



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

16th Joint Statement Follow up meeting

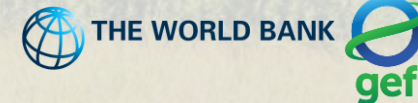
October, 22 2025

Budapest, Hungary

Project implemented by In collaboration with



Funded by



Background and Project Objectives

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

- In 2017, the ISRBC formulated the **Joint Plan of Actions** for the Sava River Basin
- JPA highlighted the opportunity for the sustainable development of river related tourism sectors, particularly **ecotourism, nautical tourism, and cycling**.
- Through the **SDIP-Phase I**, the ISRBC engaged a specialized consulting firm to create a comprehensive **Master Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Sava River Basin**.
- Contract signed December 2024 (14 months)

Countries included in the Master Plan development



MAIN OBJECTIVE

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

KEY TOPICS

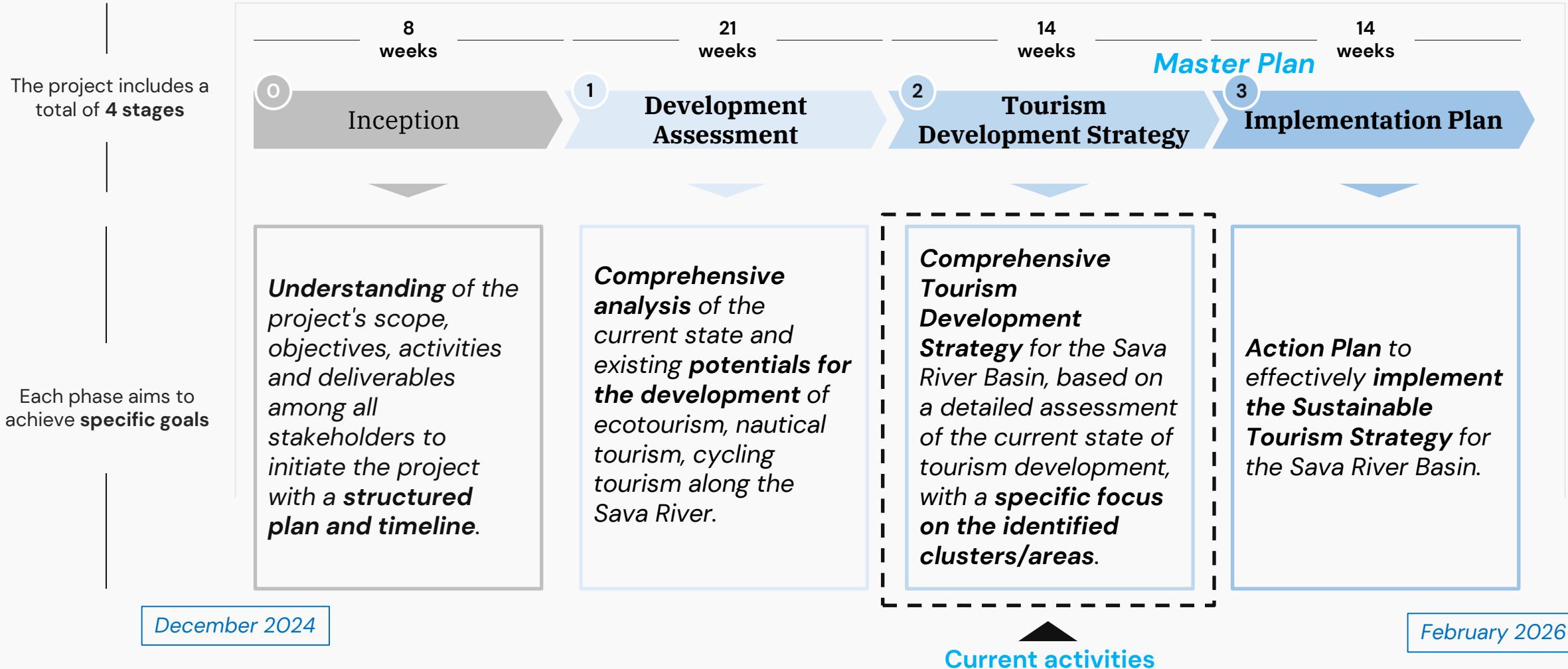


SUB-OBJECTIVES

- ✓ **Sustainable Tourism Development:** Focus on ecotourism, nautical tourism, and cycling tourism, complemented by robust infrastructure to support these activities.
- ✓ **Environmental and Cultural Stewardship:** Prioritize ecosystem conservation, biodiversity, and cultural heritage preservation, ensuring minimal negative impact.
- ✓ **Collaborative Action and Stakeholder Engagement:** Encourage cooperation across the basin, build stakeholder capacity, and foster community involvement to strengthen tourism offerings.
- ✓ **Innovation and Investment:** Leverage digital technologies to enhance visitor experiences and drive investments in sustainable tourism



Timeline for the Project implementation



Assessment of the current status-Methodology

Five main macro-assessments

INTERNAL ANALYSIS

1

current tourism, environmental, navigation, and social conditions

DEMAND ANALYSIS

2

Tourism arrivals in order to project future tourism volumes.

EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

3

External factors existing beyond the reality of the Sava River basin—that may influence the basin to varying degrees from a tourism perspective.

STAKEHOLDER INTERACTION

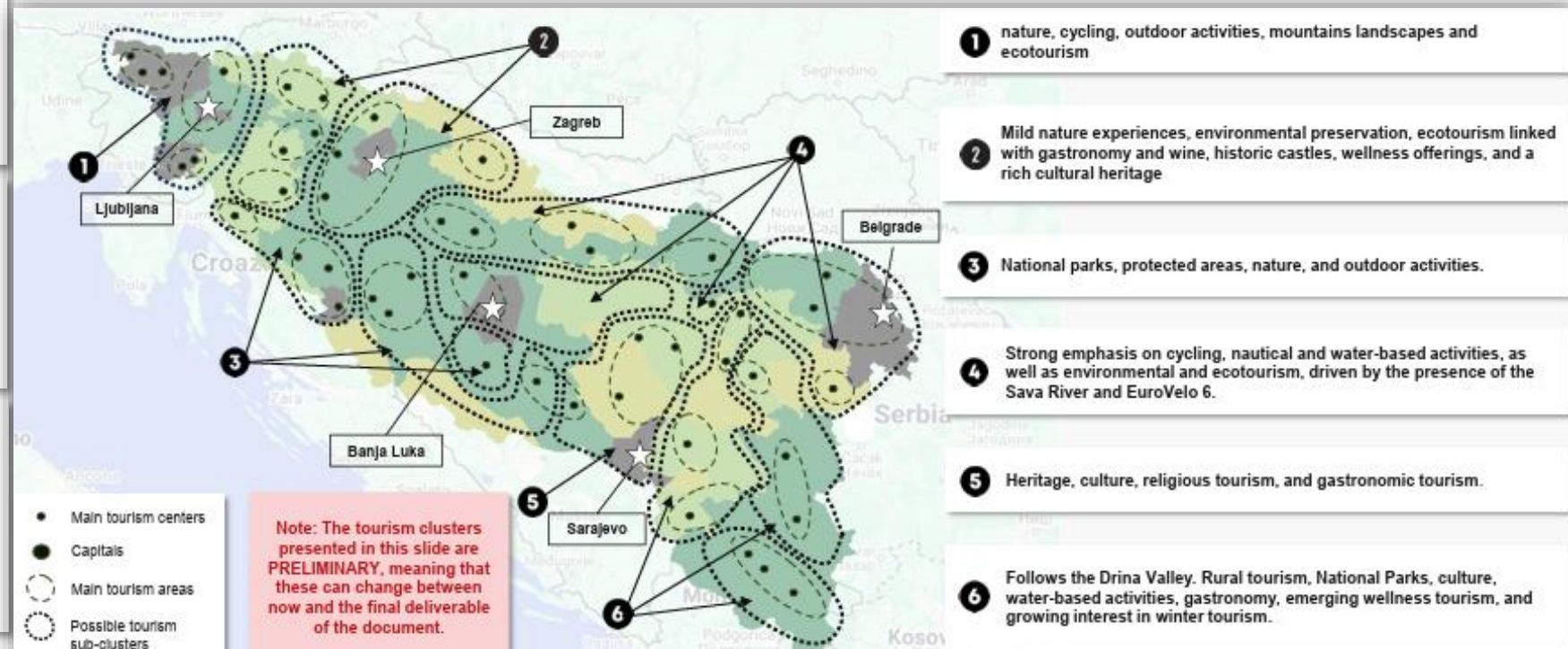
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Interaction types used to engage broad network

SWOT

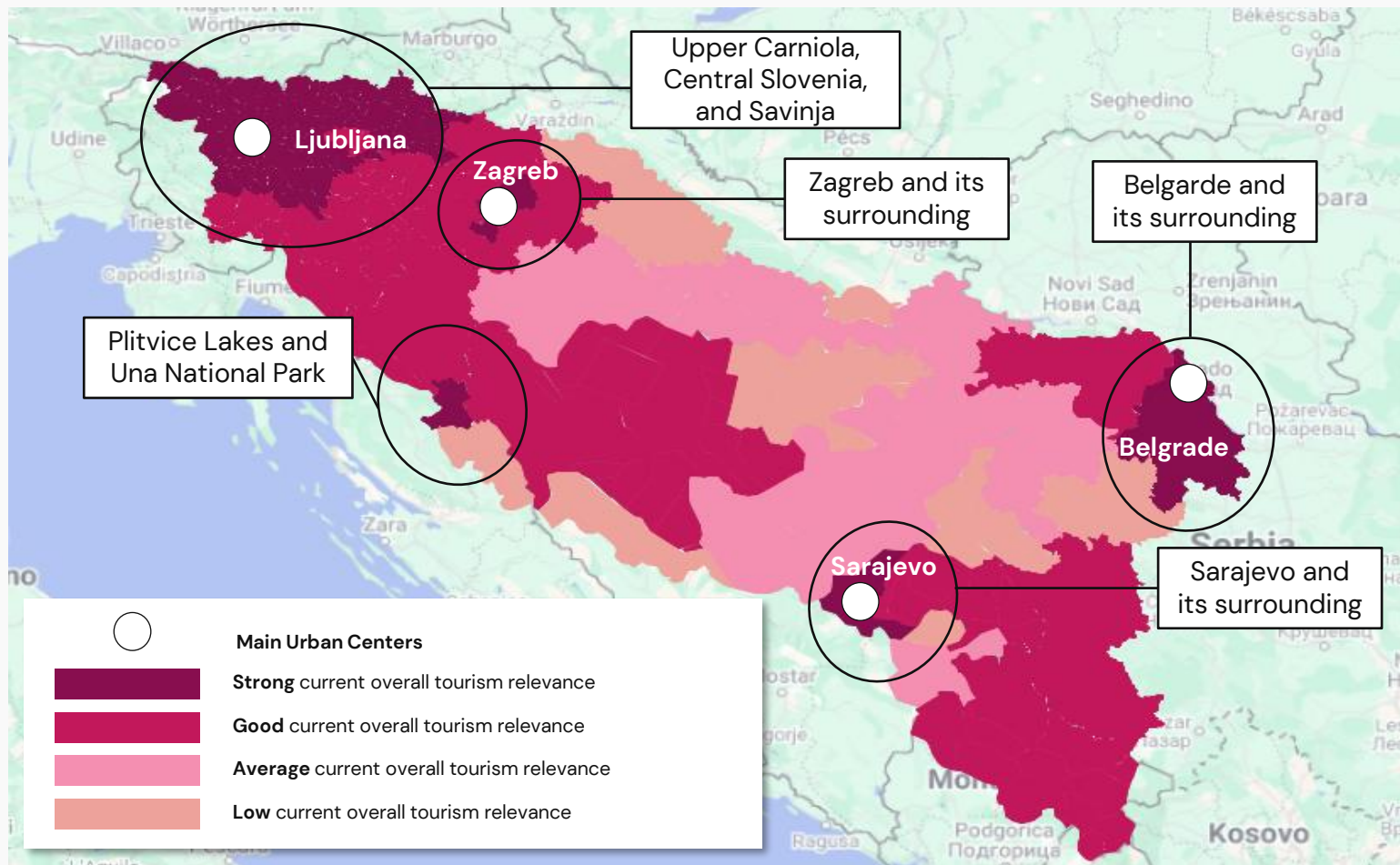
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The detailed SWOT analysis was performed for each of the cluster/areas

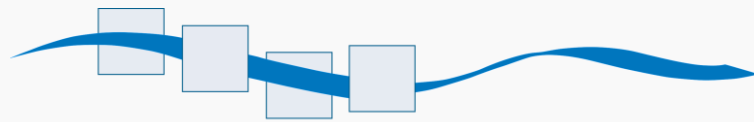


Current levels of tourism development across the Sava River basin

(identified by combining the Geospatial Mapping and Value Chain Assessment results)



- Analysis highlights :
 - areas currently **attracting the most tourism** and
 - those that already **demonstrate strong tourism development** in terms of, services, amenities, and infrastructure.
- Recognizing these areas was crucial to identifying **tourism zones** that can already be considered **anchor destinations** within the Sava River basin.

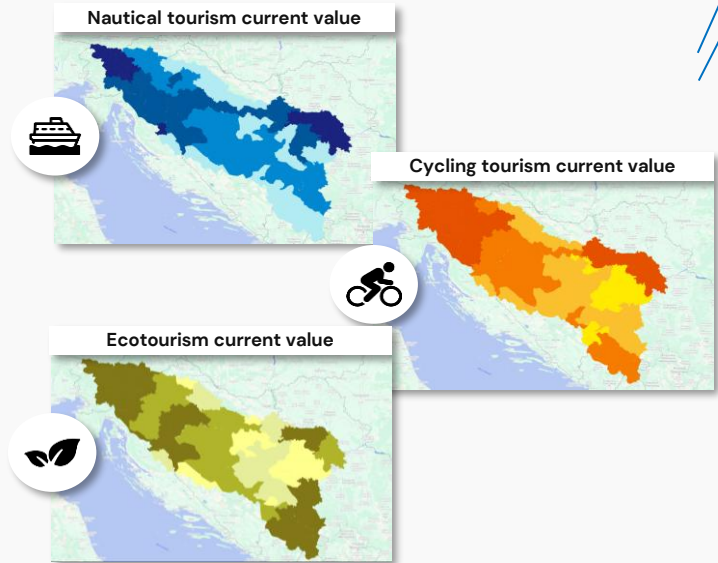


INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Assessment of current status and potentials for ecotourism, cycling tourism, and nautical tourism development

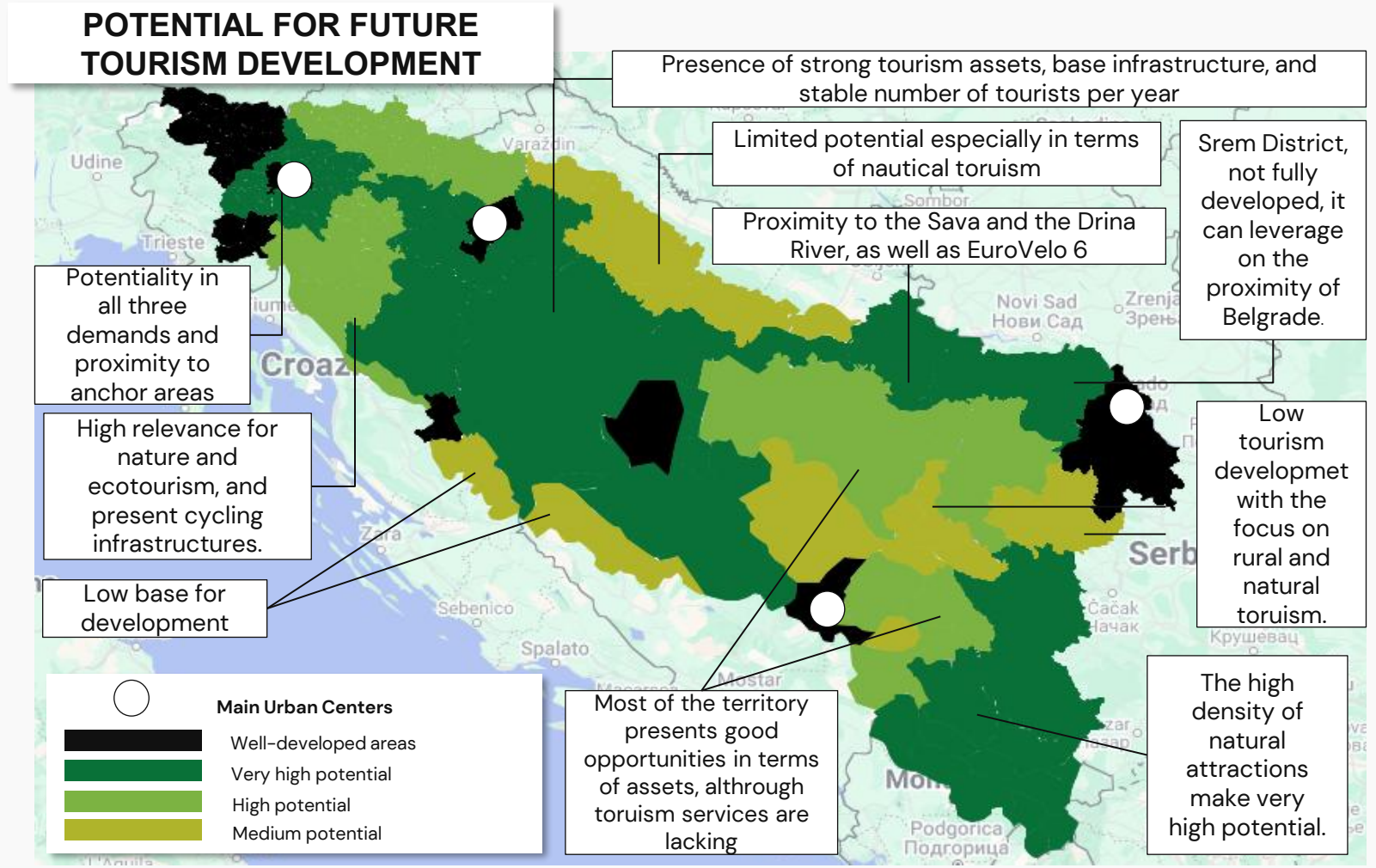
The assessment led to the creation of the “potential tourism development map” of the basin based on combining data on

- Infrastructure
- Service
- Visitor data
- Environmental conditions
- Potentials

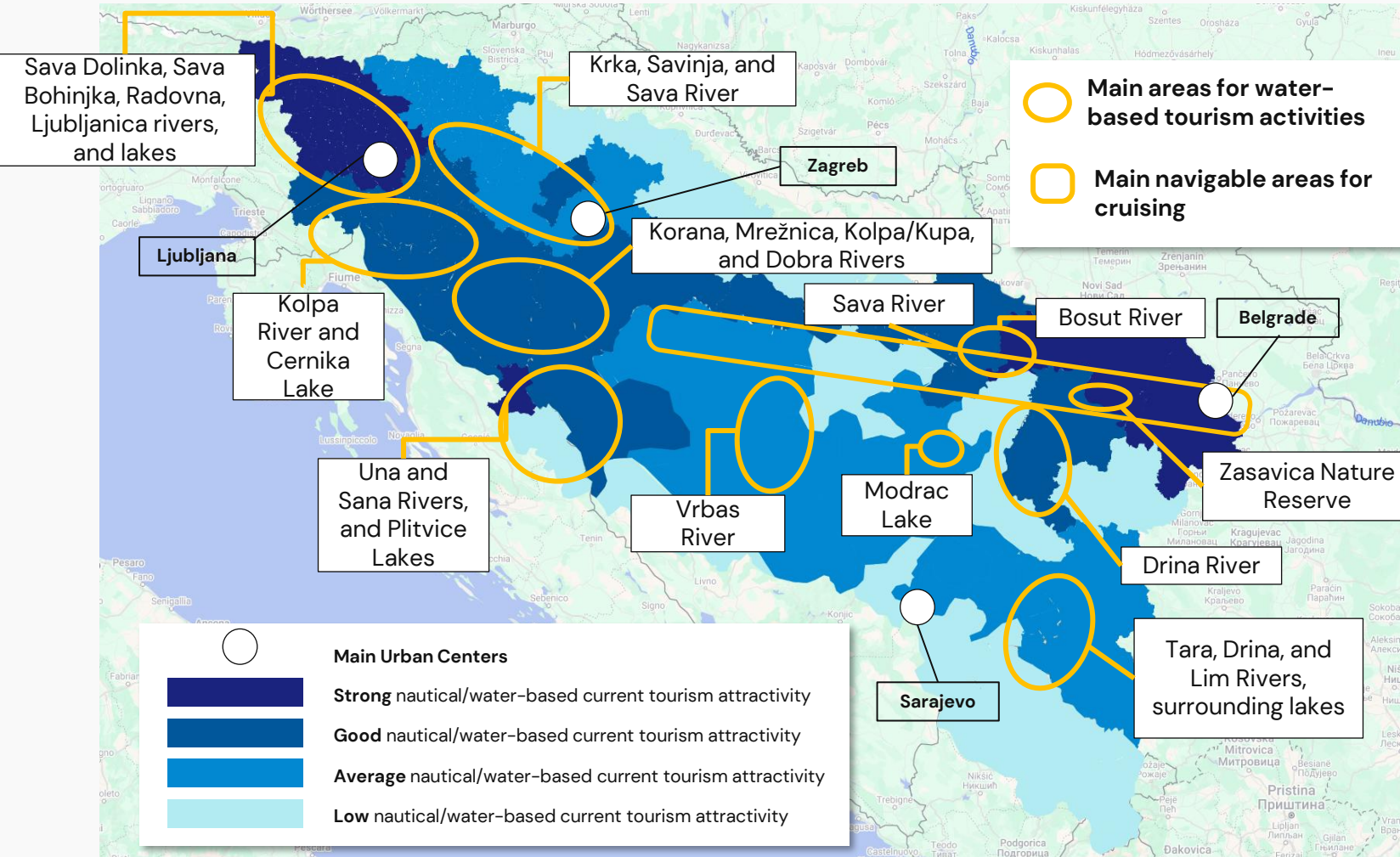


The darker the color, the more attractive the area is considered within the specific demand space.

Sources: THR and OIKON analysis.



Nautical Tourism - Current Assessment



- **Key areas** in the Sava River basin support active water-based tourism (cruising, excursion, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, fishing, etc.).
- The Sava River is the only water way potentially **suitable for cruising** from Sisak (Croatia) to Belgrade (Serbia); Croatia is developing new infrastructures, Serbia offers comprehensive services, and **Bosnia and Herzegovina has potential for growth**.
- The **tributaries and lakes** are suitable for **excursion boating**, and it is also popular for sport and recreation, kayaking, canoeing, and rafting.
- **Water tourism in fast rivers and scenic areas**, drawing local and international tourists (in Slovenia, parts of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro)

Note: Besides nautical tourism and water-based tourism, sub-criteria included main water-based tourism assets, presence of excursion services and/or river cruises, current nautical and water-based tourism intrinsic value.

Current Nautical and Navigability Conditions



Overall Assessment

Navigability Status:
Moderate



Main Issues:
Maintenance in general and specifically at critical sections

Opportunities:
Harmonize management and maintenance, strengthen infrastructure, promote touristic & recreational navigation



Overview

Establishment of the international regime of navigation on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries is one of the main goal of the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin, and is further regulated by the *Protocol on the Navigation Regime* to the FASRB, and international standards, and documents in the Sava countries.

Key Characteristics

Main Waterway:

- The **Sava River (945 km)** is the basin's most important international waterway, linking **Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade**, and flowing through **Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia** until it joins the **Danube River**.
- Commercial navigation is **possible from Sisak to Belgrade**, but **restricted** due to various conditions

Tributaries:

- The **Kolubara, Drina, Bosna, Vrbas, Una and Kupa rivers** provide **navigable stretches**, primarily suitable for **boats, excursions and recreation**.

No	River	Navigability (rkm)
1	Sava	0.00 – 594.00
2	Kolubara	0.00 – 5.00
3	Drina	0.00 – 15.00
4	Bosna	0.00 – 5.00
5	Vrbas	0.00 – 3.00
6	Una	0.00 – 15.00
7	Kupa	0.00 – 5.00

Factors Affecting Navigability

- **Hydrometeorological variability:** seasonal water level fluctuations and prolonged low-water periods reduce navigability.
- **Geomorphological processes:** sedimentation, formation of sandbanks, and riverbank erosion modify channel depth and width.
- **Infrastructure limitations:** insufficient and limited maintenance.

Strategic Importance

- Classified **IV–VII** for international transport relevance.
- Ensures **economic connectivity** for freight and passengers Continuous monitoring and coordination by the **ISRBC** aim to improve conditions and maintain consistent safety standards.

Tourism Implications

- **River Cruises:** Limited by critical sections. River engineering works on critical sections and maintenance required.
- **Boat Excursions:** Favorable on tributaries and lakes—with growing interest in small-scale tourism.
- **Sport & Recreation:** Positive for leisure boating, provided vessels fit the local conditions.

Nautical Tourism Related Infrastructure



Overall Assessment

Moderate and uneven development across countries.

Priority actions: Infrastructure upgrades, harmonized planning, and sustainable integration (low emission propulsion).



Overview

Nautical tourism infrastructure in the Sava River basin is interlinked with the **type and scale of nautical activity** (river cruises, boat excursions, or recreational boating), and includes **shore-based facilities** and **floating units** whose **size is related with vessel capacity**, navigability conditions, and environmental/spatial planning regulations.

Main Infrastructure Typologies

- **For River Cruises**

Larger pontoons with services like waste reception, electricity, water, and border control. Key needs include modernization and construction of passenger piers in Slavonski Brod (Croatia) and Brčko District (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

- **For Boat Excursions**











Small floating facilities, usually without additional premises, mainly on tributaries and lakes. Good practice: Bosut River (Croatia) with Sveta Katarina vessel integrating recreation and education. Requires maintenance and alignment with spatial plans.

- **For Sports & Recreational Navigation**




Predominantly local activities (individual navigation, recreation, fishing, kayaking, rowing). Infrastructure focuses on moorings and marinas, ideally embedded in natural environments. Examples: Blade Lake (Slovenia) and Sava River, Splavarska Street in Slavonski Brod (Croatia)



Country Overview

-  Good facilities for boat excursions (Ljubljana, Bled, Bohinj); trend toward electric propulsion. 
-  Extensive infrastructure network; new projects along the Sava River route. 
-  Low-quality infrastructure; urgent upgrades needed in Brčko and Drina River. 
-  Good condition, especially in Belgrade, Sremska Mitrovica and Šabac; more moorings needed. 
-  Limited infrastructure, mainly for rafting and kayaking. 

Key Takeaways

- **River Cruises:**  **Moderate** – needs improvements in key hubs.
- **Boat Excursions:**  **Moderate** – growing demand but lacking support facilities.
- **Sports & Recreation:**  **Sensitive** – favorable conditions, yet mooring capacity remains limited..

Requirements for Developing Nautical Tourism

Overview

The development of nautical tourism in the Sava River basin depends on the **navigability of inland waterways** and the **availability of basic port infrastructure**. The goal is to balance **infrastructure expansion** with **environmental preservation**, ensuring sustainable growth across cruise, excursion, and recreational segments.

Main Prerequisites by Type

River Cruises

Requires a minimum IV class of navigability, passenger terminals, and cruise vessels with cabins. Infrastructure exists in Belgrade, Šabac, Sremska Mitrovica, Sisak and Brčko while Slavonski Brod is under construction, though critical sections need urgent maintenance to ensure continuity of navigation.

Condition: ● **Moderate** – nearing completion once all 6 passenger terminals are operational.

Boat Excursions

Needs smaller pier infrastructure, navigable waterways, and attractive destinations (nature, culture, gastronomy).

High potential for cross-border connectivity and eco-based experiences (birdwatching, sightseeing).

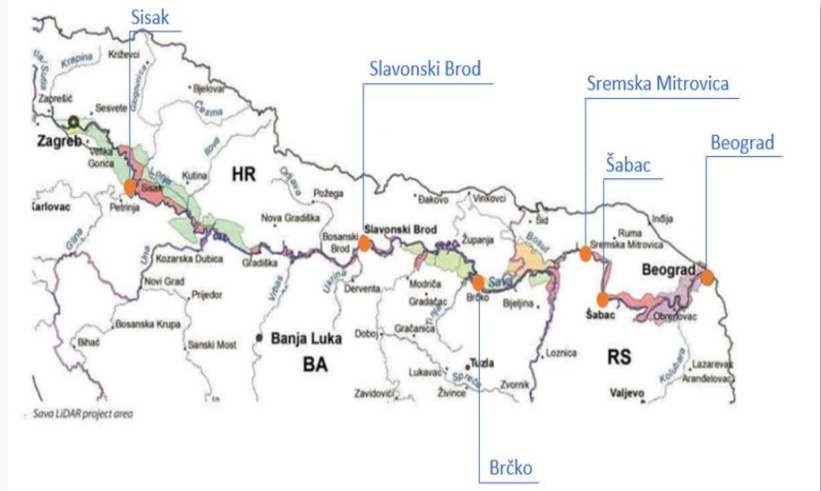
Condition: ● **Positive** – good navigability; further investment in piers would enhance transboundary appeal.

Sports & Recreational

Limited to local users, mainly for fishing, kayaking, or rowing.

Infrastructure (moorings, river marinas) has lowest capacity and lacks cross-border connections.

Condition: ● **Sensitive** – requires new mooring points and harmonized navigation regimes.



Key Takeaways

- **Navigability** of the Sava River is the **core prerequisite** for all nautical tourism types.
- **Infrastructure modernization** and **environmental integration** are equally vital.
- **River cruises** and **boat excursions** show readiness for expansion, while **sports/recreational navigation** needs foundational investment.
- **Cross-border collaboration** can unlock the basin's full potential as a unified nautical tourism corridor.

Overall Assessment

● **Moderate** condition overall.

The Sava River basin holds strong natural and navigational assets but needs **targeted infrastructure, maintenance, and coordination** to reach full operational potential.

Infrastructure projects - to enhance navigability and support sustainable nautical tourism

Illustrative non-exhaustive list

Arrangement and technical maintenance on the waterway of the Sava River

- **Institution:** Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Inland Navigation
- **Description:** Regular maintenance of the Sava River waterway to ensure navigability, preserving operational standards and safety for both cargo and passenger navigation.

Ensuring navigation on the Sava River in the city of Zagreb

- **Institution:** Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Inland Navigation
- **Description:** Preparation of project documentation to improve navigability and build infrastructure for developing excursion navigation on the Sava River in Zagreb.

Construction works on the critical section from rkm 329+000 to 315+000 and rkm 312+200 to 300+000 (Jaruge – Novi Grad)

- **Institution:** Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Inland Navigation
- **Description:** Construction of water structures to ensure navigability in accordance with approved project designs / permits.

Arrangement of special risk sections of the waterway of the Sava River (from Račinovac to Sisak)

- **Institution:** Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Inland Navigation
- **Description:** Preparation of technical and study documentation to upgrade the Sava River waterway to Class IV navigability standards (CEF).

ECO-REKUPA: ECO-revitalization and arrangement of the Kupa River for passenger and sports navigation

- **Institution:** Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Inland Navigation
- **Description:** Preparation of project and technical documentation for the arrangement of the Kupa River with the aim of developing nautical tourism.

Technical solution for the Bosut River with feasibility study and development of project phases

- **Institution:** Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Directorate for Inland Navigation
- **Description:** Preparation of project and technical documentation for the arrangement of the Bosut River with the aim of developing nautical tourism.

Construction of smaller piers for local and tourist vessels

- **Institution:** Port Authority Vukovar
- **Description:** Construction of piers and river marinas with docking places for excursion boats and recreational vessels along the Bosut River in Vukovar-Srijem County.

International passenger terminal in Slavonski Brod

- **Institution:** Port Authority Slavonski Brod
- **Description:** Construction of an international passenger pier and floating facility offering cultural and tourism services to support river cruising development.

Construction of piers on the Sava River

- **Institution:** Port Authority Slavonski Brod
- **Description:** Development of project documentation for new passenger piers to promote excursion routes along the Sava River and enhance cross-border navigation.

Construction of river marinas on the Sava River for excursion, sports and recreational navigation

- **Institution:** Port Authority Slavonski Brod
- **Description:** Preparation of documentation and permits for future river marinas aimed at promoting sports and recreational navigation and supporting cross-border routes.

Construction of river marina in Sisak

- **Institution:** Port Authority Sisak
- **Description:** Final construction phase of a river marina in Sisak with 194 berths on the Kupa River to support sport and recreational navigation.

Construction of piers in Lonjsko Polje (Drenov Bok, Plesmo, Krapje)

- **Institution:** Port Authority Sisak
- **Description:** Construction of passenger piers on the Sava River for excursion vessels (Drenov Bok, Krapje and Plesmo in Lonjsko Polje, Jasenovac) and enhancing eco-navigation routes.

Key findings



limited navigability and uneven infrastructure, emphasizing investments and cooperation needs

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- 1 International **river cruises** limited by navigability conditions.
- 2 **Boat excursions** take place on rivers and lakes with good navigability conditions.
- 3 **Sport and recreational navigation** underdeveloped due to the lack relevant infrastructure

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Investments** in the construction and modernization of nautical tourism related infrastructure
- 2 **Incentives** in the maintenance of waterways
- 3 **Education** for professions in inland navigation
- 4 **Cooperation** on joint plans and strategies and joint **cross-border** projects
- 5 **Following good practice** among Sava River basin countries and beyond



The environmental assessment highlighted key priorities for conservation, and sustainable actions across the Sava River basin

- 1 Sustainable infrastructure development:** to **avoid ecologically sensitive areas** and **apply low-impact solutions**
- 2 Visitor management strategy:** Regulate tourist flow to **minimize ecological disturbance**.
- 3 Governance and capacity building:** Strengthen **cross-border cooperation**, train protected area staff and implement joint monitoring systems.
- 4 Conservation zoning and land use regulation:** Integrate **conservation priorities** into land planning, enforce buffer zones, and support traditional land uses that benefit biodiversity.
- 5 Water management improvements:** Reduce **water use** and ensure proper treatment of generated **wastewater** in tourism facilities.
- 6 Waste management improvements:** Improve **waste collection**, prevent illegal **dumping**, and promote awareness for **responsible visitor behavior** in tourist areas.
- 7 Climate mitigation and adaptation measures:** Avoid infrastructure in climate-sensitive areas, promote **nature-based climate adaptation** solutions, and adopt **renewable energy** for tourism infrastructure and operations.



Main high-level recommendations to guide the steps forward

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOURISM PRODUCTS

To **extend visitor stays** and reduce seasonality. Identify and **improve the tourism offering** in the proximity of anchor assets or areas.

**TOURISM
PRODUCTS**

UNIFIED MARKETING STRATEGY AND BRAND FOR THE BASIN

To enhancing **visibility** and information for both tourists and investors.

MARKETING

ENHANCE COLLABORATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

public–private sectors through **trans-regional and transnational collaboration.**

**GOVERNANCE
AND
MANAGEMENT**

IMPROVEMENT OF CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE

roads, public transport, signage, and cycling trails, nautical facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE

ALIGN WITH CURRENT ONGOING PROJECTS

Leverage ongoing **local, national, and transnational projects** to support and align current improvements.

**INVESTMENT &
PLANNING**

INCREASE SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS

On the practical **application of sustainable tourism** standards.

TRAINING

IMPROVE SUPPORT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND YOUTH

Economic and non-economic **incentives**, such as training programs.

**INVESTMENT
AND TRAINING**

IMPLEMENT A TOURISM MANAGEMENT MODEL

Enhance tourist flow management to ensure **more even distribution** across the region.

PLANNING

IMPROVE OVERALL QUALITY AND INTRODUCE INNOVATION

Fostering innovation and **linking** tourism products with **other demand areas.**

COMPETITIVENESS

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Connect tourism areas by identifying and developing **potential tourism corridors.**

PLANNING

Towards finalization of the Project

Project's Next Steps





INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Thank you for your attention

Project implemented by In collaboration with

