**DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Drina Nexus Follow Up Project[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Component 1:** **MONITORING OF WATER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION**

Recommendation 1, **Further strengthen the formal and procedural basis for monitoring cooperation:** Extend participation in the data exchange in the framework of the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), including its data policy. Continue negotiation of pending bilateral agreements, integrating monitoring, assessment and data exchange, to establish the formal basis for monitoring cooperation, to be followed by practical steps like defining measurement and sampling sites as well as frequency and timing of common sampling, selecting indicators and determining measurement units. Agree about standard test methods for determination of the physical, chemical and biological indicators of water quality, and develop respective protocols. Establish regular meetings to help ensure the exchange and harmonization of the results.

Recommendation 2, **Monitoring water quality and status of waters**: Improve data regarding ambient water quality and ensure their comparability across borders, extending the coverage basin-wide, in cooperation with authorities in all three countries. Strengthen mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation including agencies responsible for water quality monitoring. Use existing studies of pressures and risks to screen substances for identification of priority indicators for specific locations and river sections. Continue harmonising monitoring and assessment methods, particularly concerning water quality in surface waters, building on experience of the Transnational Monitoring Network. Undertake regular participation in proficiency testing exercises for measuring, sampling and laboratory/analytical quality control in the existing cooperation frameworks, including the ISRBC and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR); intercalibration is particularly timely for defining type-specific class boundaries of biological quality elements and physico-chemical parameters which support the certain ecological status, since the riparians are progressively introducing hydrobiological monitoring.

Recommendation 3, **Identify and register pollution sources, hazardous substances in particular**: In general, with aim to provide reliable data on the emission of hazardous substances in the Drina River Basin riparian countries, it is recommended to develop registers of environmentally significant releases and transfers of pollutants. Develop emission registration by companies, e.g. by linking to water or operating licenses. Establish transboundary sharing of experience, e.g. related to disaggregating data by source and use of electronic tools. Complete data on the production of hazardous substances in industry, and data on the consumption of certain products used in agriculture such as pesticides and/or herbicides. Develop data management to move towards integrated environmental information.

Recommendation 4, **Identify and agree progressively about priorities for transboundary monitoring and assessment to strategically develop monitoring cooperation**: Upon advancement of the legal basis (recommendation 1) or through parallel projects, establish on the basis of significant water management issues and key pressure sources, a list of monitoring parameters and frequency of sampling for monitoring of pollutants. Defining such lists should be informed by a bilateral investigative monitoring of surface and groundwaters. This could include monitoring for definition of reference conditions, assessing need to monitor certain heavy metals where these occur due to wastewater discharges, mining and metal industry, or substances occurring in leachates downstream from non-sanitary landfills. Establish at jointly agreed priority locations transboundary monitoring. For joint priority setting and establishing monitoring, international good practice should be applied, including from the guidance under the Water Convention.

**COMPONENT 2: SEDIMENTATION (ADDRESSING THE PRESSURES ON WATER QUALITY)**

Recommendation 1, **Develop and update erosion maps to guide action**: Prepare new erosion maps and define areas prone to erosion every 10 years. Integrate erosion measures into spatial plans and forestry and agricultural master plans as well flood management and river basin management plans (RBMPs). Integrate the erosion and sedimentation map(s) developed in the current project into the Sava GIS.

Recommendation 2, **Apply and monitor appropriate erosion control measures:** Apply measures to reduce erosion and torrent impact in a coordinated fashion. Prepare and maintain cadastre of erosion areas and structures built for anti-erosion and torrent control purpose. Regularly assess the condition of existing structures and maintain them. Apply biological and biotechnical measures, exploring synergies, e.g. with flood control, forestry actions and biomass production, where appropriate.

Recommendation 3, **Raise awareness; promote and exchange good practice**: Raise awareness of sectoral actors and the population about the consequences of inadequate land use practices and appropriate/recommended anti-erosion measures. Exchange experience about good practices among the riparian countries.

Recommendation 4, **Establish a sediment monitoring system**: Set up or reactivate monitoring of suspended sediment at priority locations in the Drina Basin, considering as a possible starting point the stations proposed in the sediment monitoring system investigated and proposed for the whole Sava River Basin in relation to the Protocol on Sediment Management. Regularly survey the existing reservoirs in cooperation with the HPP/dam operators and analyse the sedimentation process development (including expected loss of reservoir capacity). Regularly survey cross sections along the Drina River and the main tributaries.

**COMPONENT 3: FLOW REGULATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS**

Recommendation 1, **Reconvene the Expert Group on Flow Regulation and Environmental Flows** (e-flows). Form a group of experts and authorities to progressively work towards adopting a harmonized methodological approach to determining environmental flows through upgrading the legal and regulatory basis ideally. Undertake, e.g. the following tasks

- Agree about a common set of definitions

- Share experience and good practice about environmental flows, including the legal basis and about application to different types of waters, monitoring (including biological)

- Agree about the key common features for approaches to e-flow: linking to the ecological status of water bodies, distinguishing what is feasible for old HPPs and new planned HPPs, heavily modified vs. natural water bodies etc. as appropriate. Different functions and uses to be reflected, move beyond biological minimum and building on hydrological approaches gradually.

- Assess the value of defining indicators for critical environmental flows

Consider extending the dialogue to the Sava countries later, on the ISRBC platform.

Recommendation 2, **Assessment of the current e-flow methods for harmonization potential**. Carry out a realistic assessment of e-flow calculation possibilities in the basin, based on current monitoring capabilities and country-level legal requirements. Build on the results of the project “Support to Water Resources Management in the Drina River Basin”. Review the legal aspects of methods for calculation of environmental flows, determine the scope of e-flows, select reference methods. Formulate a strategy for e-flow method selection according to the degree of conflict, urgency in time and costs. Validate methods through selected pilot studies. Evaluate the role and potential for use of e-flows in achievement of environmental objectives according to the WFD (e.g. in the context of the 2nd Sava RBMP, if appropriate)

Recommendation 3, **Initiate a dialogue about operational rules for the HPPs between the power companies and authorities, supported by the necessary studies and data**: Start discussing about developing harmonized or coordinated operational rules for all the major HPPs to reflect relevant issues, water uses and functions. Promote transparency about the operational rules and regimes. Improve sharing of and access to hydrological and other relevant monitoring data, and identify by river section the critical flow issues and related needs: flooding, sediment management, water shortage (including in relation to other/future uses), environmental flows, recreational uses etc. Determine the role of flow control for erosion and deformation of the river course and floating solid trash (landfills), pressures on water quality (dilution needs). Estimate the implications of flow regulation adjustments to electricity generation for an informed dialogue between the power sector and water management authorities. Clarify and jointly agree strategically where in the Drina Basin (small) hydropower development is possible and where not.

Recommendation 4, **Identify for best international practices options for sustainable coordination and optimization for flow regulation in the Drina**: Evaluate the relevance for the Drina of selected international experiences about diverse flow regulation aspects that have been formalized in some way elsewhere, as agreements, protocols, permit conditions, contractual or other legal/institutional arrangements. These include, for example, conditions for spare reservoir capacity as flood protection measure, compensating energy generation losses upon deviations from agreed discharge regime, specifying by a fine time-step flow requirements according to hydrological conditions (e.g. precipitation as threshold), determining flow releases to meet the requirements of ecosystem needs; swaps of electricity and balancing services, coordinated sediment wash out, river contracts etc.

**COMPONENT** **4: PROMOTING INVESTMENT INTO SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY WITH THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE**

Recommendation 1, **Addressing trade-offs and synergies in national renewable energy (RE) policies**: Revise existing RE policies to better address the need to promote/incentivise synergetic projects and projects with minimal trade-offs, such as renewable energy installations that are well-integrated in the built infrastructure, energy recovery from wastewater treatment, etc. To support this process, formalize a high-level, strategic policy dialogue to discuss common interests (among energy, water, agriculture and environment sectors) that can be achieved through sustainable RE deployment.

Recommendation 2, **Ensure sustainability of RE deployment in the Drina River Basin**. Map and quantify the potential for sustainable RE development in the Drina River Basin beyond hydropower, which competitiveness compared to other technologies should be re-evaluated also considering the braider value of environmental assets and ecosystem protection needs. Understand the role that the Drina River Basin with its natural resources can play in achieving the countries’ targets on RE, climate action, but also other sustainable development objectives. Hence, strategically prioritize sites and technologies that optimize RE exploitation by maximizing positive and minimizing/offsetting negative impacts (including transboundary), building on the “renewable- energy nexus tool” for renewable energy deployment.

Recommendation 3, **Streamlining the process of RE projects to optimize and to reduce risks**: Address the trade-offs associated to RE deployment early in the decision-making process of selecting and siting projects, comparing technological alternatives and applying the principle “avoid, mitigate, compensate” by effectively using spatial planning, permitting and assessments (notably Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment). Design RE projects in a way that explicitly exploits cross-sectoral synergies and multiplies social benefits. Explore co-financing opportunities (across sectors, countries, public and private) for such projects. Broaden the participation and empowerment of local communities and other key stakeholders and the public in the decision-making process to reduce the social and political risks associated with RE investments.

Recommendation 4, **Accelerate the sustainable energy transition in Serbia through multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral dialogue**. Accelerate and promote the recognition of the practical means to achieve a sustainable energy transition in Serbia, through high-level policy commitments. Establish clear targets beyond 2020 and formulate a roadmap and a clear long-term policy direction to achieve them, also considering the regional dimension of energy cooperation. Apply the existing legal framework on RE and introduce transparent and fair auction rules for RE projects taking into account of other mechanisms for small-size projects. Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues and public consultations focused on the sustainable energy transition, to include in it both social and environmental considerations, and related benefits. Implement the cross-sectoral approach to RE deployment by enhancing inter-ministerial cooperation initiatives.

Recommendation 5, **Enhance biomass sustainability and incentivise RE power generation at small and large scale, in Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Establish a clear methodology to quantify biomass consumption in households and to monitor progress towards achieving targets to 2030. Adopt a law specifically for district heating and heat energy systems and incentivize the sector, either at the production side (especially regarding heat and Combined Heat and Power (CHP)) or the fuel side (incentives to produce modern feedstocks). Retain feed in tariff (FiT) regime for small-scale RE production (threshold of small-scale eligibility to be defined) and include additional mechanism for community energy initiatives and self-consumption. Implement a support scheme based on feed-in premiums (FiP) through capacity auctions for large projects. Finally, address the key issue of fossil fuel subsidies (especially coal) and consider measures for their phasing out, and other market distortions as a prerequisite for the sustainable energy transition.

1. Implemented 2018-2019 by the secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and financed by the Ministry for the Environment Land and the Sea of Italy. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)