

## Training Needs Assessment

  
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*Drafted by the Themis Network Secretariat with country input  
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# Training Needs Assessment

## Introduction

The present report comes in the context of the preparation for the activities planned in the 2014 to 2015 work plan. Namely, in cluster two, devoted to individual and institutional capacity building, are included three cycles of trainings: regional, subregional and national (also called on-the-job trainings).

In order to ensure that the trainings reflect the needs and priorities of the participating administrations, the Themis Secretariat undertook a survey with the representative beneficiaries in each country.

The results are presented in this report and will form the basis for an informed decision on what major topics to include in each training cycle. The information provided by this report will be used to draft a tentative training plan for all 3 cycles mentioned above. The plan will be discussed and revised with the countries in the February 2015 Executive Committee.

The data was collected through an online questionnaire and later aggregated to form a general view. Some country specific information is also provided in this report, but the focus was to identify common trends across all countries in order to foster international cooperation on shared needs and priorities. The results will be discussed with the countries in the February 2015 Executive Committee.

## Results

The results will be presented in 3 groups: profile of those who answered, main training needs identified and preferred training methods and formats to be used.

### Respondent profile

The questionnaire had a total of 57 respondents of a multitude of institutions representing the main target groups of the 2014-2017 work plan<sup>1</sup>. 65% were male, 35% were women. The median number of answers per country was 5, whereas the average was 8. The discrepancy shows that the results were uneven between countries. For instance, Albania accounts for 38% of the total answers whereas Serbia accounts for only 2%. Nevertheless, considering that the answers cover such a wide array of institutions, the data set can be considered useful for the purpose assessing overall training needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Check the annexes for a list of respondents and their institutions

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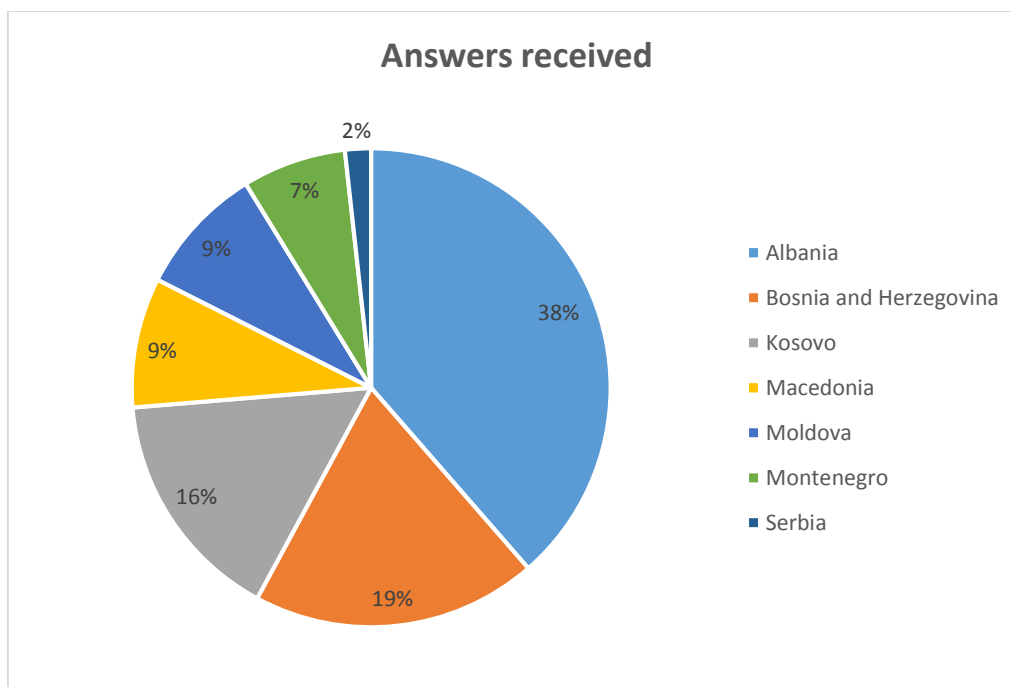


Figure 1 - Answers received

As for the field of work and expertise of the respondents, the majority was related to the nature protection and biodiversity (18.5%), to forestry (14.8%) and environmental inspectorates (12.3%). Other important types were also present in the top of the table: academia, police or customs, policy makers, judiciary, and permit writers. In terms of experience 75.4% of respondents have 10 or more years of relevant work experience. 19.3% have 5 to 9 years and only 5.3% have for or less years of experience. As for seniority, 10.5% considered themselves to be at a high political level, 31.6% saw themselves as mid-level managers and 42.1% classified their position as operational staff. The remaining 15.8% include high prosecutor, professor, etc. The combination of experience and the distribution of seniority shows that the sample was quite broad and reached all corners of the target groups. The results of this assessment should therefore be highly reliable.

<b>Professional profile of respondents</b> (multiple choice was possible)	
Nature protection / Biodiversity sector	18.5%
Forestry	14.8%
Environmental Inspectorate	12.3%
Academia	8.6%
Police or Customs	6.2%
Policy maker	6.2%
Judiciary	4.9%
Permit writer	4.9%
Spatial planning	3.7%
Non-governmental organization	3.7%
Rural development	3.7%

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Prosecutor's Office	2.5%
International cooperation department	2.5%
Other	7.4%

## Training needs

The respondents were asked to indicate from a multiple choice list which were the most suitable topics for the training cycles. Their answers are as follows:

Priority topics	
Environmental Crimes (understood to intersect all other topics present in this list)	19.12%
Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000	15.69%
Biodiversity	10.78%
Rural development and environmental protection	8.33%
Pollution control	6.86%
Transboundary issues	6.86%
Organisational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning	5.88%
Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures)	5.39%
Multilateral Environmental Agreements	4.90%
Development of enforcement strategies for specific sectors	4.90%
Water issues	4.90%
Horizontal issues (EIA, SEA, Liability, etc)	4.41%
Equal opportunities for men and women	1.96%

The respondents were then asked to provide some qualifying remarks on why they chose the topics and what other suggestions would they have. Many of the answers provided, in addition to reinforcing the ranking shown in the table above, also pointed towards issues connected with:

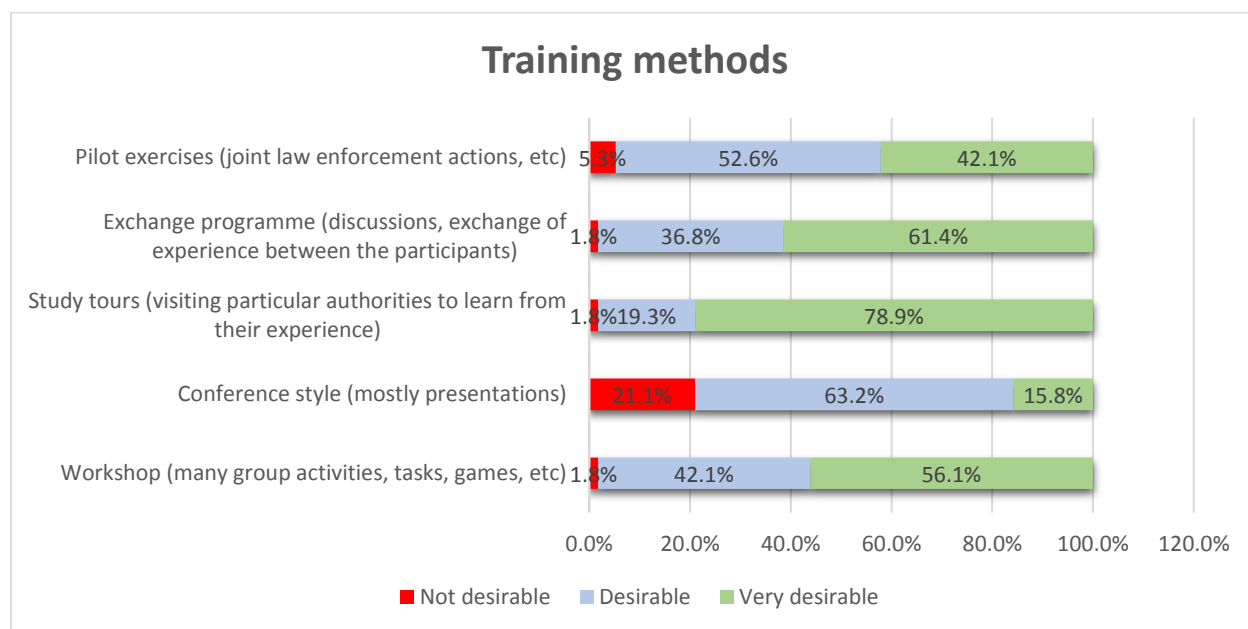
- **Law development** (for instance, by-laws), **transposition** and implementation of the EU Acquis and multilateral environmental agreements.
- Organizational management issues and study of implementation systems through study cases and SWOT analysis (gaps, advantages, solutions); practical toolkits for enforcers; exchange of experience with EU member states; corruption mitigation actions
- Multiagency cooperation and information exchange mechanisms
- Environmental crimes were highlighted as having links with organized crime; how to implement environmental crimes legislation; how to investigate environmental crimes – procedures
- Transboundary issues identified:
  - managing biodiversity and protected areas
  - international water bodies
  - shipments of waste
- Waste (waste water and illegal disposal of waste)
- Nature conservation issues (Natura 2000, CITES)
- Rural development

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- Climate change adaptation (droughts and floods)
- EIA/SEA
- Pollution control (IED)
- Public participation

## Training methods

In a similar way to the training needs, the respondents were asked to rate their preference of training methods from a list of 5 possible choices (see graph below) and to qualify their remarks in an open answer. By far the most preferred method is the study tour, when participants visit another institution and perform an “audit” on its work and methods. The second most preferred option is the exchange programme, where peers can participate equally and engage in discussions about common problems. Next is the workshop model with a high focus on group work and desktop exercises. Pilot exercises (in loco learning actions) are also seen very positively. The worst level of preference goes to conference style methods, but even so with a solid majority of respondents saying its desirable or even very desirable (80%).



Respondents highlighted that good support materials are essential to increase the impact of the training not only for those who attend but to serve as record for other colleagues and possibly to be reused in other occasions. The composition of the participant body should also be representative and diverse, the trainings should include panel discussions and there should always be a balance of theory and practice.

## State of play in national priorities

This subchapter will focus on national priorities as expressed in the open ended questions of the questionnaire. Those questions intended to provide a quick look on countries priorities in terms of transposition, implementation and enforcement of environmental law, and main challenges on the road to achieve the priorities. We first look at general trends and then provide a quick country-by-country summary.

## Summary of general transposition and implementation priorities

The most recurring transposition priorities across all Themis countries are (in no particular order):

- Convention on Biological Diversity
- Convention on the Protection of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat - Declarations and the resolutions of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
- Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals
- International Convention on Plant Protection
- Climate policy
- Natura 2000 network
- Birds and Habitats Directives of the EU (Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Birds Directive (79/409/EEC ))
- CITES and Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 and Commission Regulation (EC)
- EU Timber Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010
- EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)-Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and the Council
- Decision No 529/2013/EU on accounting rules on greenhouse gas emissions and removals resulting from activities relating to land use, land-use change and forestry and on information concerning actions relating to those activities
- Pollution prevention and control
- EIA/ SEA
- Aarhus Convention
- Environmental Liability Directive

## Summary of general challenges of transposition and implementation

The main challenges present in the Themis Network member countries are (in no particular order):

- Insufficiently defined regulations in the field of nature protection; poor intersectoral collaboration and harmonization of legislation
- Lack of public awareness and participation
- Complex system of government, poor coordination of various levels of government, conflicting or unclear jurisdictions, lack of effective coordination and cooperative mechanisms among competent authorities
- Insufficient knowledge of decision makers; limited human resource capacities; unstable administration; lack of staff motivation; political pressures.
- The impact of different interest groups at all levels of government

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- Monitoring and Control (insufficient environmental information systems)
- International cooperation and exchange of information
- Permitting system is needs further development
- Lack of technical equipment and financial resources
- Lack of strategic planning in the environmental field at national and local level and lack of development and implementation of plans
- Institutional framework not corresponding with environmental requirements and challenges
- Environmental protection and sustainable development principles are not integrated into sectoral policies and are not recognized as a priority
- Lack of relevant supporting documentation for day-to-day operations

## Priorities by country

As for the country-by-country scenario, the main priorities identified were:

### Albania

- Rural development
- Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000, Biodiversity, pollution control
- Development of enforcement strategies
- Horizontal issues (EIA, SEA, Liability, etc), Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures)
- Water issues
- Transboundary issues
- Environmental Crimes

Priority topics that needs training:

- local governments and experts for EIA/SEA
- NGO members and other relevant for development or use the mechanisms of anti - corruption
- local authorities and users (selected members of community) for protection of water quality
- regional and local administration for nature legislation and management mechanisms
- prosecutors, environmental inspectors and NGO members including journalists for identification and elaboration of environmental crimes;
- local authorities, relevant businesses and community users for the biodiversity, values, legislation and sustainable use

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Multilateral Environmental Agreements (CITES)
- Implementation and transposition of EU law
- Rural development
- Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000, Biodiversity, Pollution control,
- Environmental Crimes

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- Development of enforcement strategies for specific sectors, Rural development and environmental protection, Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures),
- Mapping the habitats in BiH by application of modern geo-information technologies (GIS)

Priority topics that needs training:

- Multilateral environmental agreements are needed at various levels internally in BiH (Municipality-Canton, Municipality- Entity, Canton-Entity; Entity-Entity) and precise allocation of jurisdiction between them. Agreements between countries at the regional level are need because that past experience has shown that they are very useful.
- Local level: Raise the capacity on business planning as well as their internal organization
- local level on one of the most important instruments for environmental protection (EIA) as well as a very similar method to Strategic Environmental Assessment - SEA
- Improving the competitiveness in agriculture
- Improving the environment and supporting land management
- Improving the quality of life and diversification of the economy in rural areas
- protection of water ecosystems and how to mitigate adverse effects in the environment caused by drought and floods
- Adoption and implementation of the new legislation with special emphasis on criminal and misdemeanor offenses against the environment.
- Trainings related to the ways of law changing (from initiative from local level to real changes at higher level and ) and trainings related law implementation
- Legal and criminal procedural aspects of environmental crime with the analysis of concrete cases in jurisdictional practice. Organized crime and environmental crimes (conditionality, links, forms)
- Forestry protection and crimes in forestry sector (forms, small crimes-theft, huge crime in forestry sector, abuses, economic crime in forest management)
- Landfills in BiH (import of medicinal, animal and other waste types from countries in the region)
- Wild dumps in BiH (causes, identification, activities of all institutions, sanctions jurisdictional practice)

## Kosovo

- Environmental Crimes; also focusing on illegally constructed facilities, especially in special protected
- Trafficking in waste, trafficking in radioactive materials and trafficking in fireworks
- Organisational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning,
- Horizontal: Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures), Equal opportunities for men and women
- Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000

## Macedonia

- Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000, Biodiversity, Pollution control,
- Environmental Crimes; development of penalty policy, establish environmental police
- Environmental liability directive (determination of environmental damage, financial insurance for the operators, prevention, mitigation and remediation activities and monitoring of this activities,



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cost recovery procedures and exception from the cost recovery, compliant procedure, legal action for compensation etc)

- Development of enforcement strategies for specific sectors
- Organisational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning;
- Improving the cooperation and exchange of information between the involved institutions in Macedonia and with neighboring countries.

## Moldova

- Institutional framework (creating national institutions responsible for development and implementation of policies, ensuring environmental compliance)
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements,
- Rural development
- Environmental protection, Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000, Biodiversity, Pollution control,
- Water issues
- Transboundary issues
- Evaluation of factors which can cause appearance of geo-ecological disasters.
- Implementation of environmental and natural resources' Geographical Informational System
- Creation of informational database for integrated monitoring
- Elaboration of Geographical Informational System of environment and natural resources.
- Development of enforcement strategies for specific sectors
- Organizational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning
- Horizontal: Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures)
- Combating environmental crimes (environmental crime identification, procedures and practices) via training activities.
- Environmental priority areas: environmental governance; air quality; water quality management; waste management; environmental protection; industrial pollution and industrial hazards; products and chemicals; climate policy.

## Montenegro

- Environmental Crimes
- Rural development
- Environmental protection, Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000, Biodiversity, protected areas, forestry, pollution control
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- Horizontal issues (EIA, SEA, Liability, etc), Equal opportunities for men and women, Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures)
- Transboundary issues
- Organisational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning
- Biodiversity, Environmental Crimes

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## Serbia

- Rural development
- Environmental protection, Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000, Biodiversity
- Organisational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning

## Conclusion

The Secretariat considers that the number of questionnaire answers collected is representative and allows this report to achieve valid conclusions. The type of institutions represented in the answers was quite broad. Most respondents had already several years of experience in their fields and the hierarchy levels represented a real distribution between operational staff, mid-level management and political staff. The response ratio between countries could have been more balanced. Nevertheless, even the countries with a smaller number of answers still ensured the key beneficiary opinions were recorded.

Regarding the training needs list the most selected topics were:

- Environmental Crimes
- Nature protection, including protected areas, forestry, Natura 2000
- Biodiversity
- Rural development
- Pollution control
- Transboundary issues (including nature conservation, waste and water)
- Organisational development, including self-assessment of departmental and institutional capacities for better workflow planning
- Ethics and transparency issues (anti-corruption measures)

In addition to these topics, countries also pointed out the need for assistance in law approximation (to both EU and key MEAs), in fostering multiagency cooperation and information exchange mechanisms, and to build capacity for waste management (illegal disposal and shipments), and EIA/SEA.

The preferential methodology of the trainings should be the study visit, when participants visit another institution and perform an “audit” on its work and methods. This gives them the chance to have a very practical and real learning experience from their peers. The second most preferred option is the exchange programme, where everyone can participate equally and engage in discussions about common problems. The workshop model, with a high focus on group work and desktop exercises, was also a favored option. Pilot exercises are considered positive and will remain an option.

The transposition and implementation priorities highlighted overlap to a large extent to the main training needs identified above. In general, there is a common thread to all countries.

The main gaps present in each country also reveal a remarkable uniformity. The improper institutional set up, conflicting or unclear competencies across agencies, lack of multiagency cooperation and exchange of information, lack of human, financial and infrastructural resources seem to be common issues. There is also a lack of appropriate creation of by-laws to permit the real enforcement of environmental framework laws. Monitoring and environmental information systems are incomplete and strategic planning for implementation is also lagging behind in some cases. Permitting systems still have room to improve to come into full compliance with EU requirements.