

TEMPLATE AWA final – Serbia - Preparation and implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan (SRBM Plan)

1. Country/Organization:

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Water Directorate, Republic of Serbia

2. Title of the action committed to in 2011 (see the annex)

Preparation and implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan (SRBM Plan).

3. Overview of progress made

(a) *Has the action been implemented?*

Yes / In progress / No

*The title of the action indicates both **preparation** and **implementation** of the SRBM Plan. The Plan has been prepared according to the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) which establishes a legal framework to protect and enhance the status of all waters and protected areas including water dependent ecosystems, prevent their deterioration and ensure long-term, sustainable use of water resources. The Framework Agreement for the Sava River Basin (FASRB), which implementation has been coordinated by the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), has created the conditions for the preparation of the first joint SRBM Plan. The Plan was based on elaboration of issues of the basin-wide concern - Significant water management issues (SWMIs), agreed upon by the riparian countries (organic, nutrient, hazardous substances pollution and hydromorphological alterations), and issues regarding pressures on groundwater quantity and the related Programme of Measures.*

*Regarding **preparation** of the Plan it could be noted that **the certain action has been performed**. The SRBM Plan was prepared in early 2013 and distributed to the Parties for their national adoption procedures. That process is currently in the progress in all the Sava countries.*

*Regarding **implementation** of the Plan it can be stated that formally there is no obligation to implement the (joint) Programme of Measures until the Plan is adopted by all the Parties. On the other hand, the sets of measures indicated in the SRBM Plan are fully based on the measures envisaged to implement either in the national plans of the Parties which are the EU members (SI) or those for which the accession countries (BA, HR, and RS) have declared that will be implemented (by 2015). In other words, it can be stated that the action has been implemented.*

(b) *What challenges were encountered during the implementation of the action? What lessons were learned?*

*The (joint) SRBM Plan is based on data officially delivered by the Sava countries. One of the main challenges during the preparation of the Plan was **lack of data** in general or lack of readily available information needed for the preparation of the Plan. That is primarily connected with the different status of the Sava countries regarding the accession to the EU and consequently with the data needed for fulfilling different obligations towards implementation of the EU directives. As national legislation in non-EU Sava countries is not fully harmonized with EU standards, a modified approach, in comparison of that required by the WFD, have had to be applied (e.g. a complete inventory of protected areas as required by WFD could not be prepared for the whole Sava River Basin and therefore, a modified approach has been applied and a set of measures has been identified to complete the registers of protected areas as required by the WFD). All the data gaps and uncertainties are well elaborated in the Plan and they will be tackled in the subsequent RBM cycles.*

Another challenge was the need and obligation to reach **a common agreement** on all the steps needed for the development of the transboundary RBM plan among all the countries participating, including comprehensive public information and consultation process.

Securing of **human resources** in the institutions of the participating countries has been also an important factor in implementing the action. In addition, it is very important to secure intersectoral collaboration in each country preparing the international RBM plan.

(c) What future steps, if any, are planned in relation to the action implementation/follow up?

These are the main planned action foreseen:

- Adoption of the SRBM Plan;
- Implementation of the Programme of Measures;
- Reporting on the implementation of the measures planned for the 1st WFD cycle and evaluation of effectiveness of the measures
- Preparation of the 2nd Sava River Basin Analysis report (the 1st Analysis, which addressed the requirements pursuant to WFD Article 5 and Article 6 was prepared and adopted by the ISRBC in 2009);
- Upgrade of the SRBM Plan with Programme of Measures

In the course of the 1st Plan preparation all the data gaps and uncertainties are marked and a comprehensive strategy for follow up has been prepared. All issues which could not be well elaborated due to lack of information in the time of preparation of the 1st plan are described with proposal how to solve the problems identified. In addition, the information provided by the countries for certain aspects of the plan are continuously upgraded on the country level and therefore must also be addressed in the SRBM Plan, accordingly.

- Implementation of the measures indicated in the next plan

4. Usefulness of the Astana Water Action

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements and provide an explanation, as appropriate.

(a) The Astana Water Action was useful to strengthen political support related to sustainable water management issues:

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Astana Water Action was partly useful to strengthen political support related to sustainable water management issues, in particular taking into account the fact that different institutions (ministries and governmental bodies) from Sava countries participated in the process.

(b) *The Astana Water Action has helped my country to comply with its international obligations:*

strongly agree / somewhat agree / somewhat disagree / strongly disagree

Astana Water Action has helped the country to comply with its international obligation, particularly towards implementation of the EU water related directives. As national legislation in non-EU Sava countries is not fully harmonized with EU standards, a modified approach, in comparison of that required by the WFD, have had to be applied.

(c) *Would your country be interested in continuing to submit and monitor new actions within the AWA framework in the future?*

Yes / No

Yes, this process is very useful and it leads to the improved international/regional and inter ministerial cooperation.