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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVO

BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Executive Summary

This Baseline Assessment (BA) report gives an overview of the current state of affairs on sustainable development in Kosovo, focusing on three areas: 1. General CSO presence, 2. Institutional presence, and 3. Potential areas for growth.

The report begins with an introduction and lay out of the background issues, following the research methodology, including desk research, interviews and data coding. Further, the report provides the key baseline findings deriving from a detailed analysis of each indicator tested during the research.

The findings show that CSOs and businesses are familiar with the work on sustainable development and have carried out projects on grassroots level that contribute to this field. However, CSOs focused on sustainable development matters face financial and capacity challenges, therefore their work is characterized by lack of sustainability, which directly impairs their possibilities to ensure a productive and smooth continuation of their work in this regard.

Further, the report contains a mapping of the identified relevant stakeholders and their potential for deeper involvement in the field of sustainable development. Specifically, the relevant stakeholders in this area are the Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (rising stakeholder) and various municipalities, together with relevant CSOs.

Lastly, the report provides recommendations regarding actions that could be undertaken for further advancement of sustainable development agenda in Kosovo, in the areas of policy processes and CSO's scope of work.

This report outlines the observation from a desk review and a range of stakeholder meetings during field research and interviews across Kosovo.

## Introduction and Background

Kosovo is going through an important stage of development; however environment protection is not prioritized. In addition to industry and transportation, the energy sector has the greatest impact on the environment. Kosovo relies heavily on electricity from coal, whereas Renewable Energy sources represent only 4% of the consumption. The air-quality drops especially during the winter season, as the use of fossil fuel products increases for energy production. Air-quality monitoring data show that the highest limit-value exceedances for PM10 and PM2.5 were recorded in the winter season, and the annual air quality trends in Prishtina represent a significant threat to public health.

On the other hand, Kosovo's waste is 32% recyclable and 40% biodegradable. Nevertheless, Kosovo only recycles 5% of it. Such factual situation increases the need for rising awareness as well as the need for the introduction of support schemes that would mobilize the public towards improvement of the waste management performance in the country.

Kosovo's aspirations for EU integration should focus on necessary transformations on policy and policy-making. Planning in the energy and the environmental sector needs serious improvements in Kosovo. National strategies and action plans should have better defined objectives, be better justified and should contain more coherent policies and interventions. Even though Kosovo is not a signatory of the Paris Agreement, given that it is not a member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), it nonetheless remains an imperative to take actions that limit emissions and address climate change properly, so as to protect the well-being of its citizens.

This report is prepared as part of the project "Empower – Engage – Build Ownership" which aims to advance the sustainable development agenda in Kosovo. The project explores specifically three thematic fields: environment, energy, and circular economy. The report is a result of in-depth research in these fields, and it will provide the foundational assessment of the current situation in this regard. More precisely, the report is conducted with the following overall objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the state of affairs on the grassroots NGO situation in Kosovo, to be used as a reference against which to compare the results achieved through the interventions (trainings, grants and other foreseen actions) and the objective of evaluating its impact and contribution to the improvement of the initial situation.
2. Offer inputs and data. The baseline assessment will identify the areas of intervention and the work plan needed to improve the situation. It will particularly come in handy in identifying implementation of the necessary project.

3. Identify the major stakeholders working in the field of sustainable development in Kosovo and the thematic areas of work and projects with the potential for support through the sub-granting scheme.
4. Provide recommendations on stakeholder's actions further advances sustainable development in Kosovo.

## Baseline Assessment Methodology

Due to limited data and available information on this topic the methodology for this report was designed in a manner of collecting primarily first-hand information with stakeholders through conducting in-depth interviews and questionnaires, in combination with desk research. The findings are complemented with an overview of the relevant legislative/policy framework and other available reports.

A questionnaire was designed particularly for the needs of this report with the aim of understanding more thoroughly the status quo on developments in the three thematic fields: environment, energy, and green economic growth/circular economy (see Annex No.3)

For the purpose of the study, a total of 130 civil society organizations and about 10 institutions working on the areas of our interest were identified. The identification of CSOs and other institutions was done through the data obtained from the list of the registered NGOs at the Ministry of Local Government Administration, through the civil society platform CiviKos, through the network of Balkan Green Foundation (BGF) and Institute for Development Policy (INDEP), as well as through other organizations in Kosovo. In this loop of organizations, it is important to note that the identification process included a mix of organizations from the local grassroots level, in combination with a few established national ones.

The identified organizations were invited to participate in the study. During this process, it was notable that the vast majority of organizations were not active (approximately 70 % of them). The ones that had remained active with at least one project were invited to fill out the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is designed as an amalgamation of “Empower-Engage-Ownership” objectives. The questions were designed to cover a broad array of topics with the intention to conduct a thorough assessment on sustainable development in Kosovo from organizations and businesses point of view.

There questions were split in 4 sections and tested for specific information: 1) the scope of work of the organization and the familiarity with sustainable development 2) the perspectives of the main problems in Kosovo (areas of circular economy, environment and energy) 3) Activities

(what should be done, what is being done, what could be done) in selected areas 4) What is needed to make such activities happen (issues and opportunities).

The questions were piloted before release for dissemination with a small number of organizations/businesses. After being contacted by phone, partly due to the nature of the questions that require extended answers and partly due to the request of the organizations to have it in written form, it was decided to have the questionnaire posted online and share it through an online platform. It was noted that the information is confidential and used only for study purposes. This process of contact was then repeated with the rest of the organizations/businesses. In total 30 in-depth questionnaires were completed. This includes NGOs, businesses and one government agency (the latter because of not being able to participate in the interview).

In addition, interviews were conducted with the public sector and government representatives. The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, and Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, being some of the major stakeholders of sustainable development from the public sector, have been contracted and invited to participate in the study. . As such, we have conducted four one on one in-depth interviews with respective Ministry representatives.<sup>1</sup> . In these interviews we managed to explore main issues in the area of environment, energy, and briefly touched upon topics related to soil use and innovation situation in Kosovo. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The ministries had also been asked to have civil servants complete the online questionnaire, which despite our continuous persistence, has been filled only by some of them. The nature of questions at the interviews was similar to that of the questionnaires in essence, however the interviews followed a natural flow with details adjusting to the scope of work of the interviewee. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and can be found at the annexes.

Lastly, there were five focus groups organized across Kosovo. The idea behind focus groups was to get information from local opinion leaders in the relevant areas of sustainable development, according the region/municipality. The focus groups were also a chance to establish a relation with these stakeholders and develop a network of like-minded active leaders in community through meeting and discussion. Five focus groups were organized in five biggest municipalities in Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Gjakova, Mitrovica, and Peja. They included participants from smaller cities in Kosovo, which rarely have the chance to engage in such consultative processes. This makes the information presented in this report more comprehensive as it derives from an inclusive consultation process. The represented municipalities were Gjilan, Drenas, Vushtrri, Istog, Obiliq, Fushe-Kosove, Novoberde, Opoja, and Dragash. In addition, three of the focus groups included representatives from municipalities who work directly with thematic priorities

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<sup>1</sup> The interviewed representatives of Ministries: Mr. Tahir Ahmeti (The chairperson of Division for Forestry Policies, Education, and Research - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development); Mr. Luan Morina (The Director of the Energy Department at the Ministry of Economic Development), Mr. Ismajl Hetemaj and Ms. Qendresa Bucaj (The Department of the Environmental Protection from the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning), and Mr. Fidan Hoti (Entrepreneurship Department at the Ministry of Innovation and Entrepreneurship)



of our project, such as the Director of Economic Development in the municipality Gjakova, the representative from the environment and urban planning from the municipality of Prizren, and representative from the municipality of Peja.

All responses have gone through a process of coding (details at section “Key Baseline Indicators”) which provides the last step of the research methodology and one of the foundations for the findings that this report presents.

## State of Affairs in Sustainable Development in Kosovo

### Non-governmental presence (including the business sector)

There is an abundance of NGOs in the local grassroots level that have undertaken or initiated projects in the area of environmental protection. These are mainly self-funded initiatives or weakly funded projects which often end up discontinued or that in some way do not have a solid base of funding. Furthermore, these are initiatives usually carried out by a few people who are experts but lack a “labour force” or aren’t able to mobilize a wider citizen participation. The scope of work is sometimes blurred between the local CSOs and municipality. The types of interventions are usually focused on waste management and awareness raising campaigns, with an exception of Peja, where the initiatives are focused on mountaineering, and the region of Prizren (including Opoja and Dragash), where the initiatives are focused on biodiversity protection. There is a visible lack of circular economy initiatives, with the exception of Prishtina, where there is one organization that has started some work on it, on introductory level to others through the GAC – Green Art Center network of organizations. There are some sporadic initiatives on energy, mainly led by the business sector, notably through the sales and instalments of systems for solar energy.

### Institutional presence (policy processes)

The vast portion of environmental issues is directly connected to the legal framework. In many cases it is precisely the legislature that defines/redefines the way that the environmental issues are targeted.

Based on the review of documents and the feedback received from stakeholders, there seems to be a discrepancy between the regulations on national and local level. Respectively, the national regulations do not seem to reflect the local needs or identify the unexplored potentials. The law on the environment foresees an integrated system in environmental protection, the reduced risk for environment protection, life and health of the people based on the concept of sustainable development (Article 2, Law No. 03/L-02), whereas on practice the sustainable work is discontinued and characterized almost exclusively by one-time projects and competencies overlap. For example, on the issue of deforestation, there seems to be discord between the central government agencies responsible for the management of the forests and the local government. The issue here is the local government not being able to be in control of their own resources,

therefore, being alienated from them, and as such, not having any means of protecting due to the lack of control. There are municipalities whose forestry territories fall under the legal status of a National Park for which there is a conflicting ownership and management of the forests, divided between them and the National Park Authority, who together with the Kosovo Forestry Agency (KFA) that is responsible for the logging process has control over the wood source, and the municipality often is left out entirely and without the chance to even fulfill its own demands for either firewood or timber.

Respondents of the questionnaire and the participants of the focus groups unanimously brought up that there is a need for the harmonization of the laws on central and local level; and a pressing need for ensuring their complete implementation. Some of the focus group participants argued that the local municipality should have extended competencies. The forests, the degradations of rivers (e.g. Drini i Bardhe) and the usurpation of the lands, especially buildings that not only occupy public spaces but also do not respect the law on the green zones, all are public issues that are dealt through the municipality at first (permissions, tariffs, etc.) and then at the ministerial level. Often, the competencies overlap, and this makes it difficult for the already problematic situation to reach a sustainable solution. Another example is the issue of hydropower projects: most hydropower plants are being built without any consultation, consideration or regard for the needs of local communities. In general, hydropower plants are designed and built in such way that maximizes profit and uses water quantity to the maximum extent possible, usually on long steel pipes that degrade the environment and ecosystem. This issue has been presented in Gjakova, Peja, Strpce and Prizren, as a problem that needs urgent consideration. Local communities and municipal officials voiced their opinion and expressed their regard that these projects were mainly profit-driven rather than having any impact on the local economy, or that they might ease in unemployment, or provide for any real development causes.

From the institutional perspective, based on the feedback received from the ministries, the issues are the same as those that the organizations have specified, such as waste management, deforestation, air pollution, and weak biodiversity protection. However, they have emphasized the issue of lack of cooperation with municipalities as an impediment to ensuring strong implementation of the appropriate policies that according to them would help to improve the situation. In other words, some municipalities are being less cooperative than others, or in the alternative, they only cooperate when in need of financial support. When asked about concrete action taken by them, the institutional response has been predominantly unified. According to them, it is not up to institutions but rather up to the people to ensure they take care and protect their environment.

However, they also stress that as far as the legislature framework and the institutional processes are concerned, they have strategies and objectives that are designed specifically for this area. These policies are updated quite frequently (in most cases after 4-5 years) and currently, based on the available information, the majority of these strategies extend to 2020.

The focus of work of the ministries is related to the (non) issue of permits, taxes and fees. The Ministry of Environment states that due to the transformation of the law from a law to an act, there has been a significant increase in the requests for permits for waste treatment, i.e. melting of metal, export/transport of waste and similar. The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Innovation states that from their side, they are working on facilitating the issuance of permits and lowering the taxes for start-ups. According to them, green entrepreneurship is not widely embraced, but the Ministry is planning to undertake measures to incorporate a 'green' aspect in the future legislative framework, including intermittently the policies and permits.

Institutions stress that they also face problems with lack of human capacities. Based on the interview with the representatives from the Ministry of the Environment, the small number of inspectors is considered a serious problem. There is only one inspector at the national level which makes it difficult to be able cover the whole territory of Kosovo effectively. Also, there is a small number of civil servants at the Ministry of Innovation and Entrepreneurship and small number of people who can be a 'watchdog' of the implementation such as park rangers. The growing demand for wood fuel to be used in wood-burning stoves is a challenge which can create an opportunity for public officials to engage in illegal activities such as bribing or even experience extortion. Two cases were reported: one involving a shooting between illegal lumberjacks and park rangers; and two, where park rangers were fired because they accepted bribes.

#### Potential areas for growth

The current state of affairs, despite the depiction of the problems, presents an opportunity for potential development in several areas. Based on the information gathered, the following areas could be improved:

#### Natural resources management with a focus on the community

Based on the research, an issue that kept coming up was the fact that competencies overlap between the local and national level of governance, with the national level often having the final say for local issues. As a result, many organizations thought of themselves as being "hand-tied" when it came to undertaking concrete steps for the protection of natural resources and the environment in their area. On the issue of hydropower projects, the municipality of Prizren, Peja and that of Strpce are having a harder time combating hydropower projects as the majority of planned projects fall within their municipalities. Issues with hydropower are also derived from central level planning, as mentioned in Strpce and Prizren, when the Ministry of Economic Development set targets for energy production from renewables which was far attached from the real potential on the ground. Even though there is a moratorium from the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning putting on hold all these hydropower projects until the situation becomes clear on which projects cannot continue due to the nonadherence to any standards, the municipalities most affected by them consider these pointless and ineffectual. They considered the central level authorities to be closely linked to the construction companies of these projects, but also the reality on the ground confirmed these projects are ongoing despite the official on-hold status.

The vast majority of the land in Kosovo is agricultural, which needs immediate activation, possibly through economic activities with a basis on sustainable use of local resources. This could be done through a decentralization of natural resource management. Citizens could go through training programs to get soft tools to contribute to the regional development potentials. In this way, the environment would be protected as resources would be used by the community itself, avoiding uncontrolled exploitation. In return, the economic development levels would also be boosted through the establishment of potential local enterprises focusing on agriculture and energy.

### Energy efficiency and renewables

The findings of the research indicate that almost all of the respondents perceive the lack of energy efficiency as a major problem in Kosovo. The lack of insulation of houses, limited access to central heating, and the poor economic condition of households, impose a huge burden on electricity demand. In parallel, the poorest households rely on coal burning during winter times as the least costly way to heat their living spaces. On the other hand, the use of lignite also for energy production and the high cost of electricity as well as increased air pollution indicate the immediate need for a viable strategy on renewables. Kosovo needs to gradually stop using lignite as the source of energy and to slowly adopt energy from non-fossil fuel sources. Kosovo's potential lies on solar and wind energy, which must become the new priorities. At the same time, the responsible institutions should provide a more investment friendly framework, which seems to represent yet another impediment for investments in this area. On top of this, serious measures must be undertaken to promote energy efficiency at all levels and ensuring sustainable tools to have EE measures widely embraced by all social groups.

### Green entrepreneurship and innovation

Green entrepreneurship must be prioritized as a mean of providing economic stimulation, but also contributing to instilling sustainable development patterns, given the impact it'd have on boosting awareness about the environment for all societal groups. There are some sporadic initiatives that help economic development mainly through household enterprises, such as beekeeping, organic cultivation of products, etc. The start-up and innovation scene for green entrepreneurship looks bleak. However, one can also conclude that the green entrepreneurship potential is widely unexploited, especially when taking into consideration the circular economy dimension. Therefore, undertaking concrete actions in this area is a matter of high priority.

## Protection of air, water and land

Air Quality	Is one the biggest environmental challenges in Kosovo. Besides pollutant emissions from lignite, air is affected also through the use of wood for heating by households, together with wood-cutting in the forests – as well as the large amounts of transport and insufficient green zones in the cities. The responsible institutions must work extensively with municipalities in creating more green zones and clean air corridors, especially on areas with heavy traffic. Organizations, such as ‘Ec Ma Ndryshe’ in Prizren are actively advocating for more green public spaces.
Water Quality	Is another area that is not properly regulated and that continues to pose detrimental risk for the health of the population, on top of the environmental degradation. Waste waters are almost not regulated by local institutions, while rivers and lakes are trashed and drained. There is a large potential for improvement in this area, through proper regulations and policies that would guarantee water protection from pollution and at the same time better management of waste waters that would prevent contamination. Public enterprises that deal directly with these issues, such as “Cabрати” in Gjakove that works with waste management, or others that work or related matters, need to have more tools and better management to ensure a successful implementation of such policies.
Land Quality	According to the outputs from the interviews, the land degradation is another pressing problem. There is an immediate need to rehabilitate the land – especially the agricultural land. There needs to be a better practice of following the urbanistic plans, especially on protecting the agricultural areas and not turning them into residential ones. Municipalities should work more on organizing and coordinating with each-other in terms of waste landfills. In many cases, smaller municipalities, such as the case of Istog, do not send their waste to Peja, the center of waste collection for the region, but instead informally have created their own landfill. Such cases of unregulated waste management not only affect the waste management processes and interfere with policies, but also have the potential to further degrade the land that is being used as a landfill. Instead, landfill locations should be identified and transport costs should be covered by budget of the local authorities.
Biodiversity Protection	Biodiversity protection, specifically the protection of rare species, such as the lynx, rare plants or authentic habitats in Kosovo, including the national park, is an important area that needs to be worked through: on the policy level and the grassroots level.

## Key Baseline Indicators

### Understanding of the notion of sustainable development

Sustainable development is an indicator used to measure the familiarity of the respondents with the fundamental notion of sustainable development itself. All of the respondents have included in their answers in one way or another the idea that sustainable development ensures ‘continuity’ or actions that extend beyond the present. Almost all respondents have answered that it involves a ‘rational use’ of resources without compromising them. However, just a few have mentioned the social dimension of sustainable development. Generally, the respondents have seen a link between sustainable development, environment and economy, while much less of the social dimension, i.e. the well-being of the population.

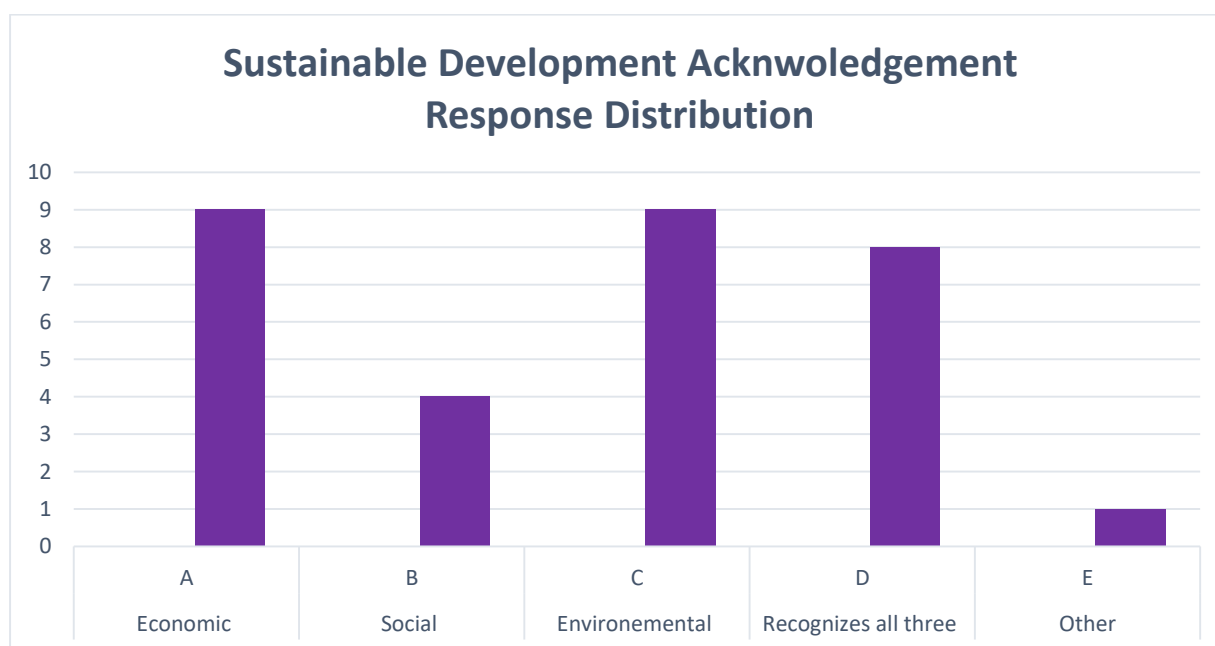


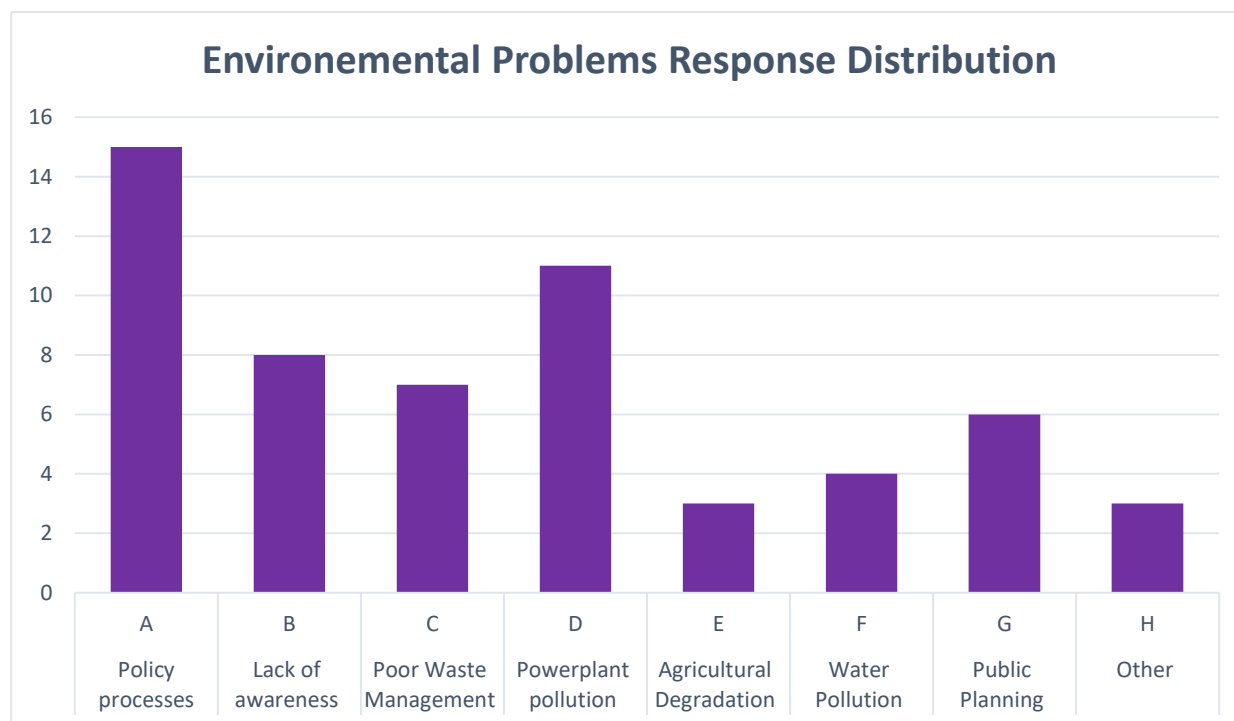
Figure 1 Results of Indicator 1

In addition, the respondents were asked about their thoughts on what has been achieved so far in Kosovo towards sustainable development policies. Most of the answers support the fact that there has been little achievement so far. Some respondents believe that the lack of specific policies on sustainable development is to be blamed for the resulting situation. Others argue that there is generally a favourable legal framework, but there has been a collective inaction in putting it into practice.

### Understanding of the notion of environmental protection

Environmental protection was an indicator used to measure the level of familiarity of the respondents with the environment and a mean to identify, as per their opinion, the main issues

pending in this specific area in Kosovo. The following were stated as main issues facing the environment in Kosovo: air pollution, water pollution, land degradation, public planning in terms of green zoning and transport, poor waste management in municipalities, lack of awareness of the citizens and policymakers and poor policy processes/management between the national and municipality level (Fig. 2).



*Figure 2 Results of Indicator 2*

As it is seen from the graph above, the respondents found policy related processes as the most pressing issue. In other words, they believe that there is a lack of implementation of the laws and regulations and the existing legal framework contributes to overlapping competencies between the national and municipal level, which ultimately results in no action from either side. Moreover, regional issues, such as the issue of protecting biodiversity of the national park of Sharr (Regional Park), a joint responsibility of Kosovo and Albania, fail continuously to be addressed properly by legislative acts. The second most pressing issue according to the respondents was air pollution. There were a few elements pinpointed in this area, mainly focused on the power plants and the release of the pollutants. While, another important issue that was brought up many times was the poor waste management in municipalities.

### Understanding of the notion of energy

Energy was an indicator used to measure the level of familiarity of the respondents with the concept of energy and the current issues in this specific area in Kosovo. Almost all respondents answered that a major problem characterizing the energy sector is the low level of deployment of renewable energy sources. Also, policy processes and management, respectively the lack of implementation and coordination in this regard, hampers developments in the sector. While, the elaborated problems have been of various natures (i.e. high cost of energy production) and they have been clustered as ‘Other’ in the graph below, a very interesting problem that was mentioned quite frequently is old technology and energy infrastructure (Figure 3).

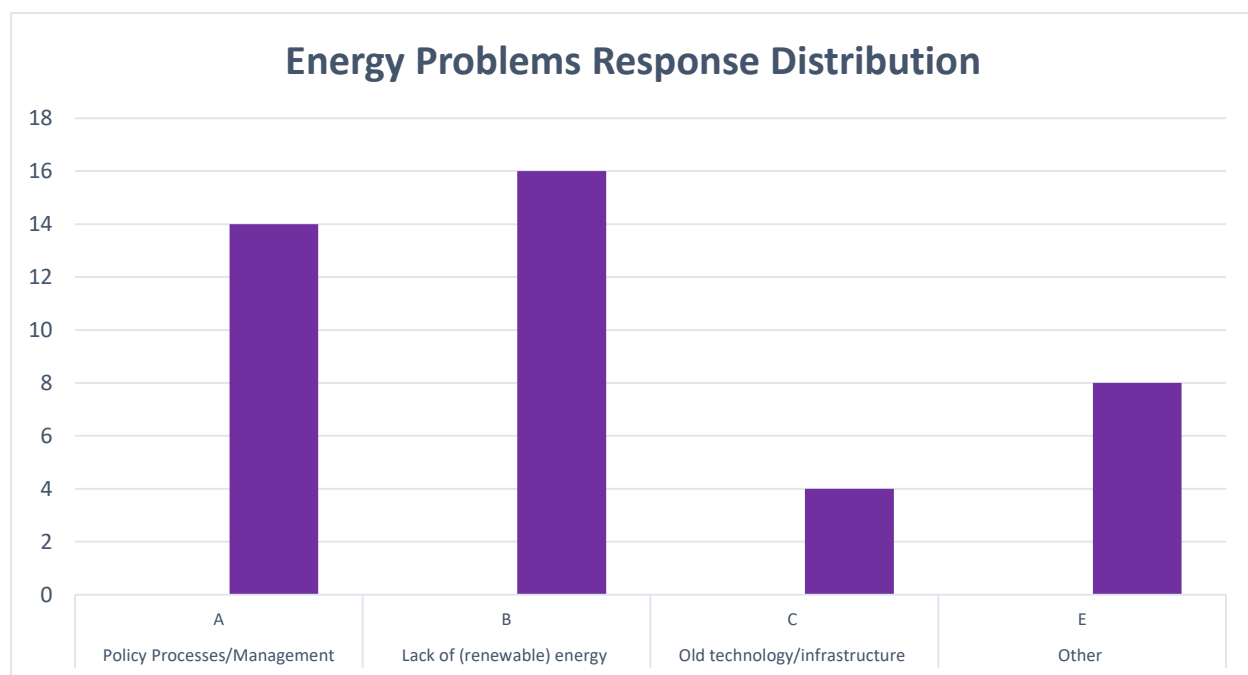


Figure 3 Results of Indicator 3

Generally, the respondents realize that the dependence on the lignite-based energy production is a problem and that investing on renewable resources is needed. The respondents also recognize the larger problems that follow, such as deterioration of the public health as a result of the current energy production methods.



### Understanding of the notion of circular economy/green growth

The circular economy/green growth was an indicator used to measure the familiarity of the respondents with the concept of circular economy and generally green growth. The respondents were significantly less familiarized with the term of circular economy. Those few who were, recognized it mainly on terms of reusing something for as long as it is possible, mainly answered so in juxtaposition with waste management. However, the number of those who recognized it was higher than that of those who do not (Figure 4).

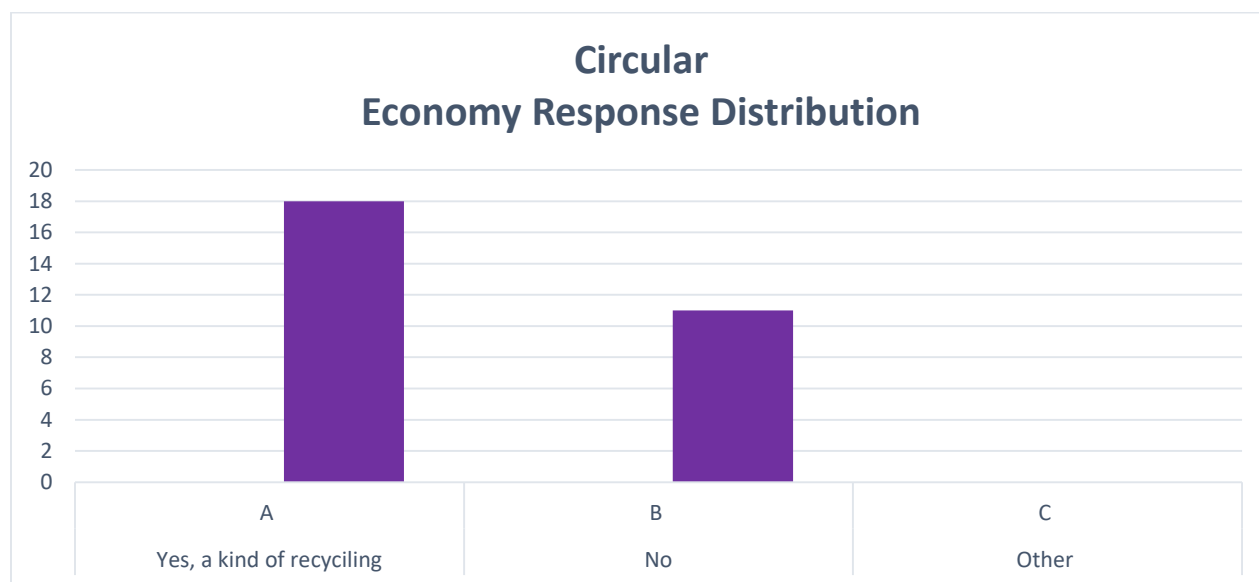


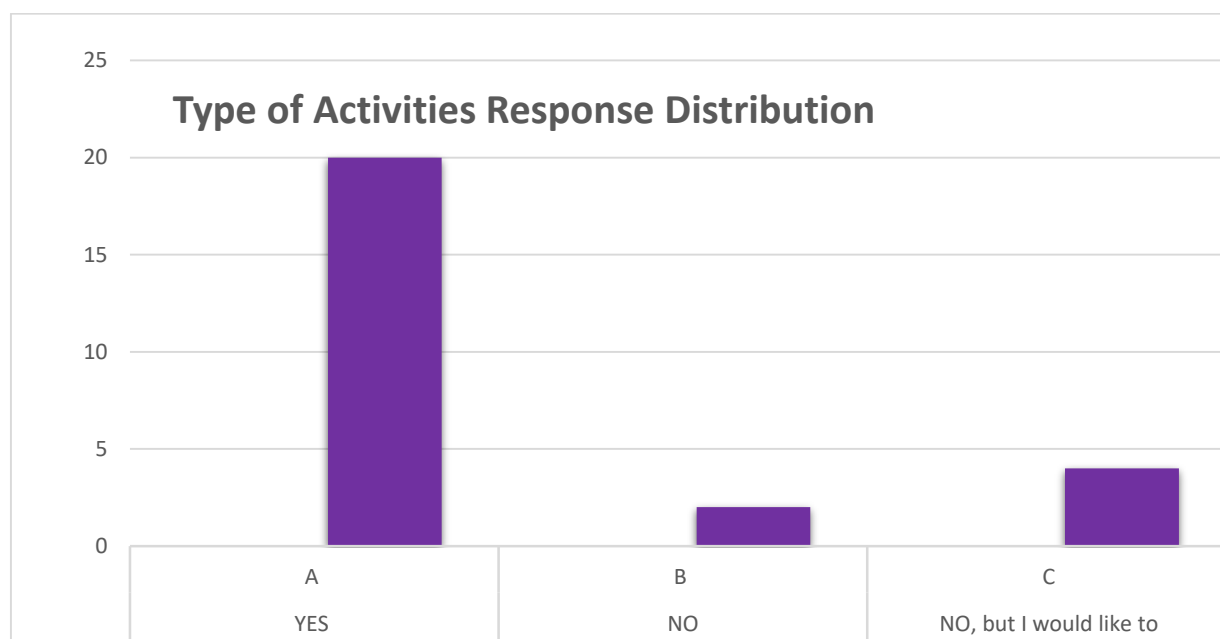
Figure 4 Results of Indicator 4

Generally, the respondents expressed interest to further explore circular economy and engage in organizing specific activities in this regard, conditional upon them being exposed to such opportunities.

### The type of activities that have been carried out within the organization/company

This indicator tested whether there have been activities or projects the organization or the company had carried up in the past until the time the respondent participated in the study that would contribute to one of the three areas (environment protection, green energy, and circular economy).

The vast majority of them had carried out activities in respective fields or implemented projects that contribute to these areas. However, a large number of them are discontinued temporarily. According to the respondents they would be willing to continue with their implementation in the future, in case they would have a chance to do so. A small number of respondents have declared that they are not implementing any activities currently.



*Figure 5 Results of Indicator 5*

What we came to understand was that, generally, the respondents carry out various activities. However, in cases when they do not, it is because of limitations in terms of time or finances. Although, even those who have answered with ‘no’, have expressed a willingness and openness to do so in the future.

### [The type of activities that are planned to be carried out](#)

This was an indicator to test what type of activities would the organizations be willing to carry out in the future, taking into account the problems and opportunities. The vast majority of organizations indicated community projects, i.e. projects that would have direct citizen involvement, as a profile of activities that could be carried out. These include, but are not limited to actions related to cleaning the environment, biodiversity protection actions, i.e. bird protection, increase of green spaces through planting trees and similar. A large portion of responses included further research on a particular area of interest for the organization in combination with awareness raising campaigns, such as policy papers, green clubs, education and trainings. Other activities that were mentioned were the creation of products that would promote circular economy, e-mobility, eco-tourism and creating stronger networks with similar organizations across the country. On the other hand, the responses from the institutional representatives were positive in terms of willingness to provide support and assistance at different stages of the project. Other responses related mainly to activities that would be undertaken as part of other initiatives.



*Figure 6 Results of Indicator 6*

Generally, all responses reflect a strong willingness to carry out activities and projects related to promoting sustainable development which would allow the organizations to further enhance their work, especially those organizations that are highly focused on a specific segment of sustainable development.

### Main Impediments Indicator

Despite the strong willingness, almost all of the organizations/businesses have declared to be facing major obstacles to carry out their work sustainably. This indicator was developed in order to identify some of the areas that present such impediments. From the received responses, almost all of the respondents say that the lack of financial resources presents a major obstacle for them. They emphasize the short-term nature of the funding and the need for more sustainable financial support. The lack of institutional support was another identified problem. This includes a gap on cooperation between ministries and municipalities and organizations; and the lack of implementation of the legislation, notably when it comes to permissions, fees and fines, for third parties that in return inhibit the work of businesses and organizations. On the other hand, many respondents emphasized the lack of awareness of citizens about their potential to contribute to the field of sustainable development and their low participation in the actions organized by them, as well as, the citizen lack of responsibility in relation towards the environment. Respondents specified the lack of expertise as another obstacle on improving the quality of their work. Many organizations have staff that is able to carry out general activities, however, they lack experts or highly specialized persons that could further advance the work and final impact. Other obstacles were the lack of support to promote products that are environmentally friendly, difficulties on incentivizing the use of energy efficiency products, etc.

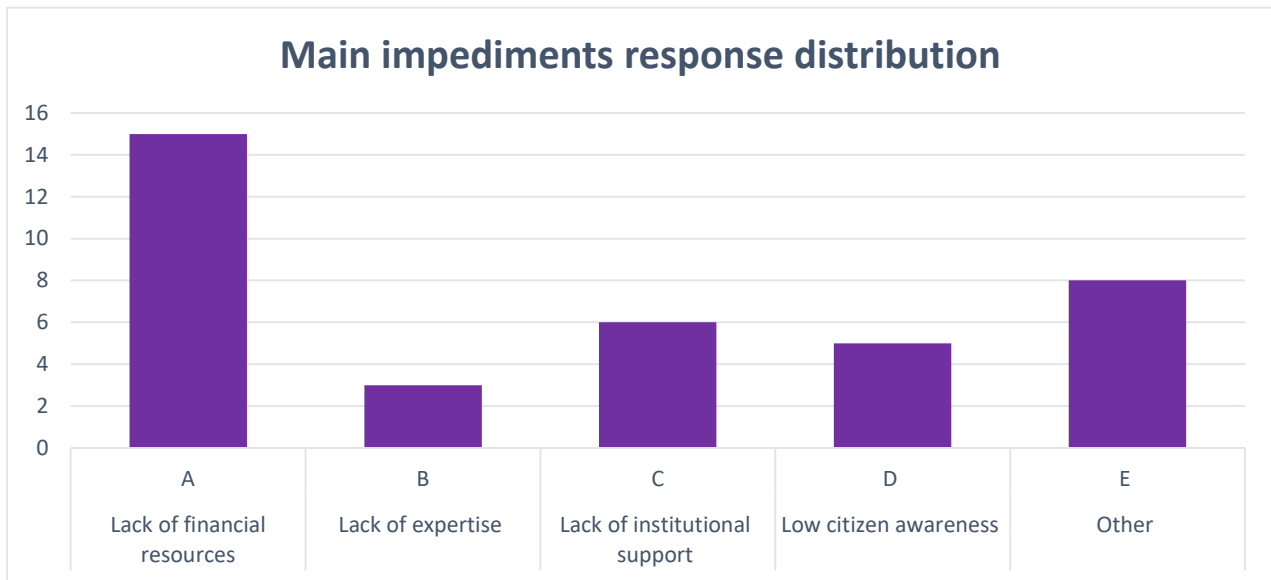
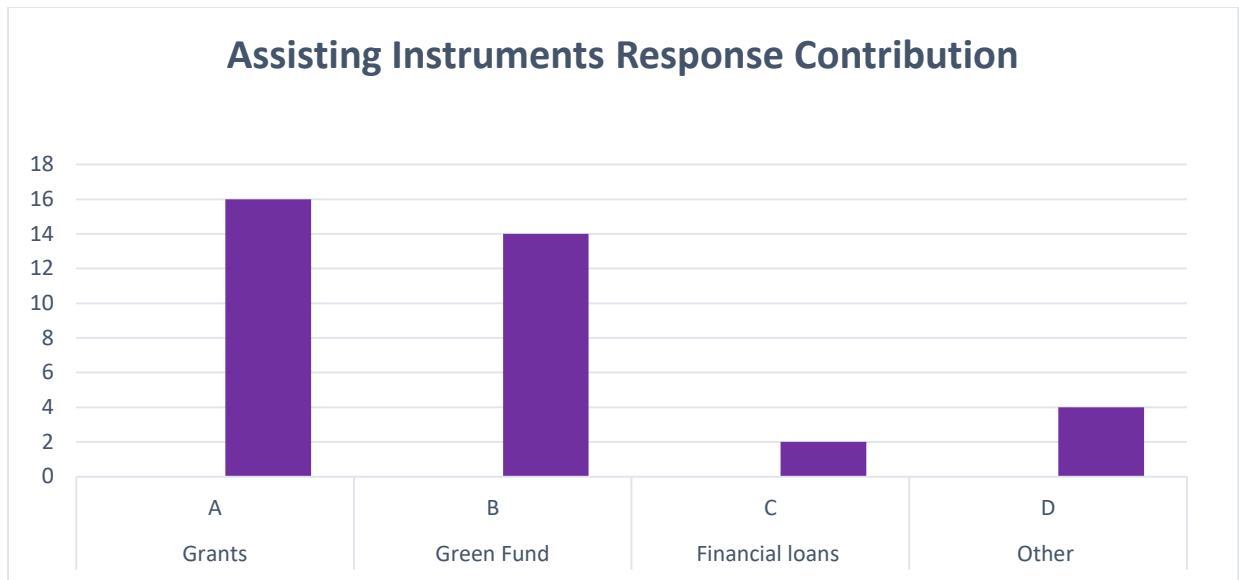


Figure 7 Results of Indicator 7

In general, all respondent organizations face some sort of difficulty in the implementation stage of their activities and are mainly struggling with the possibility to continue their projects.

#### Instruments of Assistance Indicator

This indicator was developed with the purpose to find out what are some of the instruments that could assist the organizations to further enhance their work. All of the respondents agree that grants are the best way to finance their activities, sometimes in combination with other financial resources. A Green Fund funded by the government is the second option that is considered essential for the proper functioning of the organizations in terms of ensuring sustainability of activities, but also for defining competencies between different levels of institutions. Financial loans are generally not seen as favourable due to the burden that these organizations would be faced with when having to pay them back.



*Figure 8 Results of Indicator 8*

## Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

The institutional authorities that can have an impact on promoting and strengthening sustainable development in Kosovo at the local level are municipalities, respectively the departments of a) planning and urbanization, b) the forestry and rural development, and the departments that focus on c) overall economic development. Apart from the municipalities, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP), the Ministry of Economic Development (MED), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD) are directly involved in the design and implementation of laws and policies in this field. It is recommendable for the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Innovation (MEI) to engage in this field through promoting green entrepreneurship – business and start-ups, however any developments on this are at an embryonic stage and same applies for policies and actions related to promoting sustainable development in general.

The figure below visually portrays the power each of the listed stakeholders has and the potential impact their intervention would have on the advancement of the sustainable development agenda in Kosovo.

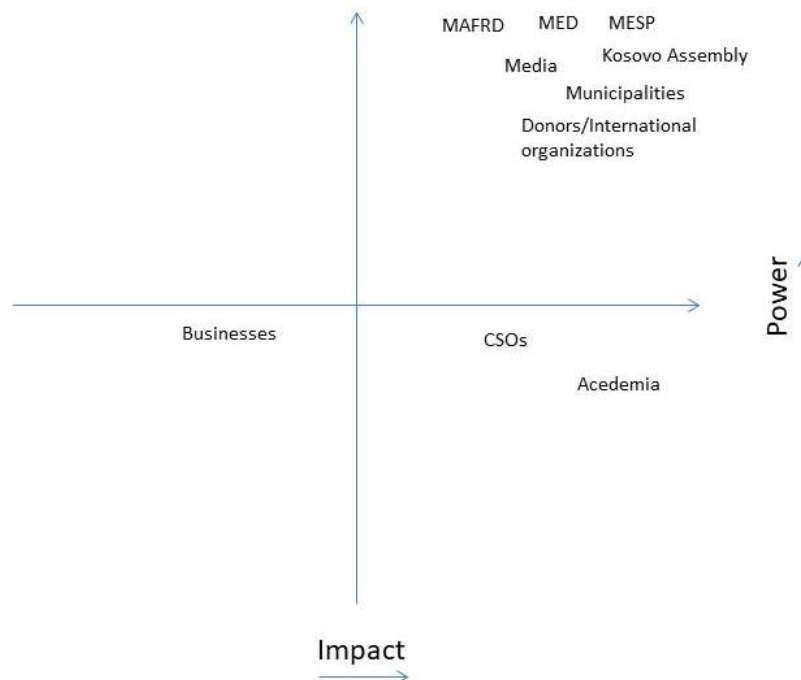


Figure 9 Mapping Out of the Stakeholders

The findings portrayed in graph above indicate that indeed it is the public institutions, respectively the ministries, the Assembly of Kosovo, and the Municipalities which have the highest power and in return could have the biggest impact. Similarly so stands the case of international organizations and donors which are present in the country. While, in the graph we recognize the significant role of media in advancing the Sustainable Development agenda in the country through the recognition of standing issues and the boost in terms of awareness rising. On the other hand, CSOs do indeed have the potential for a high impact; however, the limited resources and the lack of own constituencies indicate that they don't have much power. Same goes for Academia. They currently have low power; however, their active engagement could have a huge impact ultimately. While, the business indeed stand at the lower lane, their active engagement is essential toward the advancement of Sustainable Development Agenda in the country.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations derive directly from this research analysis and are broadly, focused on potential CSO actions, the necessary interventions in the legislative framework and the harmonizations of competencies.

### **CSOs must implement well defined and concrete actions that are in alignment with their scope of the work**

CSOs must follow a proactive approach in order to ensure smooth continuity and implementation of their activities based on a longer-term and well defined organizational development strategy. While the availability of funds is detrimental in this regard, CSOs are encouraged to engage in mobilizing their communities for voluntary work and also consider the creation of thematic coalitions to jointly address community based problems with other partners operating in the same area of interest.

### **Develop an organizational profile and recruit competent workforce**

Many CSOs work on short term actions, which are also mainly a duplication of other similar activities implemented by other organizations. To avoid such troubles, it is important for CSOs to define the profile of the organization as well as focus in recruiting competent work force, which will help with the advancement of the causes the stand for.

### **Define local and central level competencies**

The ministerial and municipal level review current policies and their delegated competencies in order to avoid the overlap of responsibilities for the promotion of sustainable development in the country. This in turn would enhance the level of institutional accountability.

### **Introduce sustainable financing mechanisms to support SD related actions**

The Government should ultimately prioritize the introduction of the Green/Eco Fund. This fund, contrary to non-sustainable short terms grants and highly burdensome financial loans, would boost investments in green actions from CSOs, businesses, or even households towards promoting sustainable development practices.

### **Introduce coordinated awareness raising campaigns**

Despite the great number of individual awareness raising campaigns on sustainable development, the level of understanding on related topics and issues from average citizens and other groups as well is still low. As such, in this regard as well, there is a need for systematic and well-coordinated inter-institutional/organizational cooperation to boost the level of understanding of SD concepts for the public and all interest groups.



## ANNEX 1

### Annex 1.1 Interview

*Tahir Ahmeti, Head of Department, Division for Forestry Policies, Education and Research, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development.*

**Q: For a start, could you give us a short of presentation and a short description of the work and activities that you develop as part of the division that you are leading?**

**A:** I am Tahir Ahmeti. Director of Division of Forestry, Agriculture, and Rural Development. Our division is responsible for the research of different sectorial documents for forests and forestry lands, the re-evaluation of the judicial subjects that work with different areas at forests and forest lands, as well as other related issues.

As for the issue of sustainable management, I will mainly talk about the forestry field that relates to the work of managing natural resources, environmental issues and various issues, without ignoring the issue of economy, energy and all the issues which relate to the field. Forest lands include about 50% of the area, specifically about 45% of Kosovo's land.

**Q: Since you already you mentioned sustainability - what does the term “Sustainable Development” mean for you and your department?**

**A:** The term or notion of sustainable development is a term that is being used most recently; generally means rational consumption or use of goods for present generations, but at the same time without harm or discomfort use for future generations. In the concrete case, forests, forest lands, environmental issues, or in general natural resources, as we say here renewable resources for different uses, sustainable forest management, would mean the rational utilization of wood; wood resources such as mushrooms, mountain fruits, medicinal plants, aromatic plants, wildlife, forests, so all of that that grows grows and multiplies in these forests. So, sustainable forest management would be the optimal use of these resources for our generation, being aware that all of this needs to be carried to the generations that will come. What does this mean in practice? In practice, this means that the use should be of a way that would enable these resources to grow, develop, progress, grow and multiply, to be in a better state for future generations. It means we have borrowed them from our ancestors, so when we use them, we should leave them - at minimum – in the same condition they were when we used them, and possibly in a better one.

**Q: You have stated how important it is for future generations. How much do you think Kosovo has achieved in terms of policies that guarantee Sustainable Development for these generations? If you can, please mention some of the problems you might be or are facing in this area.**

**A:** In these past years, Kosovo has achieved to create numerous policies, numerous strategies, numerous different documents, development of this sector and other sectors, but there have been

many challenges to implement these policies. So, their implementation has been a challenge. Some of them [challenges] have been objective, such as the fact that we have come out of a war or an armed conflict with extreme poverty, high unemployment, with a disadvantaged structure of the energy sector. Wood usage is enormous compared to other countries and we are very dependent on its use, something which has caused its [the woods/forestry] damage to a great extent; and we can not talk much about the implementation of these policies, which are, I can not say impossible, but very difficult to be implemented. So, what I am saying is that we have not managed to reach it... the reasons are that... now we can get into all the analysis, maybe objective, maybe a little less objective, there is a big gap between the two. We can say that we have good policies, many international helpers (foreign experiences have helped us) but when we needed those policies to be implemented on the ground, it becomes difficult.

As to what have been the challenges, there have been many challenges. Some I mentioned, meaning we have come out of a conflict without a good functioning of a legal state and natural resources have been on the front line, unprotected from illegal exploitation. Wood is a fortune accumulated throughout the years, meaning that unlike other resources its use happens after it has been grown for 5,6 years – people take it and damage it enormously. We have been fortunate in all this unfortunaity that our forests are very natural, so the natural conditions, pedological, orographic and the climate generally allow them to be naturally renewed. That is, all of these conditions allow our forests to be naturally renewed - however used it does not become a desert, it is not a bare area. That is, if it is not exploited for mineral exploitation, or if the wood has not been deforested. So, the forest has its role of oxygen provider and all of the positive properties that a forest has.

**Q: Considering that the forests constitute a large area of Kosovo, and you mentioned that there are cases of illegal use. So, there are problems, which are perhaps smaller and do not constitute deforestation, but still represent a barrier to improving the state of the environment.**

**A:** What's happening in Kosovo is a big problem, I am not saying that it is a small problem, it's a major problem. We have conducted many analysis, there are many studies that have been done. When it comes to improving this situation, it is necessary to eliminate these causes. The first task that should be done every day is to review the whole sector as to what measures can have a positive influence. There, there two categories can be grouped: direct measures and indirect measures, involving all key stakeholders in this matter. As an indirect measure, I would mention better organization of the forest protection from the institutions and owners for the fact that 60% of Kosovo's forest area is public owned and 40% is private ownership. That means that degradation and logging occur in both sectors, almost on an equal basis. Other issues of direct measures would be better functioning of the rule of law, the involvement, since illegal cutting is a misdemeanor, the police and the courts should be more involved. Their work greatly affects the stop of this negative effect. There are also other measures - the increase of the efficiency of various services that occur on forest land; other measures that are related to policies but which

are probably not directly related to the issue of protection of the forests. They may have to do with the impacts of increasing the supply of alternative resources for heating and energy use. For example: reducing the use of wood for burning, as Kosovo has a disparity between how much wood is produced in Kosovo and how much is spent; and on average Kosovo lacks one million m<sup>3</sup> of firewood in current accounts (which is difficult to be replaced in other forms); or more concretely said Kosovo spends some 2 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood, while our forests had the most productive output produced at 1 million m<sup>3</sup>. So, if we talk about spending about 1 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood, that would be a sustainable management of the forests. We spend 2 million m<sup>3</sup>, while we produce a steady 1 million m<sup>3</sup>. The other 1 million m<sup>3</sup> taken from our forests can not be considered as sustainable use of the forests.

Other issues, other than the use of alternative energy-related resources or energy balance in our country, would be more issues related to the energy efficiency, by finding the opportunities for that energy to be deployed more rationally, such as incorporating household isolation - instead of spending 12 meters of wood, why not spend 6 to 7 meters - is a big saving. All of these indirectly affect resource conservation.

**Q: You said that there can direct and indirect means; and already mentioned some steps that could be taken to improve the situation. I also have a short list with some types of tools or instruments that could help in this regard. According to you, what do you think would be most needed?**

**1. Grants**

**2. Loans from financial institutions**

**3. Establishment of a "green fund" by the Government of Kosovo, or**

**4. Something else.**

A: Yes ... these are about improving the situation. So far we talked about developing an activity or an issue, to protect the resources. Even the issue of grants, the creation of a green fund, or even other measures, would have an effect on this situation to improve it over a certain time. Forest improvements are long-term. So, positive impacts or positive outcomes in forests are seen in a long-term form. Degradations can be seen quickly. They have an impact, of course.

We have a multitude of programs and policies. In 2010, we have developed a strategy for development up to 2020, and there we have foreseen a number of measures on how to improve this situation. The strategy foresees, that among other things, the rational or sustainable use of the forests should about 50% of the annual increase of wood mass. The annual increase of wood stands somewhere at one million and half, whereas 60% of it is about 900 m<sup>3</sup> as I said earlier. We have said that re-forestation or the rise of new forests should primarily be based on species that are autochthonous, that are in coherence with environmental issues, environmental

conservation, and conservation of bio-diversity. We expect to not have unsustainable forms of usage to be applied anymore; there are a number of measures.

Another point, that I wanted to bring up: in the past year we have mapped a 10 year program of re-forestation of bare spaces in Kosovo, where we expect for the next 10 years to forest some 26,000 hectares of different types, mainly dominated by local/ autochthonous types (if we manage to secure the financial means from government and donors). It is a very ambitious program, which will be a challenge to implement. But we have mapped it with the best intent, meaning that even if we fail to achieve the full implementation in 10 years, at least to start and continue until it is implemented. We have a program that we started in the past year, is a forest-health program, also in the framework of sustainable management, which envisages the monitoring, fighting and tracking of about 30 pests and perennial diseases that are in the forests of Kosovo. In other words, this is a regular report on the state of our forests for the international institutions that work in the area of disease treatment (as these are not only a problem of Kosovo, but they are a regional and global problem.) It is found in most of the European countries, but even there we are aware of the trends with that what is happening in the surrounding countries.

**Q: So, as your agenda's priority is the ten-year plan and...**

Yes, the implementation of this strategy, the implementation of the national program for reforestation of bare surfaces, the implementation of the forest health program. Perennial protection has always been the biggest challenge - we spend the most of our energy on that - even though our focus is only to create policies, not that we work directly with the issue. That is, the forest department deals only with the creation of policies, strategy, and legislation. It is the municipality and the Forest Protection Agency that deal with the direct management of the forests.

**Q: What do you think civil society, or anyone else besides the government, could do to contribute in the area of environmental protection?**

Civil society, citizens, various organizations are very much involved and can do a lot. The first thing they could do is to raise awareness to the public on various issues of degradation, pollution, illegal logging, all of that that happens for them and the citizens. Kosovo, like many other countries, needs this outreach in order for the citizens to become more aware. Sometime, it is also about the institutions - not in the secular sense of the word, but the issue of awareness for the rule of law, to push people to complete their own work properly, to act faster, more concretely and efficiently.

Many of the issues that have not managed to pass through the law enforcers, have been made possible by the pressure of public opinion.

The issue of the environment as much as the implementation of the legislation is also a mean of raising awareness, a sensibilization issue, an education issue, so in addition to legislative measures it is also about raising awareness.

I want to take an example - often when the public is 'frozen', law enforcers have been pushing to go through with an issue, more than the law has pushed the public. I see their role [of the public] there, always [pushing for issues.] So, of course, the public opinion and the civil society are like monitoring agents, conductors, and supporters of all these because they are part of the environment - they live there - live with this air, with this energy, with everything that happens around us - they are an inseparable part of nature.

## [Annex 1.2 Interview](#)

*Luan Morina, Head of Department, Energy Department, Ministry of Economic Development.*

**Q: Could please explain what does the concept of Sustainable Development mean for you and your department?**

A: Sustainable Development is a new model of development that is determined by public interests by taking into account the general environmental aspects of a globalized world. So, it is development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The goal of sustainable development is to create sustainable patterns in the three aspects of human activity: economic, social and ecological.

**Q: How much do you think Kosovo has achieved in terms of compiling policies that guarantee Sustainable Development?**

A: Kosovo has generally made progress towards creating policies that ensure sustainable development. It should be emphasized here the drafting and adoption of the Energy Strategy 2017-2026 as the main ten-year policy document of sustainable development in the energy sector, taking also into account the minimal environmental impact, which goes in support of sustainable economic development and social well-being in Kosovo within a free and competitive energy market.

**Q: The energy sector is one of the most debated sectors and pressing in sustainable development and Kosovo. What do you think are problems in the energy sector that Kosovo faces?**

A: Kosovo's problems in the energy sector are: Lack of adequate (new) generating capacities, which would be built to match the increasing demand for electricity - because if we are dependant on older generation capacities then this contributes to the environmental pollution at a high level. Then, the high level of electricity commercial losses; Low heat concentration heating spaces with only 3-5%; Lack of natural gas infrastructure and high use of electricity for heating, insufficient use of alternative energy sources potential.

**Q: What do you think are the problems in Kosovo in the environmental sector?**

A: The main problems in environmental protection in Kosovo are: pollution from the transport sector, environmental pollution from obsolete capacities of electricity generation, poor waste management, river contamination, and others.

**Q: Are you familiar with the concept of “Circular Economy”? If so, what do you understand with this concept?**

A: Yes... in a circular economy, the value of products and materials is kept as long as possible and it is finally recycled as is the case with waste; and the use of resources is minimized, and when a product reaches the end of its life, it is reused to create further values. This can bring great economic benefits, contributing to innovation, growth and job creation.

**Q: Taking into account the complete picture of sustainable development areas, what do you think Kosovo can do differently on these points:**

**a) improving the situation in the green energy sector, b) improvement of the state of the environment, and c) to promote the circular economy.**

Improvement in the energy sector can be achieved through the full implementation of national policies and plans for renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, so raising awareness for a more rational use of energy. Improvement on the state of the environment can be achieved through the construction of new generation capacities, with the latest technology (so, that is environmentally friendly), stopping or limiting the circulation of old vehicles, increasing the quality of urban transport services, better management of waste disposal, full implementation of environmental legislation, etc.; whereas circular economy can be promoted through sustainable development policies of the energy sector, national plans for alternative energy sources and energy efficiency, initiation of implementation of projects that have to do with the creation for energy efficiency measures, awareness raising campaigns on energy saving and use of other energy options.

**Q: Ok. Do you/your department carry out activities or policies, in any of these three areas (green economy, environmental protection, circular economy)? If so, please mention some examples.**

A: We develop policies for sustainable development of the energy sector taking into account all the potential of local energy sources for use, as well as ensure the continuation of initiation and support of projects for the implementation of energy efficiency measures in the public and private sectors, use of the potential of renewable energy sources, investments in gas infrastructure, new capacities of concentrated heat, etc.

**Q: What are the obstacles that you encounter to make these happen?**

A: Well, the lack of sufficient financial resources to carry out projects and the lack of studies (research).

**Q: What tools do you think you can help in this regard?**

- a). Grants**
- b). Financial Loans**
- c). A green fund established by the Government of Kosovo**
- d). Other**

A: The tools that would help in this regard are soft grants and credits, which could be used for the purpose of establishing some funds.

### [Annex 1.3 Interview](#)

***Mr. Ismajl Hetemaj and Ms. Qëndresa Buçaj, Department of the Environmental Protection from the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP)***

**Q1: How does Kosovo stand with regards to sustainable development?**

**IH:** As far as the planning documents, policies, and even the forestry sector goes, there is an existing strategy; we have enough documents that are in line with global policies, thus in line with EU standards and beyond. The implementation is problematic: both in legislation and in the policy level, always. The objectives are often a list of wishes when they are set, but when we come to actually implementing them we cannot implement almost any of them. In fact, the lack of financial projects dedicated to nature, the environment, is always a current issue. Also in the forestry strategy 2010-2020 there are some very clear objectives - very S-M-A-R-T, but when it comes at their implementation, we have 100 problems. The goal of the policies is to be harmonized in a way that would have a result - resources to be used sustainably, as mentioned in the first question.

The biodiversity strategy and action plan have four objectives. The first objective is to create a legal and institutional infrastructure in line with EU standards. The second objective is for the ministry to initiate and implement projects that create better conditions for species and habitats - this about stopping the loss of diversity. The third objective is that the policies for the protection of diversity are also part of other sectors' policies - other sectors are agriculture, forestry, energy ... energy claims to build hydropower plants which in some way may destroy biodiversity. Perhaps you are aware of it, it's been quite present - the Valbona valley for example has stopped their construction because of biodiversity and environment degradation. Also, our Ministry has taken steps and it will not approve the construction of hydropower plants that might harm the biodiversity, namely in the Bjeshket e Nemuna. Especially within protected areas, the new minister who has come has decided, and it is a political stance that they should be banned because of imposed destructions and because of the cost-benefit - they produce very little energy compared to the damage that they cause.

Other sectors should harmonize their policies with environmental policies - the *acquis communautaire* is that 2/3 are environment and 1/3 are other parts. Slowly, the other sectors are coming to realize that the environment is an urgent matter and should be respected. This will take time, of course, but we are going in the right direction.

**Q2: You stated that this strategy has been developed just recently...**

**IH:** It has been approved, but every five years there happens a revision and a new plan is drafted for the upcoming years. This has been for the years 2011 – 2020; the first plan was for 2011-2016, we have reviewed it and have compiled the plan for the next years, so up to 2020. This is an official document that characterizes the field. We are also preparing the strategy for climate change, as climate change is linked to this sector - but it has not yet passed as a document and we are making some steps in that direction.

**Q3: Is there any new component that has been added during the review and has been included in the strategy of 2020?**

**IH:** The objectives have remained the same. There is a part that deals with education, communication and the community. These were the basic objectives even in the original document, but they have been more or less reformulated. So, there are strategic objectives 1 and 2, then there are measures. Generally speaking, these are all we think that should be done in the biodiversity protection sector. These are mainly the points.

**Q4: Okay. Let us move to the environmental part: What are the main problems that Kosovo faces in the field of environment?**

**QB:** I work in the Division for Nature Protection, but as we are in the Environmental Department, the biggest problem, considered by me, is the waste management, and air pollution that has been current and it can be as a sector within the environment; also, water resources are not well managed, especially by public enterprises. For example, waste water treatment, there are no sewage treatment facilities, illegal exploitation of resources, use of gravel that has a negative impact on the environment, as well as illegal logging of forests, illegal hunting related to the part of the nature protection within our division.

**Q5: Could you tell me more about the work of your division, specifically for the policy activities/policy making that you have developed so far to address these issues?**

**IH:** We are here to make the law – thus are part of the chain which has as a main task the preparation of the institutional/legislative base, and the policies for nature protection, but the department is in general for other sectors - that nature is only a part, special sector, but here are the Division of Industrial Pollution, Waste Management, the Division for Education and Environmental Awareness, lately there was established the Division of Waters that is within this department.

**Q6: You mentioned that these are issues related to other sectors - we are also conducting research on the issue of energy and the circular economy, which are also part of sustainable development and help on the 'green' economic growth.**



**IH:** Yes, circular economy.

**Q7: Exactly. Based on these functions you have, what do you think you could do as a ministry to go towards the green growth?**

**IH:** Circular economy has to do with the development of resources - recycling, remanufacturing, waste collection, so from a resource making it reusable for another generation. So, it is as a policy... because they are also reviewing the waste management strategy, similarly to this year, but this concept is current in environmental policies, it is being developed - it is not that there seen a very big result - but waste has become a commodity - meaning today you cannot find iron waste thrown into rivers because they have been met with interest - people collect them plus the cans to make an economic gain.

**QB:** We constantly have requests for permits...

**IH:** ... This cleans the environment, because right after the war, I recall, someone in Klina has dismantled pieces of cars, in order to recycle, while nowadays you cannot find anybody that comes in the yard and picks them - the same is happening also with plastic, which means that this is a process that has gotten in the heads of the inhabitants of Kosovo and has certainly a very good impact on environmental protection. It does not mean that it is the only one, but it has an aspect of awareness campaigns; it is also a competition, and has economic benefits, that is, this economy has just begun to develop, so the circular economy. In our ministry this topic has been discussed for 5-6 years now.

**Q8: You mentioned that there are requests for permits. Could you tell me more about the situation with permits? How is a procedure for obtaining permits?**

**QB:** Yes. Quite often, I am part of the Permits Review Committee, in this case, of that that Ismaili also mentioned for the export of waste, or export of plastics, paper or metal waste. In the last two years we have received a lot more requests for permits, so these requests have increased because the legislation, in this case from the law and waste legislation from waste law has derived as an act or administrative instruction that regulates this issue. That is to say, it is a very simple procedure that requires some documents as a company, as a legal entity, to make this export of the development of this activity.

**IH:** And everything is done with the approval – i.e. it is not allowed, even outside of Kosovo they do not accept if there is no approval from our ministry – e.g. whether the origin is known or not, how much ton, in what state it sends, even on the transit.

**Q9: How many permits are issued within a year? Do you have any figures?**

**QB:** I have no evidence regarding this...

**IH:** I am compiling the report, however...

**QB:** It's normal to know the figures but I do not have a certain number. It's a new thing which has started for the last two years.

**IH:** Yes... it is a new process that has been accepted by the ministry. Businesses apply it and it is also some kind of contribution that has entered the system.

**Q10:** Okay. Let us move a little on the challenges or even obstacles that you encounter in your usual job. You previously mentioned that a big part of legislation stagnates in the implementation.

**IH:** Yes, even the report compiled by the European Commission states that we are somehow good with the legislation because we have approximated it almost 100% in line with the directives, but when they send us 'implementation questionnaires', just as you are asking us, we have nothing to write down. That because we have one inspection, or two to three, or one up to three fines, and they get surprised in reports that the implementation is the *Achilles heel*. We are not achieving what we have promoted. We have stated that 11.5% of the territory of Kosovo is protected nature area. So, only protected areas are 11.5%, meaning 1/9 of the territory. But when it comes to the effective implementation of that protection, it almost does not differ from what was outside the protected area. There is very little difference. All activities take place similarly, just like inside the park also outside of it.

**QB:** This is due to the lack of human capacities. In this case, we only have one nature inspector at the central level, and he fails to cover the entire surface; even the existing administrations that we have are certainly lacking staff, lacking knowledge or professionalism. More or less we do not put all the blame at them, because poverty also creates pressure. Even the needs of the households that have the wood as the only way of heating.

**IH:** So, there are many things. The fault does not rest only with those of management, but also with the different requests. Let's say we have an improvement, but there is an identified problem, which for sustainable management, is one of the risks. Degradations are present and much.

**Q11:** The very last point that in a way summarizes all that we have discussed until now - something that could have helped at most to improve the situation. We have also organized meetings with non-governmental organizations working in the field of environment and sustainable development, and usually they seek financial support. But for you, from your perspective as a ministry, what sorts of means do you think could have helped most: financial loans? Grants? A Green Fund, established by the government? Something else? What do you think?

**QB:** We have Eco Fund, is Ismajli, for many years...

**IH:** Yes. Usually, the most advanced countries in the region, Slovenia, Croatia, have an Eco Fund or Environmental Fund. From 2002 to 2003, since the establishment of this government, we have been attempting to create a budget line only for the environment, but we have failed because the Ministry of Finance, respectively the Law on Public Finances, does not foresee such funds. Back then it was Kosovo's consolidated budget, but now it is Kosovo's budget, which does not allow other funds to be created within this budget. The Ministry of Finance says you can make projects, make programs, and we give you the means. But not a special fund where the taxes would get collected. For example: taxes on vehicle registration that reaches the amount of 3

million euros - 300,000 vehicles are registered annually, 3 million euros could have been transferred into that fund, but instead they go to Kosovo's budget. That being said, there is no specific line that those means that are dedicated to the environment to be used for the environment.

**QB:** ... or in environmental projects.

**IH:** This is something that can be done for the future, for which even civil society sector could lobby about, who can support the ministry to create a fund as an instrument through which it could apply the environmental policies. Law enforcement and proper function of the system in terms of fines or damages caused to the environment, or the principle *the polluter pays*, and others, are some that we are not achieving to make them happen, because - for example - the guardian of the forest does a complaint when going to court, but the polluter is under protection - "is poor," "needs heating" etc., so it creates more opportunities to get out of the situation. They punish him with 150 euros, while the value of the damage is 500 euros. It is convenient for him to pay 150 euros rather than paying the price of the damage. So there is a problem here, which may not be expressed as it was right after the war, but we also see it as a problem that is not solved properly, i.e. fines for illegal actions. They are no longer able to stop those devastating actions of humans towards resources, like wood, water, living, plant life, animals, and others.

**QB:** I think that another expectation for the future is the support coming from donors for implementation. Although we have...

**IH:** We have grants, because the environment knows no border, and a pollution in us is also reflected in Macedonia. Pollution of the river Lepenci will have effects in Vardar. In international or regional terms, different organizations allocate funds but there is a need for more.

**QB:** For increasing the number of grants.

**IH:** In Gjakova, a few days ago, the construction of sewage plants was done, also in Peja, and all of which are being made with the help of donors. Kosovo gives 10%, but the major part, about 79 million euros have been supported by German organizations.

**Q12: One more question - this time really the last one - how does the co-operation with the municipalities stand?**

**IH:** Yes, we have memorandums for cooperation. It depends. Some are more cooperative, they benefit more, some do not benefit, are not cooperative. Overall, it is not bad.

#### [Annex 1.4 Interview](#)

***Mr. Fidan Hoti, Entrepreneurship Department, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Innovation***

**Q: Are you familiar with the concept of Sustainable Development? What does it mean for the Ministry of Innovation?**

Hoti: Yes, we are aware of the long-term development, sustainability, and all of these. At the moment, all of them are policies, but to be honest, in practice we have not yet developed something. I am going to mention the Innovation Center so that it doesn't get centralized to only economic development work - we have attempted to distribute it in the territory of Kosovo, in centers such as Prizren, Ferizaj and all of them. I have also supported it - it has been a good policy after all - I believe it will take time...sustainability takes time...but first we have to start something, then to continue with the other stages; so, I believe this ministry will have the opportunity to give something and after a few years to become one of the main stakeholders. We are trying to work with other departments from other ministries - there's been departments at the Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Economic Development that have worked directly with green and environment, but it takes time. You know how the administrative work goes, not to say a sort of resistance to conformity, which I believe after a while be able to give its impact a little more.

**Q: As a relatively young ministry, as you say, it takes time to be fully established.**

Hoti: Especially to be fully founded, and then all of the others...

**Q: (contd) ... exactly. You mentioned the centers in other regions: how is it going with the cooperation with municipalities?**

Hoti: Yes, concretely in Ferizaj and Prizren, where we have opened centers called Think Future. Both are like incubators of innovation, I can say labs. The Ferizaj one has been in cooperation with the Faculty of Applied Sciences - the involvement takes time there too, but it was more concrete and at the same time we expect more from them because they are linked to innovation. However, the administrative issues - we gave them the memorandum of understanding, but the administrative issues remain with the municipalities. What we can do is transfer something there, but it is still up to the municipalities to carry the concrete, practical development within it, such as in this case in Ferizaj. The other one is in Prizren, almost in the closing negotiation stages. There is another one foreseen for Peja. I don't know about Gjakova, since it is very nearby Peja - but I know that there will be one in Prishtina, specifically at the Technical Departments.

**Q: So, these centers are all in cooperation with the technical departments?**

Hoti: Yes, with technical departments - as the innovation is very connected with technology, so we hope to have greater cooperation and connectivity with them. Even with the Ministry of Education, there's been attempts... there's a need to completely change the approach of the students to direct them towards innovation or new ideas - because we have old teaching methods that do not contribute anything to innovative thinking or new ideas - but all that there needs to be is a little understanding coming from the public, because it really takes time. But, at least to start with the first step, then the changes will come - to find partners, non-governmental organizations, etc., because until now we are in this stage....to find even business representatives because they can also contribute with their ideas. The political staff is in direct communication with them, and we do what we can do to help.

**Q: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about the entrepreneurship part: how do we stand with entrepreneurship in Kosovo? Since we come from an organization that deals with sustainable policy issues, we are particularly interested in 'green' entrepreneurship.**

Hoti: About green entrepreneurship I have little knowledge, and the fact that I have little knowledge means that I am not seeing it much, it is not developed. I believe it is very necessary - especially at this phase when we are making attempts towards development - as a perception of development we have building new factories, at the same time we must think of what we can do to the environment - not just the damage that we can make, but what we would have been able to do that could potentially affect the efficiency of production, factories, and all of this. I do not believe that it has been a ministry policy so far. But, at least when we give some information, the instructions, we will try to put some kind of attention to the sphere of green space, which could be influential. With a certain limit, so that it is not overdone - as I said to cause damage, but something more innovative that could also help with the environment.

At the department of entrepreneurship, we are a new staff - eight civil servants at the moment...we need to pass those stages of ministry development first, and at the same time we are expected to make larger policies.

There are programs to distribute funds; we have had a call for grants for non-governmental organizations at the moment, and it is foreseen that by the end of the year to have to have such a call for physical persons to, because they are important. With whomever we have had contact, we have said to keep their ideas and not tell us - so that their telling does not enable someone else to run with their idea, but instead to have the time so that they can also apply. What we can do is develop the formal section, but what is left is the *risk-taker* part, as an attribute that they have.

**Q: So, it is up to the people to develop their ideas?**

Hoti: Yes. There must be a big motivation for people to take the risk, plus we know that institutions provide little support. Until last week, we have made attempts, jointly with the Ministry of Finance, that in a few months to have the import tax on technology equipment banned - this is something that would be very influential for new businesses.

So, we are trying with some small, general aids, so that they don't have to spend their time at the start worrying about the burden, but instead to stay focused at their ideas, because it is really bad to have an idea and to be surrounded by those who support your ideas - and this is the purpose of the ministry, so we will try to have a greater impact.

**Q: In addition to the import tax, is there any other expected future policy that is potentially related to aspects of the green economy?**

Hoti: I was going through the ministry's goals but I do not see the environmental protection as the final level of the green environment and all of these. So, there is a difference between going up the level to not harm the environment and between using more efficient opportunities to be more innovative in technology and impact positively the environment.

We have that mentality of immediately looking into building a factory building and not think much about other things. I believe it takes time; first by changing that perception as we have it towards businesses....but, frankly speaking, in our ministry 'green' itself is the most developed level of innovation to say so ... and we can not, as Kosovo develop innovation if we are not using other innovations that the world has, for example, hydrogen cars and all of these... at the moment we are not using them, we cannot pass into the next innovative stage; so we cannot put out there new cars with something else more efficient ... this was directly related to taxes so that we put to use technology devices that are more sophisticated, to help businesses do not pay extra taxes because we know they are very expensive. We have always used second-hand or no insurance, it takes time until we become a partner of the countries that export to us.

We are oriented on the right track, but it is still up to the citizens to take care of the green, to be careful of whatever that might be damaged, to be careful what we put in Kosovo (tech equipment); and then again it takes time, the training of the staff who will be using them - so, it's a long process... and we as a ministry will be specifically working with it. We will take the other departments of the Ministry of Trade that deal with the innovation and entrepreneurship... We can't disperse them, but at least we will connect with them and be involved.

**Q: Have you heard about the concept of the circular economy, and if so, what do you understand with it?**

Hoti: You have mentioned it ... however, no. I have studied economics, but I did not hear it.

**Q: What tools / instruments do you think would be helpful in the future for your ministry and generally in Kosovo ... which would have helped to develop policies that account for 'green growth' or in any way incorporate the environmental component?**

Hoti: Well, I think the best would be to have information: to know, to have somebody know that it is important. These are also millennium goals. Let's install a new mentality, to change the approach towards the business as we see it, and not only to get the money out of something, looking only at the cost and whether we can be in a plus [meaning: receiving more], but also to consider social responsibility - because we can give to the society something more than some funds, a few grants. So, we have to think what can we give to an other generation.

**Q: What do you think of a government-funded green fund?**

Hoti: I will take note of this and forward it to the team. I also looked for the circular economy ... I'm not aware, but the 'green' [component] will be forwarded to the staff so that is may be foreseen to be added to the foundational policies. I will do my utmost to at least send it to the right persons - to have it accounted for - at least in papers and then in practice - to find the right people and all of the rest that is necessary. I honestly believe, from my enthusiastic side that a green fund would be very, very important.

**Q: Thank you.**

## ANNEX 2

### Annex 2.1

#### Focus Group:

#### Annex 2.1: Peja Municipality

**Date: 26 February 2018**

**Participants:** Mehdi Mulaj (Municipality – Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, coded “M”), Ariston Lipa (Environmentally Responsible Action - ERA group, coded “A”), Urim Xharavina (Let’s Do it Peja, coded “U”), Kreshnike Dreshaj (Euro-Ekologet, coded “K”).

**The concept of sustainable development: How do you understand the concept of sustainable development?**

**M:** With sustainable development I think we understand a project which is carried out by encompassing in itself three aspects, or three sides, the economic, social and environmental. This means to create a solution for their problems, but by not impacting the environment, in the meaning of not damaging the environment. Briefly, this is what I understand as sustainable development.

**U:** If we delve deeper at the UN’s sustainable development objectives, then we can elaborate even further, but if we remain at sustainable development, I believe that what was said, remains as a definition.

**A:** I fully agree with what was said. Ever since 2011 we have been involved in projects, in initiatives for the promotion of sustainable development and responsible citizen behavior. Sustainable development implies these three components, where an equilibrium between the economy and the environment. However, there should be a component of discounting as well, so that we can safeguard the resources for our heirs, and not consume everything at present. We should consume them rationally, where the core of the ideal concept is the equal consumption as much as there are resources and as much as they can be generated. So, the consumption is not growing at the same pace as they are being depleted for the next generations.

**Circular Economy Concept: How do you understand the concept of circular economy?**

**U:** As a professional in economics, I have personally not encountered this term before.

**A&M&K:** Likewise, are not familiar with the term.

**Q: As a department or organization, have you undertaken any activity that is interconnected with sustainable development?**

**M:** I would connect this with a professional aspect of mine, specifically in relation with the integrated protection, which involves, for example: fruits and vegetables and the use of pesticides which has direct access in the environment. I think that that might have the importance that you have mentioned, taking into account the minimal use of pesticides and them to be

applied only in necessary cases in which there is no other alternative. Another worry for the municipality are the “black waters.”

**K:** Projects that the organization has implemented mainly have been connected to the environment. Their priority was water, air and land; mainly the protection of the environment from pollution. Other focus of them was the increased care towards forests and species that are going towards extinction, and which live in these ecosystems. These projects have been developed in the city of Peja and its surroundings.

**U:** The focus of our organization is the development of policies are the help and assistance given in the process of creating a municipality plan of waste management, and at the same time, in the creation of the regulation of the management of the waste and the regulation for environmental protection. Another project which is currently being implemented jointly with Erasmus +, is connected with the creation of the itinerary where agriculture serves tourism. This targets groups of youngsters and the creation of their business plans that they generate will be in the itinerary. This project has also the component of the sustainable development, the socio-economical aspect, etc.

**A:** The building of Haxhi Zeka \*Mulliri\* is the space which the organization uses to work, and which was made possible from the municipality. In 2011 we had started with the project “Sustainable Forestry Development Center.” As a part of this specific project of sustainable development was the promotion of sustainable development, which had as its main goal informing what does it mean to be a responsible citizen – the work had started with students from primary and high schools. Now we do have the small grants scheme, where local residents are given grants to develop projects which promote responsible citizenship. The project is thought to be sustainable, but at the same time also ‘self-sustainable’. Another project is ‘Comics for Sustainability’ which through designed strips from the youth aims for sustainable development. ERA has held a workshop with these persons in regards to the design of the comicbooks, which had to create a story in which the hero goes in an imaginary world and comes back with an answer for solutions for sustainable development applicable to our world. At the moment we have two activities that we are carrying out with students: the project is called “Cute Robots” where with electronic trash different shaped sculptures are created. Anyways, this is not directly recycling, but reuse of materials. What makes it interesting is the fact that these sculptures are driven into wood glue. This creates a transparent layer which makes it less damaging for the environment and prevents them being thrown in inadequate places. The other activity is connected with the project Slowfood, which we lead. It aims the preservation of biodiversity of food and so we fight global warming.

**U:** We have started the implementation of the project that takes into account the UN objectives, where as a target group we have highschoolers and the technical. So we are more focused at the 6<sup>th</sup> objective which includes water and sewerage and the 7<sup>th</sup> objective which discusses renewable energy and energy efficiency. So, as an organization we are oriented more in the fulfillment of the UN objectives that are related to the environment. Activities include promotion and awareness-raising, the water component – we do that with the highschoolers from the natural sciences department. They will be part of lectures as a part of a specific group of students for the



importance of promoting the 6<sup>th</sup> objective; whereas for energy, with the technical school because of their field – then it is expected from these students to visit some areas in Kosovo, for Renewable Energy Sources, foreseen to take place at Balkan Green Foundation. Then, the technical school students, who are exposed to the energy area, will go the gymnasium and lecture about it, and vice-versa. Peer to peer concept.

**What are the main environmental challenges that the Municipality of Peja and the region faces?**

**U:** Unfortunately, all of the potential contamination happens! Perhaps, compared to other cities, we stand better in some aspects; for example, air. Still, based on previous measurements, air in Peja is not in its optimal state. This is due to traffic and heat with coal and wood during the winter season. In Pejë, it is rarely specified the case of bakeries and kebab places. The equipment used by these businesses contributes to increasing the level of pollution. They do not use filters, so the city is filled with smoke, especially the center, as they are concentrated in that area.

**M:** But the illegal cutting of wood is also present and worrying.

**A:** The environment in Kosovo is also threatened by the overwhelming tourism factor. Do not misunderstand me, there must be tourism but there must be a policy, respectively a regulation that promotes agrotourism. This means that there must be sustainable tourism. The other factor is the illegal logging of the forest, which is occurring out of the control. Something else that harms specifically animals, is the excessive infrastructure. The intensive work of tourism that meets the demands, creates the opening of streets, restaurants, etc. It becomes a cycle. Another specific problem is the illegal hunting in Peja because there are not enough animals for the hunting season. As for the sewage problems, I am not aware of any study being conducted, but there are problems as the sewage waters are drained into the river.

**U:** As far as the sewerage goes, the project for its treatment is being implemented. There is an analysis of water pollution being done, e.g. from the source of the Drin River, which at that point is considered as very clean, and through this research it is thought to see how much there is water pollution, when the river reaches the border point with Albania. Many scientific studies that students have done in the past have researched about the level of pollution. Very little is mentioned about the industrial waste. Across Kosovo there are factories that have been operational beforehand, which have produced various chemicals that have remained inexhaustible and overtime have become contaminants. In those places, new factories have been opened and these materials are manipulated, in which case they are toxic. For example a plant has produced cyanide residues, and it is known that cyanide is quite dangerous and no one deals with its treatment. KFOR jointly with KSF for a while have isolated and stored these substances, but that requires special and continuous treatment. It flows into the ground and pollutes the ground, and drains into groundwater.

**A:** At present, this is not a problem, but there is going to be a problem in the future. With hydropower plants for energy production, there has been an environmental problem. In the hydropower plant construction project in Lumbardh of Peja, ERA will try to prevent the implementation of this project. However, in the media it can be seen that the ministry is not

responsive so it builds suspicion that something is going on in the background, that the public is not aware about.

**U:** The same case was in Deçan where the river is already dead. It affects the ecosystem, changes microclimate etc.

**M:** Another concern is the burning of used car tires - because the landfills do not accept them and we are seeing that they are piled in unassigned places. It is the most savage pollution which requires treatment and a serious approach to be addressed. Circular economy, and of course advanced technologies need to be involved so that they are recycled, but this has not been happening.

**U:** With regard to vehicles, not treating used oils is also a problem. They are thrown directly into nature, it pollutes the water and the ground.

**M:** It is not as the municipal assembly is taking concrete steps in reducing environmental pollution.

**Sustainable development policies: What is being done in the direction of developing sustainable development policies?**

**M:** Not that there is nothing being done - there are movements but not the needed ones. We are far from that reality.

**Q:** They are up of the individual and its education, because from small amounts they turn into compounded ones. This adversely affects the environment. I think people are not aware and little has been done in this regard, especially in rural areas. If you go to the remote villages, the situation is terrifying - there are dead animals, where waste prevents regular circulation. Children grow in these areas with polluted environment.

**M:** Penalties must also be applied.

**U:** All villages in Peja are provided with waste management services. Rugova area may be a problem, but Istogu is not.

**A:** We need to develop new policies, considering that the laws that are in effect now, are the highest level that exists. Law implementation must be strengthened as well as the part about people's education, that is what and how to act. We have all of the environmental policies, we only lack the national park management plan.

**U:** As far as policies are concerned, I agree that laws are good but as a state policy are wrong. Investing in a new power plant is disastrous for Kosovo. This is state policy. State policy is allowing this to happen. By means of new studies even hydropowered plants are not considered as 'clean energy' and are the second environmental pollutants. The state is not developing appropriate policies towards the energy sector. It is polluting the environment and destroying it. As far as awareness goes, we are all aware, and each one of us knows that we should not throw garbage in inadequate places. We must raise awareness but as long as there are no consequences for the actions, this happens.

**K:** If garbage is thrown at a given location then that location will remain destroyed also for future generations. At present no measure is taken.

**U:** To connect with the policies - there is a regional company 'Ambienti'; there is also a regional landfill under the aegis of the municipality of Peja. The municipality of Istog does not bring the waste to this landfill, while the Istog municipal assembly has developed the policy that has formalized an illegal landfill. To lower transportation costs perhaps. This is a municipal policy that creates illegal landfills. This is not recognized by the central authorities, it is not licensed and neither approved, which is something in conflict with the laws, but the Ministry of Administration and Local Government has allowed it.

**M:** Asbestos is harmful but no action is taken to eliminate it. The problem is known, we need to find a solution.

**Activities for the future: What are some of the activities that you could develop in the future?**

**M:** Every law, everything that is planned has a cost. For instance, in order to eliminate the asbestos, first there needs to be a budget that is foreseen for this activity and then to start the work in this regard. You can not create panic to the citizens, but you should undertake something concrete. We tell them, but the concrete action/activity must come with a concrete budget.

**U:** A place where there is no industry and is the most polluted country is nonsense. Industrial sites are polluted. To solve these problems, the entire state must work in this direction. And it needs billions in financial terms. For such a short time we have damaged and created all this pollution - we are a case study as people. High cost is also cleaning. There is something in this direction regarding polluted waters - even if there are a few doubts as to whether they will work properly - Or is it happening like with the power plant filters.

**M:** Those waters even though they are treated, they are not preferred to water fertile and agricultural lands. Although treated, they are not preferred to water the fertile and agricultural lands. We prefer that irrigation water should be as clean as the water that is for drinking.

**K:** Chlorine is a concern for everyone in Istog. It causes diseases, 80% are sick of kidney stones and there never have been any experts in treating drinking water. This applies to both, Peja and Prizren.

**U:** The chlorine level is uncontrolled in drinking water and agriculture.

**A:** €15.8 million was allocated to MESP for expropriation of infrastructure. These should be allocated for the environment and it would be good that €2 million were allocated for the infrastructure. There is lack of conscience regarding small practices that each one can do, which in return can have a great impact. All the water from the tussocks goes into the ground; noone has a reservoir which would make it possible for the water to be used. Then, the use of economic light bulbs; the recycling economy needs to be embraced. Also, when washing hands, that water can be reused. If 75% of people did this massively, it could have a great impact.

**U:** Lets do it has distributed the reservoirs for this purpose, and they could be used for irrigation.

**Tools that could help: What could the EU help with?**

**U:** As far as EU funds are concerned, funds should go to the direct beneficiary. Not having 60% spent in other Prishtina organizations and a small amount comes to us. Most of the funds are spent on wages and operating expenses while to the direct beneficiary goes only 1%.

**K:** It is a high cost for application and at the end the application gets rejected.

**M:** Only the central or municipal level are eligible to take credits. While the grants yes, with a participation of 10-15%; but part of the designing should be also the municipality.

**A:** Many are money is left in Prishtina, because of it being the headquarters. Those money and funds for organizations and projects operating in Prishtina, let them stay there. The funds for the environment do not go to Prizren which has the Sharr National Park, except for 1% and that's it. The other part is grants but not in the form that it gives 100% being based on projects that years. Let it be 30% grants for new projects. 70% to go to operational grants with the organization supporting what it is doing so far. It allows the organization to deal with specific tasks but it also helps finance new projects.

**U:** Projects are short and you can not solve the issue. Awareness does not happen for such little time. Grants must be long-term. Expertise goes away in absence of funding.

**A:** EU progress report should be updated in databases and when there are gatherings for reporting on the state of the environment CSOs should be present. Because an individual of an organization that once opens a certain project and does nothing now and other individuals are governors discussing the topic only from a political approach rather than on the ground. Civil society goes on the field and has accurate data. You must take the input of the whole society. The project partnership approach needs to be changed.

## [Annex 2.2](#)

### **Focus Group: Municipality of Prishtina (including Fushë Kosovë, Gjilan)**

**Date: 26. 02. 2018**

**Participants: Avni Sylja (ELEN), Enis Spanca (Greenor), Bujar Kadriaj (Ecosystem NGO), Lumni Sefa (Friends of Nature), Lorik Mucaj (Green Art Center), Leutrim Shala (YRE).**

#### **The concept of Sustainable Development**

**Elen:** There needs to be top-down approach: development policies should come from state institutions. As a member of the business community I see a slow process of advancement ... changes in legislation as well as implementation of practices. The development plan is not defined. Rural zones are untreated from the ecologic aspect as well as from the development aspect. Prishtina's economic zone belongs more to Drenas. Businesses have an individual solution.

Problems with electricity. With water. With the treatment of waste. This country has a fragile economy - not sustainable, because of the objective problems that only a development plan can solve. If it remains on an individual or communal basis....the latter have other problems, not to mention that there is no competent team that could create solutions to these problems. There is no adequate staff in the municipality. All the rivers that go through the town and its surroundings, Vushtrri, Skenderaj are in a miserable state. They are contaminated - water from bad tires is used for irrigation.

**Greenor:** agrees and makes the difference between the pillars of sustainable development.

**Ecosystem NGO:** adds that these natural resources must be developed in a sustainable way operationally. For example - forests are where the tire degradation and waste treatment happens.

**YRE:** European Integration; Let's clean up Kosovo. Sees sustainable development mainly as problem of environmental degradation.

**Friends of Nature:** we should have the attitude that what we say, is what we all do. More respect for the law.

### **Main Problems that Kosovo faces in the field of Sustainable Development**

**GAC:** Kosovo faces problems with law enforcement. Today there are over 380 schools that have green clubs. Financed by recyclable waste. Everything is possible but the main problem lies with the citizen. From excessive corruption, the poor does not see the common public spaces as those of his or her. There is also indifference of civil society. Even in organization that accept everything.

**YRE:** Shares an example of a project with GIZ - which has failed because of the indifference of the citizens (only one stage had been implemented). There initiatives, but there is indifference from the citizens.

**GAC:** Also meritocracy. Organizations want to know me if they are to give funds. The processes are always turning off due to indifferences or because of a project.

**Greenart:** I do not establish the organization for personal gains. The ministry does not come and deal with you but supports people who have millions. The case of impiants of the palace of justice. They dont know what an impiant or septic pit is. The case of the cave in Kline, through which goes a sweage. When I take a project I dont work in that way. There is an impossibility of functioning for organizations. Active and inactive - not functional enough. Invest in paper, not in concrete projects.

### **Energy problems**

**GAC:** The factual situation on the field is too worrisome situation such as withdrawal from initiatives that have good intentions. Common denominators - are major issues, the problems that belong to all of the society - belong also to the institutional level - and should be treated by the higher instances. We do not have a national development plan many of the few untrained sectors - should all be treated as a tutor.

They support the whole society - they belong to the institutional level - should be treated by the higher instances. There is no national development strategy plan. The government needs to raise this issue as it is very seriously. The issue of energy needs to be tackled individually. The USAID initiatives have put so much bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining permits in the municipality... there should then be consent from the Energy Regulatory Office, consent from KEDS, there are so many different sectors involved, that the entrepreneur gives up because of the numerous obstacles.

Power supply where there is no access. Business have to face obstacles with the power lines. KEDS does not deal with them. If the neighbors don't allow it, the business is not possible. The government needs to understand that these are its citizens.

**GAC (continues):** In the energy area there are things that need to be done very correctly - the 3Rs within the SAA. 20% of the energy is renewable, 20% is 60,000 a month from 2020. The first problem is the governance. The access. We stay close to the minister to amortise his mistakes. The second problem is the KEDS monopol. The third problem is the energy impact on the environment. Kosovo B. We have a problem because we are destroying the nature and the fauna. We have no other option except the photovoltaic system - which is not convenient for KEDS. There are no conditions for investors. Those who are increasing state saving's need to be stimulated.

### **Potential activities**

- Everything is circular - the solution of the waste problem at the Llapi River. You may be fined with the level of contamination of your neighbor; there needs to be awareness and support of the continuation informal sector.
- People need to be given the opportunity to do something new.
- Waste management.
- With scientific studies no in feasibility - the environmental impact in public health.
- Activities with students - student awareness.

## **Annex 2.3**

### **Focus Group: Gjakova Municipality**

**Date: 26. 02. 2018**

**Participants: Lulzim Jupa (Municipality of Gjakova), Ermira Shehu (Ecological Civic Initiative NGO); other participants were invited but did not come.**

### **The concept of Sustainable development**

**Jupa:** No negative thought, but positively in coordination and continuity. What does this mean? Continuous cooperation. Not some political, but something that continuous with all of the institutions and the society, that helps the city and its citizens.

**Shehu:** The involvement of young people in our organization and with a primary goal their advancement. Not simply to participate in an activity and to end with that - but to make sure it continues. Each state of the project continues further.

### **The concept of Circular Economy**

**Jupa:** From experience my guess would be something that would go in a cycle - otherwise I don't know.

**Shehu:** I think this is known as a cluster that foresees some mechanisms that are incorporated together for a specific purpose. The goal is shared and that goal must be achieved.

### **How much do you think Kosovo has achieved in terms of compiling policies that guarantee sustainable development or activities that ensure sustainable development?**

**Jupa:** Policies needs to be regenerative and display some sort of dedication. I am for policies that are in continuity. There needs to be staff and training - not megalomaniac types - each should be regenerative and dedicated, with a watchdog from the employees or someone else.

**Shehu:** All projects have been for young people up to 21 years of age. I believe that they are able to continue with the same work even after the trainings. For this, there should be annual trainings that guarantee the development of young people. It is never enough to have only organization involved.

### **The main problems with environmental protection.**

**Jupa:** First, there needs to be formed ...we used to have before what we have called the environmental protection inspectorate - so we need to have inspectors for the protection of the natural resources, such as protection from the degradation of the rivers which is causing us so many irregularities occurring during the seasons - when there are floods, rains, risks for bridges to slide from its construction because the river basin has been destroyed. The inspectorate needs to be prosecuted for such happenings.

Further, there needs to be a ban on the constructions on the edge of the river basin - the landfills with inert materials, which become compressed and remain there. The circular economy if done, should be with the municipality enterprise - for the fee collection of fee collection from the property tax.

The Regional Water Supply Company (KRU) Gjakova spends water and sewage. To help Cabrat company [waste collector] to have with fee collection to create some revenues. Possibly to be billed from the property tax. The value of the property tax towards the material value for waste throwing.

**Shehu:** The main problem rests in the citizens trust for environmental protection who still do not believe that waste management should be taken into account and it is a process, precisely because of the idea that it is a company and the issue ends there. But, the waste has this opportunity even for benefits about which there is no awareness.

### **Potential activities in this field**

**Shehu:** We have had a project with which we had applied to the Ministry for Environmental Protection in Prishtina, but we did not receive any financial support. It had foreseen waste separation by type. All of the projects that had been applied as part of the waste cleaning - perhaps there were separations made but they were still collected from the same company, Cabрати - had no impact. That's why we had foreseen this recycling process. I hope for us to be able to apply it again about it in the future.

**Jupa:** There are businesses that collect cardboard to have them recycled. This was something very good - we are working on it - also glass recycling.

**- Are there any initiatives for businesses dealing with green economy?**

Not for the environment. Except that every business that registers in the department, foresees a primary code with what it will be dealing, and based on that, there are business that work with waste management.

**Potential activities that you can undertake in the future**

**Jupa:** The assembly is a shareholder of the municipal directory. To help them, we have had initiatives with fee collectors with the business community. We have created a verbal form that there needs to be a contract and to have the payment signed for whoever creates the most waste. We have had information that they have been happy with the services. The company has transporting vehicles, but there are also old-fashioned transport vehicles - tractors without appropriate signs or anything. So financial and technical means. So, the goal is to be able to help morally and financially Cabрати company.

**Shehu:** Practice should start from the earliest levels of schooling: from age 6 onwards - so that we have awareness from the earliest times. There are numerous mechanisms that help with adequate waste management. For these there is no target group - these projects have to be of generations. It could start from schools through studying appropriate subjects specific for the environment. Otherwise, there are opportunities to develop projects for many categories. For example, about smoking - smoking see-through containers. They could encourage young people to go and throw the cigarettes there - at a special spot, where they could also have fun and with visual activities, etc. The youth does not perceive it very deeply and are not very careful. Even though there should be projects that do not encourage smoking in the first place.

**Supportive tools**

**Jupa:** Grants - green grants specifically; the citizens are usually interested to apply but not to implement. But, by specifying the grant beneficiaries - which companies are that deal with environmental maintenance, so specific references and specifics, then these could help a lot. Including the Cabрати company, which works directly with these.

*Financial Loans*

**Jupa:** A green fund - agree that would be a lot of help. Could help eradicating a category of people who do money laundering. Not planting roses or pines, at a time when they are not



sustainable. Specific grants. Serious companies. Experts. Assist companies such as Cabрати with help.

**Shehu:** I am generally against these grant practices. I have seen some grants coming from the ministry of the environment, where the cost of diesel was 2000 euros - when then are we protecting the environment? So, that part has to be very specific - that they are intended for environmental protection and have different positions on this matter. I move [travel] so much, and I do not spend 2000 euros in not even two months. Things like this create dissatisfaction.

You can get a bill and such documents but its effect is too small. If a municipality foresees in the development plan that these projects are for the community, they need to talk to the people, specify them, specify the zones.

### **What could the EU do to help?**

**Jupa:** It should continue, today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, to follow everything - not just have a dinner and leave.

**Shehu:** Good practices and their expertise. The financial part is important - but if there is no research, it has little value. If one wants to plant a tree, there should be a few specifics, the ground, types, etc, not have cases such as what was mentioned, to have plants planted in the wrong season. If the EU has opportunities to support a project, it should be with stages and growing step by step.

## [Annex 2.4](#)

### **Focus Group: Mitrovica**

**Date: 27. 02. 2018**

**Participants:** Vehbi Goxhuli (engineer) Arben Nika (Center for Education and Environmental Development), Drenas, Tahir Krasniqi (Center for the Environment and Alternative Energy), Krenar Nika (Center for the Environment and Alternative Energy), Mehmet Beqiri (NGO), Bekim Dobra (Management student, intern at CBM Mitrovica)

### **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

- Not just the environment, but also the NGOs as partners of the country's institutions. Use of alternative energy sources. Long-term partnerships.
- Do not allow something to stay undeveloped.
- Sustainable municipal services; to install sustainability in municipal institutions.

To be durable for all circumstances, even when a donor does not stand behind it. Ensuring that processes are running.

- Creating a work system that is capable of recording environmental impact, as well as other areas.
- Economic development by protecting the environment, rationally, without harming the ecosystem, population health, biodiversity.

### **Energy problems**

- We are supplying the lignite - we are exploiting this scheme but we have no solution because we are a poor country and our costs are larger - to produce electricity. There are opportunities also for clean energy. So, efficiency, and production, the process / output efficiency, the handling and the way that it is being burnt.

To turn lignite into something else would mean an increased cost. The solar panels are 120 euros and they use the same electricity; if the cost is increased, would be unaffordable for the villager or citizen of Kosovo.

- Frequent interruptions and reductions have forced each citizen to deal with this issue even though it is not a subject that everyone should be dealing with. The use of sources and their failure to return to the previous sources. The mention a few examples of European countries - Germany. A small comparison with Kosovo.
- Coal has closed all of the possibilities of thinking in an alternative way. We did not give ourselves space to find other sources of energy. Such a small population such a small country. The wind is mentioned as an alternate source. There is a possibility of creating water reserves - if a good feasibility study is done. The law on energy - there is a issue to be connected to the network - mentions the generators in Golesh which can not be connected, according to this participant. Emphasizes lack of awareness of other opportunities, and focus on a given field.

### **Environmental problems**

- People, lack of awareness, waste
- River pollution, industrial pollution.
- Proper environmental protection information - we do not deal with the largest pollutants - eg pollution from motor oils, sewage. A garbage carriage is punished with a fee of 50 euros, but the large landfills are being neglected.
- Municipal household wastes.
- The way we create energy, mentions the power plant as the biggest influencer.
- Recycling of waters for regions that do not have water at all. In Skenderaj, for example, when there are floods, there is water.
- Expropriation of land for businesses is alarming / Parcel protection - land categorization for protection against erosion. Creation of a water recycling plant.
- The air pollution - and its sources

## **Circular Economy**

Everything circular depends from one another. Set up a specific process and return to its point. Mentions the example of water and garden planting at schools. Mentions issues with waste management. Mentions the opportunity to process wood from forests in different ways. Recognizes a relation between the lack of good lands that may affect deforestation.

### **Potential activities in the future**

- Working with young people, informing and planting plants.
- Conduct a research on waste and pollution, create various environmental protection activities.
- Cleaning of illegal landfills, sewage purification.
- Cooperation with other non-governmental organizations.

### **What can the European Union do for the development of these activities?**

- Funds.
- If not grants, then financial loans.
- Capacity building.

## [Annex 2.5](#)

### **Focus Group: Municipality of Prizren**

**Date:** 28 February 2018

**Participants:** Fabiola Begaj (Finch), Ilirjan Mekani (Egnatia), Eroll Shabani (EC Ma Ndryshe), Galip Belallari (Prizren Municipality), Izet Osmani (Pyejet e Prizrenit NGO), Labinot Germizaj (KVRL)

### **The Concept of Sustainable Development: What do you understand with the concept of sustainable development?**

**Finch:** For all projects that have gone through the first stage of implementation, it is required that this stage does not stop at a single stage but to continue at other stages in order to complete the project process. So, it is not enough to have just a stage of implementation, because if we relate to biodiversity, nature, water, these are renewable sources that require care, so this is a process of development for the future as well.

**KVRL:** To have as much support for youth and current problems.

**Egnatia:** The fundamentals of the project being more sustainable.

**Ec Ma Ndryshe:** Projects that are implemented to have continuity even after the completion of the project. So there is no fixed time.

**Prizren Municipality:** Feasibility, realization and sustainability of the project. Not something that was made as documentation. The research should be made for something that will have results.

**Pyejet e Prizrenit:** Same as Finch - the project continues even after it is completed.

**What are some of the main environmental problems in the municipality of Prizren (including the surrounding area)?**

**Pyejet e Prizrenit:** Competencies between the central and local level, there is confusion in the laws. The laws are approved by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo and are in conflict with municipal laws. Central government has more powers than the local one (following the follow-up question). It would be better for the local government to have more extensive powers.

**Municipality of Prizren:** Agrees on the part of the laws, there is a need for harmonization. It adds the degradation of the rivers (White Drin), the usurpation of land (illegal construction, garbage on land, burning - coal, old cars) and others. Mentions the municipal environmental permits and tariffs; and the law on decentralization.

**Egnatia:** Prizren does not have any kind of "preventive" that could stop the increased pollution. There are new buildings that do not respect the law on green areas. Then problems arise because botany is interconnected. If it is destroyed and there are only a few green areas, except that there is no green areas, there is even more pollution.

**EC ma Ndryshe:** Emphasises population awareness. Punishment would be a precautionary measure. A pressing problem, as it can be noticed in illegal constructions, in most cases is that we have a disregard and usurpation in the property of others - in public properties. So not only do they not allow green space, but they also usurp what it is already existing.

**Egnatia:** adds that 30% of the plan foresees free space.

**Municipality of Prizren:** continues that "according to the sketches and documentation, you get the idea that you are in the west. But in practice it lacks."

**Finch:** During project implementations throughout Prizren, including Dragash, Opojë, and Shtërpçë, we have noticed some problems. The first problem is the pollution of water basins and rivers - this not only affects the value of drinking water, but also impacts biodiversity - this pollution has an impact on the environment, the endangered species (it affects them to disappear and not return to the natural pools). The second part is illegal dumping that the community creates in inappropriate places. This affects the appearance and the damage of the lands. Failure to use land in the future can lead to degradation and erosion. Example can be taken of Albania and Macedonia, where it can be noticed. The second aspect is the illegal logging of the forests. The municipality should create, in cooperation with the forest service and the national park, for communities that live in highlands to have the supply of wood, but also receive this supply in a legal way - so that the impact on the forests is not negative as well as to have a chance to protect

biodiversity. Another point is illegal hunting. If we refer to the Sharr National Park, it does have an impact on biodiversity in the region, specifically in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. If we continue to hunt then there will be a decrease in the value of the environment and biodiversity. This means that as Kosovo we will not be able to be part of foreign organizations and we will not be able to have a good assessments of biodiversity.

Another issue is the basin of Drin, as an added value that needs to be protected and needs a high awareness among the population to avoid dumping waste in these waters.

Prizren region takes in many tourists - if we can not protect these (biodiversity) then we can say farewell to sustainable mountain tourism and those with guesthouse (in the cities).

Projects should not be in short stages but in continuous stages in order to have a positive impact.

There also needs to be representation in a more extended circle, including that the experts and projects are not made by a few people. The region of Prizren is very broad.

**The Concept of the Circular Economy: What do you understand with this concept, if you are familiar with it?**

**EC Ma Ndryshe:** Yes, waste management for a longer period of time. Waste that is thrown to be circulated.

**Others:** Generally have not heard; however, they make a difference between waste management and economic aspects.

**Types of activities: What are some of the activities or projects do you develop?**

**Municipality of Prizren:** carries out a competition for Earth Day in April; a partnership in activities on May 24th with Let's Do It Kosova; on June 5th, carries out a multiethnic "My Way" project.

**EC Ma Ndryshe:** focuses on greening the public areas, mainly through public town meetings and planting plants.

**Egnatia:** works mainly with youth institutions with individual financing; organizes activities such as cycling as a protective element for the environment; as well as participates in activities such as Cleaning Day, planting, etc.

**Finch:** focuses on the protection of migratory birds and endangered habitats. They are part of a network and members of several organizations. With activities, they mark events such as the Day of Migratory Birds and the Day of Biodiversity, the International Day of Forests; they support the municipality in activities, cross-border cooperation, national parks. They are part of Environment Euro 2000 (have funds), in accordance with the directives of EU and developed countries.

**KVRL:** Celebrates Earth Day, has activities with young people, mainly focused on advocacy for a cleaner environment.

**Possible impediments: What are some of the most frequent obstacles to the development of these activities?**

**Municipality of Prizren:** Limited budget. Assets destined for a certain destination.

**Egnatia:** The budget, volunteering without any stimulation.

**EC Ma Ndryshe:** Agrees with regard to volunteering and participation. In one of their projects, the workforce was missing. Limited financial means are also a barrier.

**Finch:** Population awareness; financing opportunities. Sustainable development of projects is required to have development basis.

**KVRL:** Weak awareness of the youth, lack of budget.

**Future potential activities: What are some of the activities that you could develop in the future?**

**Finch:** Work with communities that live off the city of Prizren - the first impacts on biodiversity are carried out by them, including the area of Opoja and Dragash. They also have the proper expertise.

**Egnatia:** Educational campaigns with young people in schools; and field activities (mountains, etc) so that the youngsters can experience from an early age such an experience.

**Pyejet e Prizrenit:** Protection of forests and forestation.

**EC Ma Ndryshe:** Awareness of green spaces, especially with plans 70/30. Work with young ages. Observation of inspectors - almost is foreseen by residents, therefore is not very effective.

**KVRL:** Youth awareness, information packages for young people.

**Municipality of Prizren:** "Green package" in schools.

**Supporting Tools: What are some of the means or tools that could help in this regard?**

Everybody agrees on *grants* as a supporting tool.

Partially agree on a "*Green Fund*." State that depends on the management if it on a municipal or ministerial level.

*Financial loans* are not considered. See "Other"

*Other*, **Finch:** States the base/sustainability of the projects so that they are efficient. Creation of a network in municipalities and NGO-s for a sustainable management of the projects. Municipal centralization is important jointly with appropriate monitoring for NGO-s. Funds must be managed at the local level, potentially from the municipality, as it may know the development plan better.

*(Note: The interviews were originally conducted in Albanian. When relevant, sentences were edited and/or summarized for clarity).*