



**Improved Financial Sustainability and Strengthened Resilience of Protected Areas Through
Development of Sustainable Recreation and Partnership With Private Sector**

(Sustainability of Protected Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina – SPA)

PIMS #6439

INCEPTION REPORT

October 2022

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Abbreviations

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
EPEEF RS	The Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund of RS
EPF FBiH	The Environmental Protection Fund of FBiH
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
HCVF	High-conservation value forest
MET FBiH	The Ministry of Environment and Tourism of FBiH
MoFTER	The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH
MSPCEE RS	The Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of RS
MTT RS	The Ministry of Trade and Tourism of RS
PA	Protected area
PIRs	Project Implementation Reviews
RS	Republika Srpska
SES	Social and Environmental Safeguard

1. Introduction

The objective of the project “Sustainability of Protected Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (SPA)¹ is to achieve practical improvement in the management of protected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), providing for better biodiversity status through strengthened resilience of key biodiversity values to climate change impact and increased revenues to protected areas from sustainable recreation. The project is called to reduce the gap between the current capacities of protected areas (PAs) with their increasing vulnerability to emerging threats and the growing need to preserve and sustainably maintain the biological and ecosystem diversity that is among the top five in Europe. The project will make an incremental effort in assisting the protected area management with tools and instruments aimed at diversifying and improving the sustainable, nature-based tourism offering in targeted PAs and neighboring communities, thus providing for sustainable incremental income and a development option that will valorize the unique natural values without further threatening them. Under Component 1, the project will work to reduce the vulnerability of key biodiversity values and strengthen the resilience of target protected areas in BiH to climate change, and support climate-neutral and BD-sensitive PA management and business planning. Component 2 will develop and test mechanisms for increased PA revenues from sustainable tourism.

The project is implemented in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of the Federation of BiH, the Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Trade and Tourism of Republika Srpska, Environmental Protection Fund of the Federation of BiH and the Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund of Republika Srpska, as well as with managers of protected areas and partner local governments throughout BiH. In total, 26 protected areas in BiH will be involved in this project through various activities.

The total UNDP’s project budget is USD 2.79 million, out of which the GEF grant is USD 2.64 million and the UNDP TRAC is USD 150.000, while the parallel co-financing in the amount of USD 18.36 million is provided by the BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism, RS Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology, RS Ministry of Trade and Tourism, CISP –International Committee for People's Development, FBiH and RS Environmental Funds, Municipality Šamac and Municipality Ravno, Sarajevo Canton Public Enterprise for Protected Areas and UNDP.

An external Inception workshop of SPA project was organized on September 27th in Sarajevo, to mark World Tourism Day. The purpose of the external session was to formally launch the project and familiarize stakeholders with the objectives, expected outcomes, and outputs, as well as to foster ownership and active partner engagement. Representatives of Project Board institutions and other responsible institutions (cantonal ministries of environment/tourism, public enterprises responsible for protected areas management, tourist organizations, state and entities’ chambers of economy, private sector representatives), international organizations (World Bank, GIZ, USAID, AICS, including UN agencies: FAO, UNESCO and UNEP), local and international NGOs active in the field of nature protection were invited to the Inception workshop.

The inception workshop was attended by 64 representatives of relevant institutions, as evidenced by **Annex 2: Workshop participants list**.

¹ During the inception phase of the project, it was decided to shorten the original title of the project (*Improved Financial Sustainability and Strengthened Resilience of Protected Areas Through Development of Sustainable Recreation and Partnership With Private Sector*) so as to assure easier communication and visibility of the project. Project Board approved this decision on the 1st Project Board meeting, held on October 10th, 2022.

2. Project Overview

The project's work will be implemented through 4 components, while component 5 is dedicated for Project management costs. Under Component 1, the project work to reduce the vulnerability of key biodiversity values and strengthen the resilience of target protected areas in BiH to climate change. Component 2 develops and tests mechanisms for increased PA revenues from sustainable tourism. Project Component 3 groups the project knowledge management activities, while Project Component 4 is dedicated to the fulfillment of the M&E requirements. The realization of project activities is planned as per the following structure:

Component 1: Strengthening PA resilience to climate change threats
Outcome 1: Managerial and technical capacities of targeted PAs in place helping ensure resilience of key biodiversity values to climate change
<p><i>Output 1.1:</i> Comprehensive climate threat assessment conducted for pilot PAs (<i>National parks Sutjeska, Kozara, Drina and Una; nature monument Prokoško jezero, park of nature Blidinje, protected landscape Vjetrenica-Popovo polje, park of nature Orjen and nature monument Vrelo Bosne</i>).</p> <p><i>Output 1.2:</i> PA management framework developed/updated and under implementation with due account of climate threats for above-listed pilot PAs.</p> <p><i>Output 1.3:</i> A portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystems developed and set under implementation, and as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A species management plan for the alpine newt (<i>Triturus alpestris</i>) for Prokosko Lake NM• An adaptation plan for Serbian spruce (<i>Picea omorica</i>) with measures to improve status in natural populations, support to regeneration, monitoring of tree health, and pest control for Drina National Park, including targeted support to regeneration• Adaptation plan for Bosnian pine (<i>Pinus heldreichii</i>) for Blidinje Park of Nature• Forest fire management capacity building, including development and operationalization of an early warning system and development of Fire Protection Action Plans with priority prevention measures for national parks Sutjeska, Kozara and Drina, Orjen and Blidinje parks of nature, and Skakavac Nature Monument. The project will provide a targeted investment in fire-fighting equipment and tools for suppression of initial fires (water backpack pumps, fire-fighting brooms, face masks, goggles, helmets, gloves, mobile water pumps, petrol leaf blowers, etc.).• Management guidelines with mechanisms of bark beetle outbursts control and the early response measures compatible with the PA regime will be developed for the management authorities of Sutjeska, Kozara, and Drina national parks, and the Sarajevo Canton PA public enterprise (Skakavac NM). For the bark beetle outburst control, particular pest control methods (pheromone traps) will be offered in accordance with the PA regulations and best practices available. <p><i>Output 1.4:</i> Demonstration of innovative restoration approaches: development of restoration methodology and plan for the pilot sites (protected habitats Tišina and Gromiželj), including the realization of planned activities and engagement of local communities, landowners, private sector stakeholders, municipal authorities ensured and documenting effects, including proposition for dissemination and replication.</p> <p><i>Output 1.5:</i> Replication and adaptation of pilot PAs solutions and demos to other sites, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expert proposals and justifications for the inclusion of vulnerable/threatened species, such as Balkan Chamois (<i>Rupicapra hydro morphological balcanica</i>), into the climate change regulations prohibiting hunting and encouraging species protection inside PAs (NPs Sutjeska, Drina).• The adaptation plans for valuable spruce and pine forest stands and the associated HCVF management measures for PLs Trebević and Konjuh.

Component 2: Improving financial sustainability of targeted PAs through sustainable tourism development

Outcome 2: Financial sustainability of targeted PAs improved

Output 2.1: Sustainable tourism products developed for pilot PAs

- Drina NP: sustainable tourism offer packaging and targeted support for infrastructure development
- Bijambare PL: development of programs for eco-tourism, eco-agriculture, environmental awareness and education, with targeted implementation support
- Vjetrenica-Popovo polje PL: Co-financing of tourism infrastructure ("Viewpoint with an educational trail")
- Orjen PN: A roadmap for traditional businesses and tourism development - beekeeping, use of medical plants and ecotourism.
- Good harvesting practices for NTFP collected and hands-on training on the use and control of NTFP for the PA management, ranger services, and adjacent communities
- Capacity building measures aimed to assist the PA management authorities and local tourism operators to actively promote PA managers as tourism destination managers and to meaningfully engage with the local communities and vulnerable groups.

Output 2.2: Functional partnerships with the private sector stakeholders are in place to provide community engagement and increased income streams from legal nature resource use activities (incl. recreation) occurring in the targeted PAs

Cooperation with the privately-owned sustainable business for the development of a tourism product for Vjetrenica - Popovo Polje by co-financing the restoration of an existing mill nearby the Vjetrenica cave in ownership of Ravno municipality. The project in the main phase will look for other opportunities to have tourism sector stakeholders engaged to encourage sustainable tourism development and income generation for PA management authorities and people living in the vicinity of protected

Output 2.3: Eco-tourism concession model developed and piloted in Sutjeska National Park. Activity includes an elaboration of Sustainable Concession Management Guidelines based on best available practice applicable to the existing legislative framework; Development of concession proposal; Support to concession management, compliance monitoring, and enforcement; Capacity building for PA staff and community representatives engaged in concession business; Monitoring of concession activities according to the agreed methodology and criteria, document lessons learned from the applied processes; Case-study from the concession pilot and development of replication package.

Output 2.4: PA participation in the government grant programs is ensured in a sustainable manner

Modifications to the existing mechanism for grant allocation that will include eco-tourism development within the protected areas;

Trainings for PA managers and conservation authorities for applying at other available external funding. Focused training activities will be designed to increase understanding and interest in external funding sources.

Output 2.5: Promotion of natural values, products and services in the targeted PAs is improved

- Improved visibility and connectivity of groups of PAs linked geographically with a view of providing a more comprehensive offer to visitors and promote longer visitation periods: Kozara - Una PN (RS) - Lijevčanski knez - Jelića Brdo Forest - Žuta Bukva; Tajan - Konjuh – Bijambare; Skakavac - Orlovača cave - Trebević - River Prača Canyon - Bentbaša; Cicelj - Sutjeska – Kuk.
- Joint promotion and branding for cave nature monuments
- Drina NP: support to visitor facilities and PA promotion
- Una NP: Development of detailed Regulatory (urban) plans for visitor zones (Martin Brod, Kulen Vakuf and visitor zone Štrbački buk-Lohovo) Improved connectivity with Una Park of Nature (RS)
- Development of promotion packages and implement action plans for enhanced PA visibility and outreach and co-financing outreach activities for recently established/re-classified PAs: Vjetrenica PL and Orjen PN
- Communication, promotion, and marketing capacity building

Component 3: Knowledge management and communication
<i>Output 3.1: Knowledge management and communication ensured throughout project implementation</i> Project Communication, KM and replication support KM & experience sharing events (PA Manager Day as a platform for experience sharing, "corporate" training and knowledge building on fundraising, best practices for diversification of financial flows etc)
Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation
<i>Outcome 4: Project results properly monitored and evaluated</i> MTR and Final Evaluation

2.1. Important project milestones

As per the Delegation of Authority (DoA) for SPA project, signed on June 8th 2022, the project encounters the following milestones:

July 1st, 2022	Project start
November 1 st , 2022	Inception Workshop
July/August each year (2023-2027)	Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs)
January 31 st , 2025	Mid-Term Review
March 31 st , 2027	Terminal Evaluation
June 30 th , 2027	Project operational closure
December 31 st , 2027	Project financial closure

3. Progress during the Inception period

During the inception period, the following progress has been made:

a. Hiring of project personnel:

During the inception period of the Project, the hiring procedure for the Project Manager was finalized and initiated in the case of other members of PMU: project analysts (one situated in Banja Luka and one situated in Sarajevo) and project associate. It is anticipated that the establishment of PMU will be finalized by the end of 2022.

b. Stakeholders' discussions and Inception Workshop:

In total, 12 meetings were organized during the inception phase. Internal meetings of the employees of UNDP had the aim to share information on the main aspects and considerations of the project, including administrative and logistical issues regarding the organization of the Inception Workshop.

Meetings with stakeholders were organized with the aim to introduce them to the planned activities of the project and assess current conditions and setup for project implementation and to further defining the cooperation approaches for the realization of activities in pilot PAs (26 PAs is planned to be involved in the project). Those meetings were crucial for conducting the situation analysis and deciding on further approaches to project implementation.

An external Inception Workshop was organized on September 27th and attended by 64 representatives of institutions relevant to the field of nature protection and tourism in BiH (Annex 2). Along with the consultative meetings with stakeholders, the most important conclusion is that the project log frame was accepted by the stakeholders, and planned activities were recognized as important contributors to achieving progress in PAs management. However, in the period between the development of the project document and the initiation of its implementation, the following changes occurred and will be further elaborated in chapter 4 Situation Analysis:

changes in the status of management plans in pilot PAs – meanwhile, some management plans were finalized or in the development stage. An adaptive management approach will be to align planned activities with the current status on the field. Besides, this will enable the project to work in a collaboration with other international organizations/projects (USAID Tourism, WWF).

status of the population of alpine newts at natural monument Prokoško lake – as communicated at the first meeting of the Project Board, there are no individuals of alpine newts at the Prokoško lake. This information required defining a new approach for achieving the project indicator *6b: Non-deterioration of Alpine newt (Triturus alpestris) population in Prokosko Lake NM stable or increasing.*
activities implemented regarding preservation of Serbian spruce.

c. Project Steering Committee (Project Board):

On July 20th, official letters for nominations of Project Board members were sent, and following nominations were received during August 2022:

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH (MoFTER)

Mr. Senad Oprašić, Head of the environment protection department and technical focal point for GEF
Ms. Jelica Grujić, Head of the tourism department

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism of FBiH (MET FBiH)

Mr. Mehmed Cero, assistant minister and NFP for UNCBD
Ms. Zineta Mujaković, head of the Department for nature protection
Ms. Bisera Hotić, head of the Department for tourism

The Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of RS (MSPCEE RS)

Ms. Svjetlana Radusin, assistant minister and NFP for UNFCCC

Ms. Željka Stojičić, senior advisor for nature protection

The Ministry of Trade and Tourism of RS (MTT RS)

Mr. Bojan Rašković, senior advisor for tourism

Ms. Irena Kisic-Plavsic, senior advisor for legal affairs

The Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund of RS (EPEEF RS)

Mr. Srđan Todorović, director

The Environmental Protection Fund of FBiH (EPF FBiH)

Mr. Adi Habul, senior advisor for biodiversity and PA management

UNDP CO in BiH

Ms. Raduška Cupać, Energy and Environment Sector Leader

The First Project Board meeting was held on October 10th in Banja Luka (**Annex 6**: First Project Board meeting; invitation letter, attendance list and minutes) and with the following conclusions:

- Project Board members agreed with the proposed abbreviated title of the Project;
- In 2022, an analysis of the current state and challenges for the development of a concession model for Sutjeska NP will be conducted. It will be the basis for creating an operational plan for subsequent activities.
- Possible changes to the indicators in the logical framework of the project: the only disputable indicator is the one regarding the state of the alpine newt population. The Regional Technical Adviser of the Project will be informed about this and in the following period, a decision will be made on changing the indicator in this phase or in the MTR phase of the project.
- The Inception report will contain information about changes of the situation on the field (e.g., planned activities for the preparation of management plans for protected areas) in order to clearly communicate the need for changes in the project strategy. Except for the unclear situation related to the alpine newt, it was concluded that all other changes are of operational nature and as such will not affect the planned outputs of the project.
- Annual statements on spent parallel co-financing funds in the past period – the format of the statement will be known in the following period. If the need be, defining the approach and preparation of the first statements will be the subject of one meeting of the Project Board.
- The next meeting of the Project Board is planned for February 2023 in Sarajevo. It was agreed that the meetings of the Project Board will be organized evenly in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. Information on the status of the activities will be sent to the Project Board via email in December 2022.
- The information about announced consultancy job postings and tenders will be forwarded to the Project Board members in order to ensure the quality of the planned activities.

4. Situation Analysis

The most important conclusion of the consultation meetings organized during the inception phase of the project, including the First Project Board meeting, is that the overall log frame and planned activities of the project are fully welcomed, recognized as needed and important and that the project stakeholders were fully involved in the PPG stage of the project. Therefore, it can be concluded that the most important assumptions that shaped the project design are all made explicit throughout the entire process of project preparation and initiation, and they are still valid.

In general, the project strategy is assessed as adequate and is fully supported by the project stakeholders. Status of risks were presented to the Project Board members and tracked accordingly. So far, it is anticipated that the most important measure to minimize the identified risks should be to assure proper communication and cooperation with stakeholders, including other projects in field of PA management and tourism, so as to avoid overlapping and assure synergetic and efficient effort.

When it comes to the new opportunities and synergies, it has to be emphasized that forestry companies are recognized as valuable stakeholder that will assure proper realization of most of the CC activities (Component 1). Besides, along with local authorities (cantons, cities, municipalities), they are recognized as partners for realization of activities aimed to minimize forest fire threats.

It has to be emphasized that the stakeholder engagement plan was followed during the consultation meetings and organization of the inception workshop therefore planned cooperation were re-confirmed during the inception phase of the project.

Situation analysis has revealed the following changes that can be anticipated as operational as they will not affect the fulfilment of planned outcomes and outputs but rather will require modification in the realization of project activities. As agreed with all stakeholders, these changes occurred due to the longer period between project preparation and its initiation. Below is the description of identified changes along with the alternative approaches to be implemented to align with the current conditions:

Component 1: Strengthening PA resilience to climate change threats	
Outcome 1: Managerial and technical capacities of targeted PAs in place helping ensure the resilience of key biodiversity values to climate change	
<i>Output 1.2: PA management framework developed/updated and under implementation with due account of climate threats for National parks Sutjeska, Kozara, Drina and Una; nature monument Prokoško jezero, park of nature Blidinje, protected landscape Vjetrenica-Popovo polje, park of nature Orjen and nature monument Vrelo Bosne).</i>	
Current status:	Alternative approach:
National Park Una – final draft of the new management plan is prepared	Cooperation with WWF and NP Una to define a solution for the integration of climate change considerations into the new management plan
National Park Kozara – development of visitors management plan	Cooperation with USAID and NP Kozara to define a way to synchronize the planning documentation
Nature monument Prokoško jezero – FBiH Environmental Protection Fund is financing the preparation of management plan	Cooperation with the Fund, PA managers, municipality of Fojnica and engaged service provider to agree on integration of climate change considerations into the management plan

<p><i>Output 1.3:</i> A portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystems developed and set under implementation, and as follows: A species management plan for the alpine newt (<i>Triturus alpestris</i>) for Prokosko Lake NM</p>	
Current status:	Alternative approach:
FBiH Environmental Protection Fund is financing the preparation of management plan	Cooperation with the Fund, PA managers, municipality of Fojnica and engaged service provider to integrate a species management plan for the alpine newt into the management plan of Prokoško Lake NM
Current status of the population of the alpine newt at the Prokoško Lake NM	<p>The exact status of the population will be investigated during the development of the management plan and species management plan and concrete measures developed.</p> <p>A proposed alternative approach is to re-introduce individuals of alpine newts to Prokosko lake. This will be further assessed and decided whether indicator 6b (<i>Non-deterioration of Alpine newt (<i>Triturus alpestris</i>) population in Prokosko Lake NM stable or increasing</i>) should be rewritten.</p> <p>As evidenced in the minutes of the first Project Board meeting, individuals of the alpine newt are not present in Prokosko Lake due to anthropogenic activities. However, they are present in other areas that are potential subjects of protection. Therefore, it was proposed to include planning of the reintroduction of species from other habitats.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Management Plan for this species should be integrated into the Management Plan of Prokoško Lake NM. Therefore, it would be good to leverage on this activity in order to determine the current state and the next steps related to this species.</p> <p>RTA is informed about this issue and the project risks were re-assessed accordingly.</p>
<p><i>Output 1.3:</i> A portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystems developed and set under implementation, and as follows: An adaptation plan for Serbian spruce (<i>Picea omorica</i>) with measures to improve status in natural populations, support to regeneration, monitoring of tree health, and pest control for Drina National Park, including targeted support to regeneration</p>	
Current status:	Alternative approach:
During consultation meeting held on October 20 th 2022 with Mr. Dragan Kovacevic, head for nature protection department of the RS Institute for protection of cultural, historical and natural heritage, it was noted that	A species risk management plan for Serbian spruce containing the measures to prevent/minimize negative impacts of CC on the viability of this population.

significant progress regarding status of the Serbian spruce in NP Drina was already achieved (e.g. equipment for assessing the ecological parameters for revitalization and regeneration of Serbian spruce installed at 10 locations in NP Drina, trees marked and inserted in GIS platform to follow the viability status, seeds collected and the genetic analysis finalized). To be able to increase the impact of project activities, these efforts should be broadened to all areas in RS with identified forest stands of this species.	
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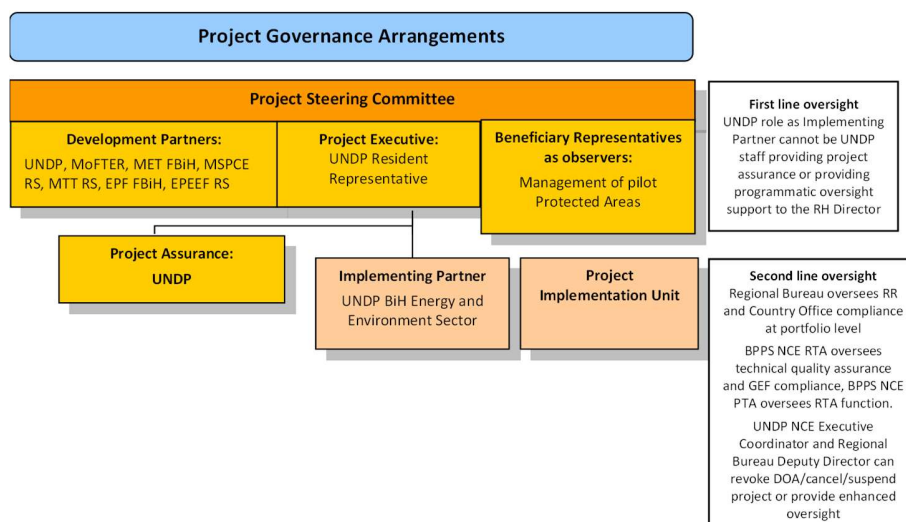
5. Overview of the Project Implementation Process

The below Annual Work Plan was presented at the Inception workshop, consultation meetings held during the inception phase and approved by the Project Board on the 1st meeting. It is important to emphasize that for the rest of 2022, project dynamics is in line with the originally planned AWP while the financial planning is delayed due to the prolonged process of hiring project personnel. Consequently, budget spending was moved to forthcoming years of project implementation.

Component 1: Strengthening PA resilience to climate change threats	
Outcome 1: Managerial and technical capacities of targeted PAs in place helping ensure resilience of key biodiversity values to climate change	
<i>Output 1.1:</i> Comprehensive climate threat assessment conducted for pilot PAs (<i>National parks Sutjeska, Kozara, Drina and Una; nature monument Prokoško jezero, park of nature Blidinje, protected landscape Vjetrenica-Popovo polje, park of nature Orjen and nature monument Vrelo Bosne</i>).	engagement of experts (International Consultant for CC Resilience; PA capacity building coordinator; PA management planning specialist and BD and CC Adaptation/Resilience specialist) assessments conducted, draft scenarios prepared
<i>Output 1.2:</i> PA management framework developed/updated and under implementation with due account of climate threats for above-listed pilot PAs.	<i>Activities aligned with the current status of PA management plans</i> Service providers engaged and work initiated.
<i>Output 1.3:</i> A portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystems developed and set under implementation, and as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A species management plan for the alpine newt (<i>Triturus alpestris</i>) for Prokosko Lake NM 	activities aligned with the development of management plan for Prokoško lake; if needed - service provider engaged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest fire management capacity building, including development and operationalization of an early warning system and development of Fire Protection Action Plans with priority prevention measures for national parks 	meetings with local authorities (cities, municipalities, cantons), forestry companies, civil protection authorities, data

Sutjeska, Kozara and Drina, Orjen and Blidinje parks of nature, and Skakavac Nature Monument.	collection and definition of approach
<i>Output 1.4:</i> Demonstration of innovative restoration approaches: development of restoration methodology and plan for the pilot sites (protected habitats Tišina and Gromiželj), including the realization of planned activities and engagement of local communities, landowners, private sector stakeholders, municipal authorities ensured and documenting effects, including proposition for dissemination and replication.	engagement of an International expert (senior advisor), and engagement of a Service provider for the preparation of Restoration plans.
Component 2: Improving financial sustainability of targeted PAs through sustainable tourism development	
Outcome 2: Financial sustainability of targeted PAs improved	
Output 2.1. Update of business plans for individual PAs, design of marketing plans, justification of proposals for clustering of PAs under a single management authority, development of optimisation schemes for the PA recurrent costs	engagement of International consultant; decision on joint approach with partnering projects
Output 2.3: Eco-tourism concession model developed and piloted in Sutjeska National Park	engagement of consultancy team, initiation of development of concession model (i.e. Working group establishment!)
<i>Output 2.5: Promotion of natural values, products and services in the targeted PAs is improved</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved visibility and connectivity of groups of PAs linked geographically with a view of providing a more comprehensive offer to visitors and promote longer visitation periods: Kozara - Una PN (RS) - Liječanski knez - Jelića Brdo Forest - Žuta Bukva; Tajan - Konjuh – Bijambare; Skakavac - Orlovača cave - Trebević - River Prača Canyon - Bentbaša; Cicelj - Sutjeska – Kuk. Joint promotion and branding for cave nature monuments Drina NP: support to visitor facilities and PA promotion Development of promotion packages and implement action plans for enhanced PA visibility and outreach and co-financing outreach activities for recently established/re-classified PAs: Vjetrenica PL and Orjen PN Communication, promotion, and marketing capacity building 	meetings held (both with PA managers and international organizations active in this field). Development of communication strategy and selection of Service Provider for awareness raising campaign development of strategy for promotion of PAs
<i>Output 2.5: Promotion of natural values, products and services in the targeted PAs is improved</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Una NP: Development of detailed Regulatory (urban) plans for visitor zones (Martin Brod, Kulen Vakuf and visitor zone Štrbački buk-Lohovo) Improved connectivity with Una Park of Nature (RS) 	service provider engaged and work initiated
Component 3: Knowledge management and communication	
definition of approach/system and data collection data collection on meeting participants (incl. Inception workshop and consultative meetings) to define broader group of stakeholders and identify particular needs. Information disaggregated by gender engagement of SESP/ESMP expert clear ESMP developed for pilot projects (CCA segment, Component 1) data tracked and reported/promoted	

Project Organization Structure is presented to the Project Board members and is fully aligned with the one presented in the Project document. Once again, it is anticipated that the Project implementation unit will be fully established by the end of 2022. For all three remaining positions, hiring processes are in final stages.



When it comes to an **M&E planning schedule**, for the remaining period of 2022 it is planned to do the following **12 site visits**:

- **NP Sutjeska, NP Kozara, NP Drina, NP Una, park of nature Prokoško lake, park of nature Blidinje, protected landscape Vjetrenica-Popovo polje, park of nature Orjen, nature monument Vrelo Bosne, park of nature Una, protected habitat Tišina and protected habitat Gromiželj**

These visits are aligned with the AWP for the first year and are aimed to discuss the approach and agree on further steps when it comes to the initiation of planned activities.

- **Project Board meetings:** The next meeting is planned for February 2023 in Sarajevo. It was agreed that the meetings of the Project Board **will be organized evenly in Banja Luka and Sarajevo.**
- **Reporting obligations (MTR, TE, PIRs)** are to be fulfilled in line with schedule defined in the DOA.

July/August each year (2023-2027)	Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs)
January 31 st , 2025	Mid-Term Review
March 31 st , 2027	Terminal Evaluation

Project risk management is fully aligned with the Atlas Risk log of the project (provided in **Annex 5: Updated ATLAS Risk Log**). As an outcome of the inception phase. Re-assessment of project risks and specification of risk mitigation measures for the first year revealed that special attention should be paid on measures to prevent the deterioration of the alpine newt population at Prokoško lake and implement adaptive management measures. Furthermore, a need for the preparation of ESMPs for pilot projects is emphasized through additional risk treatment measures.

Other risk treatment/management measures are implemented accordingly. Having in mind the inception stage of the project, the focus is devoted to communication and building partnerships with relevant stakeholders.

6. Social and environmental safeguards

As emphasized in the Project Document, UNDP SE safeguards are crucial to be followed while designing and implementing activities planned under outputs of Component 1 (1.1., 1.2., 1.3, 1.4, 1.5.) and outputs 2.1. (Sustainable tourism products developed for pilot PAs), Output 2.2: Functional partnerships with the private sector stakeholders), Output 2.3: Eco-tourism concession model developed and piloted in Sutjeska National Park, and Output 2.5. (Output 2.5: Promotion of natural values, products and services in the targeted PAs is improved.

An important next step to secure alignment with UNDP SES is the engagement of ESMP expert who will develop detail ESMPs for all of the pilot projects foreseen and assure tracking and proper follow-up on the requirements.

Besides, discussions during the inception phase were particularly focused on the following aspects:

Environmental safeguards:

- Due diligence on planned activities and follow-up (particularly the ones aimed to preserve endangered species); planning in line with local legislation and alignment with the current legislative framework.
- For the restoration of swamps, it is of crucial importance to pay special attention to communicating lessons learned and assure knowledge building out from successful experiences in the region.
- Particular environmental safeguards measures should be devoted to the development of tourist offers and tourist products – the focus should always be to sustain and to preserve and all of touristic activities must adhere to that ultimate goal.

Social safeguards:

- Strong emphasis should be paid while developing the concession model by defining mechanisms that will improve local population livelihood conditions.
- Negative consequences of COVID-19 pandemic must be carefully tracked and project approaches re-assessed against findings and lessons learned.

7. Gender mainstreaming and stakeholders' engagement

During the inception phase, the following gender issues were discussed and emphasized as important considerations of the project implementation:

- Balanced representation and meaningful participation of women and men in key project activities, including those related to capacity building and management planning for protected areas, BD threat and risk assessments, PA management and business planning, the introduction of climate-smart PA management solutions and responses to CC threats and effects, sustainable tourism development with PA engagement, PA promotion and marketing;
- Engagement and mobilization of individuals, local women groups, women NGOs, etc. to participate in its implementation of the Project and to benefit from business opportunities that are created under the particular Project components;
- Encouragement of and better access for women entrepreneurs and women's businesses (i.e. development of ecotourism products)

When it comes to stakeholder engagement policy, the project inception phase was implemented in line with the Stakeholder engagement plan, developed within the project document. Therefore, the consultation process and invitees for the Inception workshop were identified as per roles and means of engagement to ensure stakeholder engagement throughout the project duration and includes the following:

Project Board Members: BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism, RS Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology, RS Ministry of Trade and Tourism, and Environmental Funds of FBiH and RS;

Other relevant institutions: Cantonal Ministries of Environment/Tourism, Public enterprises responsible for management of Protected areas including municipalities, Tourist organizations, State and Entity Chambers of Commerce, private sector representatives;

Relevant International organizations and NGOs: World Bank, GIZ, USAID, AICS, UN agencies (FAO, UNESCO and UNEP)

The next steps in the stakeholder engagement plan are planned to be aligned with concrete areas for cooperation and synergy (i.e. site visit plan for the remaining months of 2022 is developed including the dynamics of organizations of Project Board meetings).

If needed, the stakeholder engagement plan will be adapted to the current situation on the field and will be an integral segment the of adaptive management of the project.

8. Conclusions and recommendations/way forward

The most important conclusion of the consultation meetings organized during the inception phase of the project, including the First Project Board meeting, is that the overall log frame and planned activities of the project are fully welcomed, recognized as needed and important and that the project stakeholders were fully involved in the PPG stage of the project. Except for the unclear situation related to the alpine newt, all other changes are of operational nature and as such will not affect the planned outputs of the project.

In general, the project strategy is assessed as adequate and is fully supported by the project stakeholders. Status of risks were presented to the Project Board members and tracked accordingly. So far, it is anticipated that the most important measure to minimize the identified risks should be to assure proper communication and cooperation with stakeholders, including other projects in field of PA management and tourism, so as to avoid overlapping and assure synergetic and efficient effort.

It is important to emphasize that for the rest of 2022, project dynamics is in line with the originally planned AWP while the financial planning is delayed due to the prolonged process of hiring project personnel. Consequently, budget spending was moved to forthcoming years of project implementation.

Finally, the inception phase of the SPA project did not result with the need for changes of Project implementation arrangements; Result framework, indicators and means of verification; Updated stakeholder mapping, and Updated project document. Therefore, these annexes were exempt from the list indicated in the remaining part of the document.

Annex 1: Inception Workshop Agenda

Sustainability of Protected Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SPA)

Inception Workshop

27.09.2022.

Agenda

- 10.30 – 11.00 Welcome remarks, Keynote speeches
Mr. Senad Oprašić, GEF technical focal point, BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations
Mr. Mehmed Cero, FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism (NFP for UNCBD)
Ms. Sijetlana Radusin, RS Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology (NFP for UNFCCC)
Mr. Stephen Kinloch-Pichat, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in BiH
- 11.00 – 11.30 **Project Overview;** *Ms. Raduška Cupać, Energy and Environment Sector Leader*
- 11.30 – 11.45 Coffee break
- 12.00 – 12.30 UNDP, GEF; Project's Important milestones; M&E Requirements
Ms. Monica Moldovan, Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP IRH
- 12.30 – 13.15 Next Steps & Wrap up: How can you participate in this project?
Ms. Senka M. Bećirović, Project Manager
- 13.15 – 14.00 Questions & Answers
- 14.00 – 17.00 Lunch and Field visit to nature monument Vrelo Bosne
presentation of partnering institutions/projects

Annex 2: Workshop participants list



Početna radionica Projekta "Održivost zaštićenih područja u BiH" (SPA) 27.09.2022. Hotel Hills <u>Spisak učesnika</u>			
Institucija	Ime i prezime	Potpis	Posjeta Vrelu Bosne
Ministarstvo vanjske trgovine i ekonomskih odnosa BiH	Senad Oprašić	SENAD OPRAŠIĆ	
Ministarstvo vanjske trgovine i ekonomskih odnosa BiH	Jelica Grujić		
Federalno ministarstvo okoliša i turizma	Mehmed Cero		
Federalno ministarstvo okoliša i turizma	Zineta Mujaković		X
Federalno ministarstvo okoliša i turizma	Bisera Hotić		
Federalno ministarstvo okoliša i turizma	Almira Kapetanović		
Federalno ministarstvo okoliša i turizma	Adla Kahrić		DA
Ministarstvo za prostorno uređenje, građevinarstvo i ekologije Republike Srpske	Željka Stojičić		
Ministarstvo trgovine i turizma Republike Srpske	Bojan Rašković		
Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede Republike Srpske	Milanka Jovanović		X
Fond za zaštitu životne sredine i energetske efikasnost Republike Srpske	Zoran Lukač		

Institucija	Ime i prezime	Potpis	Posjeta Vrelu Bosne
Fond za zaštitu okoliša Federacije BiH	Adi Habul		-
Kantonalna javna ustanova za zaštićena prirodna područja	Harita Čolaković		
Kantonalna javna ustanova za zaštićena prirodna područja	Lejla Muminović		+
Kantonalna javna ustanova za zaštićena prirodna područja	Denisa Dedić		+
Federalna uprava civilne zaštite	Enes Memić		
Republička uprava civilne zaštite	Vladanka Šešilija		X
Republička uprava civilne zaštite	Marija Šaraba		X
Italijanska razvojna agencija	Mersiha Behlulović		X
Ministarstvo komunalne privrede, infrastrukture, prostornog uređenja, građenja i zaštite okoliša KS	Adnan Medić		
Ministarstvo komunalne privrede, infrastrukture, prostornog uređenja, građenja i zaštite okoliša KS	Amela Rokša		X
Ministarstvo komunalne privrede, infrastrukture, prostornog uređenja, građenja i zaštite okoliša KS	Mia Maslo-Kapidžić		
Ministarstvo prostornog uređenja, građenja, zaštite okoliša, povratka i stambenih poslova SBK/KSB	Riad Idrizović		DA
Ministarstvo prostornog uređenja, građenja, zaštite okoliša, povratka i stambenih poslova SBK/KSB	Anita Jakovljević		DA
Ministarstvo privrede SBK/KSB	Amra Livnjak		
USK Ministarstvo za građenje, prostorno uređenje i zaštitu okolišu	Mersija Talić		X

Institucija	Ime i prezime	Potpis	Posjeta Vrelu Bosne	
Ministarstvo gospodarstva Županije Zapadnohercegovačke	Antonio Pavković			M
Turistička zajednica Kantona Sarajevo	Nermina Hurem Ramić		-	F
Turistička zajednica Kantona Sarajevo	Amela Abaspahić		-	F
JU "Agencija za kulturno povijesnu i prirodnu baštinu i razvoj turističkih potencijala grada Jajca"	Dragan Glavaš			M
Direkcija za turizam Ministarstva privrede Kantona Sarajevo	Indira Ibričić			F
JU Zaštićeni pejzaž "Konjuh"	Lugavić Nehra			F
JU Zaštićeni pejzaž "Konjuh"	Nurković Nermin			M
Nacionalni park "Una" d.o.o.	Amarildo Mulić		-	M
Nacionalni park "Una" d.o.o.	Emina Štrkljević		-	F
JU NP "Drina" Srebrenica	Veljko Ristić			M
Opštinska uprava Šamac	Dajana Sofrenović			F
JPŠ "Šume Republike Srpske", ŠG "Vučevica", Čajniče			-	M
JP Šumsko privredno društvo Zeničko-dobojskog kantona - Poslovna jedinica Spomenik prirode "Tajan"				
JP Šumsko privredno društvo Zeničko-dobojskog kantona - Poslovna jedinica Spomenik prirode "Tajan"				
JPŠ "Šume Republike Srpske", ŠG "Sjemeč", Rogatica	Nebojša Šubara		-	M

Institucija	Ime i prezime	Potpis	Posjeta Vrelu Bosne	
Općina Fojnica	Vahid Bureković		-	M
JKP Šćona doo Fojnica	Almin Mujčić		-	M
JP "NP Kozara"	Božidar Nikoletić			
JU Park prirode "Una"	Vujadin Pilipović			
Udruga Dinarica/WWF u BiH	Zoran Šeremet		?	M
Udruga Dinarica/WWF u BiH	Milena Ljubičić		?	F
CPCD	Anida Šabanović		✓	F
USAID Turizam	Azra Džigal		Ne	F
Centar za životnu sredinu	Milica Končar		ne znam	F
CISP	Jasmina Ovećina		-	F
Ur Lukomir	Narsid Masleša			
AquaBalkan	Eldin Gakić			
SOR Narcis	Nada Šarić		-	F
Centar za obnovu i razvoj sela Kruševo Brdo	Goran Ivanović			M
Centar za obnovu i razvoj sela Kruševo Brdo	Radojka Ivanović			F

Institucija	Ime i prezime	Potpis	Posjeta Vrelo Bosne	
10M	Emil Balavac		DA	M
FAO	Vlado Pijunović	VLAĐO PIJUNOVIĆ		M
UNEP	Matea Grabovac	<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Matea Grabovac		F
UNDP	Raduška Cupać	<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Raduška Cupać	—	F
UNDP	Alisa Grabus			F
UNDP	Jovanka Četković			F
UNDP	Amra Čelebić			F
UNDP	Alen Zaimović			
UNDP	Amina Omičević	<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Amina Omičević		F
UNDP, IRH	Monica Moldovan	<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Monica Moldovan		F
UNDP	Senka M. Bećirović	<small>DocuSigned by:</small> Senka M. Bećirović		F
Fed. ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede	TATJANA MARKIĆ		/	F
Stephan Kinloch Pichet			?	M
Fed. uprava crkvenih zajednica	Eros Mamić		—	M
NO JU Agencija JICA	Dragan Čolović		— ?	M

Institucija	Ime i prezime	Potpis	Posjeta Vrelo Bosne	
MINISTARSTVO PROT. UREĐ				
P33 KUNIH	Igor Hrabarović		HE	M
Federativno ministarstvo poljoprivrede	Amela Čračić		NE	F
UKUPNO KS	Adnan Medić		DA	M
FROIT	Blanka Čigunović		NE	F
NP „SUTJESKA“	VINKA KESMANOVIĆ		NE	F
NP „SUTJESKA“	VLAĐO SIMUNIĆ		NE	M
-II-	VIDOJEVIĆ ALEKSANDAR			M
JV PARK PRIRODE „VUKOVAR“	DRAGAN ČOLUŠIĆ		DA	M
Spomenik prirode „Tajna“	Dalija Mujkić		NE	M
SPOMENIK PRIRODE „TAJNA“	IBRAHIM KRAJČIĆ		NE	M
UNDP BiH	DEJANA KADROVIĆ		/	F

Annex 3: Minutes from the Inception workshop

****Unofficial translation***

Senka Mutabdzija Bećirović, Project Manager – welcomed the guests and participants, representatives of stakeholders, and introduced speakers as follows:

Senad Oprašić, BIH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations – GEF Operational Focal Point – Mr. Oprašić expressed his gratitude to UNDP for long term partnership and cooperation of more than 15 years, highlighting that this Project is going to deal with significant and challenging issues that BIH faces with. Mr. Oprašić also said that the Project would provide support in finding innovative financing mechanisms for protected areas through an ecosystem approach, strengthening the sustainability of protected areas through the involvement of the private sector and development of eco-tourism stating that BIH has all preconditions for the development of eco-tourism in protected areas. He also mentioned that BIH, thanks to GEF grants, increased the size of its protected areas from 1.5 % to cca. 3%.

Mehmed Cero - Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism – UN focal point for biodiversity. Mr. Cero said he was very happy to participate in this very demanding project since it involves all governmental levels of BIH: entity, cantonal, and municipal levels. He also informed participants about the documents (ESAP 2030+– Environmental Strategy and Action Plan) that have been developed and adopted by the FBiH government and will be adopted by RS and BD. He highlighted that biodiversity coupled with other six areas of ESAP are actual for the implementation of that document. He also informed participants of another important event, which is COP15, in December, in Montreal, where BIH delegation will be presenting its strategic documents, including this Project. Also, Mr. Cero highlighted that along with the GEF grant, the total financing of this Project includes cca. 18 mil USD of (parallel) co-financing of responsible institutions and other project partners He thanked to all and expressed his hope that this Project would achieve good results in next 5 years.

Željka Stojičić - Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology of Republika Srpska – Mrs. Stojičić congratulated the project team and emphasized very important step that the project team has taken in the preparatory stage, which other projects very often omit. She highlighted that all respective ministries were involved in the preparation, and they provided information on the real needs of protected areas. Mrs. Stojičić said that 3.5 % of RS are protected areas, and there are 33 protected areas in RS, highlighting that the key issue they are facing is financial sustainability, thus making this Project very actual and significant. She also said that the Ministry expected the Project to provide support to existing managers of PAs, and the Ministry expects that the capacities of managers of PAs will be strengthened through this Project, as well as new tourist offers to be created. In the end, Mrs. Stojičić said that she expected the objectives of the Project would be achieved.

Stephen Kinloch-Pichat – Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP BIH - Mr. Kinloch-Pichat welcomed all guests and participants and officially launched the SPA Project on a very significant day, i.e., the World Tourism Day. He expressed his gratitude since all participants attested the importance of the Project. Mr. Kinloch-Pichat said that climate and landscape diversity made BIH among the top 5 countries for the development of tourism, specifically eco-tourism. He emphasized that this is the first time that UNDP in BIH implements a project that directly addresses the objectives of two flagship environmental conventions – the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. As a

signatory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, BiH adopted last year an updated NDC, scaling up its commitment to reach GHG emission reduction and introducing climate change adaptation commitments and planning. In the case of climate change adaptation, the critical step refers to the urgent need for defining priorities and coherent sectoral adaptation plans and programs and SPA project will deliver in this regard as well.

Raduška Cupać- Energy and Environment Sector Leader, UNDP BIH – Ms. Cupać welcomed participants and stakeholders, who were involved in the project design highlighting the roles of Ms. Željka Stojičić RS MSPCE, and Ms. Zineta Mujaković, FMOIT). Ms. Cupać presented the Project’s purpose, objectives and organization (PPT attached) and once again invited all stakeholders to get fully involved with their ideas, comments, and suggestions. She also presented Ms. Senka M. Bećirović, who will be managing the Project together with the Project team in Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

Ms. Senka M. Bećirović - Project manager, UNDP BIH – Ms. Bećirović expressed her gratitude to all speakers, and introduced the next speaker, Ms. Monica Moldovan, Regional Technical Adviser Istanbul Regional Hub, after the break, who will present practical steps of implementation of this kind of GEF-funded projects.

After the coffee break, the participants were welcomed by Ms. Monica Moldovan - RTA welcomed participants and thanked organizers for this opportunity to introduce the complex process of Project design and implementation coupled with the requirements of UNDP, UNDP CO, GEF, etc. (Presentation attached).

Ms. Bećirović thanked to Ms. Moldovan and other colleagues who participated online. Afterwards, Ms. Bećirović presented, practical next steps that will require the involvement of all participants, starting with the most important groups of stakeholders (PPT attached). She also highlighted the necessity for the cooperation of all stakeholders including the government sector, protected areas managers, non-governmental sector, etc. Ms. Bećirović once again mentioned component 3 of the Project (Knowledge management), which does not have some practical, visible result in the field, but which will be of great importance for the future management of protected areas.

Ms. Bećirović announced Project Board meeting in beginning of October, potentially 10 or 11 October in Banja Luka, and invited all participants to communicate all ideas, suggestions, etc. Afterward, Ms. Bećirović opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Oprašić made a comment on the potential Adriatic Sea protected area, since there are some activities in Neum municipality (Neum Klek bay), i.e., possibilities for the introduction of some new PAs. Also, he mentioned monitoring and evaluation of protected areas and highlighted that BiH needs anyone who can help to establish M&E system. Mr. Oprašić stressed out that NGO sector should be included in this segment since it can significantly contribute to the full implementation of the Project.

Dragan Kovačević - Institute for Protection of cultural, historical and nature heritage of RS- congratulated to all speakers, specifically to Ms. Bećirović for detail presentation of all activities. He stressed his concern for not seeing all managers of PAs, such as NP Kozara, public enterprise “Šume RS” stressing the importance of this enterprise in the overall process. Mr. Kovačević also informed the audience that in the case of NP Drina a significant progress to preserve the population of Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*) has already been made. Therefore, current conditions should be carefully assessed, and planned activities

adjusted in order to achieve the best value for money. He announced that NP Una shall host the next PAs Manager Day in the beginning of November and invited the Project to participate and to present all these activities.

Mr. Mulić, NP Una director- Thanked to donors and all that were involved in preparation of this very complex and demanding project, which is of great importance for BIH protected areas. He stressed that the presentation of project activities was clear and detailed along with the scope and size of work that would be required in the Project. Mr. Mulić highlighted the importance of involvement of all respective institutions and said that he welcomes information of possibility for adaptation of PA problems, since they are not the same now, as they were in the preparatory stage of the Project. Also, he said that staff of PAs should be trained about new topics such as modern technologies, potential climate change impacts and prevention measures, etc. Mr. Mulić wanted to address the issue of a gap between tour operators and PAs highlighting the need for creating tourist packages that include PAs since they showed that they are generators of tourism. Once again, he said that we should all work together, i.e., should work much more on promotion of PAs and introduced idea of establishment of regional cooperation with other PAs.

Ms. Bećirović responded that there may be some corrections as per current situation of PAs.

Mr. Ivanović, Center for reconstruction and development of Kruševo Brdo village, expressed his hope that this Project would support initiative to protect Kruševo brdo that has a very valuable natural and cultural value – it is consisting of 5 river streams, 14 waterfalls, traditional way of living, and activities that they have already initiated such as "Ladies wolf hunting" events, etc. He said that we could harmonize our activities and asked to include this area in some of the Project's sub activities.

Public institution "Agency for cultural, historical and natural heritage and development tourist potential of the city of Jajce" Mr. Dragan Glavaš- Mr. Glavaš expressed their willingness to be involved in project activities since they have made an initiative of protecting the Pliva lakes – the biggest natural lakes in BiH which are already heavily affected by a significant number of visitors (cca. 250,000 tourists per year).

Protected areas - NGO CISP representative- Jasmina Ovčina- NGO sector wants to take a role in promotion of PAs such as Nature Park Blidinje and National Park Sutjeska and mentioned their commitment to achieving a participatory approach in the management of PAs. She also stressed out the importance of including Academy (universities) together with tour operators. She informed participants about their current work with these two NPs and about biodiversity study, which is ongoing. Further on, she mentioned their next steps on creating awareness, since they want to have responsible tourists who will not have negative effects to biodiversity. Moreover, Ms Ovčina highlighted their willingness to participate in the Project.

Then, Ms. Bećirović invited WWF representatives to inform participants about their activities in BIH.

WWF in BIH, Ms. Milena Ljubičić, Informed participants on their activities in last seven years on the improvement of management of PAs in BIH and mentioned their current work with NP Una. Their activities are related to the participation of the local community, protection of biodiversity, legal regulation, institutional regulations, etc. She also presented their next activity "Days of managers" which will be held in the end of October or beginning of November with the subject of sustainability of PAs, local financing, availability of finances, different mechanisms, etc.

Mr. Cero shared his impression of seeing these projects as their capacity. He also said that, by having this energy in the Project, great results can be achieved. He also emphasized the role of forestry which must be fully involved in the project.

Ms. Bećirović thanked to all participants and summarized the discussion as follows:

- Next steps of Project team: preparation of Inception report,
- No significant comments on the Project activities,
- Project Activities will be adopted in accordance with real, current situation in the field,
- Project board meeting to be organized by beginning of October

Ms. Bećirović informed participants that the Project would contact each of them and agree on individual steps of relevance for each institution.

Ms. Bećirović expressed her gratitude once again to all participants for their presence, interest and valuable contributions during the preparation of the Project and hopes this kind of support will continue in the project implementation.

The Inception workshop was concluded with these words and invitation of all participants to visit PA Vrelo Bosne.

Note: pdf print outs of the [presentations](#) was sent via email to the participants of the Workshop.

Annex 4: Draft Annual (Operational) Work Plan and Budget for year 1

Project Output Description	Year 1	targets planned for 2022				targets planned until June 2023					
		september	october	november	december	january	february	march	april	may	june
Component 1: Strengthening PA resilience to climate change threats Outcome 1: Managerial and technical capacities of targeted PAs in place helping ensure resilience of key biodiversity values to climate change Output 1.1: Comprehensive climate threat assessment conducted for											
Comprehensive climate threat assessment conducted for NPs Sutjeska, Kozara, Drina, Una, Prokosko lake NM, Bliđinje PN, Vjetrenica PL, Orjen PN, and Vrelo Bosne NM		engagement of experts: International Consultant for CC Resilience; PA capacity building coordinator, PA management planning specialist and BD and CC Adaptation/Resilience specialist definition of methodological approach				assessments conducted, draft scenarios prepared					
Output 1.2: PA management framework developed/updated and under implementation with account of climate threats											
PA management plan developed with due account of climate threats and climate neutrality objectives/indicators: Drina NP						Service provider engaged, development of PA management plan initiated					
PA management plan developed with due account of climate threats and climate neutrality objectives/indicators; should include enhanced monitoring of aquatic habitats and ichthyofauna: Una NP						Service provider engaged, module for CC agreed and integrate into new management plan					
PA management plan developed with due account of climate threats: Prokosko Lake NM						Service provider engaged, module for CC agreed					
PA management plan based on the new valorisation study, integrated with a climate threat management module: Vjetrenica PL						Service provider engaged, development of PA management plan initiated					
Support to climate-neutral and BD-sensitive PA management and business planning: Canton Sarajevo PAs (incl. Status assessment and an action plan for the endangered spruce forest and vulnerable peatland communities for Bijambare PL)						Service Provider engaged					
PA management plan developed with due account of climate threats and climate neutrality objectives/indicators: Orjen Park of Nature						Service provider engaged, development of PA management plan initiated					
Output 1.3: A portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for											
Species management plan for alpine newt (<i>Triturus alpestris</i>) integrated with the PA management plan (Output 1.2): Prokosko Lake NM						activities aligned with the development of management plan for Prokoško lake, if needed - service provider engaged					
Forest fire management capacity building, incl early warning system and Action plan with priority prevention measures, equipment and training: Orjen PN, Sutjeska NP, Kozara NP, Drina NP, Bliđinje PN, Sarajevo Canton PAs		meetings, data collection and definition of joint approach with other UNDP's projects				meetings with local authorities (cities, municipalities, cantons), forestry companies, civil protection authorities, data collection and definition of approach					
Output 1.4: Demonstration of innovative restoration approaches											
Wetland restoration in Tisina and Gromizelj: Demo sites for restoration selected based on ecosystem types/threat imminence/current damage to ecosystem/its value; Restoration methodology and plan developed for the pilot sites to demonstrate options for its threatened ecosystems; Targeted support for selected restoration pilots provided; Engagement of local communities, private sector stakeholders, municipal authorities ensured; Restoration effects documented, pilots evaluated and proposed for dissemination and replication.		Status quo assessment conducted and plan for approach made. If urgent, hiring of Restoration Consultant in this year.				engagement of International expert (senior advisor), engagement of Service provider for preparation of Restoration plans meetings with city authorities of Bijeljina to discuss the approach					
Component 2: Improving financial sustainability of targeted PAs through											
Outcome 2: Financial sustainability of targeted PAs improves Output 2.1: Sustainable tourism products developed with commun											
Update of business plans for individual PAs, design of marketing plans, justification of proposals for clustering of PAs under a single management authority, development of optimisation schemes for the PA recurrent costs		meetings with relevant stakeholders and data collection				engagement of International consultant; decision on joint approach with partnering projects					
Output 2.3: Eco-tourism concession model developed and piloted in											

Clarification of policies and elaboration of Sustainable Concession Management Guidelines based on best available practice applicable to the existing legislative framework		development of Gap analysis (internal capacities of Project team) to define the strategy of action	engagement of consultancy team, initiation of development of concession model (i.e. Working group establishment)
Development of concession proposal			
Output 2.4: PA participation in the governmental grant programme			
Output 2.5: Promotion of natural values, products and services in the			
Improved visibility and connectivity of targeted PAS through joint promotion efforts: Kozara - Una PN (RS) - Liječanski knez - Jelića Brdo Forest - Žuta Bukva Tajan - Konjuh - Bijambare Skakavac - Orlovača cave - Trebević - River Prača Canyon - Bentbaša Cicelj - Sutjeska - Kuk Joint promotion and branding for cave nature monuments		meetings held (both with PA managers and international organizations active in this field). Development of communication strategy and selection of Service Provider for awareness raising campaign	development of strategy for promotion of PAs
Drina NP: support to visitor facilities and PA promotion		meetings held and definition of strategy	
Una NP: Development of detailed Regulatory (urban) plans for visitor zones (Martin Brod, Kulen Vakuf and visitor zone Štrbački buk-Lohovo)		RIP developed	service provider engaged and work initiated
Improved connectivity with Una Park of Nature (RS)		meetings held and definition of strategy	development of strategy for promotion of PAs
Promotion package and co-financing outreach activities for recently established/re-classified PAs: Vjetrenica PL and Orjen PN			
Communication, promotion, and marketing capacity building	promotion of project launch and engagement of service provider for awareness raising campaign		activities in line with project progress
Outcome 3: Knowledge management			
Project Communication, KM and replication support	definition of approach/system and data collection data collection on meeting participants (incl. Inception workshop and consultative meetings) to define broader group of stakeholders and identify particular needs. Information disaggregated by gender engagement of SESP/ESMP expert		clear ESMP developed for pilot projects (CCA segment, Component 1) data tracked and reported / promoted

Activity ID	Account Code	Description	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	2027 Budget
ACTIVITY1	71200	International Cons	10,000.00	12,000.00			
ACTIVITY1	71300	Local Consultants	60,000.00	62,500.00	45,000.00	40,000.00	
ACTIVITY1	71400	Contractual Serv	9,100.00	11,600.00	11,600.00	11,600.00	11,770.00
ACTIVITY1	71600	Travel	2,000.00	1,500.00	1,850.00	2,850.00	
ACTIVITY1	72100	Contractual Serv	100,000.00	300,000.00	180,000.00	115,000.00	
ACTIVITY1	72200	Equipment and Furniture		35,000.00	35,000.00	8,000.00	
ACTIVITY1	75700	Training, Workshops and Confer			30,000.00	30,000.00	
ACTIVITY1	72400	Communic & Audio Visual Equip					
ACTIVITY1	76100	Foreign Exchange Currency Loss					
ACTIVITY1		SoF Total	181,100.00	422,600.00	303,450.00	207,450.00	11,770.00
ACTIVITY1			181,100.00	422,600.00	303,450.00	207,450.00	11,770.00
ACTIVITY2	71200	International Cons	20,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	10,000.00	
ACTIVITY2	71300	Local Consultants	40,000.00	60,000.00	30,000.00	25,000.00	
ACTIVITY2	71400	Contractual Serv	9,100.00	11,600.00	11,600.00	11,600.00	11,770.00
ACTIVITY2	71600	Travel	2,000.00	920.00	1,920.00	2,000.00	
ACTIVITY2	72100	Contractual Serv	95,000.00	174,000.00	170,000.00	135,000.00	
ACTIVITY2	72200	Equipment and Fu	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00		
ACTIVITY2	75700	Training, Worksho	18,000.00	39,996.03	40,000.00	15,000.00	
ACTIVITY2	76100	Foreign Exchange Currency Loss					
ACTIVITY2		SoF Total	194,100.00	326,516.03	293,520.00	198,600.00	11,770.00
ACTIVITY2			194,100.00	326,516.03	293,520.00	198,600.00	11,770.00
ACTIVITY3	71400	Contractual Serv	31,500.00	29,000.00	29,000.00	29,000.00	15,250.00
ACTIVITY3	71600	Travel	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	
ACTIVITY3	74200	Audio Visual&Print	1,500.00	5,000.00	7,000.00	10,000.00	
ACTIVITY3	75700	Training, Worksho	10,000.00	6,000.00	12,000.00	11,000.00	
ACTIVITY3		SoF Total	45,000.00	42,000.00	50,000.00	52,000.00	15,250.00
ACTIVITY3			45,000.00	42,000.00	50,000.00	52,000.00	15,250.00

ACTIVITY4	71200 International Consultants		20,000.00		20,000.00	
ACTIVITY4	71300 Local Consultants		8,000.00		8,000.00	
ACTIVITY4	71400 Contractual Servic	8,800.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	13,950.00
ACTIVITY4	74200 Audio Visual&Print Prod Costs		2,000.00		2,000.00	
ACTIVITY4	75700 Training, Workshops and Confer		614.67			
ACTIVITY4	76100 Foreign Exchange Currency Loss					
ACTIVITY4	SoF Total	8,800.00	42,614.67	12,000.00	42,000.00	13,950.00
ACTIVITY4		8,800.00	42,614.67	12,000.00	42,000.00	13,950.00
ACTIVITY5	71400 Contractual Servic	15,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	17,760.00
ACTIVITY5	72200 Equipment and Furniture		3,000.00			
ACTIVITY5	74100 Professional Servic	6,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	
ACTIVITY5	SoF Total	21,000.00	26,000.00	23,000.00	23,000.00	17,760.00
ACTIVITY5		21,000.00	26,000.00	23,000.00	23,000.00	17,760.00
		450,000.00	859,730.70	681,970.00	523,050.00	70,500.00

Annex 5: Updated ATLAS Risk Log

#	Description	Risk Category	Impact & Probability	Risk Treatment / Management Measures	Risk Owner
1	<i>Complex institutional structure and division of authorities and responsibilities between the state government, the two entities in BiH, the line ministries of both entities, and the municipal authorities.</i>	Organizational	I = 3; L = 3 Moderate	This risk will be mitigated through close collaboration with relevant stakeholders from the outset and by determining collaborative strategies and focal points in each of the key institutions for the Project Board. The project implementation team and UNDP will use the relevant experience from the previous projects and will rely on the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan to make sure that the institutional barriers are tackled timely and efficiently.	UNDP, Project Team, key governmental stakeholders, pilot PAs
2.	<i>Different management arrangements for PAs according to their category, spatial belonging and mandate.</i>	Operational	I = 3; L = 2 Low Likelihood	This risk will be mitigated through close collaboration with relevant stakeholders from the outset and by determining collaborative strategies and focal points in each of the key institutions for the Project Board. The project implementation team and UNDP will use the relevant experience from the previous projects and will rely on the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan to make sure that the institutional barriers are tackled timely and efficiently.	UNDP, PA authorities in charge of management
3.	<i>For the project interventions focused on the newly established/expanded protected areas, the future</i>	Operational	I = 3; L = 2 Low Likelihood	The planned project interventions involving the PAs under establishment/re-	UNDP, PA authorities temporarily in charge of management (line ministries, municipalities)

	<i>project activities, inputs and effects will be much determined by the management capacities in place.</i>			classification will be subject to adaptive management depending on the development of adequate institutional, financial and capacity building solutions for these PAs.	
4.	<i>Project impact on the status of biodiversity and ecosystems might be limited by climate change as a direct driver of habitat conversion and biodiversity loss in the country.</i>	Environmental	I = 3; L = 3 Moderate	<p>a. Climate change adaptation and resilience is a core of the project strategy. Under Component 1, the project will work to reduce the vulnerability of key biodiversity values and strengthen the resilience of target protected areas in BiH to climate change.</p> <p>b. Building on the key results of the PPG desk analysis, and further focusing on the PAs with the management capacities and resource available for more focus on the climate change response and adaptation, in the first year of implementation the Project will commission a comprehensive climate threat assessment of the pilot PAs. The threat assessment will be planned to take into account the project SESP risk related to the susceptibility of project endeavors to climate and extreme climate conditions and will be responsive to the SES Standard 2.</p> <p>c. Further assist the pilot PAs with the preparation of management plans, as well as management guidelines and tools for taking into account the CC threats, threat response scenarios, ecosystem resilience and adaptation measures.</p> <p>d. Portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystems will be</p>	UNDP, Project Team, key governmental stakeholders, pilot PAs

				<p>developed and set under implementation under project Output 1.3.</p> <p>e. Stakeholder consultations with the PA management authorities and municipal governments will catalyze replication of climate threat response action planning, adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystem.</p> <p>f. Ambiguous status of the population of Alpine newt at Prokosko lake improved through the planning of re-introduction measures. Evidenced and planned need for protection of Alpine newt will provide solutions to sustain this population at Prokosko lake and minimize negative anthropogenic impacts</p>	
5.	<i>Mechanisms and solutions to be offered by the project the sustainable PA finance might not prove their desired financial effect.</i>	Financial	I = 3; L = 3 Moderate	The project will perform a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the proposed PA finance opportunities, develop the mechanisms to ensure the long-term sustainability of the financial models, and ensure political buy-in. Cost-benefit analysis of the proposed PA finance opportunities, develop the mechanisms to ensure the long-term sustainability of the financial models	UNDP, Project Team, key governmental stakeholders, pilot PAs
6.	<i>Planned partnerships with the private sector partners will fail to yield the expected benefits</i>	Operational	I = 3; L = 3 Moderate	Development of a detailed private sector engagement strategy, planning of private sector engagement models with multiple benefits, performing thorough cost-benefit analyses and assessment of financial risks, and implementing early awareness raising among potential private sector partners. Adaptive management scenario where the project strategy will focus on other	UNDP, Project Team, key governmental stakeholders, private sector representatives and pilot PAs

				<p>options for private sector engagement in sustainable tourism development for the benefit of the PAs and the local communities (Output 2.2), while still providing for increased capacities to implement a PA tourism concession in the future.</p> <p>Engagement of ESMP expert to develop ESMPs for pilot projects. This will enable alignment with UNDP SES and assure tracking of social and environmental aspects of pilot projects.</p>	
7.	<i>Negative effects of the post-COVID recession</i>	Natural hazards	I = 3; L = 3 Moderate	Tracking of the situation regarding pandemic and constant communication with relevant project partners	UNDP, Project Team, key governmental stakeholders

Annex 6: First Project Board meeting; invitation letter, attendance list and minutes



Sarajevo, 04.10.2022. godine

Predmet: Poziv na prvi sastanak Projektnog odbora
Projekat „Održivost zaštićenih područja u BiH“ (SPA)

Poštovani,

Ovim putem želimo da Vas pozovemo na Prvi sastanak Projektnog odbora projekta „Održivost zaštićenih područja u BiH“ (SPA) koji će se održati u ponedjeljak, 10.10.2022. godine u Banja Luci sa početkom u 12:00 h.

Sastanak će biti održan u zgradi Ministarstva za prostorno uređenje, građevinarstvo i ekologiju Republike Srpske (Trg Republike Srpske 1), konferencijska sala na 5. spratu.

U nastavku Vam dostavljamo dnevni red sastanka:

Prvi sastanak Projektnog odbora DNEVNI RED

1. Uvodne napomene
2. Predstavljanje planiranih aktivnosti
3. Naredni koraci
4. Razno

Molimo potvrdu prisustva te Vas obavještavamo da uz pozivnicu prilažemo sljedeći popratni dokument:

- Projektni dokument projekta „Održivost zaštićenih područja u BiH“ (SPA) – originalnu englesku verziju i neslužbeni prevod.

Za sve dodatne informacije stojim na raspolaganju na brojeve telefona 060 33 52 094 / 033 293 486 ili putem elektronske pošte na senka.mutabdžija.becirovic@undp.org.

S poštovanjem,
Senka Mutabdžija Bećirović
Senka Mutabdžija Bećirović
Voditelj projekta

No.	IME I PREZIME UČESNIKA	INSTITUCIJA	KONTAKT TELEFON ILI E-MAIL ADRESA	POTPIS
1	Jelica Grujić	Ministarstvo vanjske trgovine i ekonomskih odnosa BiH	Jelica.Grujic@mvteo.gov.ba	
2	Nada Mlinar	Ministarstvo vanjske trgovine i ekonomskih odnosa BiH	Nada.Mlinar@mvteo.gov.ba	
3	Senad Oprašić	Ministarstvo vanjske trgovine i ekonomskih odnosa BiH	Senad.Oprasic@mvteo.gov.ba	
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5	Zineta Mujaković	Federalno ministarstvo okolisa i turizma	Zineta.Mujakovic@fmoit.gov.ba	
6	Bisera Hotić	Federalno ministarstvo okolisa i turizma	Bisera.Hotic@fmoit.gov.ba	
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9	Bojan Rašković	Ministarstvo trgovine i turizma RS	B.Raskovic@mtt.vladars.net	
10	Irena Kisić	Ministarstvo trgovine i turizma RS	I.Kisic@mtt.vladars.net	
11	Adi Habul	Fond za zastitu okolisa FBiH	Adi.Habul@fzofbih.org.ba	
12	Srdjan Todorovic	Fond za zastitu zivotne sredine i energetsku efikasnost RS	srdjan.todorovic@ekofondrs.org	
13	Raduška Cupać	UNDP	raduska.cupac@undp.org	
14	Senka M. Bećirović	UNDP	senka.mutabdžija.becirovic@undp.org	

** unofficial translation of Minutes of the Meeting

SUBJECT: Minutes of the First Project Board Meeting "Sustainability of Protected Areas in BiH" (SPA)

Date: 10 October 2022

Venue: Banja Luka; Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology of Republika Srpska

Present members of the Project Board:

Jelica Grujić, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina
 Senad Oprašić, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH (via the Teams application)
 Mehmed Cero, FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism
 Zineta Mujaković, FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism
 Bisera Hotić, FBiH Ministry of Environment and Tourism
 Željka Stojičić, RS Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology
 Bojan Rašković, RS Ministry of Trade and Tourism
 Irena Kisić-Plavšić, RS Ministry of Trade and Tourism
 Adi Habul, FBiH Environmental Protection Fund
 Raduška Cupać, Head of Energy and Environment Sector, UNDP

Present members of the Project Team:

Senka M. Bećirović, Project Manager, UNDP

Absent members of the Project Board:

Svjetlana Radusin, RS Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology
 Srđan Todorović, RS Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund

AGENDA

1. Introductory remarks
2. Presentation of planned activities
3. Next steps
4. Miscellaneous

Mrs. Bećirović welcomed the attendees and opened the meeting.

Considering that this is the first meeting of the Project Board, the main information was presented regarding the project, objectives, organization and project management, budget and financing, project components and activities, indicative project timeline and the work plan for the next period (i.e., until the end of 2022).

In the introductory part of the presentation, the present members of the Project Board were informed about the decision to use the abbreviated title of the project "*Sustainability of Protected Areas in BiH – SPA*" instead of the original title ("*Improved Financial Sustainability and Strengthened Resilience of Protected Areas Through Development of Sustainable Recreation and Partnership With Private Sector*") in order to ensure recognition of the project and facilitated communication and promotion of activities and outputs. The present members of the Project Board supported this initiative.

The project management structure from the Project Document was presented to the Project Board members. In addition, it was pointed out that the engagement of three people in the Project Team with the Energy and Environment Sector of UNDP is underway (2 technical associates and 1 administrative associate). It is planned that the project team will be formed by the end of 2022.

When it comes to project financing, the attendees were presented with information on the budget distribution in view of the donor and UNDP (a total of USD 2.79 million) by project components, as well as information on the parallel co-financing of the project, the institutions that signed the co-financing letters, and the planned funds. Mrs. Bećirović informed the attendees about the recent amendments in GEF procedures, which require the preparation and signing of annual statements on spent parallel co-financing funds. Following the dynamics of preparation of annual Project Implementation Reviews – PIR, in May of each year (2023-2027) the project team will contact the institutions that signed the co-financing letter for the purpose of defining the content of these letters.

As the meeting progressed, the Project Board members were informed about the planned project activities, in accordance with the project components 1 and 2, as follows²:

Project component 1: Strengthening resilience of targeted PAs to climate change impacts

Output 1.1. (*Comprehensive climate threat assessment conducted for pilot PAs*). It was pointed out that this activity represents the key initial activity of the project, on the basis of which further activities under project component 1 will be conducted, and the same goes for the project component 2 in the part related to creating of a sustainable tourist offer that will not threaten the ecosystem stability and sustainability of protected areas.

² More details about the presented activities can be found in the presentation, submitted as an attachment to these Minutes.

Output 1.2 (*PA management framework developed/updated and under implementation with due account of climate threats*). Information was shared with the Project Board members on the management plans for protected areas that are planned to be developed in accordance with the Project Document. It was emphasized that from the moment of preparation of the Project Document until the start of the Project implementation, certain changes occurred (e.g., Kozara NP and Una NP, which, in cooperation with other international organizations/projects, are in the phase of preparing certain plans for national parks) and that the meetings will be held with managers of all PAs in order to define the current state and framework of activities in this field.

Output 1.3 (*A portfolio of adaptation and resilience solutions for targeted species and ecosystems developed and set under implementation*). It was pointed out that depending on the outputs of the activity 1.1, there is a possibility of changes or additions to the planned activities.

Output 1.4 (*Demonstration of innovative wetland habitats restoration approaches (protected habitats Gromiželj and Tišina)*). It was pointed out that these are the activities that will be carried out throughout the project duration, and that initial meetings are planned for this year (with the RS Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage and with the managers of protected habitats) in order to determine the current state and needs. If the field visits indicate that the situation in these habitats is alarming, the engagement of experts for habitat restoration/recultivation will be initiated.

Output 1.5: Replication and adaptation of pilot PAs solutions and demos to other sites.

Project component 2: Improving financial sustainability of targeted PAs through sustainable tourism development

The planned activities for the targeted protected areas were presented to the Project Board members for the following outputs:

Output 2.1 (*Sustainable tourism products developed for pilot PAs*).

Output 2.2 (*Functional partnerships with the private sector stakeholders are in place to increase income streams from legal nature resource use activities occurring in the targeted PAs*)

Output 2.3 (*Eco-tourism concession model developed and piloted in Sutjeska National Park*). The planned steps in the development of the concession model were presented (*A. Defining the subject of the concession based on the analysis of financial benefits and benefits for the community, risks and scenarios for risk management; B. Overview of options for concession management; C. Development of promotional package and helping the competent Ministry in the preparation of tender documentation (definition of criteria and methodology for evaluation of bids for concessions); D. Finalization of the concession contracts and E. Preparation of Sustainable concession management guidelines and instructions for replication of the model*).

Output 2.4 (*PA managers' participation in the governmental grant programmes*).

Output 2.5 (*Joint promotion of natural values, products and services in the targeted PAs*). It was pointed out that a number of activities were planned as part of this output: joint promotion of geographically close protected areas, different categories; joint promotion and branding of caves; promotional activities for PA Vjetrenica – Popovo polje and Orjen NP; co-financing the establishment and equipping of facilities for visitors to Drina NP and Una NP; development of regulatory (urban) plan for visitor zones

(Martin Brod, Kulen Vakuf and Štrbački buk-Lohovo visitor zone). In addition, practical trainings are planned for managers of all protected areas aimed at building communication skills of PA managers, promotion and marketing of content, values, products and services of protected areas.

Discussion on the presented project activities

The following project activities were discussed at the meeting:

2.3 (Eco-tourism concession model developed and piloted in Sutjeska National Park)

Mr. Cero posed a question about the subject of concession within Sutjeska National Park, considering that the term eco-tourism is in the very title of the activity. He noted that according to the FBiH Law on Concessions, the subject of a concession contract can also be a protected area. He emphasized the importance of this activity, with the aim of improving the current state of management of protected areas and the private capital engagement, but also the need to plan all activities step by step.

Mrs. Stojičić replied that the idea for this concession is to include accommodation capacities/facilities within the National Park, along with the accompanying infrastructure. She also mentioned that the planned analysis will offer several models for creating a concession contract and that the most adequate one will be chosen, that is, the one having the most benefits for the local population and posing the least risk to the biodiversity of Sutjeska NP.

Mrs. Grujić pointed out that in this activity it is very important to try to refer to some successful example from the Region. Mrs. Mujaković mentioned the example of the Postojna pit in Slovenia, which fully represents a subject of the successful concession contract.

Mr. Habul pointed out that when developing a concession model, it is necessary to precisely define what such concession would entail (facility, management of the facility, etc.).

Mrs. Stojičić and Mrs. Radusin pointed out that the concession model should primarily improve the tourist offer of the National Park, improve accommodation facilities and thus retain tourists in the National Park. The planned analysis will provide information for defining the subject of the concession contract.

Mr. Cero pointed out that through this model special importance should be given to the issue of emigration of the population, which is particularly emphasized in rural areas of BiH, that is, the areas in the immediate vicinity of protected areas.

Mrs. Bećirović pointed out that in 2022 it is planned to carry out an analysis of the current state and challenges in view of the development of a concession model (legislative, institutional, financial challenges). The analysis will be prepared by the Project Team members, and it will be presented in order to create a plan for the following activities.

Output 2.1 (Sustainable tourism products developed for pilot PAs).

Mrs. Hotić asked for more information about the planned activity on Bijambare (development of programmes for eco-tourism, eco-agriculture, environmental awareness and education, with targeted implementation support). It was clarified that the activity was approved by the Public Institution for Protected Natural Areas of the Sarajevo Canton and that it would imply the involvement of the population from the area of the Nišić plateau.

Mrs. Hotić pointed out that the segment of development of rural tourism accommodation capacities was given special importance in the FBiH Tourism Development Strategy and that in this sense the piloting of some solutions should be envisaged. Since the project is based on the achievements and experiences of the ViaDinarica program, it would make sense to pilot these solutions within the already established ViaDinarica network.

In the discussion related to this activity, it was pointed out that the differences between ethno and eco-tourism should be considered, and that a special focus should be dedicated to eco-tourism.

Mrs. Kisić-Plavšić followed up on this discussion and pointed out that all the activities planned by the project should be planned and communicated in such a way that they contribute to the objectives of the new RS Tourism Development Strategy.

Output 2.5: (Joint promotion of natural values, products and services in the targeted PAs)

Mrs. Kisić-Plavšić emphasized the need to support the Drina National Park and the fact that it still does not have a developed tourist offer. Therefore, planned co-financing of the construction and equipping of facilities for visitors is required.

Moreover, Mrs. Kisić-Plavšić pointed out that the activities related to the tourist infrastructure are quite broadly planned and therefore prudence is needed in their implementation.

Mrs. Grujić suggested that when creating the marketing framework, the option of including protected areas in the wider offer at the regional level should be considered.

Mrs. Stojičić emphasized that practical trainings for building communication skills of PA managers, promotion and marketing of content, etc. are very important for managers of protected areas, since there is an evident lack of these skills and activities.

Mr. Habul agreed with this statement, but also shared the experiences/challenges of managers who, due to the current organizational structure, lack of employees and legislative obstacles, are not able to implement such activities.

It was concluded that the planned activities are appreciated, but also that the change itself in the current practice will be happening gradually.

Project component 1, discussion on planned activities for the protection of populations

Mr. Oprašić pointed out that it should be taken into account that this project is primarily aimed at the protection of biodiversity and the sustainability of protected areas. Therefore, all planned tourist activities should be in the service of protecting biodiversity and improving its condition.

Mr. Habul raised a discussion related to changes in the logical framework of the project. Namely, indicator 6b in the Project document states: "*Non-deterioration of Alpine newt (*Triturus alpestris*) population in Prokosko Lake NM stable or increasing*". According to the information at his disposal, individuals of the alpine newt are not present in Prokosko Lake, but they are present in other areas that are potential subjects of protection. Therefore, the question is posed whether the project can include planning of the reintroduction of species from other habitats.

Mrs. Mujaković agreed that these problems were recognized and informed the attendees that in the coming period, based on the funds allocated by means of the Public Call of the FBiH Environmental Protection Fund, the organization CEKOR will develop a Management Plan for the natural monument Prokoško Lake and that the Management Plan for this species should be integrated into the Management Plan of Prokoško Lake NM. Therefore, it would be good to leverage on this activity in order to determine the current state and the next steps related to this species.

It was concluded that Mrs. Bećirović will inform the Regional Technical Advisor about this challenge. Given that the project does not include potentially protected areas, a possible change in the approach to the implementation of these activities (reintroduction from other habitats) or change of indicator will be discussed. Options for this change are possible either in this phase or during the Mid-term review (MTR) project phase planned for the beginning of 2025.

Annual statements on spent parallel co-financing funds in the past period

Mrs. Kisić-Plavšić raised the question regarding the method of reporting on parallel co-financing, that is, whether the institutions are obliged to list in the annual statements only the activities that fully follow the project dynamics. She pointed out that the Ministry, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, faced a lot of unforeseen circumstances and that the period ahead is also uncertain.

Mrs. Cupać pointed out that the planned amounts of parallel co-financing were formed on the basis of estimates. So far, the practice with such reports has been positive, and explanations in terms of possible deviations will be documented.

It was concluded that Mrs. Bećirović will gather more information about the format of these statements in the forthcoming period and that she will inform the Project Board accordingly.

Discussion; Miscellaneous

Mrs. Kisić-Plavšić emphasized that the project plans a significant scope of activities, and she expressed her concern about the planned number of people who will be engaged in the Project Team.

Mrs. Cupać explained that such a structure was proposed based on the experience of the Energy and Environment Sector in the implementation of this type of GEF projects (budget and project duration). She pointed out that this is a new area for the Sector and that the endeavours will be made to staff the project team with individuals who have significant experience.

Additionally, the plan is for one technical associate to be based in Banja Luka and the other one in Sarajevo. In this way the idea is to ensure the support both to the institutions of the Project Board and other partner institutions to the greatest extent possible.

Mrs. Stojičić suggested that information about announced consultancy job postings and tenders be shared with Project Board members in order to disseminate the information to as many experts as possible and thus ensure the quality of the planned activities.

Plan for the next period

Mrs. Bećirović presented the indicative timeline of the Project, with special reference to what is planned in the first year of the Project implementation (July 2022 – June 2023) and the end of 2022. It was agreed to submit the indicative plan to the Project Board.

As for the plans for 2022, the planned program activities include:

- Engagement of expert to strengthen the capacity of PA managers
- Preparation of Comprehensive climate threat assessment for the pilot PAs, which implies the engagement of experts for: adaptation to climate change, biodiversity protection / protected areas management
- Selection of bidders for the preparation and implementation of the promotional campaign within the project
- Marking International Mountain Day (11 December 2022) through a short promotional video
- Preparation of tender documents for:
 - a. Development of management plans/CC modules for NPs Una, Drina, Prokoško Lake NM, Vjetrenica-Popovo polje PA, Orjen Park of Nature and Una Park of Nature
 - b. Preparation of the regulatory (urban plan for visitor zones in the area of the Una National Park (Martin Brod, Kulen Vakuf and the Štrbački buk-Lohovo visitor zone)

In the following period, a series of consultative meetings is planned as follows: RS Institute for the Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage; Sutjeska NP, Kozara NP, Drina NP, Una NP, Prokoško Lake NM, Blidinje Park of Nature, Vjetrenica-Popovo polje PA, Orjen Park of Nature, Vrelo Bosne NM, Una Park of Nature, Tišina protected habitat and Gromiželj protected habitat; meetings and exchange of information with partner projects (WWF, GIZ, USAID, ViaDinarica) and gathering information on experiences in the Region; exchange of information on the experience and activities of UNDP projects in the field of combating natural disasters (DRR).

Moreover, the Project will be presented as part of the PA Managers' Day in BiH; Bihać, 26-28 October 2022: Project presentation.

As for administrative duties, Mrs. Bećirović pointed out that in the coming period the following is planned:

Finalization of the Inception report (1 November 2022), according to the predefined content;

Forming of the project team;

Development of the Project Communication Strategy and Risk Communication Strategy.

At the end, Mrs. Bećirović informed the Project Board members regarding monitoring of the identified project risks and the obligation to apply the adaptive project management techniques in order to ensure the expected results. The Project Board will be informed in due course on any changes regarding the impact of identified risks related to:

- Complex institutional structure in the field of nature protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Current management capacities of newly established/expanded PAs
- CC impacts on the planned project activities aimed at biodiversity protection
- The effects of the pandemic on the public resources budgeting for nature protection, the financial state of the private sector and the interest of tourists

- Needs of vulnerable groups
- Endangerment of pilot PAs in which habitat restoration activities are planned
- Current management capacities of all PAs involved in the project.

Mrs. Bećirović thanked for the discussion and emphasized that the next Project Board meeting is planned for February 2023 in Sarajevo. Information on the status of the activities will be sent to the Project Board via email in December 2022.

Conclusions:

- Project Board members agreed with the proposed abbreviated title of the Project;
- In 2022, an analysis of the current state and challenges for the development of a concession model for Sutjeska NP will be conducted. It will be the basis for creating an operational plan for subsequent activities.
- Possible changes to the indicators in the logical framework of the project: the only disputable indicator is the one regarding the state of the alpine newt population. The Regional Technical Adviser of the Project will be informed about this and in the following period a decision will be made on changing the indicator in this phase or in the MTR phase of the project.
- The Inception report will contain information about changes of the situation on the field (e.g., planned activities for the preparation of management plans for protected areas) in order to clearly communicate the need for changes in the project strategy. Except for the unclear situation related to the alpine newt, it was concluded that all other changes are of operational nature and as such will not affect the planned outputs of the project.
- Annual statements on spent parallel co-financing funds in the past period – the format of the statement will be known in the following period. If the need be, defining the approach and preparation of the first statements will be the subject of one meeting of the Project Board.
- The next meeting of the Project Board is planned for February 2023 in Sarajevo. It was agreed that the meetings of the Project Board will be organized evenly in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. Information on the status of the activities will be sent to the Project Board via email in December 2022.
- The information about announced consultancy job postings and tenders will be forwarded to the Project Board members in order to ensure the quality of the planned activities.