

MID-TERM REVIEW

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program

Country

Regional, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia

GEF ID

10553

Implementing Agency

World Bank

Executing Entity

Others

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

The objective of the Project is to enhance transboundary water cooperation and strengthen climate resilience in the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

11/19/2021

Agency Approval

7/6/2022

Implementation Start

1/26/2021

First Disbursement

12/27/2022

Expected MTR

10/31/2024

MTR Submission

3/31/2025

Actual MTR

10/11/2024

Expected Completion

11/1/2026

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

GEF grant-financed activities comprise consultancies implemented by the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) under SDIP's Component 4, which was declared effective in Nov 2022 (~2 years after SDIP approval). Implementation is advancing firmly but slowly with disbursement levels at 8%, and commitment level at 30% in February 2025 and expected to increase to 50% by June 2025.

Project progress is advancing slowly as it involves several analytical activities that require a thorough stakeholder consultation process to seek feedback on ToRs and acceptance from the ISRBC member states, in addition to consultative evaluation of proposals. This consultation process follows the commission's charter and is considered crucial for enhanced cooperation and later uptake of the project results, with the added benefit of reducing the risk of delays during implementation. Recognizing these standard operating procedures, the WB team, however, emphasized the importance of timely project implementation, and urged ISRBC to expedite processes and award as many contracts as possible by June 2025. The contract of the joint statement on navigation is ongoing, the contracts related to sustainable tourism, and to the flood and drought warning system are ongoing, while the procurement processes of two contracts – sediment, water and biota, and hydrology, amounting to a total of USD 1.8m – are ongoing and are expected to be awarded by March 2025.

Recently ISRBC submitted a revised timeline proposing an extension of closing date to June 2027 to successfully complete all activities, and achieve objectives. Major deliverables that will benefit from this extension are the update of the River Basin Management Plan, the Flood Risk Management Plan, and the sediment management plan, which will build on the outputs produced by ongoing activities. A discussion between ISRBC and the WB is ongoing to assess potential options to reduce this extension timeframe, and expedite implementation.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed as per WB ESF, and disclosed in Nov 2021. Since effectiveness of the grant, ISRBC has engaged with several stakeholder groups, representing the ISRBC working groups, national competent authorities in the Sava River Basin countries, international organizations such as the ICPDR, WMO, EUSDR, and the public through the official ISRBC web site, regarding each of the activity financed by the grant.

The method of engagement ranges from public consultations stakeholder forums to working meetings groups with representatives from member states, and forms part of the above-mentioned consultation process for the preparation of all activities' TORs, and will continue for all implementation phases. SDIP project continues to hold during missions regional workshops with all PIUs under the SDIP with the objective of fostering the regional spirit of the Project and promoting exchange and collaboration. The last workshop took place in Belgrade, Serbia and took 2 days. Representatives from all PIUs actively engaged in discussions on common issues around project implementation, such as procurement, environment and social risk mitigation and capacity building activities. The meeting presented tentative timeline and potential investments for preparation of Phase 2.

Regarding GRM, the ISRBC has published the Project Grievance Form, along with procedures, on the ISRBC website. No complaints have been received at this time. ISRBC continues to attend meetings with the Bank's environmental and social specialists on a monthly basis as part of regular implementation support.

C. Gender Equality

While there is no specific gender action plan for the grant-funded Component 4 of the SDIP, gender is incorporated into the following Results Indicator for ISRBC: Regional tourism master plan for the Sava and Drina Corridor that includes the establishment of a forum for women-headed SMEs is developed and

endorsed (Yes/No). The contract for this master plan was awarded in December 2024, and a kick-off workshop was held in January 2025 to present scope and proposed timeline for discussion with relevant stakeholders.

D. Knowledge Management

Several of the activities conducted by the ISRBC, under the GEF funded component 4, contribute to knowledge products and knowledge sharing, in particular the Hydrological Study for the Sava River Basin, and the Study on Sediment, Water and Biota in the Sava River Basin, and updates to the Flood and Low-Fow Forecasting and Warning System (FLFWS).

The Hydrological Study aims to to enhance knowledge of the water cycle components and their spatial and temporal distribution in the Sava River basin through a synopsis of different hydrological topics of special importance for a better assessment of development activities.

The Study on Sediment, Water and Biota aims to to enable steps toward the fulfilment of the requirements defined by Protocol on Sediment Management to the FASRB and to ensure knowledge base for development of the Sediment Management Plan in the Sava River Basin. As well to fill so far recognized gaps in the Sava RBMPs related to interlinkages between sediment, water and biota.

The FLFWS aims to improve the forecast of flood and low-flow events and the related warning procedures in the Sava River basin, thereby reducing the risks of loss of human life, damage to property, the environment, cultural heritage and the economy, and to increase the resilience of the entire society, taking into account the current climate variability and future climate change.

III. Core Indicators

Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem	Sava	Sava	Sava	
Count	1	1	1	0

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Sava	3	3	1	

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Sava	4	4	2	

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Sava	2	2	1	

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Sava	1	1	1	

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	27,500	110,000	0	
Male	22,500	90,000	0	
Total	50,000	200,000	0	0

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
Donor Agency	World Bank	Loans	Investment mobilized		47360000
Donor Agency	World Bank (WBIF)	Grant	Investment mobilized		8000000
Total Co-financing				0.00	55,360,000.00

Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	High or Substantial	High or Substantial	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

All of the activities of the International Sava River Basin Commission are of the nature of technical studies and assistance, and as such are rated as low risk so far. They continue to be aligned with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), as each of the Terms of Reference that have been reviewed and adequate provisions have integrated adequate requirements of the ESF. Furthermore, the Sava Commission has appointed an Environmental and a Social specialist to ensure full compliance with the ESF. Monthly E&S risk management monitoring meetings are conducted regularly and no E&S issues have been detected so far in regard to activities implemented by the Trust Fund.

However, the overall ESS risk of SDIP Program is High due to other activities, such as demining, and land acquisition aspects for some of the civil works in Montenegro, BiH and Serbia, as well as the complex administrative structure of the Project, and insufficient capacity for E&S risk management within the Implementation Agencies during Project preparation.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	10553-P175192-P168862-FY25-ISR-MTR-WB-Regional