



**The World Bank**

GEF Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program (P175192)

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# Project Information Document (PID)

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Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 17-Nov-2021 | Report No: PIDA30895

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Western Balkans	Project ID P175192	Project Name GEF Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program	Parent Project ID (if any) P168862
Parent Project Name Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program	Region EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date 07-Dec-2021	Estimated Board Date 27-Jan-2022
Practice Area (Lead) Water	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro	Implementing Agency Republic of Serbia Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Montenegro Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Republika Srpska Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water, Republic of Serbia Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, International Sava River Basin Commission
GEF Focal Area  International waters			
Proposed Development Objective(s) Parent  The Objective of the Project (Phase I of the Program) is to improve flood protection and enhance transboundary water cooperation in the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors.			
Components  Integrated Management and Development of the Sava River Corridor Integrated Management and Development of the Drina River Corridor Project Preparation and Management Regional Activities			

**PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)****SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	0.00
Total Financing	8.00
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	-8.00

**DETAILS****Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Trust Funds	8.00
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	8.00

## Environmental and Social Risk Classification

High

Other Decision (as needed)

**B. Introduction and Context**

1. **The Sava and Drina rivers form a natural connecting backbone for the region.** A pivotal feature of the Western Balkans region is the Sava River Basin, one of Europe's largest transboundary basins. It covers over one third of the Western Balkans in area and population, and physically connects the five riparian countries through inland waterways. The Sava river is the basin's mainstay. It is navigable between Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and Croatia (from which it continues upstream into Slovenia) and is connected at its mouth to the Danube river (of which it is one of the largest tributaries), thus linking these countries to Danube riparian markets and to international markets via the Black Sea. The Drina river is the Sava's largest tributary, draining over a 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> mountainous area, half the size of Switzerland. The economy and jobs in the region depend heavily on these shared water resources, whether to transport goods, generate energy, grow food and fibers, sustain biodiversity, or provide for leisure and eco-tourism activities.

2. **The Sava and Drina have a proclivity for both dry spells and devastating floods—most recently occurring in 2010 and 2014<sup>1</sup>.** The 2014 Sava flood—the largest flood in a century—caused 79 casualties

<sup>1</sup> Average annual temperatures in the region are projected to rise by about 1.8°C by 2050 (with the highest increases in the



and damages totaling €1.5 billion in Serbia (4.7% of GDP), €2.0 billion in BiH (15% of GDP), and €300 million in Croatia (0.5% of GDP). In 2010 the Drina Basin was flooded extensively—partly due to spilling hydropower reservoirs—and saw its highest water levels in 100 years. The trends and changes in mean values of precipitation, evapotranspiration, and discharges in this basin are well documented and indicate that climate change is expected to cause more intense flood and drought episodes, both in terms of scope and duration.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, current climate change projections for the Sava River Basin foresee a rise in flood peaks of up to 8 percent, and droughts occurring with increased frequency and intensity. While droughts are particularly unfavorable to navigation,<sup>3</sup> they also negatively affect agricultural production, biodiversity, fisheries, and energy generation,<sup>4</sup> and raise water demand. Floods and droughts thus create risks for livelihoods and impose constraints on trade, food security, and productive investment. These climate change related risks have led to increased receptivity for transboundary cooperation on flood protection and water resources management in the region, and thus have served as the main impetus for this project.

**3. The hydraulic infrastructure in the Sava and Drina rivers, while nominally extensive, has been poorly maintained and only partially modernized and expanded since the conflicts of the 1990s and the breakup of Yugoslavia, hampering regional economic integration and suppressing growth.** Years of neglect, a lack of avenues for lasting cross-border collaboration on waterway development projects—as the Sava river is also the border between Croatia and BiH for much of its navigable fairway—and remnants from the war itself, in the form of land mines still present along the river's right bank within BiH, have severely deteriorated navigation standards. Similarly, in the Drina, a sustained lack of maintenance and investments in upgrades to make infrastructure able to withstand climate change-related extreme weather events has reduced the capacity of the river's cascade of reservoirs to be resilient to service disruptions and to safeguard nearby communities from climate-related risks, such as major flooding events (the devastating floods of 2014 being the most recent example).

**4. As such, the Sava River Basin has considerable untapped potential as an enabler of economic growth, regional connectivity, resilience to climate change risks, social cohesion, and job creation.** Income per capita among the riparian countries ranges from US\$6,000-9,000 (Serbia, BiH, Montenegro) to US\$15,000 (Croatia) and US\$26,000 (Slovenia), signaling opportunities for income convergence. As the Sava flows from west to east across Slovenia, Croatia, and BiH, ultimately reaching the Danube in Serbia, and, via the Danube, connecting the region with other parts of Europe and the Black Sea, the river offers a tangible opportunity to address the need for re-establishing it as a core economic corridor and as a

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southern parts of BiH, Serbia, and Montenegro). Overall annual mean precipitation is expected to decrease by 10–20%. Precipitation is expected to become more variable, resulting in a higher number of days with intense weather events, and dry spells becoming more severe and prolonged (by around five days). Available hydrological analyses estimate a decrease of 20–25% in runoff. Under these conditions, the frequency and severity of floods, droughts, and extreme weather are expected to increase.

[Source: UNDP. 2013. *Natural Disaster Risks and Risk Assessment in South East Europe*].

<sup>2</sup> R. Milačić et al. (eds.) 2015. *The Sava River. The Handbook of Environmental Chemistry*. DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-44034-6\_2. Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.

<sup>3</sup> Schwarz, U. 2016. Sava White Book. *The River Sava: Threats and Restoration Potential*. Radolfzell/Wien: EuroNatur/Riverwatch.

<sup>4</sup> Thermal power plants need water for cooling purposes, while hydropower plants need water for electricity generation.



driver of low-carbon multimodal transportation. There is also an urgent need to pursue no-regret investments; for example, investments to help maintain the water flow at levels suitable for navigation (imperiled by recurring droughts), thereby reducing flood risk and strengthening the social and economic resilience of the communities within the Sava's catchment in the face of climate change. Similarly, the Drina corridor has significant potential for food production and tourism development, while the 2014 floods have shown the importance of improved management and protection of its existing reservoirs.

#### A. Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. Since the mid-1990s, several regional and international treaties and associated protocols have been established to underpin transboundary collaboration in the Sava River Basin, most notably the **Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB)**. Signed in 2002 by the Sava riparian countries (at the time, the Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Croatia, BiH, and the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), the FASRB calls, *inter alia*, for cooperation among the signatory parties towards more sustainable water resources management across the basins and the resilience of communities in the basin to adverse weather events, such as floods and droughts. The **International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)** is a Zagreb-based regional institution established in 2005 to oversee implementation of the latter FASRB provisions on behalf of the signatory parties<sup>5</sup>. Since inception, ISRBC has served as a platform for multilateral dialogue in the region, has supported basin development through planning, and has coordinated the delivery of practical tools such as a River Information Services (RIS). In delivering on its mandate, ISRBC has historically collaborated with other international institutions, including the European Commission and the World Bank, such as in the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sava River Basin Management Plan of 2014.

6. Despite tangible accomplishments by ISRBC and the FASRB signatories, the continued need for improvement in water management among Sava-Drina riparian countries demonstrates the challenge of deepening regional coordination on shared natural resources. Both the Sava and Drina waterways have the particularity that critical portions of their length mark the border between riparian countries—for example, between Croatia and BiH in the case of the Sava, where the border splits the river down the middle of its navigable fairway. This renders most interventions in the Sava within the territories of Croatia and BiH transboundary by nature, making it necessary for infrastructure investments to be planned and executed in a coordinated manner on both sides of the border. In other words, transboundary collaboration is an essential condition for the development of this shared resource, and the lack of it has hampered regional economic integration and associated economic development to date.

7. Partly in response to the above challenges, over the past 13 years the Bank has engaged the region extensively with policy advice, technical assistance, and investments. At the national level, the Bank has supported water programs covering different sub-sectors. Ongoing activities at the regional level

<sup>5</sup> Montenegro gained sovereignty after the ISRBC was established and cooperates on a technical level with the signatory parties to the FASRB based on a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between ISRBC and Montenegro, signed in Belgrade on December 9, 2013.



include the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded Drina River Basin Management Project (Drina GEF) and the BiH Drina Floods Protection project. After years of engagement, the riparian countries are working with the Bank to develop a regional investment program that can turn the recommendations from previous technical assistance at the national and regional level into tangible outcomes on ground.

8. The proposed **Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program (SDIP)** supports integrated water cooperation, by investing in infrastructure improvements and complementary measures that take into account the current and expected impact of climate change. Specifically, the project intends to address the climate change-exacerbated risk of floods and droughts, thus increasing the resilience of the targeted areas' economic activities and residents to these threats. Given the basin's transboundary nature, this will be achieved by supporting coordinated development and management of shared water resources across countries in the basin. The integrated management and development approach envisaged in this program is one that will promote the coordinated and multisectoral planning and utilization of the water and related resources of the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors in order to maximize economic and social benefits, without compromising the sustainability of these vital natural resources.

9. The integrated management and development approach envisaged in this program is one that will promote the coordinated and multisectoral planning and utilization of the water and related resources of the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors in order to maximize economic and social benefits, without compromising the sustainability of these vital natural resources. This will be achieved progressively throughout the program as presented in Figure 1 below, which illustrates the positioning of SDIP as a bridge towards a more integrated development approach for the Sava and Drina corridors.

**FIGURE 1. POSITIONING OF THE SDIP PROGRAM IN THE BANK'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE SAVA AND DRINA RIVERS CORRIDORS**

		Moving towards regional cooperation 2010-2019		2020-2026	SDIP	2023-2030	Beyond 2030	
		National initiatives	Regional initiatives				Beyond SDIP	
ISRBC				Water cooperation <i>River Basin Management Plan, Floods forecasting, data sharing, Tourism Development Plan, etc.</i>		Integrated Sava/Drina corridors development		
	BiH	Drina Floods Protection Project		WBIF and other TAs (through ISRBC and SEETO)	Floods protection investments	Integrated investments		
Serbia	Floods Emergency Recovery Project	Drina GEF TA - Floods management - Water planning Drina ESMAP - Energy optimization study		Preparation of Phase II integrated investments including demining of Sava in BiH		- Navigation - Flood protection - Hydropower optimization - Environmental improvements - Recreation and tourism		
Montenegro				Awaiting demining				
Croatia <sup>1</sup>				No investments planned				
Slovenia								

National activities

Regional activities

Integrated investments



### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

#### Original PDO

The Objective of the Project (Phase I of the Program) is to improve flood protection and enhance transboundary water cooperation in the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors.

#### Current PDO

The Objective of the Project (Phase I of the Program) is to improve flood protection and enhance transboundary water cooperation in the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors.

#### Key Results

The PDO level indicators are:

- People protected from 1 in 100-year flood event in the Sava and Drina River Basin under the project (of which female) (Number).
  - This indicator also provides data for GEF Core Indicator 11 “Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment”. Target for GEF Core Indicator will be adjusted to reflect the appropriate scope to correspond with the size of the investment.
- Areas protected by flood risk mitigation measures under the project (hectares)
- River basin management plan reflecting integrated measures updated and endorsed by countries (Yes/No)
  - This indicator also provides data for GEF Core Indicator 7 “Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management”.

### D. Project Description

10. The ongoing parent Project Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program (SDIP)(P168862) Phase I aims to improve flood protection and enhance transboundary water cooperation in the Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors. This will be achieved through (1) integrated management and development of the Sava River Corridor, (2) integrated management and development of the Drina River Corridor, (3) project preparation and management, and (4) regional activities. SDIP aligns with the development priorities identified in the Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) of the riparian countries.<sup>6</sup> Common development priorities stated in the CPFs across Sava River Basin riparians include investments

<sup>6</sup> CPFs are available for BiH (World Bank Report 99616, December 15, 2015), Croatia (World Bank Report 130706, May 2, 2019), Serbia (World Bank Report 94687, June 23, 2015), and Montenegro (World Bank Report 105039, June 16, 2016).



in economic infrastructure to enhance growth, enhancement of coping capacity against environmental risks, and protection of natural resources to achieve sustainable growth. These overarching goals are adjusted to reflect country-specific circumstances and priorities in the respective national programs. Analytical studies and physical investments related to environmental management, flood protection, and waterway improvements included in this program are also consistent with GEF's strategic long-term priorities for international waters.

11. The original IBRD loan was approved by the Board of Executive Directors on August 6, 2020 for an amount of US\$133.9 million equivalent. The parent project became effective since September 2021.

12. The parent Project represents an innovative and integrated approach to transboundary water resources management. Social and environmental risks are rated high due to the complexity of the Project.

13. During the preparation of the parent Project, regional activities (Component 4) expected to be financed from GEF grant were discussed and agreed to with the participating governments and the International Sava River Basin Commission. These regional activities were integrated in the parent Project's original design and appraised under the assumption that funds from the GEF grant would be confirmed and committed within the first year of project implementation. Specific reference to the GEF grant was made in the PAD of the Project.

14. Since the GEF grant financing application was initiated after the parent Project was appraised, the grant amount (US\$8 million) was included as a financing gap to be processed as Additional Finance (AF). The AIS and Concept Memorandum for the AF were reviewed and approved by the Country Director on April 14, 2020, and the GEF Council approved the application during its June 2020 Council meeting. A virtual decision review was conducted and a decision note approved on August 5, 2021.

15. The GEF activities were appraised technically along with the rest of the operation, therefore no adjustment is needed on activities, result indicators and number of beneficiaries.

16. Phase I activities have been identified and prepared through ongoing Bank support in the region as well as other initiatives financed by national resources and other financiers including GEF. This phase will allow trust-building and learning while financing activities of limited complexity and interdependency. Sub-projects will be implemented at national level and will have cumulative regional benefits. Phase I will also finance the preparation of additional transformational, multi-purpose regional investments to be financed under Phase II. Requested GEF funding will support the prioritization and preparation of activities related to the regional dialogue and studies that enhance transboundary water cooperation, flood early warning system and risk management, wetland protection and management plan that feeds into a master plan for eco-tourism in the Sava and Drina River Basins. This component, solely financed by GEF IW focal area, will serve as a crucial confidence building platform that will bring together the national actors and strengthen the institutions and procedures through which the Sava riparian countries collaborate.

17. The parent Project is fully aligned with GEF7 Programming Directions, international water focal area strategy, Objective 3 – enhancing water security in freshwater ecosystems. The GEF grant financing will enable the governments to: 1) advance information exchange and early warning through



enhancement of the regional flood monitoring, forecasting and management system; 2) enhance regional and national cooperation on shared freshwater resources through the update of the updated Sava River Basin Management plan and promotion of joint decision making among national, regional and global stakeholders; and 3) improve flood and environmental management through studies on and promotion of nature based solutions.

18. The Regional activities component (US\$8 million, all GEF Grant) is key to strengthening strategic regional dialogue, joint planning and sustainable management and development of the shared water resources in the Sava and Drina River Basin, including building resilience to climatic shocks. It will support policy dialogue, consultations, preparation of basin-wide plans and studies, and investments to strengthen the nexus between water services and development and economic cooperation objectives of the Sava and Drina Corridor. These activities are aligned with the World Bank's Green Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID) approach to recovery and ECA's green transition priorities, especially on natural capital renewal and disaster and climate resilience. They are also aligned with the World Bank's COVID-19 approach paper, i.e. "strengthening policies, institutions, and investments for rebuilding better". This Component will finance the establishment including operations of the Regional Task Force and Regional Implementation Unit, which will bring together the national actors to monitor project progress, review and adjust overall program implementation, promote knowledge exchange and good practices. This component will promote joint action and decision making in river basin management and flood risk management among riparian countries, thus enhancing the climate adaptation capacity of the region. The component will also allow for the preparation of key regional studies and plans that will further inform the design of the Program, including:

- Technical studies supporting the Sava River Basin management and filling the gaps in trans-boundary water management and planning processes, such as a hydrological study for the Sava River Basin, analysis of sediment, water and biota in the Sava River Basin, and a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Sava River Basin,;
- The upgraded Sava River Basin Management Plan itself, building on the afore-mentioned studies and national River Basin Management Plans;
- Further water cooperation and corridor development studies and plans, such as a Regional ecotourism strategy including nature-based solutions;
- Improvement in regional resilience management and forecasting, such as advanced flood and drought monitoring, forecasting and management systems;
- Regional collaboration advocacy and communication activities.

19. River Basin Management Plans and Hydrological assessments will ultimately support integrated water resources management and development, thereby indirectly increasing the resilience of riparian countries to climate change. The first Sava River Basin Management Plan was adopted by the countries in December 2014 and requires to be updated every 6 years, while the development of the 2nd RBMP which is included as a milestone in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region is ongoing and it will be finalized in



2021, tentatively. To fill the gaps in the 1st and 2nd Sava River Basin Management Plans, results of aforementioned technical studies will be included in the upgraded Sava River Basin Management Plan developed through the SDIP. The study on sediment, water and biota will provide environmental data for preparation of the first sediment management plan for the Sava River Basin. A regional ecotourism strategy will be developed as part of the strategy for promoting nature-based solutions to harness ecotourism and economic growth through wetland protection, job creation and other benefits. While the eco-tourism master plan will not be implemented by this project, it has the potential to engage more SMEs once implemented.

20. In addition, 1% of the GEF financing will go towards IW:LEARN<sup>7</sup> which will support an advocacy and communication plan to facilitate partnerships between participating countries to stimulate knowledge sharing and capacity building while implementing activities related to regional dialogue and studies. ISRBC already has an official website, and a webpage can be developed for this component featuring project experiences and attendance in relevant conferences including the bi-annual IW conference.

#### Legal Operational Policies

	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	Yes
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

#### Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

21. The overall Program (parent project) is rated with an overall High Risk. In respect to environmentally related risks and impacts, they are wide ranging in both the scope and nature, as Project related activities include many stakeholders and sectors, the most important being water transport, water supply and sanitation, irrigation, energy generation, municipal and tourism development, nature protection and development, agriculture production, floods and drought management etc. Additional complexities are brought by involvement of several countries with insufficient experience of horizontal, vertical and/or international institutional cooperation. Specific investments, if not well managed, may have high negative impacts on soil, air, protected areas and natural habitats, water quality and use, dam safety, energy use, cultural resources. The high incidence of protected areas and sites along both rivers, and a number of endemic species both on land and in water along with a very rich cultural heritage warrants multiple areas and applicability of all relevant standards, including ESS1 that warrants preparation of SESAs, Regional and Sectoral Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs), site

<sup>7</sup> IW:LEARN is GEF's International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network.



specific ESAs and ESMs, also in line with the three countries' ESMFs; ESS3 related to management of resources and their sound use and management of possibly hazardous wastes and UXOs (also linked to ESS4); protection of various flora and fauna and natural resources under ESS6, and identification and proper protection procedures of cultural heritage under ESS8.

22. The Serbia ESMF, ESCP, RPF, SEP and LMP were disclosed on 19 December 2019, with public consultations held on 30 December 2019 in Belgrade.

23. The Bosnia and Herzegovina ESMF, ESCP, RPF, SEP and LMP were disclosed on December 31, 2019, with public consultations held on January 29, 2020 in the City of Banja Luka.

24. The Montenegro ESMF, ESCP, RPF, SEP and LMP were disclosed on December 30, 2019, with public consultations held on January 24, 2020 in Municipality of Bijelo Polje.

25. Specifically, for the AF that will cover only part of the Program (Component 4 of the originally appraised Program), all technical assistance, design documentation and other preparatory instruments to be developed under the Phase 1 of the Program will also integrate environmental and social protection measures from a design standpoint and not just identification and mitigation of associated impacts, in line with the World Bank ESF and all relevant standards. The protection measures will be in line with all of the documents prepared for the parent project (Phase 1 of the Program) and all of the applicable ESSs. The Regional PIU to be formed within the Commission shall include an environmental and social specialist appointed from the Commission staff with additional support from externally hired specialists as needed,) that will ensure the studies are prepared in line with the ESF, but also to coordinate further work and actual implementation that lies with the national PIUs formed for the parent project (Phase 1 of the Program).

26. The associated ESCP for Component 4 was disclosed on March 16, 2021 by the International Sava River Basin Commission and re-disclosed in its final version along with a project Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) in November 2021.

## **E. Implementation**

### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

27. SDIP will be implemented by participating countries in a coordinated manner through two levels of coordination at regional and national levels. The regional activities to be financed by this grant, will be implemented by the ISRBC Secretariat and a regional task force consisting of a senior official(s) of the ISRBC Secretariat and country senior officials from key sectors such as water, transport, energy, and tourism will facilitate dialogue and cooperation in the region. The task force will be supported by ISRBC Secretariat and financially supported by the grant financing. Meetings of the task force will be held in principle twice a year and chaired by Secretary of ISRBC. Meetings will provide a space for exchange of the information about activities on national and regional level that

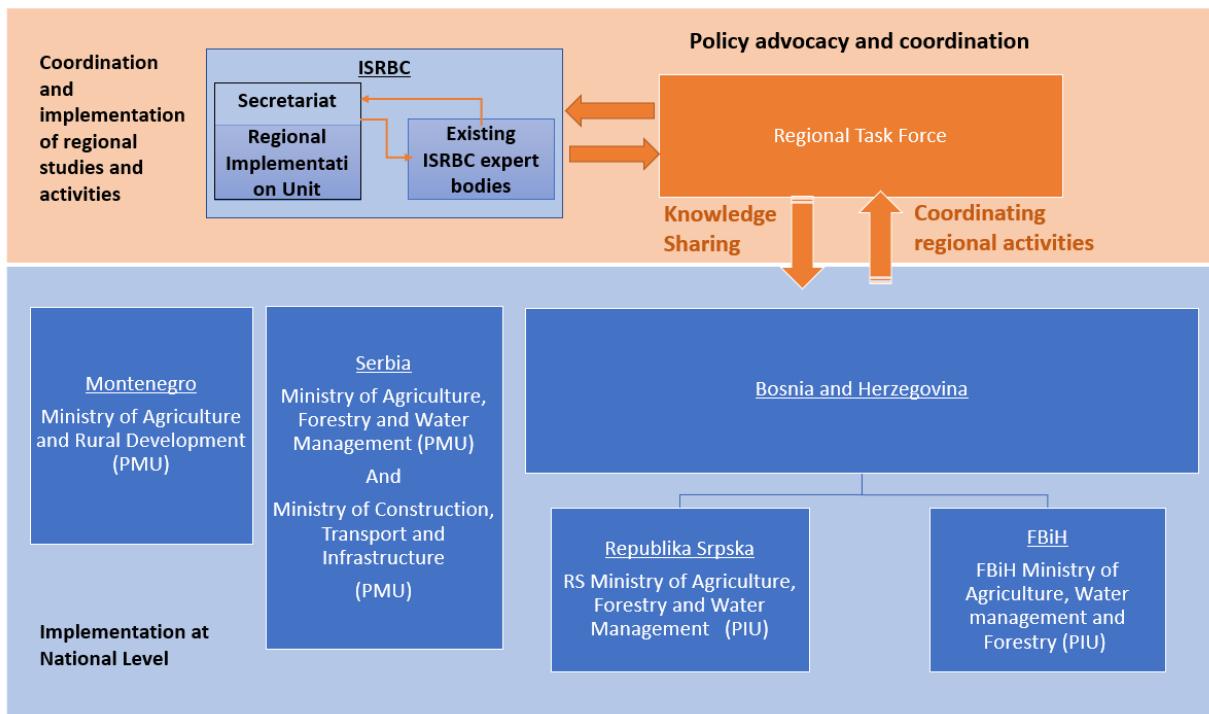


will be presented by national PIUs and regional PIU respectively. Regional task force will provide a platform to facilitate knowledge exchange and sharing of good practices, as well as provide strategic oversight and guidance for the implementation of regional activities, ensuring stronger transboundary cooperation. During implementation, other sectors will be engaged as and when the need arises.

28. A new regional project implementation unit will be housed within ISRBC secretariat to implement regional activities under component 4. A grant agreement will be signed with the ISRBC outlining the agreed activities and implementation arrangements, once grant funding is secured. The grant agreement will be implemented following World Bank fiduciary and safeguard guidelines. During the appraisal of the regional activities, a capacity needs assessment was conducted. The ISRBC does have sufficient capacity to implement these activities with the exception of safeguards and procurement specialists, who will be hired through this grant, to ensure the smooth implementation of these regional activities.

29. At the national level, implementation will be undertaken by project implementation units within line ministries of each country. PIUs/PMUs comprising of the required technical and managerial expertise to support project implementation will be established or strengthened.

FIGURE 2. INSTITUTIONAL AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> This figure illustrates the implementation arrangements for the MPA program. Some of the PIUs/PMUs may not be present during phase I of the program.

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 Country Director: | Jerry A. Lebo | 30-Nov-2021 |