

# **Agreements and RBOs to Strengthen the Management of Transboundary Waters: Example of the Sava River Basin**

**Workshop “The UNECE Water Convention – Key Aspects  
and Opportunities for Lebanon”**

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# Sava river basin

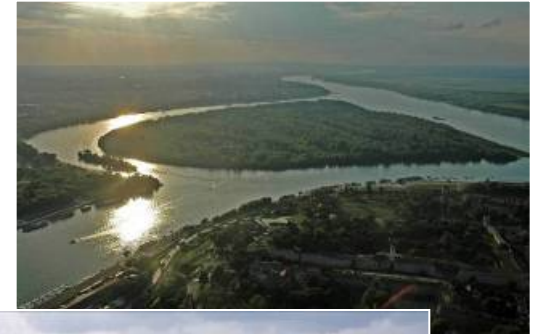


# Sava river basin

- **Area:** 97 713 km<sup>2</sup> (the second largest Danube sub-basin; share: 12%)
- **Average flow** at the mouth: 1722 m<sup>3</sup>/s  
(the largest Danube tributary; contribution: 25%)
- **River length:** 990 km (~ 600 km of which is the waterway)
- **Population:** approx. 9 million

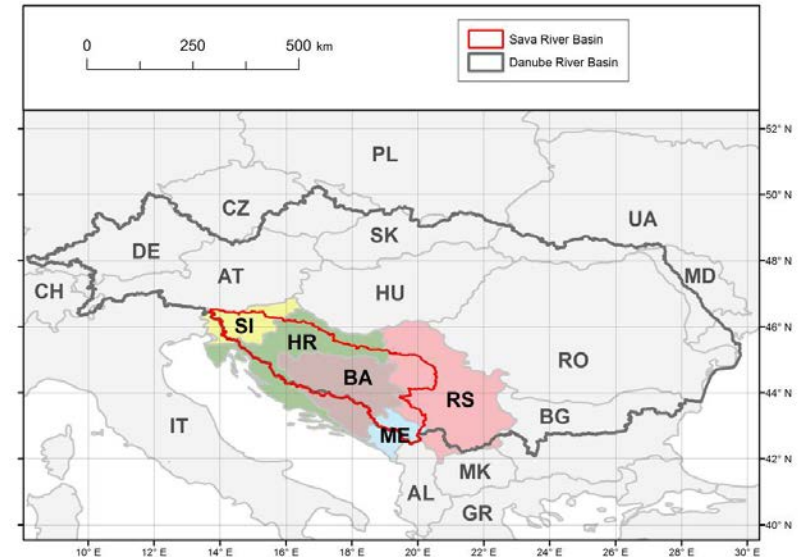
| Country              | Share of the basin (%) | Share of the territory (%) |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Albania              | 0.2                    | 0.6                        |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | 39.2                   | 75.8                       |
| Croatia              | 26.0                   | 45.2                       |
| Montenegro           | 7.1                    | 49.6                       |
| Serbia               | 15.5                   | 17.4                       |
| Slovenia             | 12.0                   | 52.8                       |

# Sava river basin



# Background to cooperation

- **Challenges**
  - **Use of water resources:** development and protection
  - **Management of water resources:** national → transboundary
- **Legal and institutional framework**
  - **Framework Agreement** on the Sava River Basin – FASRB (2002)
  - **ISRBC** (2005), **Secretariat** (2006)
  - **Participation:**  
4 member countries +  
1 country (technical level)



# Principles of cooperation

- Cooperation based on **sovereign equality**, **territorial integrity**, **mutual benefit** and **good faith**
- **Reasonable and equitable use** of water
- Securing **integrity** of water regime in the basin
- Regular **exchange of information** within the basin
- Reduction of **transboundary impacts** caused by economic and other activities of the Parties
- **'No harm'** rule

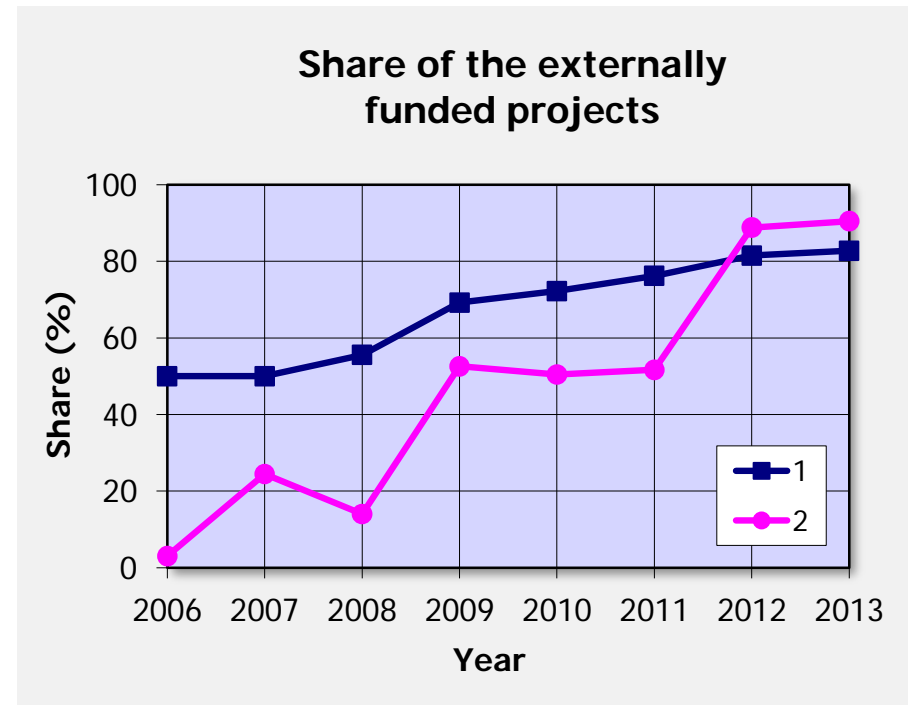
# Scope of cooperation

- **Management plans**  
(river basin, flood risk, sediment, climate change adaptation)
- **Integrated systems**  
(information, forecasting, warning)
- **Economic activities**  
(navigation, river tourism)
- Harmonization of **regulation**  
(national → EU)
- **Protocols** to the FASRB



# Mechanism of cooperation

- **Legal capacity**
  - **Navigation:** Decisions
  - **Other issues (i.e. WM):** Recommendations
  
- **Financing**
  - **Work of Secretariat:** MCs' contributions (equal since the establishment)
  - **Activities / projects:**
    - MCs' contributions (~ 10%)
    - External sources (~ 90%)

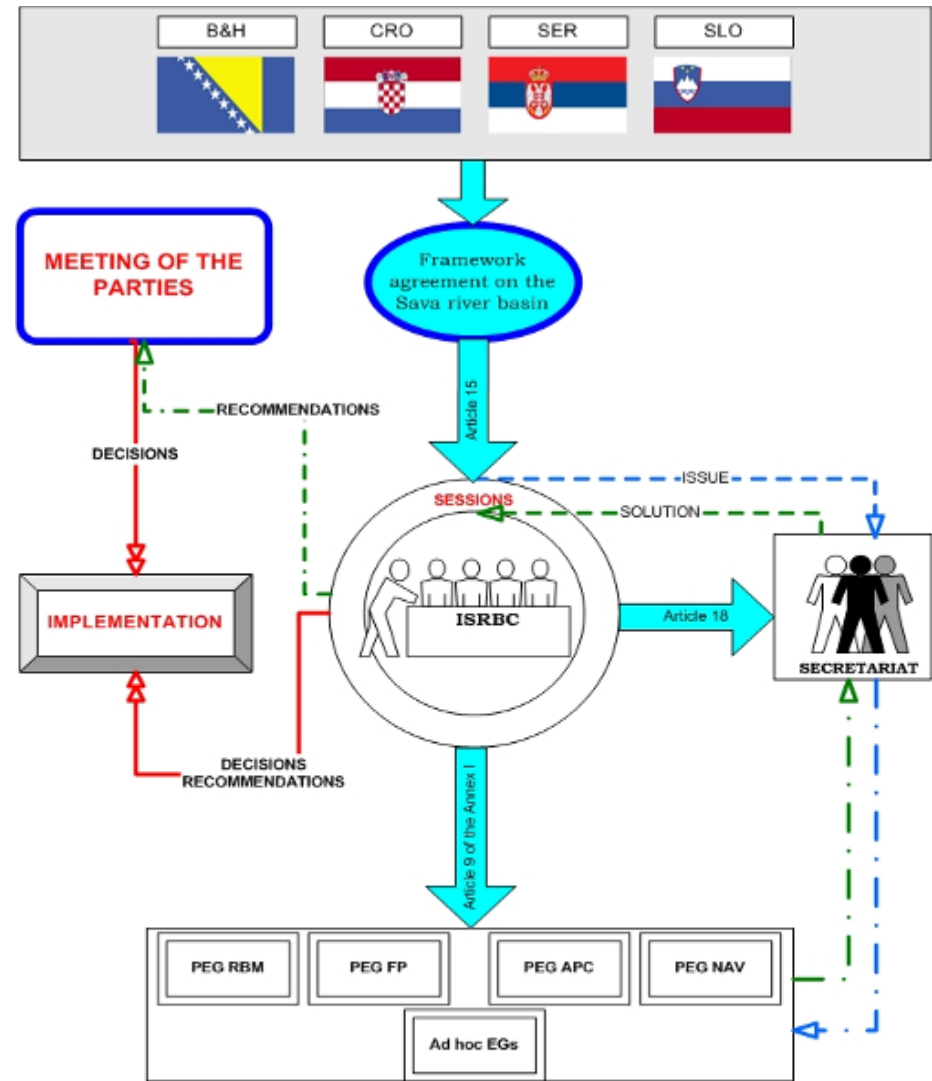


- 1 – Share in terms of the **number** of the projects
- 2 – Share in terms of the **budget** of the projects



# Mechanism

- **Stakeholders**
  - **Wide range** horizontally
  - **All societal** sectors
    - Governmental
    - Non-governmental
    - Academic
    - Business
  
- **Monitoring of implementation**



**Acronyms and abbreviations:**  
 ISRBC - International Sava river basin commission  
 PEG RBM - Permanent expert group for river basin management  
 PEG FP - Permanent expert group for flood prevention  
 PEG APC - Permanent expert group for accident prevention and control  
 PEG NAV - Permanent expert group for navigation  
 Ad hoc EGs - Ad hoc expert groups

# Inter-sectoral coordination

| Activity / Field of work                     | P | F | N | H | A | T | C |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| River Basin Management Plan (EU WFD)         | + | + | + | + | + |   | + |
| Water and Climate Adaptation Plan            |   | + | + | + | + |   | + |
| Integrated Information System (INSPIRE Dir.) | + | + | + | + | + |   |   |
| Navigation                                   | + |   | + | + |   | + |   |
| River Tourism                                | + | + | + | + |   | + |   |

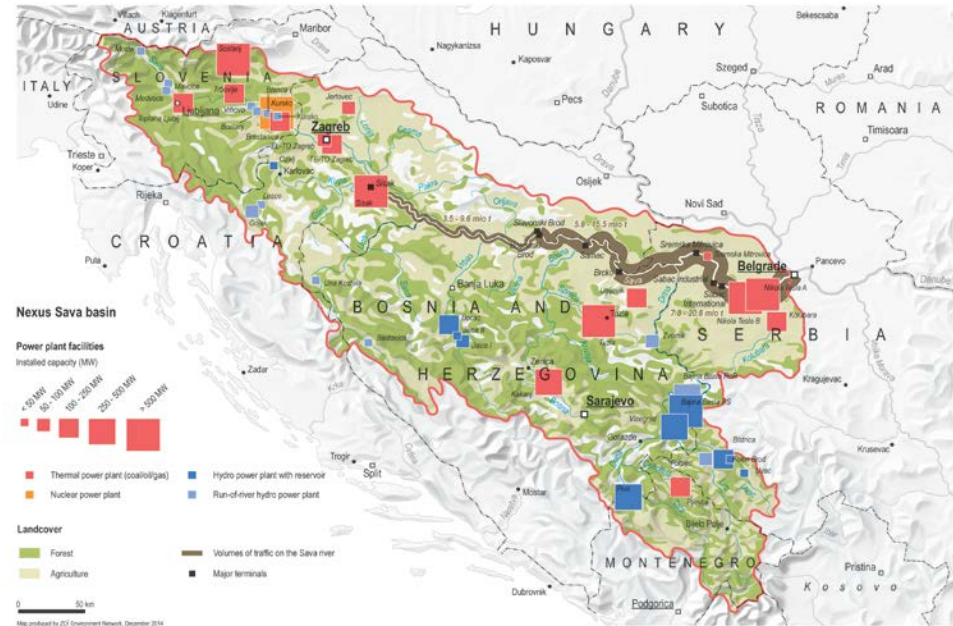
P – Water and aquatic  
ecosystem protection  
F – Flood management

N – Navigation  
H – Hydropower  
A – Agriculture

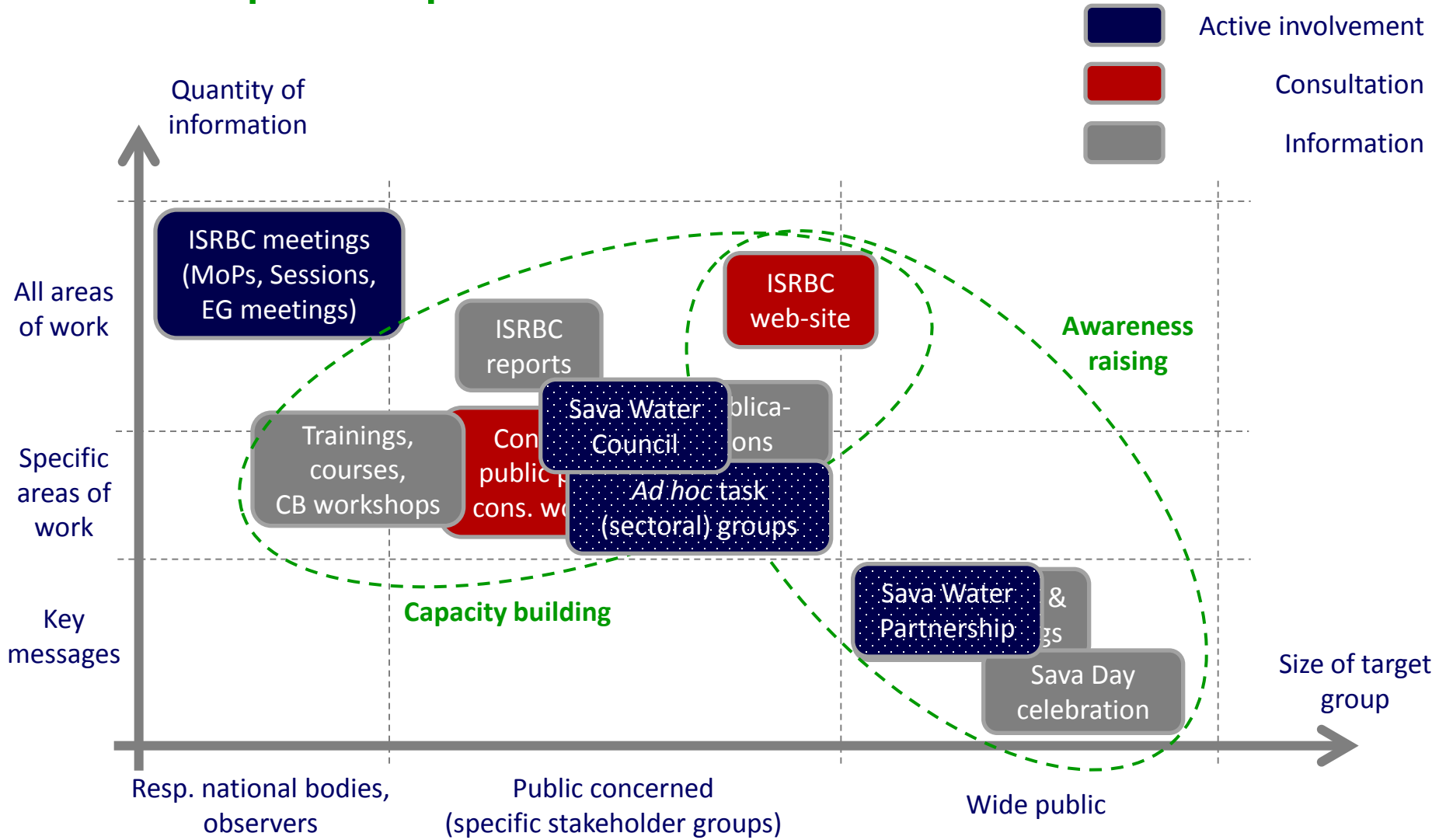
T – Tourism  
C – Climate change

# Nexus assessment

- **Basin is critical** in terms of the region:
  - Employment
  - Energy generation
  - Greenhouse gas mitigation
  - Irrigation
  - Transport and tourism
- **Governance**
  - Strong framework and incentives for good governance
  - Serious gaps (incomplete reforms, resource limitations, lack of political will)

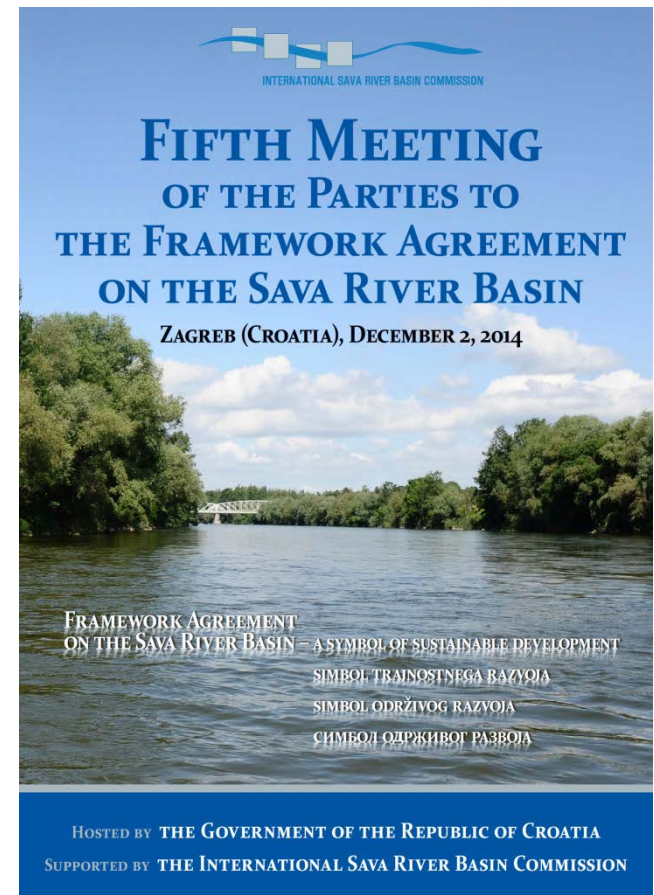


# Public participation



# Approach

- **Integrated** (whole basin, scope of work, all societal sectors, 'top-down' + 'bottom up')
- **Aligned** with the UNECE conventions and EU regulation / strategies
- **Complementary** with the processes on the Danube level
- **Pragmatic and practical**
- **Educative** (capacity building, awareness raising)



# Challenges

- **Differences between the countries** (incl. fund-raising)
- **Broad scope of work**
  - **Resolving** conflicts of interests of different users of water (within a country / between countries / climate change)
  - **Twofold legal capacity** of the ISRBC (Decisions vs. Recommendations)
  - Need for **many focal points** and **good inter-sectoral coordination and communication** within a Party
  - Need for **additional protocols** to regulate specific issues of FASRB
- Continuous **commitment** and **support at high political level**
- Number of **official languages** of the ISRBC

# Benefits

- Improved **cooperation** / Increased **level of mutual trust** among the countries
- Implementation of **projects of common interest**
- Harmonization of **regulation, methodologies** and **procedures**
- Enhancement of **cross-sectoral cooperation on national level**



# Conclusions

- **FASRB & ISRBC:** a good framework for integrated TWRM
  - By scope
  - By approach to transboundary cooperation (principles, mechanism)
- **Broad scope of work:** an opportunity for all Parties to meet their interests
- **The process is:**
  - Demanding (resources and permanent joint efforts of the Parties), yet it provides considerable benefits
  - A good basis for the progress towards the achievement of the key objective – sustainable development of the Sava river basin



# Contact information

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