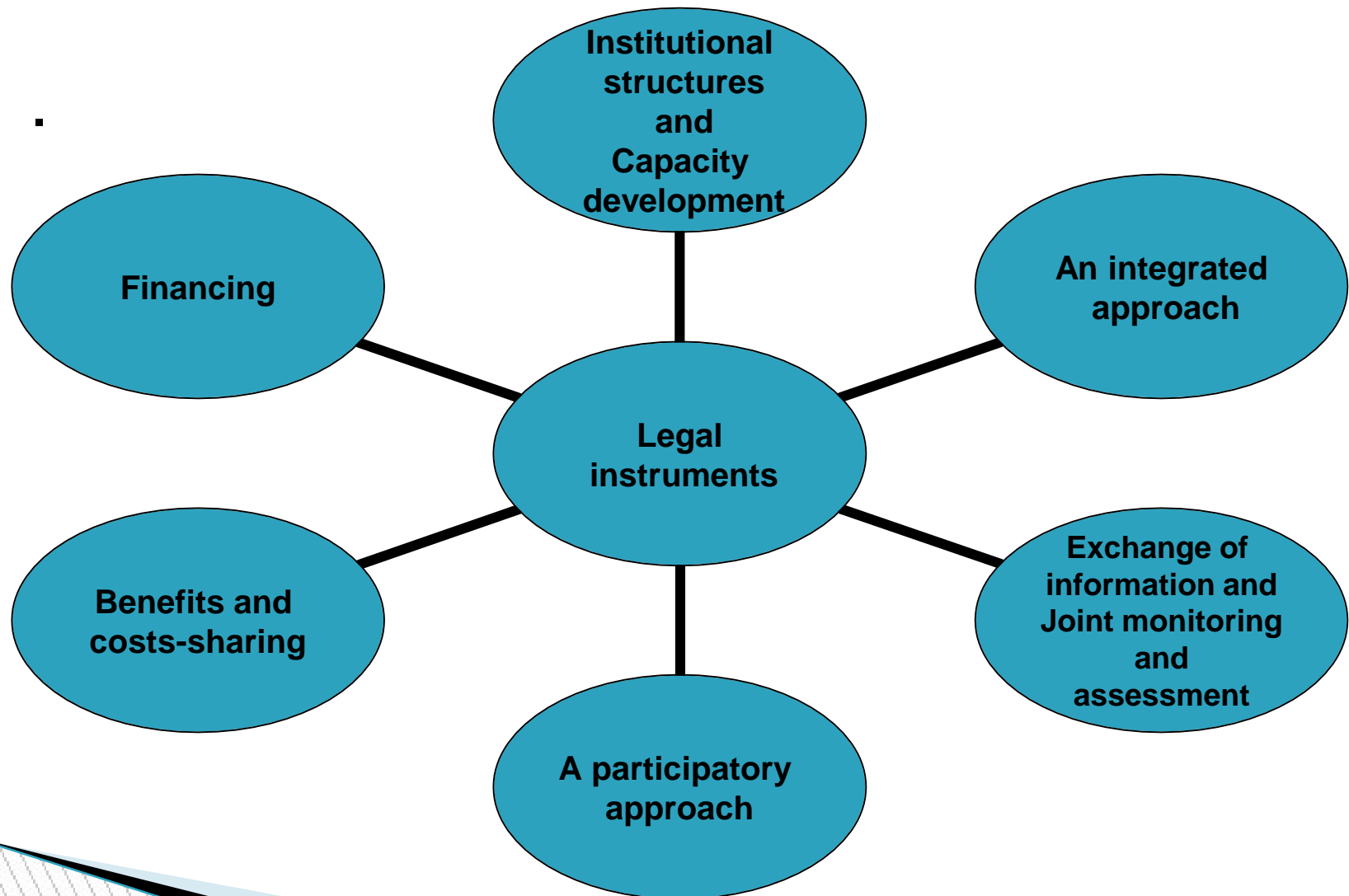
Pillars for transboundary water cooperation

▶ Achieving transboundary cooperation is always a long and complex journey and there is no single path and there are few short cuts.

In that process there are many routes that can be followed and any arrangement must be tailored to a given basin's characteristics and reflect a range of:

- *environmental,*
 - *hydrological,*
 - *political,*
 - *economic,*
 - *social and cultural circumstances.*
- 

While there is no universal solution, the following seven pillars are usually considered as necessary for long-term, sustainable and reliable transboundary cooperation



Legal instruments

- ▶ transboundary agreements need to be concrete and to set out institutional arrangements for cooperation, measures for management and protection of water resources and related ecosystems as well as enforcement.
- ▶ Agreements must take into account water quantity and quality, hydrological events, changing basin dynamics and societal values as well as all potential impacts of climate change

Case of VRB

- ▶ **The Law on Water**

- ▶ **Ratified International treaties**

- ▶ ***Who establish international river basin districts ?***

The state administrative body competent for the area of environment in cooperation with the state administrative body competent for foreign affairs shall seek to establish international river basin districts with the relevant neighbouring states for river basins which extend beyond the territory of the country(art. 9)

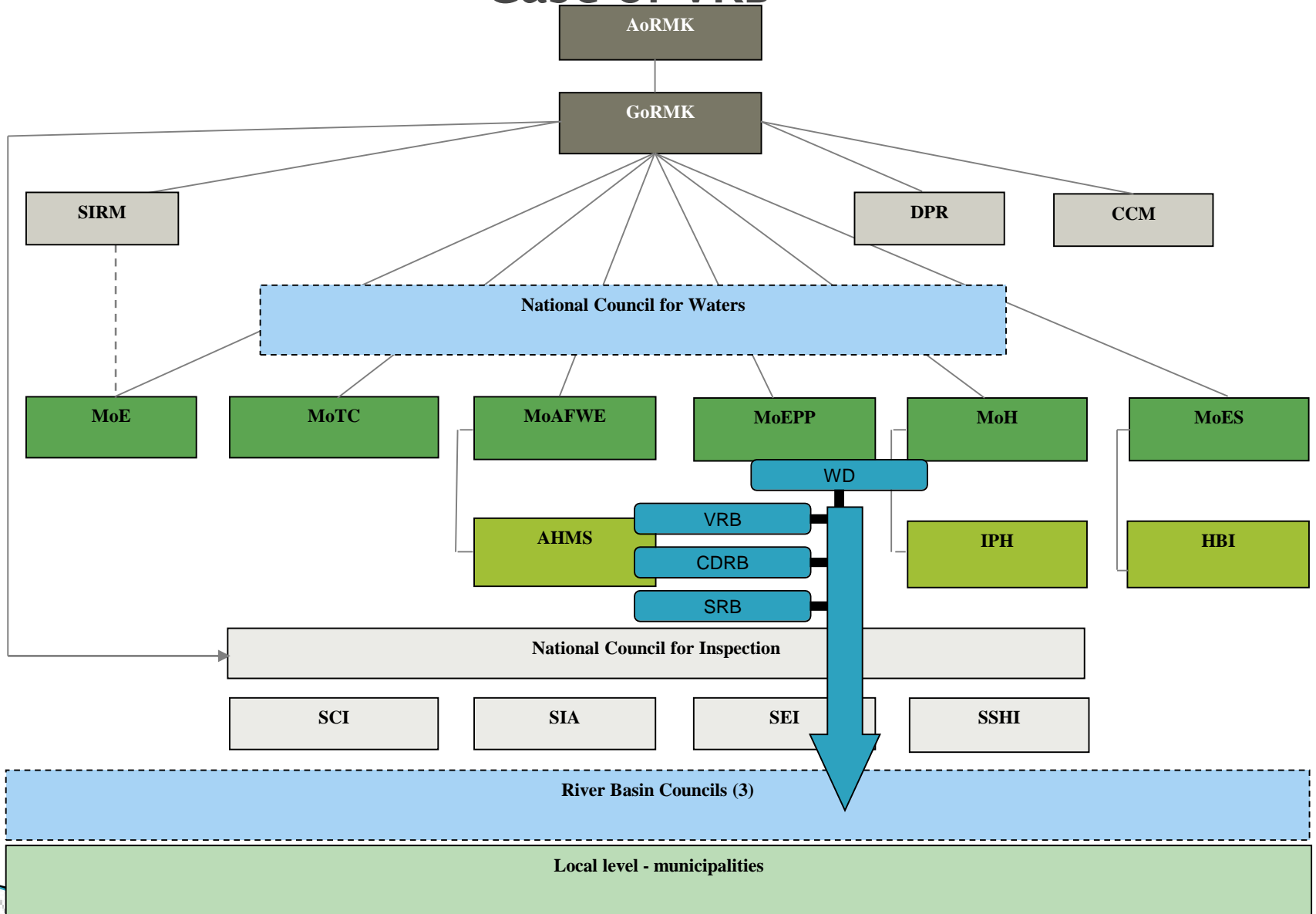
- ▶ ***Management of Tran boundary river basin districts and transboundary waters shall be performed in accordance with?***

Water Law and in accordance with the international treaties ratified by the Republic of Macedonia. (art.10(1)).– Helsinki Convention

Institutional structures and capacity development

- ▶ Effective transboundary water management starts at the national level, where coordination and cooperation between different ministries and water related institutions is needed, as are sufficient financing and political commitment
- ▶ At the transboundary level, the formation of joint bodies with strong enforcement capacity, such as river, lake and aquifer commissions, is fundamental to ensuring cooperation between the various governmental entities and good management of shared resources.

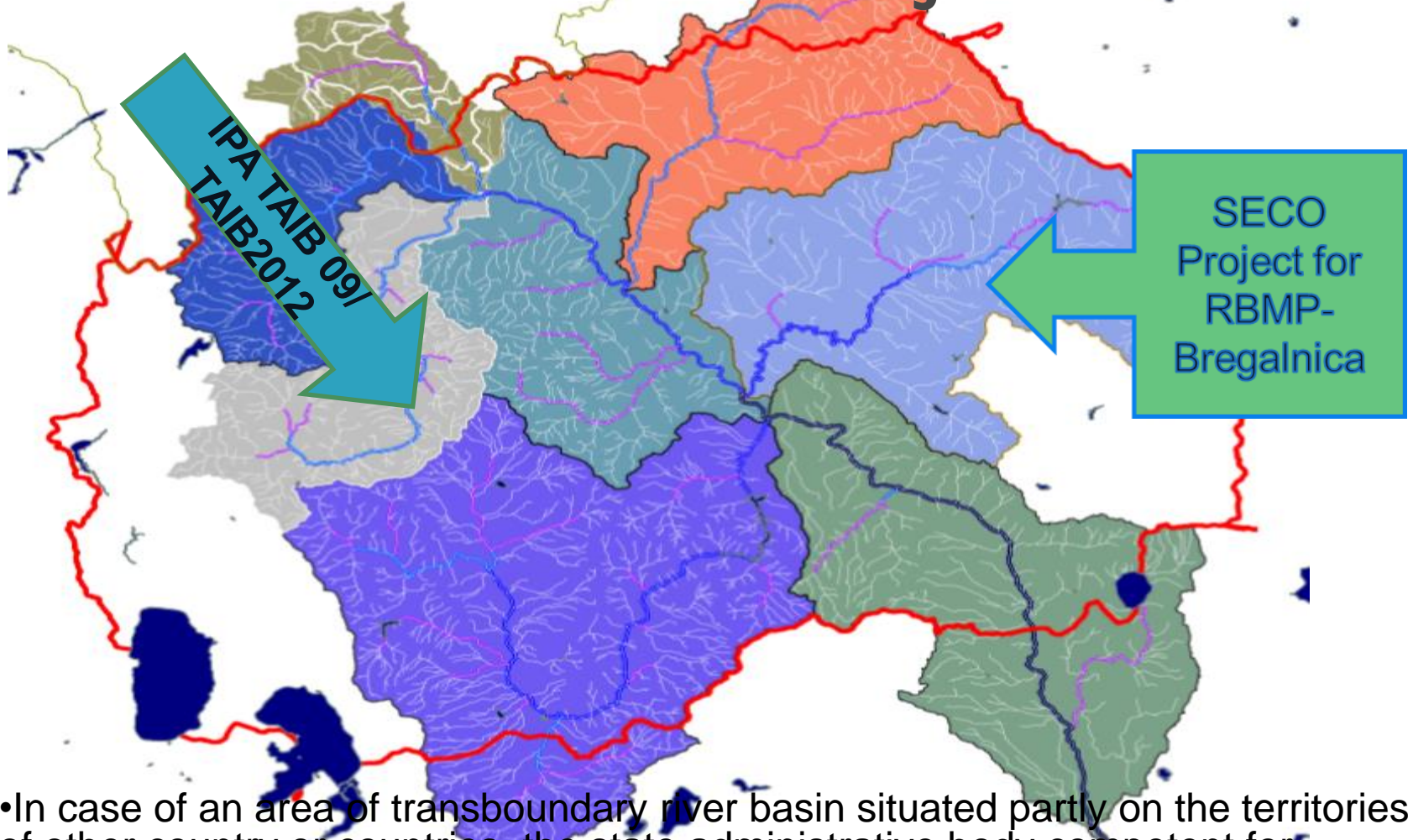
Case of VRB



An integrated approach

- ▶ Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is a process that promotes coordinated and efficient development and management of water, land and related resources to maximize the economic and social welfare without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems.
- ▶ The management approaches should be based on regional cooperation principles, focusing on river basins and aquifer systems

Case of VRB – Projects



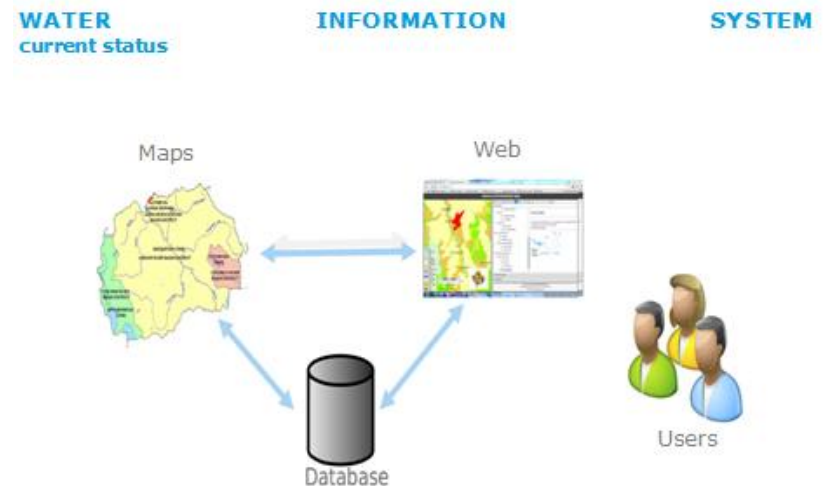
• In case of an area of transboundary river basin situated partly on the territories of other country or countries, the state administrative body competent for environment shall cooperate with the competent authorities of the relevant countries for the purpose of developing **common transboundary river basin management plan**.

Exchange of information and joint monitoring and assessment

- ▶ A common basis for decision-making requires harmonized (if not standardized), compatible assessment methods and data management systems as well as uniform reporting procedures.

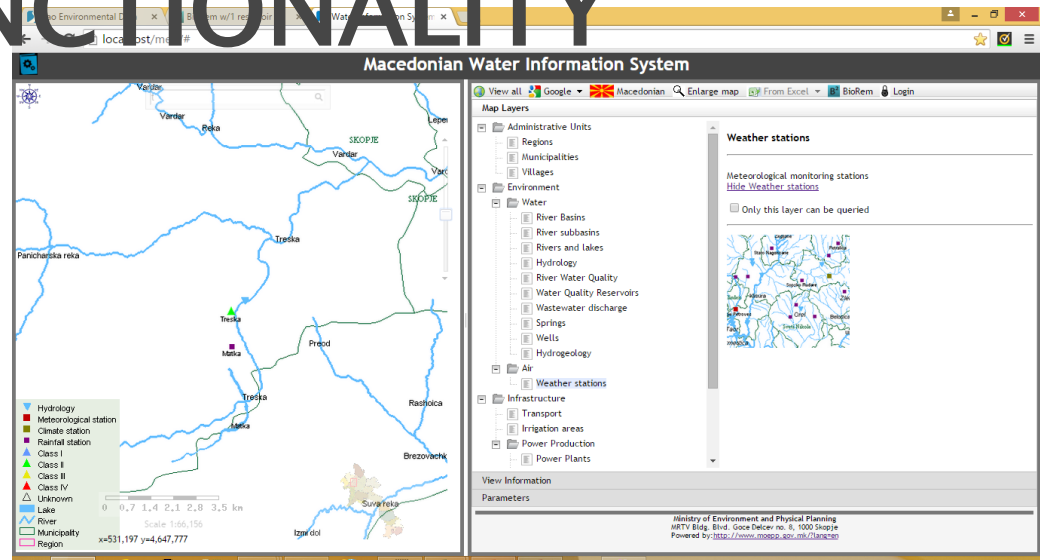
Case of VRB

- ▶ Establishment of WIS
– data base

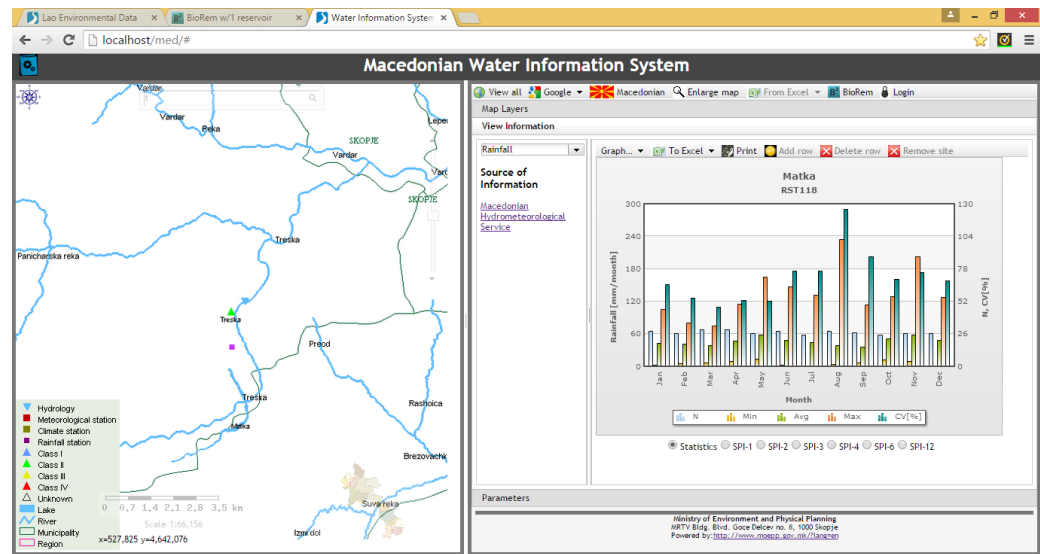


CASE of VRB/ WIS – BASIC FUNCTIONALITY

- ▶ Map layers are switched on and off in a web browser



- ▶ A click on a map object retrieves data from the database



A participatory approach

- ▶ Public participation is fundamental to maximize agreement, enhance transparency and decisionmaking, create ownership and facilitate the acceptance and enforcement of decisions and policies

Case of VRB

Vardar River basin council

- ▶ The Council is composed of representatives nominated by the MoEPP, MAFWE, MH, MTC, municipalites, association of consumers, water management enterprises, water communities, water services providers and other water users, industry, NGOs and other stakeholders.

- *During the preparation of the River basin management plans, the state administrative body competent for environment shall take into account the opinions of the River basin district management Council, and the council for management of parts of the river basin district.*

Benefits and costs– sharing/Vardar–Axios RB

- ▶ Riparian countries should focus first on optimizing the generation of basin–wide benefits, and secondly on sharing those benefits in a manner that is agreed as fair.

Case of VRB

- ▶ Gevgelija WWTP cost sharing principles

Financing/Vardar–Axios RB

- ▶ A mixture of financing mechanisms and various sources of financial resources is typically used for transboundary water management cooperation: from national budgets and external bilateral or multilateral donors funded projects to more strategic programmes and funds or private public partnerships

Current status of Varadr/Axios RB

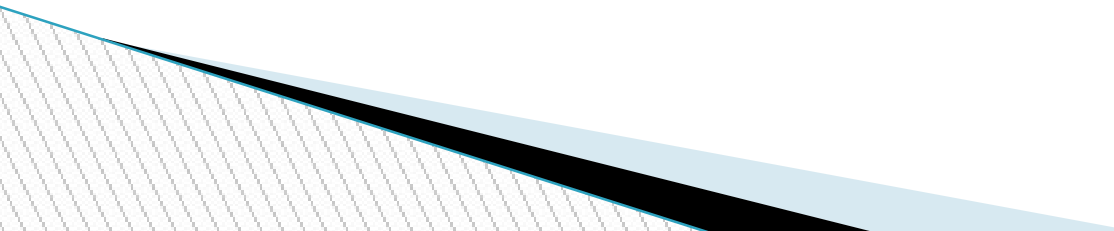
Bilateral meetings

- ▶ Two bilateral experts consultation meetings on environmental affairs between two countries were held in Thessaloniki 2013 and in Skopje 2014
- ▶ The Meetings was conducted in a spirit of continuation of established cooperation, was of great importance to both Parties which exchanged information on the Vardar/Axios River, the Doirani Lake and Biological Diversity Protection in the transboundary areas in accordance with the EU requirements.

Bilateral meetings – 2

- ▶ Both Parties agreed to identify opportunities for future cooperation in implementation of the Water Framework Directive.
- ▶ Both Parties expressed its concern regarding the current condition of Doirani Lake referring to the urgent need of immediate action on its protection, thus supporting in joint appearance in the funding of international organizations
- ▶ Both Parties expressed readiness for joint performance and shared approach to IPA, LIFE, ADRIATIC, FP7, Balkan–Mediterranean and other programmes or funds

Next steps

- ▶ Each party should nominate expert which will identify the needs for cooperation regarding conclusion of the meetings in the following areas: *Vardar/Axios River, Dojran lake, Transboundary cooperation, Nature protection, EU funds and programmes (Life, Balkan Mediterranean etc)* ;
 - ▶ To establish a working group for cooperation among both ministries of environment, which will have power to make decision in implementation of join activities and projects.
 - ▶ Third bilateral meeting in Athens in November between two countries.
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Thank You