



## Perception of Strengths and Weaknesses towards Improving Water Resources Management in the Western Balkans

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Strengthening of master curricula in water resources  
management for the Western Balkans HEIs and stakeholders  
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### Outline

1. Aims and objectives
2. Method: Online SWOT analysis
3. Results and discussion
4. Conclusions

### Acknowledgments

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Milan Gocić – UNI

*...and 27 participants from all SWARM partner countries*



## Aims and objectives

→ Identify strengths and weaknesses to answer the central question:

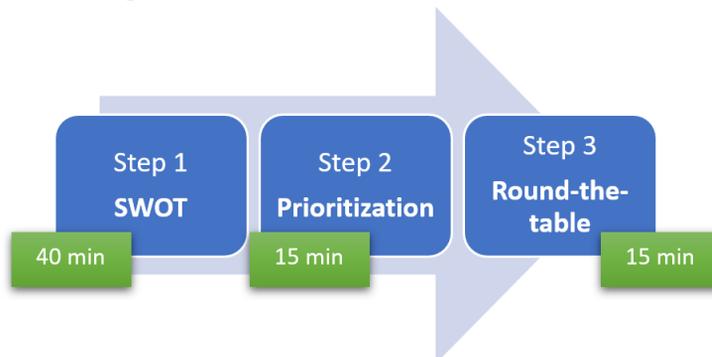
**What should be the actions for innovation  
in WRM for the Western Balkans?**

→ based on knowledge of challenges and innovative practices



## Method

- SWOT analysis using GroupMap – a real-time online brainstorming tool





GroupMap

FEATURES | TEMPLATES | PRICING | LOGIN

## Think better together.

Real-time online brainstorming tool for meetings.

Start your 14-day free trial | Join a map

The effective way to plan, brainstorm, discuss and decide

You've probably encountered the usual issues of group decision-making in your meetings, workshops or classrooms... People who dominate the conversation, quiet folks whose ideas never get heard, and of course all those post-it notes you have to write up. GroupMap solves this by capturing individual thinking first, then revealing the group perspective, all in real-time. Now that's true collaborative decision making.

1. Design your activity
2. Invite participants
3. Capture responses
4. View results in real-time

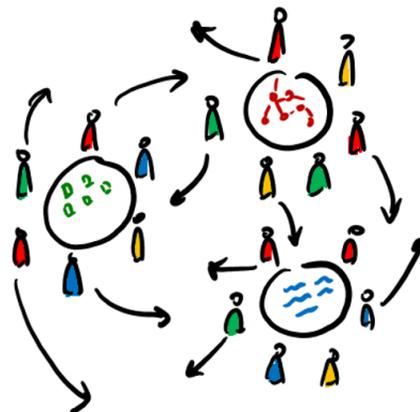
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## SWOT analysis

<p>Helpful to achieving the objective</p> <p><b>S</b></p> <p>Strengths</p> <p>Table 1</p>	<p>Harmful to achieving the objective</p> <p><b>W</b></p> <p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Table 2</p>
<p><b>O</b></p> <p>Opportunities</p> <p>Table 3</p>	<p><b>T</b></p> <p>Threats</p> <p>Table 4</p>

Discussion at each table – 10 minutes



After 10 minutes – change the table

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## Results: Strengths

Strengths	
Creativeness and resilience	
Human resources (professionals and academics) 	
Good education (particularly in water-related issues)	
Possibilities to learn from good examples and practices e.g. in EU countries	
Human potential in IT sector to develop smart systems	
Possibilities to learn from mistakes already made somewhere else	

- ➔ Great trust in the human potential and the education system in the WB partner countries
- ➔ Resilience inherent to several generations of people after enduring the Balkan Wars is identified as an important asset

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## Results: Weaknesses

Weaknesses	
Lack of water related laws implementation on all levels	
Corruption	
No politics to save water and to prevent pollution	
Lack of understanding (ignorance) of political class about Water Resource Management	
Lack of cooperation and communication between Ministries and authorities	
The penalties of polluters are not paid as nobody collects them	

- ➔ Lack of water-related governance identified as major concern
- ➔ Development of curricula and LLL courses reduce associated weaknesses over time, with well-educated stakeholders entering the labor market and developing policies
- ➔ Corruption can hardly be addressed on an academic level

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## Results: Opportunities

Opportunities	
Lessons learned - WB countries will not repeat the mistakes done in EU countries	
Information systems & digitalization - abundance of data	
Strengthen collaboration between countries in region	
Ready to apply for EU funds, with preparation of data and projects in time	
Possibilities to obtain European support and funding for implementation	
Use international knowledge networks	
IT sector, artificial intelligence	

- Top nomination: advantage of applying existing knowledge
- Technological aspect of novel information systems, data science and digital tools received nearly a similarly high ranking; possible bias due to technical background of many participants
- Cooperation of countries with common history: key opportunity

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## Results: Threats

Threats	
Corruption	
Lack of educated people in decision-making positions	
Unstable political situation	
Lack of political willingness for implementation of WRM	
Not holistic vision of WRM	
Lack of transboundary cooperation	
Lack of public awareness	

- Corruption perceived as top threat
- Lack of educated people in decision-making positions is directly addressed by the new and updated curricula developed
- Higher political stability could be expected upon accession of the WB region towards European Union membership

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## Conclusions

- **Curricula** developed and improved in the SWARM project will be subject to national accreditation processes in the future
- Once also the **LLL courses** planned for practitioners will be in place, a functional framework of improving the knowledge in WB countries within the field of WRM is expected
- This will contribute to **mitigating several weaknesses and threats** currently identified as major obstacles and **activate the strengths of the WB population**
- Some factors identified as threats or weaknesses can only be addressed on the **level of politics** and are thus outside the scope of a technically-oriented framework.

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**Thank you for your attention!**

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