



ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE in the Dinaric Arc

A Western Balkans
Environment & Development
Cooperation Programme

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Transboundary
Cooperation
in the Dinaric Arc

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MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
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TRANSBOUNDARY ASSESSMENT
NP PLITVICE LAKES / NP UNA



The studied TB region ...

- natural historical border between Croatian and B&H in the study area defined by **two natural barriers: Una river** and **Plješivica mountain ridge**

Divide the study area in **3 natural parts**:

- 1) area along Una river **on B&H side**;
- 2) area along Una river **on the Croatian side**, in the part where border is defined by Una river course;
- 3) nearby area **on the Croatian side** of NP Plitvice Lakes, on the other side of Plješivica mountain, in the part where border is defined by Plješivica mountain





Natural values / uniqueness of the area

- Karstic bio-hidro-geomorphology uniqueness in European context - **travertine shapes**
- Attractive natural and anthropogenic landscapes with lakes, canyons, cliffs, river valleys, forests, meadows
- **BD hotspot**, a refuge
- diversity of water and terrestrial habitats
- bordering area of three climate areas
- **sparsely populated area**, hardly accessible subareas of preserved wilderness, virgin forests and **presence of all European top predators**



Socio-economic situation in the area

- war conflicts in 1990s and transition challenges
- **Area within and around NP Plitvice Lakes:**
 - recovered nature-based tourism: 1 mil. visitors, 730 jobs in the NP Public Institution + private sector
 - the most advanced and recovering
- **Area around Una:**
 - collapsed pre-war agriculture, forestry and processing ind. economy
 - stagnating and deteriorating: 60% of pre-war population returned, mostly older; unemployment ↑60%
- ... open for green development scenario based on “eco-tourism” building on practices existing in NP Plitvice Lakes area
- opportunity for turn towards more BD friendly development in the area along the upper course of Una river



Nature protection in the area

NP Plitvice Lakes

- Proclaimed in 1949 (drainage basin included in 1997)
- Area: 29.685 ha
- Public institution: 730 permanent staff, cca 130 perform conservation related jobs
- over 100 years of tourism in the area, with cca 1 mil. visitors per year

NP Una

- Proclaimed in 2008
- Area: 19.800 ha (with proposal for additional 15.000ha);
- Public institution yet to be established;
- Number of visitors 10.000 – 20.000 per year

Croatian side of area along Una

- Una spring – 2,25ha protected since 1968
- National ecological network area along the relatively narrow strip along the river course
- Interest for a regional park in the wider area still exists
- Number of visitors – couple of 1.000, mainly rafting and hunting



Priorities for areas

Plitvice Lakes:

- Fairly developed, reaching carrying capacity limits

Priorities:

- Improved visitors management and sustainable tourism
- Carrying capacity, expanding the offer, longer season
- Challenge of maintaining income while preserving experience and without disturbing ecosystems

Una area:

- At the very beginning of green development scenario, green vision has to be demonstrated

Priorities:

- Concrete follow-up projects with tangible results (increased number of visitors and improved livelihood based on eco-tourism as “multiplier” for the local subsistence economy) to confirm trust and expectations from the “BD friendly businesses-based development”
- **concreteness is of utmost importance, not to lose momentum and credibility**



Opportunities for transboundary cooperation

1. Cooperation between the two existing National Parks
2. Establishment of genuine (spatially connected) TBPA along river Una



Transboundary cooperation priorities: prerequisites and next steps

1. Cooperation between the two existing National Parks

Prerequisites:

- Real life establishment of the **Public Institution NP Una**

Next steps:

- Know-how transfer from NP Plitvice Lakes to NP Una, joint projects
- Joint research – invasive species, large mammals, migration corridors, etc.
- Development of the complementary tourism offer (Exchange of visitors, joint tourist service packages; Joint training for tourist guides and interpreters; Joint marketing)



Transboundary cooperation priorities: prerequisites and next steps

2. Establishment of genuine (spatially connected) TBPA along river Una

Prerequisites:

- Formal establishment of a Regional Park on the Croatian bank of the river
- Secured **initial funding** for the cross-border cooperation from international funds

Next steps:

- Development of closer cross-border cooperation (establishment of common tourist offer)
- Fund supporting “**green business**” private sector initiatives in the area



IMPORTANT ASSET: demonstrated political will and experience in cooperation

- Top-level: Joint Statement of the Big Win for Dinaric Arc signed by ministries in Croatia and B&H in 2008
- Bottom-up initiatives...
- EU Framework 5 “Study of Anthropogenic Pollution after the War and Establishing of Measures for Protection of NP Plitvice Lakes and Bihać Region at the Border Area of Croatia and B&H”
- EU CARDS 2004 project Promoting conservation of border river ecosystems and sustainable use of resources in border are of Croatia and B&H
- EU CARDS 2004 project UnAvanTurizam
- EU IPA CBC project Una – Spring of Life

PLUS ...

- Memorandums of Understanding for TB cooperation exist in the field of commerce
- Memorandums on Environmental Protection between Chambers of Commerce exist
- Regional Social Events: EKOBIS Fair in Bihać & Una Regatta, B&H; Dani Gacke & Jesen u Lici, Croatia