

## Minutes of meetings

**Title:** Regional Conference on Financing Climate Proofing and Green Infrastructure

**Moderator:** Sonja Gebert (UNEP) and Merima Hrapović (CENER 21)

**MoM prepared by:** Merima Hrapović and Maja Kurtagić-Hadžić, CENER 21

**Date:** April 13, 2022

**Time:** 09:30 – 14:15, on-line, Zoom platform

### **Aim of the Conference:**

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- To provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge, expertise and hands-on experience regarding current trends in financing climate-proofing and green infrastructure as well as to encourage productive discourse on the possibility of establishing a regional fundraising mechanism for climate-proofing of infrastructure in the transport sector. The Conference aimed at offering a new perspective on the financing possibilities and importance of climate proofing investments to the stakeholders across the WB countries.

### **Participants response:**

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The meeting was attended by a total of 92 participants. The list of participants is given in Annex 1 of these minutes.

## Agenda:

Session/Theme	Panelist/Presenter	Time
<b>Formal Introduction to the Project</b>		<b>09:30 - 09:50</b>
<i>Introduction to the conference</i>	Merima Hrapović, CENER 21	09:30 - 09:40
<i>Opening and welcome speech</i>	Sonja Gebert, UNEP	09:40 - 09:50
<b>Session 1 - Economic Sustainability of Road Infrastructure</b>		<b>09:50 - 12:00</b>
<i>The impact of climate change on the Western Balkans - risks and economic consequences</i>	Vasko Popovski, ClimaProof National Consultant for North Macedonia	09:50 - 10:05
<i>Climate resilient road assets - the economic aspect</i>	Mark de Bel, Senior Economist, Deltares	10:05 - 10:20
<i>Panel discussion</i>	Naresh Pradhan, Senior Transport Specialist in Green Climate Fund (GCF) Aleksandar Simić, Sustainability & Climate Change Expert Mark de Bel, Senior Economist, Deltares	10:20 - 10:50
<b>Q&amp;A</b>		10:50 - 11:30
<b>Break</b>		11:30 - 12:00
<b>Session 2 - Climate Proofing Investment in the Transport Sector - How to establish a regional funding mechanism?</b>		<b>12:00 - 14:00</b>
<i>Funding mechanisms for climate proofing of investments</i>	Michel Leushuis, Senior Finance Expert, Rebel	12:00 - 12:15
<i>Climate resilience - process for project evaluation and selection for financing</i>	Sarah Duff, Green Economy and Climate Action, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Victor Bonilla, Transport Specialist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	12:15 - 12:35
<i>IPA funds experience in meeting EU Environment and Climate Change requirements</i>	Jadranka Ivanova, Team Leader at SANE27 Programme	12:35 - 12:50
<i>Case study of investing in climate resilient road infrastructure</i>	Mark de Bel, Senior Economist, Deltares	12:50 - 13:05
<i>Panel discussion</i>	Drazen Kucan, Senior Urban Development and Energy Efficiency Specialist at Green Climate Fund (GCF) Michel Leushuis, Senior Finance Expert, Rebel National Consultants in WB countries	13:05 - 13:35
<b>Q&amp;A</b>		13:35 - 14:00
<b>Closing session</b>		<b>14:00 - 14:15</b>
<i>Conclusion and closing remarks</i>	Sonja Gebert, UNEP Merima Hrapović, CENER 21	

## Course of the Conference:

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In the introduction part of the Conference, the participants were welcomed by Ms Merima Hrapović, Project Coordinator on behalf of CENER 21. Ms Hrapović presented participants with more details relevant to Component 3 of the ClimaProof project as well as with the aim and purpose of the Conference itself. Ms Hrapović emphasized the importance of receiving the potential inputs from the stakeholders during the Conference, which will further be used in the process of drafting the *Regional Strategy for climate resilient infrastructure development in the Western Balkans*.

The participants were also welcomed by Ms Sonja Gebert, the Programme Manager on behalf of UNEP Office in Vienna. Ms Gebert gave a brief overview of the work that UNEP is conducting in the region, referring to its support to the WB countries in achieving their environmental priorities through initiatives and projects on biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as assisting countries in relevant reporting and capacity building activities. Ms Gebert informed participants about the objectives, activities and results of the ClimaProof project, emphasizing the need for financing climate proofing of the infrastructure in the Western Balkans (in particular road infrastructure) and the necessary alignment with the best EU practices and recommendations.

Mr Vasko Popovski, the National Consultant for North Macedonia, opened **Session 1 - Economic Sustainability of Road Infrastructure**, giving an overview of the impact of climate change on the Western Balkans (risks and economic consequences). Mr Popovski stressed that, when considering the hazard profile of the region, the Western Balkans is one of the most exposed regions to natural hazards in Europe. The majority of the disasters that happened during the last two decades involved floods, of great intensity and magnitude, as well the impact on the societies in the region. In addition, the frequency of forest fires and extreme temperatures is increasing. Such events, combined with the new emergent risk and threats (e.g. pandemic and biohazards), cause meaningful implications for the economy and development of the region. Accordingly, major disasters that occurred in the WB countries in the recent period resulted in extensive damages and economic costs. For instance, the annual average population in Kosovo\* that is affected by flooding is about 10,000 and the annual average affected GDP is about \$50 million.

Mr Mark de Bel, Senior Economist from Deltares, presented the economic aspect of the climate-resilient road assets. Mr de Bel elaborated on the general methodology (including risk assessment and the difference between damages and losses), a case study - economic analysis of road assets in Albania (including approach, risk profile, criticality, cost-benefit analysis), and lessons learned. He noted that the desktop studies, which are based on global data with coarse traffic data (corridor level), can produce useful and strategic results at a network level. However, in order to execute the action plan, a field validation is required. Also, Mr de Bel noted that finding reliable input and data (on damages, repair costs, downtimes, etc.) is sometimes difficult, which is why a national input (from local partners and stakeholders) is very important.

During the panel discussion within Session 1 of the Conference, Mr Naresh Pradhan - Senior Transport Specialist in Green Climate Fund (GCF), briefly presented the perspective of GCF about climate resilient road infrastructure. There is a growing need for interventions on climate-resilient infrastructure in order to minimize the hazards that the world is currently facing. Over the next 50 years, the world is likely to experience high temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events ranging from droughts,

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

floods and freezing winters, which are very challenging for the infrastructure itself. To meet these challenges, the society needs to be well prepared, in terms of securing sufficient investments to build a low-carbon society and ensuring long-term sustainability. GCF is working in many different regions and countries, and challenges across these projects vary significantly. Therefore, all relevant stakeholders have a role to play and need to do better and more.

Ms Sonja Gebert (UNEP) asked if there were any current practical projects funded by GCF regarding climate-proofing road resilience, particularly in the Western Balkans region. She noted that countries have their NDAs (Nationally Designated Authorities) whose job is to communicate with GCF on the country's needs and to formulate the country programs for GCF. According to these country programs, climate-resilient infrastructure comes as the highest need and priority to be addressed through GCF.

Mr Naresh Pradhan (GCF) replied that according to the GCF portfolio, the majority of the projects in the transport sector are related to immobility. Until now, we do not have any other projects that deal directly with the climate-resilient road infrastructure. This is why GCF encourages NDAs and accredited entities to submit proposals that will also address the need for climate-resilient infrastructure. There are many more sectors apart from immobility, which need to be covered and GCF will gladly support such initiatives.

Mr Mark de Bel (Deltares) noted that immobility (although a part of transportation) does not comprise road infrastructure as such. If the new road is being built, it is much easier to make it resilient to any future climate change, especially nowadays when the awareness of climate change is much higher than it was 20-30 years ago. Therefore, the big challenge is making the current infrastructure more climate-resilient instead of building some new climate-resilient infrastructure. According to him, the climate-proofing of the existing road infrastructure would be a very nice addition to the GCF portfolio, because it is directly related to the changing climate and there are a lot of existing roads that are not climate-resilient.

Mr Aleksandar Simić (National Consultant for Serbia) agreed with Mark's point of view, noting that in Western Balkans there are many interventions for building the new road infrastructure. This means that we need to ensure that such infrastructure is more climate-resilient than the existing roads are. Roads within Western Balkans are generally old and total climate expenditure in recent years has peaked. Also, Mr Simić pointed out the discrepancy between NDAs and respective governments, as well as the lack of communication between NDAs and GCF. Almost all recent projects are being funded by IFIs, which have specific guidelines for climate-proofing, meaning that climate resilience is deeply analyzed from the sustainability and economic point of view. For instance, the EBRD has a green economy transition mechanism that provides some relevant valorisation of climate-resilient outcomes. Mr Simić emphasized that the countries of Western Balkan lack a systemic approach in ensuring the climate resilient road infrastructure, e.g. if a highway is being built with the funding from IFIs, there is an absence of a procedure or a guideline by NDAs - institutions responsible for road infrastructure.

Ms Jadranka Ivanova (Team Leader at SANE27) expressed the dilemma on whether the region should have some kind of legislation that countries need to follow in order to secure the climate-resilient infrastructure. If yes, what type of legislation should it be (e.g. soft legislative or more structural legislation) and how this procedure should look like?

Mr Mark de Bel (Deltares) replied that since roads are normally under the responsibility of the road authority, it is the job of governments to set criteria for performance (e.g. what should the road infrastructure achieve), which will be further translated to designing norms in terms of adapting to changing climate.

Ms Birgitte Keulen (European Investment Bank), noted a similar issue that was pointed out by Mr Aleksandar Simić, referring to the need for a systemic approach in developing a climate-resilient infrastructure. Climate proofing is a cross-cutting issue that requires collaboration between different authorities, including the involvement of not only road authorities but also water management and forest management authorities, etc.

Ms Sandra Andovska (representative of NDA from North Macedonia) noted that NDA has a procedure for communicating with the GCF, while the infrastructure projects are defined within infrastructure policies that are worldwide prescribed or EU prescribed. She also asked for more insights on the issue of the systemic approach in relevance to NDAs. Also, Ms Andovska added that, in terms of climate action, the National Spatial Plan is being developed at the moment, and therefore all strategic documents will have the climate-related topics, which will be later utilized on a technical level.

Mr Aleksandar Simić (National Consultant for Serbia) clarified that countries of Western Balkans need to scale down the worldwide and EU strategies on climate resilient road infrastructure to the national contexts, emphasizing that NDAs probably lack the procedure or guidelines for designing climate resilient road infrastructure or guidance on maintenance, monitoring or construction of climate resilient roads.

Ms Sonja Gebert (UNEP) noted that countries in general lack ownership in decision-making in terms of the climate-proofing of the investments for infrastructure development. For instance, the EBRD has its own standards for taking the climate resilience aspect into account, which is good, but what happens when the investor is not the EBRD, but a funding institution that does not take into account the climate resilience or environmental protection aspect? How to assist countries in ensuring that investments reaching this region are taking climate change risks into consideration in a sustainable way?

Mr Vasko Popovski (National Consultant for North Macedonia) commented that climate change and disaster risk reduction aspects are in a way detached from the road network planning in the region. The level of awareness on both sides is still low. According to him, the road authorities in the region are not sufficiently using the existing risk and hazard assessments at the current stage. In North Macedonia, there is a lack of risk evaluation models, as well as an absence of a comprehensive assessment approach that involves future changes. Therefore, Mr Popovski and colleagues from UNDP Regional Hub are advocating for making a sensitization of policy and decision-makers in climate, disaster and road sectors, in order to kick off the engagement in a multi-sectoral, multi-risk and multi-hazard development. Accordingly, they are developing relevant documents such as a technical checklist and guidance for building resilience in critical infrastructure sectors, where the road sector is one of the prioritized sectors.

***Session 2: Climate Proofing Investment in the Transport Sector - How to establish a regional funding mechanism*** was opened by Mr Michel Leushuis, Senior Finance Expert from Rebel Group. Mr Leushuis gave a presentation on funding mechanisms for climate-proofing of investments, with a focus on the following topics: financing need for climate-proofing of road infrastructure, an overview of current funders and their practices, the potential of private finance as a funding source, and the possibility of setting up a separate financing mechanism. Mr Leushuis clarified the difference between Greenfield and Brownfield projects in the context of their relevance to climate-proofing. He noted that accessing financing for climate-proofing of road infrastructure within Greenfield projects is not such a big challenge (since this aspect is only a couple of percentage points of total project cost), while the same access within Brownfield projects is harder to achieve since these projects are relatively small and entail dispersed investments. Also, he emphasized that the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) is the main factor for implementation of the EU's Economic and Investment Plan for the WB, and one of the key priorities for the next years is sustainable transport. By the end of the presentation, Mr

Leushuis elaborated on the advantages and disadvantages of setting up a separate ClimaProof financing mechanism.

The second presentation within Session 2 of the Conference was given by Ms Sarah Duff (Green Economy and Climate Action, EBRD), who provided meaningful inputs on the *Climate resilience - process for project evaluation and selection for financing* from the EBRD point of view. Ms Duff briefly presented the key details on the work of EBRD in the context of climate finance. All EBRD activities will be aligned with the Paris Agreement from the end of 2022, and the EBRD seeks to increase the volume of green financing to 50 per cent by 2025. When it comes to transport projects, the EBRD needs to see the climate adaptation and resilience integrated into the whole project cycle. This is being tracked through the identification of climate change risks/vulnerability, assessment of the potential impact on infrastructure and identification of adaptation measures to improve resilience. Such an approach ensures direct financial benefits (such as avoided road closures due to extreme weather and reduced repair and maintenance costs related to climate impacts) and wider economic benefits (e.g. ensuring better connectivity for rural/peripheral regions, more reliable trade and supply chains, etc.).

Ms Birgitte Keulen (European Investment Bank) provided an insight that a lot of investments needed to protect the transport infrastructure are required outside the transport domain. Therefore, such initiatives need to be done by water authorities, forest management authorities, etc. According to her, the discussions made at a regional level need to involve not only the transport authorities (which are often the strongest authorities within ministries - transport makes about 50 per cent of all expenditures of governments on infrastructure) but also other authorities in order to get several types of investments including other sectors as well.

Ms Jadranka Ivanova (Team Leader at SANE27) presented the IPA fund's experience in meeting EU environment and climate change requirements, based on the case of North Macedonia and Albania. IPA is a funding mechanism of the European Union that supports the reforms in the enlargement countries with financial and technical assistance since 2007. She noted that the environment and climate change sector is the most expensive to meet EU requirements. Regarding climate change mainstreaming, if there is a structural or institutional instrument within the countries, then the support of IPA and any other donors will surely be more efficient and long-lasting. However, Ms Ivanova noted that countries at this stage are not ready to take this obligation on their own unless being supported.

The next presenter was Mr Mark de Bel (Deltares) who elaborated on the case study of investing in climate-resilient road infrastructure - on the example of pluvial floods in the Netherlands. Mr Bel briefly presented the methodology of investing, interventions, cost-benefit analysis and eventually how such interventions are financed depending on the level of roads. Some of the interventions that were identified and evaluated in different road strategies involved: additional maintenance of roadsides (after monitoring), additional maintenance of drainage system and pavement, construction of piped drainage system (when missing) and improvement of existing drainage system (when present). When considering the case of the Netherlands, there is a clear economic rationale for increasing the climate resilience of the road network.

During the panel discussion within Session 2 of the Conference, Mr Aleksandar Simić (National Consultant for Serbia) commented that in Serbia there are two designated authorities - Public Roads of Serbia and Corridor 10. Public roads of Serbia manage the majority of the roads (approximately around 95 per cent), while Corridor 10 is only in charge of big infrastructural projects (such as new highways within Serbia that connect the country with Europe). When it comes to regular maintenance and operation, Public Roads of Serbia are self-budgeting, thus the authority plans its budget annually. Most new roads are funded by the EU, European Commission and IFIs, meaning that climate resilience issue is covered, but when it comes to the climate resilience of existing

roads and their maintenance and operation, this issue is not something that is primarily discussed. According to him, the internal documents of Public Roads of Serbia do not take into account the climate resilience of the road infrastructure.

Mr Vasko Popovski (National Consultant for North Macedonia) confirmed that a similar situation exists in North Macedonia as well. He noted that there was one innovative program with funds being used for local roads, municipal roads and municipal communal infrastructure; however, the input from the state budget is mainly oriented towards supporting the big projects (loans and grants), while the small amount is dedicated for operation and maintenance. Mr Popovski pointed out one good practice example that is being mainstreamed, referring to the national Public Road Company, which has developed technical guidance for the public enterprises on the preparation of climate-resilient design in the context of designing and maintaining roads.

Mr Vasilije Gazivoda (National Consultant for Montenegro) agreed with Mr Simić and Mr Popovski, noting that in Montenegro there are two institutions managing the public roads - Traffic Directorate and Public Works Administration. These institutions are mainly funded from the budget, which also covers the costs of road infrastructure repair - remediation of damages that occurred in the past period (including climate change impacts). He stressed the problem of “bottleneck” in the traffic, particularly during the summer months when many traffic jams occur, which impose the need for new interventions and preparation of projects on expanding the existing road infrastructure with the third road line. Within these projects, some of the climate resilience aspects are being considered, but not to a significant extent.

Mr Besim Islami (National Consultant for Albania) commented that the situation regarding the financial investments in road infrastructure and maintenance of roads in Albania does not differ much from Serbia and North Macedonia. Climate resilience is not very well considered in the relevant documents, particularly when it comes to secondary (municipal) roads, which is why much more needs to be done in regard to this issue.

Ms Suzana Alcinova Monev (Hydrometeorological Service in North Macedonia) proposed strengthening the cooperation of the hydro-meteorological services in the region regarding the standardization of climate services dedicated to resilient road infrastructure. For instance, preparation of probability distribution of intensive precipitation is important for dimensioning the drainage systems, and will be even more meaningful in the future. The standards that are currently being used are ancient YUS standards which should be updated in light of EU regulations.

Valbona Berisha (National Consultant for Kosovo<sup>\*</sup>) commented that the Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for the maintenance of highways and regional roads in Kosovo<sup>\*</sup>, while municipalities are responsible for the maintenance of local roads. Ms Berisha emphasized that Kosovo<sup>\*</sup> is a developing country that has other priorities in terms of development due to basic issues and ongoing crisis, which is why the climate resilience of infrastructure is out of the agenda of the state. There are some documents at a state level (such as climate change strategy and action plan), but they are more focused on the GHG emissions and relevant monitoring - not on the infrastructure resilience.

Upon completion of the discussion session, the conference was closed by Ms Gebert and Ms Hrapović who greeted all participants and panellists thanking them for their active participation in the conference and inviting them to join the upcoming activities within the ClimaProof project.

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<sup>\*</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

## Conclusions:

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- Legal framework and relevant documents in the field of climate change in the countries of the WB are undeveloped or insufficiently developed (focusing mostly on the reduction of GHG emissions and neglecting the aspect of adaptation to climate change). This is mostly due to the lack of capacities, data and tools needed for taking climate change into consideration when planning infrastructural projects.
- Planning and building a climate-resilient road infrastructure is a cross-cutting issue that requires involvement and active cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors (relevant authorities, ministries, agencies, hydro-meteorological services, institutes, private sector, financing institutions, etc.).
- There is still a significant gap between the requirements of the Green Agenda for Western Balkans and the actual situation in the countries of the region, in terms of countries' commitments and goals on one side, and the actual interventions and activities that are being undertaken on the field.
- When considering the possibility of establishing a regional fund-raising mechanism, there are both advantages and disadvantages of such intervention that need to be taken into account before making the final decision. While the new mechanism would be valuable in terms of providing a dedicated access point and incentive for developers to include climate-proofing in their infrastructure projects, it would also require additional resources and a change in governance structure (including obtaining a political mandate). Therefore, setting up a new mechanism would be a time-consuming and challenging process, particularly when taking into account the complex administrative structure and procedures in the countries of Western Balkans. Instead, it may be more efficient and practical to collaborate with financing institutions that already possess their own mechanisms (such as WBIF), and make a separate fund within the existing mechanism that would be utilized for climate-resilient infrastructure development in the WB region.
- All the relevant inputs received during the Conference will be accordingly considered and used for the development of the Regional Strategy that is being drafted under Component 3 of the ClimaProof project. Such data are valuable for the content of the Strategy, and the Strategy itself will serve as a roadmap for the countries in the region to plan and build climate-resilient road infrastructure.
- If the pandemic circumstances allow, the summary of the Regional Strategy will be presented to relevant regional stakeholders during the in-person meeting in the summer of 2022.



## Annex 1: Attendee Report

No.	Name and surname	Institution	Job title	Country	Gender	Contact
1.	Anela Karahasan	Chamber of Economy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Senior Associate	Bosnia and Herzegovina	F	a.karahasan@kfbih.com
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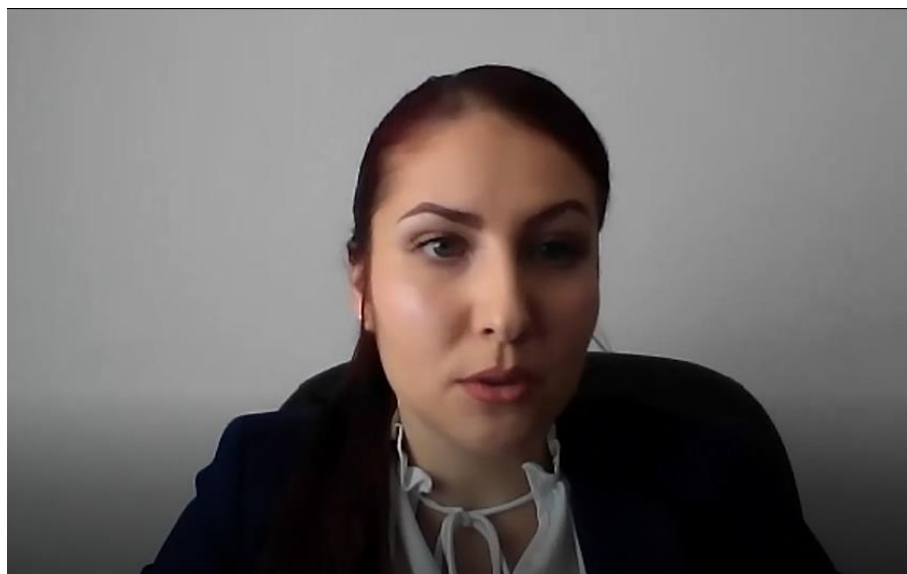
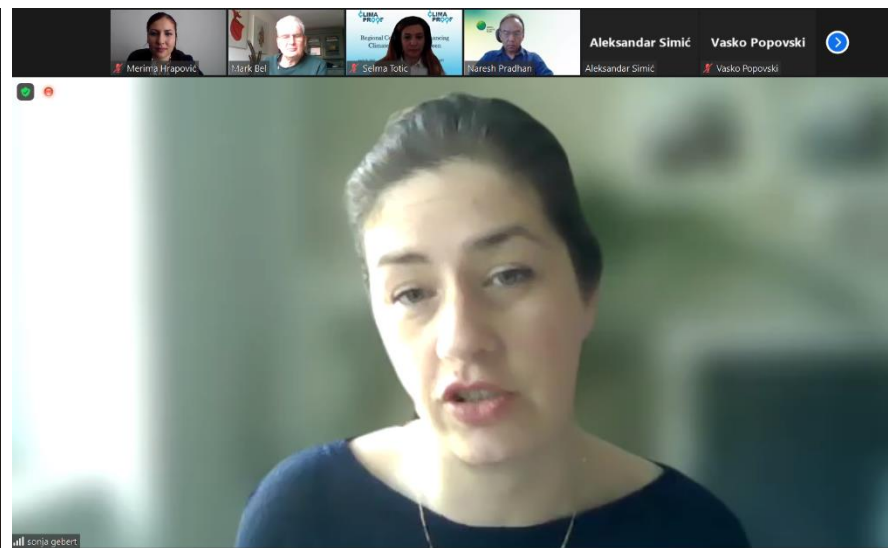
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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

## Annex 2: Photo Material



# Deltares



## Climate resilient road assets the economic aspect

Mark de Bel

13 April 2022

enabling delta life

Selma Totic

Merima Hrapovic


Vasko Popovski

Angel Marčev

### ALBANIA - Risk assessment for floods, landslides and earthquakes

Annual Expected Damages	Floods	Landsl.	EQ	Total
01 Milot - Morine New	16,739	824,373	6,079	847,188
02 Q. Osh - Pulis	13,398	112,808	14,194	140,400
03 Milot - Shkoder	1,540,190	90,040	177,787	3,808,017
04 Tirana - Durres	1,793,170	116,378	191,444	3,101,992
05 Durres - Fier	9,981,132	513,307	350,730	10,845,169
06 Tirana - Elbasan	3,004,926	456,556	127,413	3,588,895
07 Fier - Tepelene	1,252,073	105,858	61,559	1,419,490
08 Sarande - Greqi	40,927	39,710	5,553	86,190
09 Elbasan - Gramsh	717	26,243	27,484	54,444
10 Lushnje - Berat	254,003	93,458	42,334	389,796
11 Rrogozhine - Elbasan	6,332	29,090	49,935	85,357
12 Shkoder - Hani - Hotit	190,376	97,336	31,355	319,067
13 Milot - Peshkopaj	517,207	198,058	27,417	742,675
14 Vlore - Sarande	136,028	78,477	23,513	338,018
15 Pogradec - Korce		57,177	6,054	151,325

- Annual Expected Damages per hazard and corridor
- Earthquakes excluded from action planning due to dispersed impact and limited AED/km



WITH FUNDING FROM  
AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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## Integrating climate resilience in project development



Strategy

Feasibility

Design

Construct





Operate

Decommission


High-level Climate Risk Assessment

Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

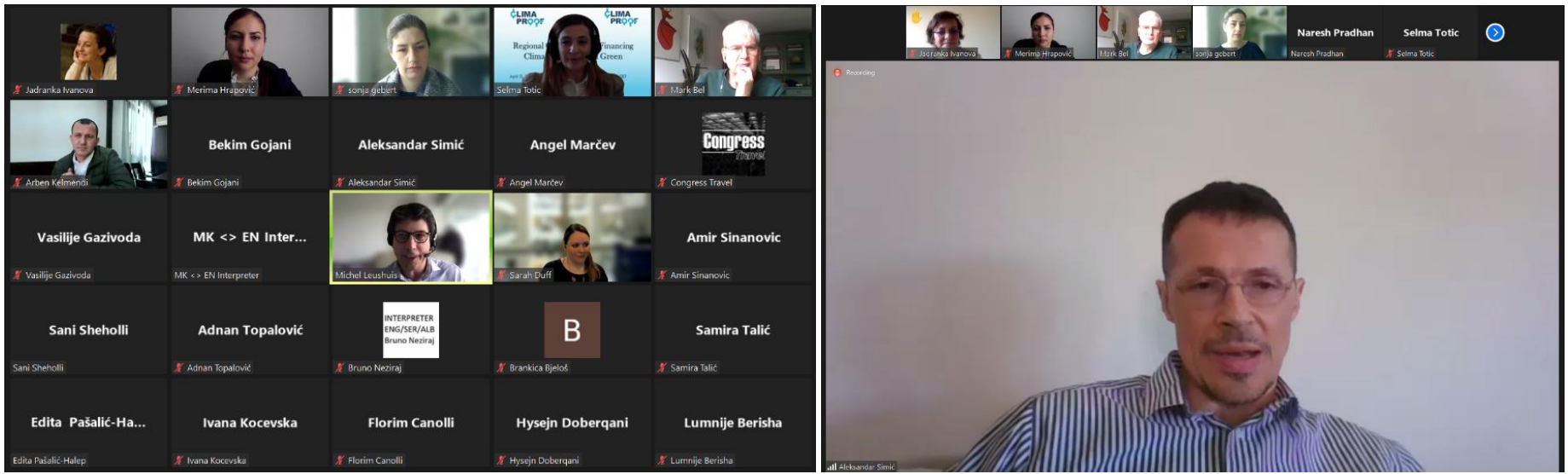
Integration of Climate Resilience Measures, Monitoring and Review

13 April, 2022
5



Sarah Duff










Supporting Albanian Negotiations in Environment, Chapter 27 (SANE27) - phase II  
Mbështetja e Negociatave Shqiptare në Mjedis, Kapitulli 27 (SANE27)-faza 2

*IPA funds experience in meeting EU Environment  
and Climate Change requirements  
(North Macedonia and Albania)*

**Jadranka Ivanova, Team leader SANE27 phase II**







