

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

Date: May 5, 2020

CEPF Grant: 109139

Grantee: Centar za životnu sredinu

Project Title: Steps Towards the Protection of Neretva Tributaries: Buna, Bunica, Bregava and Trebižat, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project Location: Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mediterranean Basin)

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization: Centar za životnu sredinu
2. Grant title: Steps Towards the Protection of Neretva Tributaries: Buna, Bunica, Bregava and Trebižat, Bosnia and Herzegovina
3. Grant number: 109139
4. Grant amount (US dollars): 146,923.62
5. Proposed dates of grant: 01/11/2019 – 31/07/2022
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken: Bosnia and Herzegovina
7. Date of preparation of this document: May 2020

The Process Framework will describe the project and how restrictions of access to natural resources and measures to assist affected communities. Affected communities should have the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the Process Framework. Typically, the Applicant will prepare a draft Framework that will then be shared and discussed with local communities and other relevant stakeholders. Based on the consultations, a final Framework will be prepared. CEPF may provide guidance on development of the Framework and will review and approve the final Framework prior to approving the final project proposal application. The Process Framework should include the following elements:

A. Project background

Canyon ecosystems in the relict landscape of Neretva represent a special ecological and natural value of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the available data on present steno endemism within Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than half of the identified species are located in Herzegovina region, the mountain complex Prenj-Čvrsnica-Velež, canyons of Neretva River and its tributaries. Locations chosen as a part of this project (Neretva tributaries Buna, Bunica, Bregava and Trebižat) are located at the very center of the endemism of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only 2% of the country territory is protected and B&H government signed the concessions to build more than three hundred hydropower plants in canyons of rivers in B&H without examining the impact on the environment and local communities. In Mediterranean region water as a resource is especially valuable. South Bosnia and Herzegovina is mostly karst area where water is still a limited resource. Rivers that we will focus on are representing the most important tributaries of Neretva, the “lifeblood” of the Herzegovina. All of them, are threatened by hydro projects and all deserve some level of protection. Trebižat River is not protected although Kravica waterfalls are recognized and promoted as a tourist destination. Key threats are planned hydropower plants, climate change and its consequences on nature and people, loss of biodiversity and inadequate management of natural resources. In this area there are several planned hydropower plants such Upper Horizons system (Gornji Horizonti) that endanger Bregava, Buna and Bunica rivers, as well as hydropower plants on Trebižat, Bregava and Buna rivers. All of them are facing strong local and scientific opposition. With those individuals and organizations, we are in constant communication and with this project we plan to have a systematic approach and better coordination of the public needs and possibilities for the cooperation.

The aim of the project is long-term protection and wise-use of those rivers for the benefit of local communities and the wider public and we want to achieve that with the combination of scientific work and advocacy activities. We fear that without having a focus on these Neretva tributaries now, in a few years we will lose the most valuable riverine ecosystems in Herzegovina. Even if the hydropower projects would

be abandoned or stopped anyway, poor management of natural resources and inadequate touristic approach can damage those pristine ecosystems in the long run.

The project has several phases. The aim of the research phase is to collect the data about the species (for at least 10 taxonomy groups) present in rivers Buna, Bunica, Bregava and Trebižat combining the field research and already existing data (published and unpublished). The research will be made through engaging scientists who are experts in botany, herpetology, mammalogy, ornithology, entomology, macrozoobenthos and ichthyology. Each scientist, according to the worldwide-adopted scientific methodologies for research, will do a mapping of the most valuable and threatened species and habitats along the rivers. Also, they will be asked to give recommendations for the future sustainable management of those rivers, each from their point of view. Apart from research that they will actively participate in advocating for the designation of the new protected areas and wise-use management within KBAs by giving interviews for the video we will produce, for media and public, participating in the meetings with the officials, local communities, etc.

Our big focus of the project will be on working with local communities and all stakeholders on raising their awareness. Often in Bosnia and Herzegovina locals do not understand the benefits of protected areas and also why some groups are against destructive activities such as hydro energy projects. Due to a lack of knowledge and proper information, there were already a few cases where locals were blocking the conservation processes. We will focus on delivering to them strong arguments for the conservation at the same time asking them about their needs and ideas for the sustainable management of those sites. The education will be done as a combination of workshops and public events and all the gathered data from the scientific research and recommendations for the management of the areas will be published and promoted. In addition, we are planning to initiate the procedures for the protection of Buna and Bunica, Bregava and Trebižat rivers towards the Governments with arguments and with a better understanding about the importance and vulnerability of species/habitats. With the data received, we will have a draft proposal for protection and sustainable management that will be a new advocacy tool for conservation activities. Especially important will be consultations and common planning with the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Federal Ministry for Environment and Tourism.

The main possible impacts of project activities will be reduced threats on at least 10 species and population of at least five species recovered or stabilized and protected, promoted and well-managed rivers Buna, Bunica, Bregava and Trebižat within at least two new protected areas that are benefiting local communities and the wider public.

B. Participatory implementation

Centar za životnu sredinu (CZZS) will ensure that our project and conservation activities do not disadvantage or undermine poor, vulnerable, or marginalized people who are dependent upon or live adjacent to natural resources, and wherever possible we seek to implement our activities in ways that enhance local well-being and social equity. We are committed to respecting human rights, promoting their protection and realization within our programs, and supporting the governance systems that can secure those rights.

To achieve our project goals, we will make consultations with and offer cooperation to all major stakeholders. These are Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism, National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, government of Herzegovina-Neretva's canton, scientific experts, policymakers, local anglers, local CSOs that deal with environmental protection, tourist organizations and other relevant affected local communities (landowners, farmers). We will also work on informing the local communities and policymakers about the project activities and benefits of protected areas through the set of meetings, workshops and fieldwork. The local communities will be consulted and called to participate in preparing the official initiatives for the protection of the areas or if not possible, recommendations for their sustainable management.

Our main principles of participation include:

- Participatory processes should be ‘well-governed’ (transparent, accountable, legitimate, fair, and inclusive).
- Closer contact with government officials through meetings.
- Mutual respect between all participants.
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities.
- Democratic principles.
- Education for the project key beneficiaries, in order to build their capacities and provide knowledge on the subject.
- Regular meetings and cooperation with key stakeholders.
- Raising awareness events in order to enable participation and a possibility to influence the decision-making process by the participating members and the wider community.
- Participation should be an integral part of any activity or project cycle, commencing at the outset of activities and continuing through project management, monitoring and evaluation.

C. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

This project is corresponding to projects that are likely to have low or minimal adverse environmental and social impacts that can be mostly prevented and/or mitigated applying the best environmental and social practices. The successful implementation of the project will not lead people to be resettled from their homes. Project results should propose a scheme intended to provide better control and measures for sustainable management of the rivers. Before any activities being conducted, the project team will work with the local community to determine which households may be impacted by the measures. Criteria will be refined during implementation.

The project might influence mostly:

- Tourist operators who might be affected by some restriction of access, but the project expects to work on best practices and to promote ecotourism.
- Anglers: only professional anglers will be considered as affected. Restrictions to illegal, unsustainable fishing methods will not be considered to determine affected persons.
- Farmers: many people in the project area live from agriculture (fruit and vegetable growers, fish farmers) and they might be affected by some regulations depending on the category of the protected area if the proposed sites for protection will be accepted, but the project will promote best agricultural practices.

According to the current laws, some activities (agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, recreation) are allowed in protected areas if they are not in conflict with the purpose of protected areas. Successful implementation of the project will not exclude people from accessing the natural resources they depend on, but the access could be more regulated and in accordance with already existing Laws.

D. Measures to assist the affected persons

According to the current laws depending on the category of the protected area, economic and other activities are allowed as well as actions that do not compromise essential features and roles of the protected area. Since one of the actions of this project is to submit a proposal for a new protected area that we still do not know whether it is going to be accepted, we will list some of the measures that could assist the affected persons. Also, the project is likely to have low or minimal adverse environmental and social impacts. The project team will revise measures during implementation. The potential impacts to people using areas under the management and protection will be mitigated through their participation and inclusion in the income generating activities. The local communities will be educated in values and benefits of protected areas, so that individuals have the opportunity to make better livelihoods, without undergoing illegal activities. The project will promote ecotourism and recreation, village restoration, ecological and organic farming, growing indigenous plant varieties, production of products with eco-label and geographical origin, enabling

craft activities with an emphasis on old crafts. Possible protection of some areas will offer new jobs opportunities to local communities, especially in tourism and agriculture.

E. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism

The project team and the main partner NGO Majska cvijet will establish a grievance mechanism in order to provide means to address complaints and/or conflict situations by any stakeholder or a person affected by the project. The grievance mechanism will be publically available and will be communicated with all project participants as well as the local community, through direct communication, leaflets, etc.. Any person or a group of people has the right to raise an official or unofficial complaint, and the project coordinator has the obligation to respond within 15 days.

The project coordinator will be the first contact person for receiving the grievances. His/her details (Dragana Kovačić Jošić, dragana.kovacic.josic@czzs.org, Miše Stupara 5, 78000 Banja Luka) along with the contact information of the grantee organization, the CEPF Regional Implementation Team (Borut Rubinič, borut.rubinic@dopps.si), the Executive Director and the World Bank local office will be made available to the public and the project stakeholders. The project coordinator has the obligation to communicate all grievances with the CEPF Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director (Pierre Carret, pcarret@cepf.net) within 15 days. In a case of failed resolve, the issue must be passed along to the CEPF and the World Bank. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.

F. Implementation Arrangements

CZZS as a leading organization on the project will do the implementation of the project and its safeguard mechanisms. CZZS will inform the partner on the project (NGO Majska cvijet) on the obligations under the conflict resolution and complaint mechanism and discuss with them the practical implementation mechanisms suggested, before actual implementation. CEPF will be regularly informed as part of the semi-annual progress reports. The wider public will be informed about the objectives and results of the project through publications, media, and raising awareness events that will be frequently organized during the entire duration of the project. At the end of the project, CZZS will provide a final evaluation, analyzing and reporting on each deliverable and key indicator including participatory discussions with local communities.