

Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area

Working Group on Water Management (WGWM) of the Prespa Park Management Committee

Rules of Organization and Procedure – Proposed amendment of Terms of Reference (ToR)

as approved by the PPMC on 23.06.2022 31.01.2023

Article 1

Functions of the WGWM

1. The WGWM is a standing expert group of the PPMC and operates under the auspices of the latter. More specifically, the WGWM will assist the PPMC in identifying and obtaining the water management information required for policy-making purposes and will provide expert technical support to the PPMC, primarily by ensuring that all available water management information is presented to the PPMC in an agreed and accessible manner.

2. The overall objective of the WGWM is to facilitate coordination of efforts for development and implementation of an integrated transboundary Prespa River Basin Management Plan as envisaged by the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). This objective will be pursued by providing technical expert support to the PPMC and by issuing recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management. In this context, the WGWM will facilitate cooperation and exchange of water-related information and will pursue the harmonisation of the water management plans among the three countries based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation.

Article 2

Tasks of the WGWM

1. Pursuant to article 14(4) and taking into account article 5 of the Prespa Park Agreement, the specific tasks and mandate of the WGWM are defined as follows. The WGWM will:

(i) Support the work of the PPMC in the preparation of discussion / decision papers on issues related to water protection and management.

(ii) Prepare a four-year workplan for the prioritization of the tasks and activities to be pursued, in accordance to the PPMC requests.

(iii) Facilitate the establishment of data-sharing mechanisms and agreements for the regular and ongoing exchange and assessment of available water management information, including: a) data on monitoring of water quality and quantity of water resources; b) data on current water uses and water abstractions of surface waters and their impacts on water quality and quantity; and c) data on surface water status (ecological and chemical) and on groundwater status (chemical and quantitative) as specified in the EU Water Framework Directive.

(iv) Facilitate the development of a transboundary water monitoring scheme with the collaboration of all national institutes responsible for the national water monitoring programmes applicable in the basin.

(v) Exchange information on existing or planned water uses that could affect the ecological character of the Prespa Lakes Basin and discuss possible remedial actions and

alternative solutions.

(vi) Provide information concerning the development of any technical works in any part of the water basin which might cause impacts in the Prespa Lakes basin and update this information; evaluate relevant environmental impact assessments, in accordance with appropriate international standards.

(vii) Facilitate the coordination of activities in order to ensure consistency and harmonisation of the water management plans in the Prespa Lakes Basin based on the principles of integrated river basin management and the relevant EU and international legislation. In specific, facilitate the coordination of activities towards the following objectives:

- a. Set environmental targets and adapt to these the water uses in the river basin
- b. Development of consistent reference conditions and water quality elements for the surface and groundwater resources
- c. Adoption of appropriate joint emission limits for wastewater and threshold values for groundwater according to EU legislation
- d. Identification of Significant Water Management Issues which can directly or indirectly affect the quality of the surface and groundwater resources
- e. Elaboration of an inventory of Protected Areas according to the EU Water Framework Directive requirements
- f. Coordination of programmes of measures among the three countries

(viii) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms and procedures to facilitate transboundary cooperation and exchange knowledge among the water management authorities and interested stakeholders at the river basin level.

(ix) Recommend to the Prespa Park Management Committee the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate cooperation in scientific research programmes.

(x) Facilitate the coordination of activities and make related recommendations towards the establishment of early warning systems and procedures and facilitate related preparatory work towards the development of risk management and contingency plans for extreme events of floods and droughts.

(xi) Facilitate better understanding of the law and policy context for water management activities, including analysis and exchange of information on relevant EU legislation, national law, international law and standards on transboundary waters and protected areas.

(xii) Liaise in respect of technical matters with the Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee.

Article 3

Composition of the WGWM

The WGWM will consist of a total of 7 members, including:

- a. one representative of the national water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties who may be assisted by national experts,
- b. one representative of the regional water services (or equivalent administrative entity) of each of the three State Parties,
- c. one representative from the European Commission, DG ENV, Water Unit (or relevant regional Commission official)

The members of the WGWM are appointed – and replaced if need arises - by the Minister

for the Environment of each State Party and by the European Commission, respectively.

Each member may have an alternate, appointed and replaced as above mentioned, and fully authorised to replace her/him in case of inability to attend meetings or follow related WGWM work.

Article 4

Organisation of work of the WGWM

1. *Meetings:* The WGWM will convene twice a year, in the same country. The venue of the WGWM meetings will rotate among the three State Parties. ~~It is specified that during the first four years of operation, the WGWM meetings will be convened in Greece since according to article 14 (5) of the Agreement for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area, the operational costs of the WGWM shall be covered for the first four years of its operation by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.~~ Their dates will be agreed at the end of the previous meeting. Extraordinary meetings may also be held upon request of the PPMC and whenever deemed necessary by any of the three State Parties or the European Commission. It is further provided that one of the two annual meetings of the WGWM under the same chair might be organized via teleconference following the relevant decision of the PPMC.

2. *Decisions and recommendations:* The Working Group on Water Management will propose recommendations based on the principles of integrated river basin management, as reflected in the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), for the adoption by the PPMC.

Recommendations of the WGWM to the Prespa Park Management Committee will be based on consensus and shall be included in the Minutes of the WGWM.

3. *Chair:* The WGWM will be chaired on a rotational basis for a period of one year by each of the national water authority representative. The annual rotation of the Chair of the WGWM follows the rotating Chair of the PPMC ~~even if the WGWM meetings convene in Greece during the first four years of the WGWM operation.~~ It is further specified that the chair continues to serve as the chair of the WGWM for the duration of the year i.e. not only during meetings but also in between and until the next country takes over. In case of absence of the state representative, the meeting will be chaired by his alternate. The powers and duties of the Chair shall be to:

a. Convene the regular meetings of the WGWM.

b. Prepare the draft agenda for the meeting in consultation with the members. Any member may propose agenda items.

c. Preside over each meeting of the WGWM.

d. Review the Minutes summarizing the main conclusions and outcomes of the meeting, prepared in the English language by the PPMC Secretariat; ensure their review by all members of the WGWM at the end of the meeting; incorporate feedback; ensure signing of the final Minutes by all representatives of the national water services / Ministries of Environment of the three State Parties and the European Commission; ensure that Minutes are sent to the PPMC through the Secretariat; and that copies of the signed Minutes are circulated to representatives of the national water services of the three State Parties and the European Commission.

e. Ensure the observance of the present Terms of Reference.

The PPMC Secretariat will assist the chair in performing the above duties.

4. *Working language:* The working language of the WGWM is English and the working documents of the WGWM are also to be drafted in English.

5. *Communication:* Internal communication among members of the WGWM between meetings will be conducted through electronic means (preferably e-mail, web meetings

etc).

6. *Technical expertise:* In the event that the WGWM lacks sufficient technical expertise on a relevant issue or specific thematic area on an agenda item: **af.** Relevant expert(s) (from the Parties or international experts) may be invited to participate in the meeting(s) on an ad hoc basis ; and/or

gb. Ad hoc Task Groups may be established to contribute to the work of the WGWM, upon guidance by the latter.

7. *Attendance of meetings:* The WGWM meetings will be open to the PPMC and Secretariat members. Interested parties and stakeholders may be invited to participate in the meetings on an ad hoc basis upon mutual prior consent by all the WGWM members.

Article 5

Expenses of the WGWM

~~1. The operational costs of the WGWM (i.e. accommodation expenses and meals of all WGWM members during meetings taking place in Greece and organisation of meetings thereof) shall be covered for the first four years of its operation through funding provided by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy.~~

~~2. After the end of this period, t~~The PPMC will cover the costs of operation of the WGWM by its core budget, the Party in whose territory a WGWM meeting will be organised shall bear the cost of organizing the meeting, and each Party shall in principle bear the expenses associated with the participation of its members (i.e. travel and accommodation expenses) in the WGWM meetings.