



Terms of Reference

for

Design of a Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Sava River Basin

February 2024

PROJECT:	SAVA AND DRINA RIVER CORRIDORS INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SDIP)-Phase 1, Part 4 – Regional Cooperation
IMPLEMENTING AGENCY:	International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)
ACTIVITY:	Design of a Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Sava River Basin
REFERENCE NUMBER	HR-ISRBC-343723-CS-QCBS

1. Introduction

In 2004, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia ratified the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB) intending to support sustainable development of the region through transboundary water cooperation and established the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) for its implementation. Although the development of tourism is not one of the primary objectives of the FASRB, the Parties to the FASRB have agreed to cooperate in this area as well, within the ISRBC framework. By the Ministerial declaration, adopted at the second meeting of the Parties, held in June 2009, the high representatives of the states, recognizing the great potential for the development of tourism in the Sava River Basin in an environmentally friendly manner, encouraged the Parties to further explore possibilities in this regard.

In 2017, the ISRBC prepared, with the support of the World Bank, the [Joint Plan of Actions for the Sava River Basin \(JPA\)](#) as a milestone for integrated river basin management and socio-economic development in the region, defining priority areas of cooperation in the Sava River Basin.

Priority area 4: *Developing sustainable river tourism* comprises the following actions:

- Action 4.1: Development of a Sava River Nautical Way from Brežice in Slovenia to Belgrade in Serbia and integration with other sustainable tourism products, actions, and activities.
- Action 4.2: Development of Transnational Sava River Bike Lane and integration with other sustainable tourism products, actions, and activities.
- Action 4.3: Promotion of ecotourism in the Sava River Ramsar sites and other protected areas and integration with other sustainable tourism products, actions, and activities.

The JPA provided the basis for the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Programme (SDIP). Within the SDIP-Phase I Part 4: Regional Activities, implemented by the ISRBC, the preparation of a Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Sava River Basin is foreseen.

2. Background

2.1 Definition of the project area

The Sava River Basin is a major river basin of South-Eastern Europe, with a total area of app. 97,700 km², and represents one of the largest and most important sub-basins of the Danube River. The basin is shared by five countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro, while a negligible part of the basin (about 200 km²) belongs to Albania.

The Sava River Basin features extraordinary natural and cultural characteristics. The Sava River is a unique example of a river with some of the floodplains still intact, thus supporting flood alleviation and

biodiversity. In the Sava River Basin, there are many areas protected to preserve natural values, landscapes and cultural heritage, with different levels of protection: nine national parks (Triglav, Plitvice, Risnjak, Sutjeska, Kozara, Una, Tara, Durmitor and Biogradska gora); seven sites designated according to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat - Ramsar Convention (Bardača, Lonjsko polje, Crna Mlaka, Peštersko polje, Obedska bara, Zasavica, and Cerknjsko Lake); the UNESCO heritage sites (Prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps in Ig in Slovenia, Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge in Višegrad in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Stećci Medieval Tombstones Graveyards in Perućac-Rastište-Hrta in Serbia, and Stećci Medieval Tombstones Graveyards in Žabljak-Plužine in Montenegro). All these areas represent the main project area for the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development.



Figure 1: Project area for the Master Plan development with indicative locations of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Sites and National Parks

2.2 Cooperation and achievements in sustainable tourism development in the Sava River Basin

Since 2009 the ISRBC has implemented several activities aimed at the development and promotion of sustainable tourism:

- In cooperation with the Economic Region of the Sava River Basin – Forum of Chambers of Commerce, in 2011 the ISRBC developed “Sava - Nautical and Tourist Guide”¹, which is an informative publication that promotes nautical tourism and the Sava River Basin as a tourist destination. This publication is a useful reading for sailors and the guideline for safe navigation but also represents a good basis for investors who decide to invest in this area, both in tourism and supporting manufacturing and service industries.
- To promote cycling tourism, in the period 2013-2016 the ISRBC organized demonstration cycling tours along the Sava River from its source in the Slovenian Alps to the confluence of

¹ https://www.savacommission.org/UserDocs/Images/05_documents_publications/other_publications/nautical_tourist_guide_sava.pdf

the Sava River and the Danube in Belgrade. The cycling route is more than 1.000 km long and it is connected to the EuroVelo Network 6 (Atlantic-Black Sea), and 9 (Baltic-Adriatic).

- In the field of ecotourism, the ISRBC in 2013 published Transboundary Ecotourism Guidelines² to contribute to the unified approach for sustainable development of ecotourism in wetland areas of international importance (Ramsar Sites). The guidelines outlined the scope of work for the preparation of a master plan for the development of ecotourism in the Sava River Basin.
- In accordance with its powers, in 2023 the ISRBC issued a recommendation with a proposal of conditions for regulating the use of the Kupa/Kolpa River for navigation in the sectors shared between Croatia and Slovenia for sports, recreation, and tourism purposes.
- In the project Sustainable Historic Environments holistic reconstruction through Technological Enhancement and community-based Resilience (SHELTER³), finalized in 2023, the ISRBC together with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, mapped cultural and historical heritage sites (archaeological, architectural, sacral, memorial and garden architectural, urban, cultural landscape, historical landscape, other) located within flood-prone areas in five Sava riparian countries and analyzed the impact of floods on those sites, aiming to contribute to enhance resilience of historic environments to cope with climate change and natural hazards.

The establishment of the Task Group for Sustainable Tourism Development (TTG) by the ISRBC in 2017 especially contributed to the strengthening of cooperation in this area. The TTG, which represents a permanent mechanism of cooperation, includes representatives of the ministries responsible for tourism of the ISRBC member states, as well as representatives of institutions relevant to the development of tourism (national/regional bodies, etc.). In addition to the members appointed by the ministries, two representatives from the Economic Region of the Sava River Basin and representatives of the Secretariat of the ISRBC participate in the work of the TTG.

3. Objective of the Assignment

The main objective of the assignment is to design the Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Sava River Basin (Master Plan).

The Master Plan covering the Sava River Basin should focus on the development of ecotourism⁴ in the Ramsar sites and other protected areas (national parks, and UNESCO cultural heritage sites) in the Sava River Basin, nautical tourism on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries, and cycling tourism along the Sava Corridor. The Master Plan aims to facilitate development that balances the needs of visitors along with environmental preservation and to ensure the minimization of negative impacts on the basin's unique ecosystem, biodiversity, and cultural resources while supporting socio-economic development.

Preparation of the Master Plan should facilitate the well-planned development of tourist infrastructure (for ecotourism, nautical tourism, and cycling along the Sava Corridor), pave the way towards investments in sustainable tourism development, establish basin-wide cooperation and capacity building of tourism stakeholders, and promote the use of digital technologies in tourism activities.

²https://www.savacommission.org/UserDocs/Images/05_documents_publications/other_publications/transboundary_eco_tourism_guidelines.pdf

³ <https://www.savacommission.org/projects/projects-2332/shelter/533>

⁴ *Ecotourism is a type of nature-based tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to observe, learn, discover, experience, and appreciate biological and cultural diversity with a responsible attitude to protect the integrity of the ecosystem and enhance the well-being of the local community.*

Ecotourism increases awareness towards the conservation of biodiversity, natural environment, and cultural assets both among locals and the visitors and requires special management processes to minimize the negative impact on the ecosystem (World Tourism Organization UNWTO Tourism Definitions, eISBN978-92-844-2085-8, April 2019)

Furthermore, the Master Plan should emphasize the importance of collaboration between existing tourism stakeholders on national, regional, and local levels, and identify opportunities for partnerships with private businesses, tour operators, and local entrepreneurs to enhance the tourism offerings and community engagement in the Sava River Basin. The Master Plan will also highlight specific aspects of the basin's natural and cultural richness and promote healthy living and well-being.

4. Scope of Services, Tasks (Components) and Expected Deliverables

The list of tasks and instructions presented hereunder shall not be considered to be exhaustive. The list of tasks will be confirmed based on the Inception Report and it will be subject to further amendments based on insights into progress. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Consultant to proactively reassess the requested services, to fulfill the stated objectives of the assignment.

4.1 Main activities

A Comprehensive analysis of the current state and existing potentials for the development of ecotourism in designated areas, nautical tourism on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries, and cycling tourism along the Sava River considering policy, as well as economic, demographic, social, and spatial-ecological factors:

- An analysis of strategic and planning documents and policies, both at the national/entity and regional level, to ensure the compliance of the Master Plan for the entire basin with them, and to enable the filling of identified gaps. The analysis should include documents relevant to ecotourism, nautical tourism and cycling tourism, including specific documents related to the management of protected areas (national parks, Ramsar sites and UNESCO cultural heritage sites) in the Sava and Drina corridors.
- An overview and assessment of the main tourist resources in the project area (considering attractions, tourism product quality, relevant tourist infrastructure with special reference to the possibility of access for people with disabilities, capacities including carrying capacity, destination branding and marketing, and use of digital technologies).
- An analysis of general and study-specific tourist statistics.
- Extensive inventory of the existing/planned relevant projects.
- Comprehensive stakeholder analysis and identification of focus groups to ensure that the perspectives and needs of different stakeholders, such as governmental/non-governmental organizations, local communities, tourism operators, and environmental organizations are considered.
- Special attention should be paid to increasing women's involvement in economic activities and engagement in decision-making. Aiming to influence the Master Plan design, a forum of women-headed small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will be established in an early phase of the Assignment, based on the structure proposed by the Consultant, taking into account that the forum is planned to become a permanent body.
- Preparation of the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of sustainable tourism development, to specifically cover economic, social, and environmental aspects.

B Development of the Master Plan, in accordance with the detailed assessment of the current state of the tourism development in close collaboration with focus groups, that should contain at least:

- General principles for sustainable tourism development, aligned with the UN Sustainable development goals (SDG 8.9, and SDG 12b), Environmental and Social Framework of the

World Bank, and other good international industry practice⁵. The Sava River Basin specific vision(s) and mission(s) for sustainable tourism development, with defined short-term and long-term strategic objectives for ecotourism in the project areas, nautical tourism on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries and bike routes along the Sava River.

- Action plan with the Road map and identified key programs/activities/projects/investments necessary to achieve the established objectives.
- A preliminary cost estimation for identified key programs/activities/projects/investments in the main areas of activities:
 - ecotourism in nature protection or nature conservation areas,
 - nautical tourism,
 - cycling tourism.
- Proposal of regional branding and marketing strategies for the relevant focus groups to attract a broader range of tourists.
- Proposals for integration of digital technologies (structure and content) in tourism development and promotion. This could include the use of digital marketing strategies, online booking platforms, and the development of digital tools for tourists to explore and experience the Sava River Basin.
- Based on the assessment of current potential provide proposals for the development of thematic tourism routes, focus on biodiversity, landmarks, or basin traditions, and provide suggestions for further development, creating a more engaging and varied experience for tourists.
- Proposals to improve existing and develop new products in accordance with the potential of the attraction and new, upcoming market trends, considering the complementarity with the adopted national and regional strategies and plans to enhance the overall tourist experience.
- Proposal of strategies for crisis preparedness addressing natural disasters or public health crises to mitigate the impacts on tourism ensuring the safety of visitors.
- Proposal of strategies for behavioral adaptations which can be used for: (i) capacity building of involved stakeholders, involving training programs for community members, fostering skills that align with the sustainable development of the tourism sector, and promoting entrepreneurship in tourism-related activities; (ii) educate tourists about the importance of conservation and preservation efforts, of natural and cultural resources, fostering a sense of responsibility.
- Proposal of measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, including training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities.
- Proposal on how to ensure the sustainability of stakeholder engagement in tourism activities, with a special focus on increasing women's involvement in decision-making processes. The Master Plan should capture the women-headed SMEs' specific needs and concerns, indicate potential job opportunities for women, and explore the ways to ensure that women-headed SMEs can benefit from tourism and other related activities.
- Explore possible contiguity with similar activities in other areas of the Danube River Basin, and propose synergetic activities, if applicable.
- Develop a list of indicators and methodology for monitoring (data collection and evaluation) of the Master Plan implementation.
- A preliminary assessment of environmental and social risks and impacts that can be caused by proposed tourism developments, and recommendations for their monitoring and management. This section should be fully aligned with the provisions of the Environmental and Social

⁵ E.g. ICOMOS International Charter for Cultural Tourism (https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2023/CSI/eng-franc_ICHTCharter.pdf) and UNESCO (https://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2707/2/impact_assessment_22_v14.pdf)

Framework (ESF) of the World Bank, and all the underlying Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) under the ESF, in particular ESS1 on Environmental and Social Impact, ESS10 on Stakeholder Engagement, ESS6 on Biodiversity and ESS8 on Cultural Heritage.

In the course of the Assignment, the Consultant shall conduct the following events/activities with the participation of key stakeholders⁶:

- Kick-off meeting during the Inception phase;
- 1st stakeholder forum after the finalization of the draft Assessment report;
- 2nd stakeholder forum after the finalization of the draft Master Plan;
- a forum for women-headed SMEs.

The events will be essentially held in person, with the possibility of participation online. The Consultant should provide an adequate meeting room, equipped with modern technical equipment, which includes excellent sound systems, quality lighting, projector, screen, and high-speed internet. The costs of refreshments and meals for participants will be borne by the Consultant. For each event, the Consultant should prepare (i) an agenda with background information (ii) draft documents and presentations with critical issues to be discussed. The Consultant shall moderate the events and compile the minutes of the events.

The estimated number of participants, to attend events in person, is as follows:

- 25 at the kick-off meeting, with the participation of the TTG members and the representatives of the ISRBC;
- 40 at the forums, with the participation of the TTG members, ISRBC, and the representatives of identified focus groups, including those of a forum for women-headed SMEs;
- 20 at the forum for women-headed SMEs.

In addition, the Consultant shall present the draft project results at the meeting of the ISRBC respective expert groups (Permanent Expert Group for River Basin Management and Permanent Expert Group for Navigation) which will review and provide comments and recommendations for draft deliverables. The participation of the Consultant at the meetings may be in person or online. It is estimated that the four meetings of the expert groups will be organized by the ISRBC during the Assignment.

4.2 Deliverables

The Consultant shall provide the following main deliverables:

- 1. Assessment Report**, following the requirements requested in 4.1 A.
- 2. Master Plan**, following the requirements requested in 4.1 B.

The Consultant shall also prepare:

- Brochure/Summary of the Master Plan.
- Booklet.

⁶ Key stakeholders and focus groups to be identified in the Inception Phase of the Assignment

5. Team Composition & Qualification Requirements for the Consultant

5.1 Consultant Qualification

1. The Consultant must be legal entity whose core business should comprise substantial experience and expertise in the various domains relevant for the tourism development: policy analysis, economy, marketing, management, transport, environmental protection, data management, and use of information and communication technologies.
2. The Consultant must have completed in the last ten (10) years at least three (3) similar assignments related to the development of tourism strategies and plans. Copies of certified References (containing role in the assignment, brief description of the assignment, start and completion date, country of assignment, client name, address, reference's contact, and contract value) for the listed assignments should be attached.
3. Consultant should demonstrate to have solid technical and managerial capability of the firm. Please provide only the structure of the organization, general qualifications, and key staff and availability of appropriately skilled key experts.

The criteria for the selection of the Consultant are:

- a) Overall experience relevant for the assignment – 30%
- b) Similar contracts to demonstrate specific experience – 50%
- c) Experience in the similar projects in the region – 10%
- d) Firm organization and availability of key experts- 10%

5.2 Details on required personal capabilities requirements

It is expected that this project will require a team of experts covering the skill sets listed below. Required experience should be demonstrated by attached list of references (containing start and completion date, country of assignment, client name, address, reference's contact, brief description of the assignment, with clearly defined role performed) for all the listed contracts.

Key expert 1 - Team leader

- Advanced university degree (master's or equivalent) in the field of tourism, business, or a social or economic sciences; an advanced university degree in another discipline may be accepted in lieu if it is pertinent to the requirements of the assignment and in combination with relevant professional experience.
- At least 10 years of proven qualifying progressively responsible professional experience comprising the development of strategic and planning documents in the field of tourism development.
- Experience in the implementation of at least 5 service contracts that are the same or similar to the subject of the procurement, including at least one of the service contracts as a Project Team Leader.
- Project management experience in international and multidisciplinary projects.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Key expert 2 - Tourism specialist

- Advanced university degree (master's or equivalent) in the field of tourism, business, or a social or economic science related to the tourism industry; an advanced university degree in another discipline may be accepted in lieu if it is pertinent to the requirements of the assignment and in combination with relevant professional experience.

- At least 7 years of proven qualifying professional experience in tourism sector working on tourism product development, tour development, tour management, tourism marketing, or planning, management, and operation of tourism businesses.
- Experience in the implementation of at least 3 contracts for services that are the same or similar to the subject of procurement.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Key expert 3 - Inland water transport specialist

- Advanced university degree (master's or equivalent) in the field of transport, traffic or transport logistics; an advanced university degree in another discipline may be accepted in lieu if it is pertinent to the requirements of the assignment and in combination with relevant professional experience.
- At least 7 years of proven qualifying professional experience related to the development of traffic and transport on inland waterways.
- Experience in the implementation of at least 3 contracts for services that are related to the development of nautical and passenger transport on inland waterways.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Key expert 4 - Environmental specialist

- Advanced university degree (master's or equivalent) in the field of environmental science/engineering field; an advanced university degree in another discipline may be accepted in lieu if it is pertinent to the requirements of the assignment and in combination with relevant professional experience.
- At least 7 years of proven qualifying professional experience related to environmental impact assessment/strategic environmental impact assessment.
- Experience in the implementation of at least 3 contracts for services that are the same or similar to the subject of procurement.
- Proven knowledge and experience in working on provisions of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) of the World Bank will be taken as an advantage.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Key expert 5 - Social specialist

- Advanced university degree (master's or equivalent) in the field of a social science field; an advanced university degree in another discipline may be accepted in lieu if it is pertinent to the requirements of the assignment and in combination with relevant professional experience.
- At least 7 years of proven qualifying professional experience related to the implementation of social standards.
- Experience in the implementation of at least 3 contracts for services that are the same or similar to the subject of procurement.
- Proven knowledge and experience in working on provisions of the Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) of the World Bank will be taken as an advantage.
- Excellent command of written and spoken English.

Pool of experts should contain as well non-key experts that should possess the following expertise:

- Community based development/local economic development
- Stakeholder engagement/Public communication
- Digital marketing
- Data analyst/Statistician
- Cultural heritage protection

The list of non-key experts shall be approved with the approval of the Inception Report, i.e., when the final scope of services for the assignment will be (re)defined and approved by the Project Coordinator.

Estimated input per expert

Experts	Number of days
K1 Team leader	160
K2 (Tourism)	120
K3 (Inland waterway transport)	110
K4 (Environment)	85
K5 (social)	85
Non-key experts	325
TOTAL	885

6. Reporting Requirements and Time Schedule for Deliverables

6.1 Reports, associated deliverables, and deadlines for their submission

Report	Contents of Report & associated deliverables	Timing for submission
Inception Report	The Inception Report shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specify in detail the activities that the Consultant will undertake to provide the required services; - provide a detailed timetable (including a Gantt chart including deliverables and milestones) for the delivery of the required services; and - Identify and explain any proposed modifications to the Consultant’s initial methodology as set out in the Consultant’s Technical Proposal. 	2 months after the commencement date of the Assignment
Interim Report	The Report should cover the activities defined in the 1 st part of the Assignment (4.1 A), including Assessment Report.	6 months after the commencement date of the Assignment
Draft Final Report	The Report should cover activities defined in the 2 nd part of the Assignment (4.1 B), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - draft Master Plan - draft Brochure/Summary of the Master Plan - draft booklet 	12 months after the commencement date of the Assignment
Final Report	The Report should contain a description of all activities implemented during the Assignment, including all final deliverables (as listed in 4.2).	14 months after the commencement date of the Assignment

The Consultant shall also prepare short monthly progress reports containing:

- Progress on tasks and deliverables, including any challenges and risks.
- Review and feedback on the work completed.
- Verification that the project remains on track and aligned with the objectives and, if necessary, proposed corrective measures.

6.2 Format of the reports and deliverables

All draft reports, including main deliverables, shall be submitted only electronically in an editable format to the Project Coordinator, who will be responsible for approval of the reports and deliverables.

The approved reports shall be delivered in digital format and in two hard copies.

The final Master Plan should be delivered in digital format and printed versions (30 copies).

The Assessment Report and Master Plan must be accompanied by necessary maps/graphs/figures. All maps/graphs/figures and data used for their development should be delivered in appropriate digital editable format.

All reports shall be submitted in English.

The brochure/Summary of the Master Plan should be prepared in English language (ca. 30 pages, digital format and 100 hard copies).

A booklet (at least 8 pages, 150 hard copies) should be prepared in English and all official languages⁷.

Monthly progress reports should be prepared in English and in digital version only.

Submitted reports and related deliverables shall constitute the basis against which the payments to the Consultant will be made.

7. Client's Input and Counterpart Personnel

The ISRBC shall:

- make available all produced publications of interest in electronic form.
- make available related GIS data in native format.
- facilitate contacts with the stakeholders and assist in the collection and valorization of comments where necessary.
- support in the organization of forums and other events/meetings.

8. Working languages

The working language shall be English.

9. Duration of the Assignment

The expected duration of the assignment is **14 months** from the commencement date.

10. Selection process

The Consultant will be selected under the provisions of the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers (Procurement Regulations), in investment project financing Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services November 2020, based on the method of Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) Lump Sum Contract.

⁷ Official languages of the Parties to the FASRB, Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Serbia