



GEF-6 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

PROJECT TYPE: FULL-SIZED PROJECT

TYPE OF TRUST FUND: GEF TRUST FUND

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PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Danube River Basin Hydromorphology and River Restoration (DYNA)		
Country(ies):	Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine	GEF Project ID:	9801
GEF Agency(ies):	World Wildlife Fund, Inc.	GEF Agency Project ID:	G0014
Other Executing Partner(s):	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), The International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC/ "Sava Commission"), National governments, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme	Submission Date:	03 March 2017 27 March 2017 16 May 2017
GEF Focal Area(s):	International Waters	Project Duration (Months)	42
Name of parent program:	N/A	Agency Fee (\$)	\$397,982

A. INDICATIVE FOCAL AREA STRATEGY FRAMEWORK AND OTHER PROGRAM STRATEGIES

Objectives/Programs (Focal Areas, Integrated Approach Pilot, Corporate Programs)	Trust Fund	(in US\$)	
		GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
IW-2 Program 3: Advance Conjunctive Management of Surface and Groundwater Resources (Outcome 3.1 & 3.2)	GEFTF	4,422,018	39,118,000
Total Project Cost		4,422,018	39,118,000

B. INDICATIVE PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Objective: Strengthen integrated and harmonized approaches for river restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation in the Danube River Basin (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine)						
Project Components	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in \$)	
					GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
Component 1 – Regional Danube River Basin and Flood Risk Management Plans Implementation	TA	Outcome 1.1 - Increased transboundary / regional capacity and coordination in the field of hydromorphology of EU and non-EU Member States (GEF-eligible countries) in the Danube river basin for preparation and implementation of integrated regional river basin and flood risk	Output 1.1.1 - Engagement of non-EU Member States in field trips and training sessions for Danube basin water management authorities and other stakeholders on how to prepare and implement harmonised regional river basin and flood risk management plans and measures in alignment with	GEFTF	1,052,862	8,270,000

		<p>management plans and measures and thus increased alignment with EU Water Framework and Flood Risk Directives</p> <p>Outcome 1.2 - Improved regional / transboundary harmonization of methodologies for hydromorphological monitoring and assessment and raised capacity on their practical application in non-EU Member States</p>	<p>EU Water Framework and Flood Risk Directives</p> <p>Output 1.1.2 - Stock-taking of hydromorphological pressures and approaches for river restoration and conservation measures at Danube basin level</p> <p>Output 1.2.1 - Tool-kit and regional application workshop on how to establish hydromorphological monitoring and assessment methods in line with basin-wide good practice and EU water and flood management legislation in linking hydromorphology to biological quality elements</p>			
Component 2 – Strengthening country-level efforts for implementation of Danube River Basin and Flood Risk Management Plans	TA	<p>Outcome 2.1 – Hydromorphological aspects adequately integrated into country level river basin and flood risk management planning and emerging related governmental strategies and programmes</p>	<p>Output 2.1.1 - Gap analysis of existing non-EU country level river basin and flood management plans as well as emerging related governmental strategies and programmes (e.g. on climate change adaptation) concerning hydromorphological aspects and policy integration</p> <p>Output 2.1.2 – Assessment of country-level freshwater ecosystem services and socio-economic impacts of river basin and flood management and discussion of implications in frame of workshops</p> <p>Output 2.1.3– Revised or new relevant country level plans and strategies related to water and flood risk management, with integration of hydromorphological and ecosystem service aspects</p>	GEFT F	1,052,862	17,850,000

		<p>Outcome 2.2 – Established hydromorphological monitoring and assessment (linked to biological quality elements) in non-EU Member States</p> <p>Outcome 2.3 – Increased capacities of non-EU Member States for integrated river basin and flood management plan preparation and implementation and thus implementation of EU water and flood management legislation</p>	<p>Output 2.2.1 – Country-level workshops and technical assistance on developing, strengthening, and harmonizing hydro-morphological monitoring and assessment methodologies and establishing the link to biological quality elements</p> <p>Output 2.3.1. – Analysis and recommendations for increasing efficiency of inter-agency cooperation on hydromorphological monitoring and assessment and for better involvement of scientific institutions and expert organisations in non-EU Member States</p> <p>Output 2.3.2 – Knowledge, media and awareness raising action targeting water managers and decision makers concerning hydro-morphological impacts and strategic integrated planning of measures with relevant stakeholder involvement (e.g. Civil Society Organisations, private sector etc) in non-EU Member States</p>			
Component 3 – Demonstration pilot projects for improved country-level and regional capacity	TA	<p>Outcome 3.1 – Demonstration of regional hydromorphological and integrated approaches in river basin and flood risk management planning and implementation</p> <p>Outcome 3.2 - Demonstration of country-level</p>	<p>Output 3.1.1 - Preparation/ implementation of at least one transboundary pilot project across two non-EU Member State countries demonstrating hydromorphological and integrated approaches in river basin and flood risk management planning and implementation</p> <p>Output 3.2.1 - Preparation/ implementation of at least one pilot project per country demonstrating</p>	GEFT F	1,684,578	8,350,000

		hydromorphological and integrated approaches in river basin and flood risk management planning and implementation	hydromorphological and integrated approaches in river basin and flood risk management planning and implementation				
Component 4 – Knowledge management and effective project Monitoring and Evaluation	TA	Outcome 4.1 –Project knowledge and lessons learned disseminated, including participation in IW:LEARN Outcome 4.2 – M&E to inform adaptive management	Output 4.1.1 – Project results and knowledge products developed and disseminated nationally, regionally, and to international IW community. Output 4.1.2 - Participation in at least two IW:LEARN regional and one international conferences, including GEF International Waters Conferences Output 4.2.1 - Project monitoring to inform adaptive management for successfully delivery of project results Output 4.2.2 – Project mid-term and final evaluations developed and shared in a timely manner.	GEFT F	421,144	2,800,000	
Subtotal						4,211,446	37,270,000
Project Management Cost (PMC)				GEFT F	210,572	1,848,000	
Total Project Cost						4,422,018	39,118,000

C. INDICATIVE SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE, IF AVAILABLE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
Intergovernmental	ICPDR, ISRBC/ “Sava Commission”	In-kind	800,000
NGO	WWF DCPO	In-kind	100,000
Government	Non-EU Member Governments (GEF Eligible countries)	In-kind	5,500,000
Private Sector	The Coca-Cola Company	Grant	300,000
Private Sector	Hydropower operators	In-kind	12,000,000
Government	EU Member Governments	In-kind	19,900,000
GEF Agency	WWF GEF Agency	In-kind	\$518,000
Total Co-financing			39,118,000

D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES), FOCAL AREA AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b) ^{b)}	Total (c)=a+b
World Wildlife Fund, Inc.	GEFTF	Regional	IW	N/A	4,422,018	397,982	4,820,000
Total GEF Resources					4,422,018	397,982	4,820,000

a) Refer to the Fee Policy for GEF Partner Agencies.

E. PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested? Yes No If no, skip item E.

PPG AMOUNT REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), TRUST FUND, COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

Project Preparation Grant amount requested: \$150,000					PPG Agency Fee: 12,385		
GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in \$)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total c = a + b
World Wildlife Fund, Inc.	GEFTF	Regional	IW	N/A	137,615	12,385	150,000
Total PPG Amount					137,615	12,385	150,000

F. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Provide the expected project targets as appropriate.

Corporate Results	Replenishment Targets	Project Targets
1. Promotion of collective management of transboundary water systems and implementation of the full range of policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services	Water-food-ecosystems security and conjunctive management of surface and groundwater in at least 10 freshwater basins;	<i>I</i> Number of freshwater basins

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

1. *Project Description.*

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed;

The Danube basin pressure analysis performed by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) shows that surface waters of the Danube basin are severely impacted by hydromorphological alterations from human development. Interruption of river continuity and morphological alterations, disconnected adjacent wetlands/floodplains, hydrological alterations and future infrastructure that impact water status are key issues the water management community in the basin needs to address. Progress has been relatively slow because of lack of financial resources, difficulties in solving issues related to ownership questions, next to the need for further assessments and harmonization of monitoring and assessment methodologies. These problems are additionally compounded by weak transboundary coordination and harmonization along several reaches of the Danube River.

In the Danube basin and beyond, flooding and its impacts have worsened by past decisions on how to use and manage the river system and its impact on river and floodplain morphology. The traditional engineering solutions (like flood

protection dykes, channelization of rivers, cutting of side-arms, dams) do not always deliver the expected results and often lower resilience to climate change. Also, floods are a natural phenomenon and floods can also have benefits for society and ecosystems, e.g. for ground water recharge as adaptation to climate change, or for fish production, nutrient reduction, or developing alternative land use like grazing.

So far, implementation of the integrated flood risk management approach and making use of nature-based solutions has been slow. The Hydromorphology Task Group of the ICPDR did a needs assessment in autumn 2016 and highlighted the following group of issues as the main barriers for successful long-term implementation across the Danube basin, with the highest degree of urgency in non-EU Member States, as the knowledge base and institutional capacity are weakest there:

- a) Further harmonisation and improved methodologies are needed including increased monitoring to monitor the effectiveness of hydromorphological measures (e.g. correlation pressure/impact, correlation biology/hydromorphology);
- b) Missing cooperation and discussion on bilateral cross-border rivers (national and bilateral level, e.g. different methodologies, classification used) as well as missing acceptance of land owners and stakeholders for specific measures (e.g. in case hydropower plants are not owned by the state);
- c) Missing linkage to other issues, sectors such as land-use and agriculture;
- d) Missing supporting tools for enforcing restoration measures (such as legislation, list of good practice examples/case studies, exchange about results of infringement cases, position papers and guidance on specific issues as it was done e.g. for the “ICPDR Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower”).

During the stakeholder consultation process of this PIF, representatives of non-EU member states emphasized that they lag their EU peers in terms of designing and implementing hydromorphological measures and suffer from a lack of related monitoring and assessment approaches, missing linkage to biological quality elements, weak institutional capacity for preparing measures from pre-feasibility studies through the business planning. Other shortcomings that prevent progress are low level of transnational harmonization of data collection and interpretation and inefficient cooperation both between governmental agencies and with external stakeholders such as civil society organisations and expert organisations. As particular pressure, small hydropower development was mentioned for which better preplanning mechanisms are needed.

2) the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects;

Danube countries are working toward meeting the objective of good ecological status for the river mandated in the Water Framework Directive and provisions of the daughter Floods Directive in a river basin context. This means that both EU Member countries Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia and less resourced non-EU member countries Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine can only achieve good water status through cooperation and joint action towards improving current water quality and freshwater ecology as well as avoiding deterioration thereof. While the EU countries are undertaking compliance largely with their own funding and have profited from capacity building measures in implementing EU law, non-EU member countries are rather dependent on donor funding and learning from the experience of EU countries.

Hydromorphological alterations over the past decades aiming to improve conditions for navigation, extract sediments for construction, gain agricultural land, and generate hydropower have had severe impact on water (including ground water) quality and freshwater biodiversity and is consequently identified by Danube basin countries as “Significant Water Management Issue”. There is also evidence that these changes have lowered flood retention capacity, which in face of climate change is of increasing concern. In the European context, the possibility of retaining nutrients and flood waters through strategic restoration of river systems is increasingly viewed as cost-effective considering multiple benefits. Non-EU countries with limited public investment capacities are particularly interested in testing lower-cost solutions for increasing climate resilience.

Danube River Basin Management Planning

The ICPDR differentiates the following types of hydromorphological changes: Interruption of river continuity and morphological alterations (e.g. through hydropower dams), disconnected adjacent wetlands/floodplains (e.g. caused by flood protection dykes), and hydrological alterations (e.g. in case of hydropeaking) as well as “future infrastructure projects” as they will cause such changes once implemented.

Joint Programme of Measures, the Action Plan for Danube basin countries prepared under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) as part of the Danube River Basin District Management Plan update of 2015, devotes an extensive chapter to hydromorphological changes. They were also highlighted by the Ministerial Declaration of Danube basin countries issued in February 2016.

Planned measures (baseline projects) in EU and non-EU countries include:

- Construction of fish migration aids and other measures at existing migration barriers to achieve/improve river continuity in the Danube River and in respective tributaries to ensure self-sustaining sturgeon populations and specified other migratory fish populations;
- Avoidance of new barriers for fish migration imposed by new infrastructure projects;
- Restoration, conservation and improvements of river morphology, habitats and their connectivity for self-sustaining sturgeon populations and other type-specific fish populations in the Danube River and the respective tributaries, also contributing to the improvement of other aquatic biological quality elements;
- Protection, conservation and restoration of wetlands/floodplains to ensure biodiversity, the good status in the connected river, flood protection, pollution reduction and climate adaptation by 2021, including ensuring exchange with relevant experts on the implications of the measures for sustainable flood risk management;
- Development of an inventory, priority ranking and steps for implementation for the restoration and reconnection of lost floodplains and wetlands along the Danube River and its tributaries, taking the effects on biodiversity, flood risk management, nutrient reduction, water retention and climate adaptation into account;
- Achievement of good ecological potential (GEP) for impounded water bodies (mostly heavily modified) by e.g. improvement of river morphology in the head sections of the reservoir;
- Specification of measures addressing hydrological alterations by each country;
- Enhancement of integrated planning approaches, taking environmental requirements into account from the beginning of infrastructure planning to prevent and/or reduce impacts on water status;
- Stakeholder participation in pre-planning procedures to ensure that impacts are avoided and the best environmental option is chosen for new infrastructure projects;
- Improvement of ecological status in case of new flood risk management measures, and improvement of ecological situation in cases requiring refurbishment/ maintenance/ reconstruction of existing structures by making the best use of synergies.

While EU countries have largely secured funds for these measures, non-EU countries are dependent on future donor fundraising, such as from the EU sources.

Within the Danube basin, there is also the watershed of the Sava River, which is the largest Danube tributary by discharge. The 2014 Sava Basin Management Plan also aligns with the Danube River Basin Management Plan. A hydromorphological pressure analysis was done and Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWB) designation was assigned, but with discrepancies between special background study and (provisional) designation of whole Sava and lower tributaries as heavily modified. Hydropower, navigation, flood protection, urban development and agriculture were identified as main current and future causes for hydromorphological alternations and appropriate measures have been outlined in Joint Programme of Measures similar to those under the Danube River Basin Management Plan.

Danube River Basin Flood Risk Management Planning

Aware of the basin-wide relevance of flood issues, the ICPDR also developed its flood protection policy, which was formalised by adoption of the ICPDR Action Programme on Sustainable Flood Protection in the DRB in 2004. The EU Flood Directive (FD), which non-EU Member States in the Danube basin are currently transposing into country level legislation, is based on the river basin approach. The integration between the WFD and the FD offers the opportunity to optimize mutual synergies and minimize conflicts between them.

Thus, another approach to flood risk management is now promoted in the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan: an integrated flood risk management focusing on prevention, protection and preparedness (including forecasting). In this framework, making space for river in the areas where the human and economic stakes are relatively low represents a more sustainable way of dealing with floods. The conservation and the restoration of the natural functions of wetlands and floodplains, with their ability to retain floodwaters and reduce the flood pulse, are a key feature of this strategy, thus allowing important opportunities for synergies with WFD implementation.

Climate Smart Approaches

In December 2012, the ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change was adopted. It provides an outline of the climate change scenarios for the Danube River Basin and the expected water-related impacts. Furthermore, an overview on potential adaptation measures is provided and the required steps towards integrating adaptation into ICPDR activities and the next planning cycles are described, complementing those at country and/or sub-basin level elaborated by Danube countries as well as for the Sava and Danube Delta sub-basins.

Since adaptation to climate change is a cross-cutting issue, all relevant ICPDR Expert Groups and Task Groups (see below) were mandated to fully integrate adaptation to climate change in the river basin and flood risk management planning process.

Thus, the Joint Programme of Measures (JPM) went through a “climate check” of the ICPDR Expert and Task Groups, putting priority on climate-smart, no-regret and low-regret measures which are flexible enough for various conditions. Therefore, the JPM at this stage generally does not include specific measures which are solely dealing with the effects stemming from climate change. For example, hydromorphological measures like fish migration aids or the re-connection of wetlands and floodplains are increasing the resilience of the ecosystem. With regard to the latter multiple benefits also in terms of increased water retention capacities and therefore flood mitigation are encountered, leading to potential win-win solutions for integrated water and flood risk management.

Institutional Set-up

The ICPDR is formally comprised by the Delegations of all [Contracting Parties](#) to the Danube River Protection Convention, but has also established a framework for other organizations to join. In 2000, the ICPDR contracting parties nominated the ICPDR as the platform for the implementation of all transboundary aspects of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). ICPDR has different bodies: the Ordinary Meeting, which takes the political decisions; the Standing Working Group which provides the political guidance, the [Technical Expert Groups](#) and Task Groups which prepare the technical background documents; among these the ICPDR Hydromorphology Task Group (HYMO TG) established under the River Basin Management Expert Group (RBM EG) as a coordination platform for questions related to hydromorphology. It supports the information/data collection, filling of data gaps and development of harmonised methodologies. It also contributes to inter-sectoral topics related to hydromorphology such as navigation, hydropower, flood risk management, quantitative aspects of sediment management, sturgeons and adaptation to climate change.

Similarly, although at smaller scale, the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) has a Secretariat, which is based in Zagreb, Croatia, and runs expert groups, composed of delegated experts from each Party such as the Permanent Expert Group for River Basin Management (PEG RBM) and the Permanent Expert Group for Flood Prevention (PEG FP). The Sava Water Council enables stakeholder consultations.

ICPDR and ISRBC structure, staff capacity, and established coordination mechanisms will serve as solid baseline on which the project can build.

River Basin and Flood Risk Management Planning at Country Level

Within non-EU Member States, the national implementation of these regional frameworks is at various stages of implementation:

Bosnia-Herzegovina: In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the legal framework for water management is in line with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). Further legislative improvements are taking place in 2017. The first RBMP for three entities and two watersheds for the period until 2021 is under development with adoption expected by mid of 2017. Hydromorphological alterations of surface water bodies is one of the Significant Water Management Issues. The Programme of Measures of RBMPs identifies several measures - regarding hydromorphological pressures, such as a pilot study on sediment that should start in 2017 and will be funded by the Sava River Watershed Agency. However more studies and data in particular for small rivers 10-100 km² are needed. Flood protection projects along the Sava and the mouth of the Bosna, Vrbas and Drina are under development or in the implementation phase. The West Balkans Drina River Basin Management project will promote cross-border cooperation on transboundary water management issues.

Moldova: In Moldova, according to the Association Agreement with the EU, RBMPs and FRMPs have to be prepared by 2022. Within the framework of various projects, some RBMPs were developed (i.e. Prut River Basin MP in 2015 within the EU project “Environmental Protection of International River Basins”) and presently the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Moldova intends to submit it for adoption to the Government. The RBMP does not include concrete measures on hydromorphological alterations but acknowledges the impact of hydromorphological alterations on habitats and proposes “to restore natural river conditions, avoiding illegal sand and gravel extraction as a priority”. In November 2013 the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the Regulations on Flood Risk Management Nr. 887. It transposes requirements of EU Flood Risk Directive. In 2014 in frame of the Management and Technical Assistance Support to Moldova Flood Protection Project, financed by Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund, preliminary flood risk assessment and flood hazard and flood risk maps were developed for the whole territory of the Republic of Moldova.

Currently, legislation does not include hydromorphological monitoring, but hydrological only and so far, hydromorphological monitoring and assessment was conducted within several technical assistance projects providing training on hydromorphology for specialists of the State Hydrometeorological Service. Still, Moldova needs to increase hydromorphology knowledge through studies and implementation of pilot projects on tributaries of the Danube River (river Ialpuș) or grade II tributaries of the Prut River Basin.

Montenegro: In Montenegro, the Law on Water was amended in 2015 and is in compliance with the EU WFD and Flood Directive. National River Basin Management Plans for the Danube and Adriatic basins are under development, to be finalised by 2019. The first Flood Risk Management Plan is expected for 2021. The Sava RBMP did a pressure analysis for the upper Drina catchment only. Flash floods on small rivers are impacting larger rivers as illustrated by the flash floods on the Tara river tributaries.

Serbia: The Water Law of Serbia of 2010 (to be revised in 2018) is partially in compliance with EU legislation. RBM and FRM plans will be fully aligned to WFD and FD requirements by 2021. The current national Draft RBMP of 2014 is partially in line with the WFD. A detailed hydromorphological mapping has only been done for pilot catchments (e.g. Kolubara River). A (simplified) risk assessment is partly under development and partly under implementation for rivers larger than 100km², but there is no official national method established so far.

Ukraine: As to Ukraine, in autumn 2016, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted amendments to the Water Code, including provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive and Flood Directive. A Regulation on surface and ground water bodies monitoring should be developed and adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine within 2017. It will include hydromorphological monitoring as part of the state operational monitoring. According to Association Agreement of the EU with Ukraine, RBM and FRM Plans are to be prepared by 2022 and 2024, respectively.

The Danube river basin district is one of the nine river basins delineated in Ukraine and includes four sub-basins: Tisza, Prut, Siret and Danube Delta. RBMs were developed within the framework of various projects: the Prut River Basin Management Plan (without Siret), developed in 2015 within EU project “Environmental Protection of International River Basins”, the Danube Delta Analysis (part of River Basin Management Plan) is to be completed under the ENVSEC Danube Delta project in 2017, the national part of the Tisza River Basin Management Plan (2012) was developed in frame of the EU project “Enhanced support to the Ukrainian authorities responsible for implementation of the Danube and Ramsar Conventions”. The latest considers hydromorphological alterations as one of the significant water management issues (SWMI), including interruption of river continuity and morphological alterations, disconnected adjacent wetlands/floodplain, hydrological alterations and future infrastructure projects. It includes hydromorphological assessment of the water bodies based on hydromorphological monitoring for rivers larger 500 km², and analysis of the existing programs of measures (mainly flood protection) and their relation to hydromorphological quality improvement.

For each of the sub-basins, relevant river basin management plan should be developed. The elaborated ones will be updated to fully comply with EU WFD, by 2024.

3) the proposed alternative scenario, GEF focal area strategies, with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;

Despite significant progress made across the implementation of regional and national river basin and flood management plans in the Danube, multiple gaps and barriers remain. In September 2016, government members of the ICPDR Hydromorphology Task Group at its meeting in Vienna identified multiple needs that go beyond the business as usual agenda of their institutions, especially for non-EU member states, to guide future work. These specific identified needs raised during this exercise include:

- More joint workshops, field trips, common exercises and guidelines to improve lessons learnt on hydromorphological issues;
- More information exchange on technical level (e.g. methods, assessments, progress in developing methods in different Danube countries, Article 4.7 WFD implementation, technical/administrative measures, relation of hydromorphology and biology and measures), also more presentations of national implementation in HYMO TG meetings;
- Improved cooperation with other relevant stakeholders (agriculture, industry), also in RBM EG meetings to strengthen the cooperation with relevant stakeholders (by inviting stakeholders for specific presentations);
- Improved cooperation with other ICPDR expert groups e.g. on a workshop on status assessment in order to highlight hydromorphological aspects and processes (not just pressures) or on a public information campaign to raise understanding about the benefits societies receives from ecological measures;
- Strategic planning with stakeholders;
- Raising political will across professional spectrum and stakeholders (e.g. agriculture, industry);
- Adapting laws to enforce legislation;
- Putting emphasis to sediment transport, not only fish migration;
- More integration of biodiversity (relation biology/hydromorphology) and nature conservation aspects into river and flood risk management planning;
- Elaboration of position papers and guidance documents on specific issues.

This needs identification presented the basis for an incremental investment that builds off the baseline progress presented above. In parallel, through a consultative process with water management stakeholders during project identification, the same needs were identified and informed the overall project objective and core interventions that are proposed in the components below.

The proposed project Theory of Change addresses integrated and harmonised approaches for river restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation for the Danube River Basin, with specific focus on non-EU member states of ICPDR, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine. The logical-based approach for achieving

this objective utilizes strengthened government and stakeholder capacity for planning and implementing hydromorphological measures in a basin-wide context, complimented with demonstration pilot projects to illustrate feasibility of integrated solutions and mechanisms for capturing knowledge and scaling up, to significantly improve integrated management of the Danube River and restored freshwater ecosystems and the avoidance of deterioration from unsustainable infrastructure development.

The Theory of Change fits well the GEF International Waters focal area, which aims to promote collective management for transboundary water systems and subsequent implementation of the full range of policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services. The global environment benefits targeted by the IW focal area match those of this project very well: (i) *multi-state cooperation to reduce threats to international waters* by complementing and supporting the work of the Danube and Sava river basin commission; (ii) *reduced pollution load in international waters from nutrient enrichment and other land-based activities* as freshwater restoration has proven to strengthen self-cleansing properties of wetlands and rivers; (iii) *restored and sustained freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems goods and services, including globally significant biodiversity, as well as maintained capacity of natural systems to sequester carbon* by preparing and supporting restoration projects; and (iv) *reduced vulnerability to climate variability and climate-related risks, and increased ecosystem resilience* through its focus on no-regret nature-based solutions to flood risk mitigation.

In particular, the proposed project consists of four components that target support for implementation of key river basin plans at the regional and national level, coupled with innovative hydromorphology demonstration pilot project investments and capturing of knowledge, experiences, and results in order to improve the overall health and services of the Danube River Basin.

Component 1 - Regional harmonization: increased regional capacity in the field of hydromorphology and better coordination of non-EU Member States in the Danube river basin will be established resulting in harmonised preparation and implementation of regional river basin and flood risk management plans and measures. To that aim, actors in the field of regional water and flood management from non-EU Member States will be involved in field trips and other hands-on training on how to prepare and implement harmonised regional river basin and flood risk management plans and measures. Also, a stock-taking exercise of hydromorphological pressures and approaches for river restoration measures at Danube basin level will show gaps and good practice models to be followed. In addition, capacity building measures in targeting non-EU Member States will help improving regional / transboundary harmonization of methodologies for hydromorphological monitoring and assessment and lead to stronger alignment with EU Water Framework and Flood Risk Management Directives A tool-kit and regional application workshop on how to establish hydromorphological monitoring and assessment methods in line with basin-wide good practice will put emphasis on linking hydromorphology to biological quality elements. This will help e.g. avoiding future impacts of water infrastructure measures on Danube basin water ecosystems.

Component 2 - Improved country level planning: focus will be on integrating hydromorphological aspects adequately into country level river basin and flood risk management planning as well as emerging related governmental strategies and programmes such as those on climate change resilience and adaptation. This will be achieved by conducting a gap analysis of existing non-EU country level river basin and flood management plans as well as emerging related governmental strategies and programmes concerning hydromorphological aspects and policy integration, e.g. of river and flood management aspects. Results of an assessment of country-level freshwater ecosystem services and how they relate to socio-economic impacts of river basin and flood management will be discussed in workshops. Technical assistance measures, experience exchange and workshops will help water and flood managers in non-EU countries in integrating such hydromorphological and ecosystem service aspects into revised or new relevant country level plans and strategies related to water and flood risk management.

Country-level workshops and technical assistance will be provided on developing, strengthening, and harmonizing hydromorphological monitoring and assessment methodologies and establishing the link to biological quality elements. The capacities of non-EU Member States for integrated river basin and flood management plan preparation and implementation in line with EU water and flood management legislation will also be raised, making best use of the monitoring and assessment outputs. From an analysis of the current governance set-up, recommendations will be

derived for increasing the efficiency of inter-agency cooperation on hydromorphological monitoring and assessment and for better involvement of scientific institutions and expert organisations in non-EU Member States. Knowledge, media and awareness raising action targeting water managers and relevant decision makers e.g. from Ministries of Environment, Finance, or Planning concerning hydromorphological impacts and strategic planning of measures with relevant stakeholder involvement (e.g. Civil Society Organisations, private sector etc) in non-EU Member States will strengthen the political will to put stronger emphasis on avoiding and mitigating future hydromorphological deterioration through better preplanning mechanism and better design of interventions.

Some aspects have been identified that will be of particular importance to specific non-EU Member States:

In **Bosnia-Herzegovina**, emphasis will be put on analyzing the impact of future hydropower projects, which are expected to cause severe hydromorphological alterations. Support will be requested for data collection and studies for smaller rivers between 10-100 km². Also, support will be needed to assess the economic feasibility of hydromorphological measures in light of tight public funds and low capacity in administration.

In **Montenegro**, the focus over the coming years will be on capacity building and training on flood control and integrated water resources management in line with WFD and Flood Directive, with emphasis on hydromorphological assessment and flood control. Support will be requested for data collection and studies for smaller rivers which are causing problems with flash floods.

In **Serbia**, measures on avoiding and mitigating impact of hydropower, navigation, and flood protection have to be designed. Data and studies for rivers of the size 10-100 km² are in urgent need.

In **Moldova**, the focus will be on training in river and floodplain restoration and of hydrologists and related experts in modern methods of field surveys and using hydromorphological quality elements in determination of ecological status and potential of surface water bodies.

In **Ukraine**, there is special interest in learning more about restoring riverbeds and floodplains (taking into account the specifics of Carpathian region and Danube delta and of small rivers, e.g. river Tova, Botar), best practices balancing hydropower production and nature protection, dike reallocation along the rivers within Tisza, Prut and Siret basins, as well as support for data collection and studies for smaller rivers between 10-100 km² for the Ukrainian part of Danube river basin.

Component 3 - Implementation of pilot measures will involve the preparation and/or implementation of at least one transboundary pilot project across two non-EU Member States and one pilot each per non-EU Member State, demonstrating hydromorphological and integrated approaches in river basin and flood risk management planning and implementation. Recent floods e.g. in the Tisza sub-basin confirmed the need for river and floodplain restoration, where they were modified for flood mitigation and improvement of ecological status. Several potential sites and measures for pilot actions have already been identified but need to be further investigated in the ProDoc development phase.

Component 4 - Knowledge management and effective project Monitoring and Evaluation will encompass pilot projects on reducing hydromorphological pressures both for the country and the trans-boundary level. IW: LEARN will be used for disseminating project results internationally, including through participation in IW: LEARN regional and one international conferences. Project monitoring will inform adaptive management for successful delivery of project results and project mid-term and final evaluations will allow adaptive management.

The proposed project is thus well-aligned with the GEF-6 International Waters Focal Area Strategy **Objective 3 Program 3**, focusing on advance conjunctive management of surface and groundwater resources. More specifically, the four project components collectively will achieve results under **Outcome 3.1**; *Improved governance of shared water bodies, including conjunctive management of surface and groundwater through regional institutions and frameworks for cooperation lead to increased environmental and socio-economic benefits*, and **Outcome 3.2**; *Increased management capacity of regional and national institutions to incorporate climate variability and change, including improved capacity for management of floods and droughts*. The project-level results framework will include

indicators aligned with the GEF-6 IW focal area indicators 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, and 3.2.1. Lastly, as the project builds on several previous GEF IW Danube investments, the proposed interventions here are a natural fit within the overall GEF International Waters investment modality towards promoting collective management of transboundary water systems and implementation of the full range of policy, legal and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services.

4) incremental cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEF TF, and co-financing;

As mentioned above, strategies and plans facilitated by the ICPDR have fostered political agreement on actions related to mitigating hydro-morphological changes and heightened flood risk. The EU-related countries are undertaking compliance largely with their own funding. GEF is being asked to fund a small increment of next-step actions for the five GEF recipient Danube countries consistent with their participation under the Danube Convention and in fact beyond their duties and obligations toward meeting the spirit of the Water Framework and the Floods Directives. This reasoning is similar to the earlier GEF projects focusing on Danube nutrient pollution reduction.

Without GEF International Waters focal area support, countries working together under the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC/ “Sava Commission”) will continue implementing national and regional river basin management and flood risk management plans and preparing updates based on reviewed analyses of status quo. However, this business as usual scenario will imply that a critical weakness – gaps in hydromorphological monitoring, pressure analysis and measure design particularly in non-EU Member States – will not be tackled appropriately and with necessary coordination. Hydromorphological pressures will consequently result in further habitat deterioration of numerous key stone and endangered species. This is expected to lead to lower self-cleansing properties of the Danube freshwater ecosystem as well as lower biodiversity values. While other donors and stakeholders are currently investing in counteracting these weaknesses or are planning to do so in the near future, efforts are not coordinated and not based on a comprehensive basin-wide hydromorphology understanding and gap assessments. Under business as usual, key baseline investments, especially from EU to non-EU member states, will lack necessary hydromorphological analysis and undermine overall implementation of river basin and flood risk management plans, significantly jeopardizing long-term success of EU investments and overall protection of the Danube Basin and sub-basins.

A series of projects and funding sources have been identified as initiatives that serve as the baseline and key sources of cofinancing for the GEF investment, including:

- EU-funded projects, co-financed by Danube basin countries, will tackle hydromorphological challenges over the coming years, in particular Danube Transnational Programme projects (“Sediment”, “Joint Tisza”, “Danube Floodplain”, “Revistur”), national and cross-border IPA projects in the Western Balkan countries on water and flood management related issues, and Cohesion Fund investments, e.g. in the project for the Slovenian Drava river below Maribor, or Serbia’s Vojvodina water management project; the Danube navigation project in Serbia, which will invest in ecological mitigation measures;
- ICPDR initiatives financed by its parties and donors, in particular, the feasibility study for restoring fish connectivity across the Iron Gates dams on the Danube, the Joint Danube Survey 4 to collect field measurements, including biological quality elements and hydromorphology in all countries along Danube;
- Sava and Danube River Commission Secretariats will both contribute to the achievement of project objectives; part of their staff and office running costs will provide co-financing;
- Projects funded by Danube basin countries: Communities in Austria and Slovenia on opposite banks of the Mura river will revitalize a mill channel with benefits for biodiversity; along the Lower Bosna River, flood risk management measures are in preparation which will be implemented with governmental funds; the German government invests in nature based solutions in the Danube basin; the Austrian government will invest in several EU Life projects with strong relevance to improve hydromorphological conditions and river

restoration and in flood protection involving hydromorphological improvement measures; in Ukraine, the national environmental fund, regional and community level funds are available for river restoration and flood risk mitigation;

- Other donors include the UNESCO Venice office, supporting a Bosnian sediment management project and the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) allocating funds for water and flood management projects.

The proposed GEF interventions aim to address these weaknesses by pulling all these efforts together, with a specific emphasis on non-EU countries, to harmonize approaches across country borders, establish a platform for joint learning and thus provide a push towards effective improvement of hydromorphological conditions. At the Danube region level, GEF funding will be used to increase transboundary capacity and coordination in the field of hydromorphology of EU and non-EU Member States for preparation and implementation of regional river basin and flood risk management plans and measures based on harmonized monitoring data and analysis. This will be done through engagement of non-EU Member States in field trips and training sessions for Danube basin water management authorities and other stakeholders, a stock-taking of hydromorphological pressures and approaches for river restoration, and a tool-kit on how to establish hydromorphological monitoring and assessment methods in line with basin-wide good practice in particular in linking hydromorphology to biological quality elements.

In the five non-EU countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine) authorities will be supported in integrating hydromorphological aspects adequately into country monitoring and assessment procedures as well as river basin and flood risk management planning and emerging related governmental strategies and programmes, e.g. on climate change adaptation. This integration aspect is particularly innovative and much needed project component not tackled by other donors. The same can be said about the project objective of increasing involvement of scientific institutions, consultancies and NGOs as well as improving inter-agency cooperation on hydromorphological monitoring and assessment. As hydromorphology so far has been largely neglected by decision makers, their awareness will be raised that participatory planning of hydromorphological measures can be a cost-effective and efficient way of meeting national and international biodiversity and climate commitments.

5) global environmental benefits (GEFTF);

Over the last two centuries in particular, most of the larger floodplain areas in the Danube basin have disappeared – including up to 80% of the total wetland area along the Danube and its larger tributaries, the Prut, Tisza, Sava, Drava, and Morava. Rivers and floodplains in the Danube basin have suffered in particular from measures for flood protection, agriculture, navigation and hydropower generation with insufficient consideration for biodiversity and ecosystem service impacts, such as flood water retention. This GEF project fosters close international co-operation between the 14 countries sharing the Danube River basin and working together under the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) with focus on maintaining and restoring the basin's floodplains, wetlands and river beds, uniquely valuable ecosystems in global terms. Action is of critical importance, as the Danube Pollution Reduction Programme assessed.

The project will therefore produce benefits at the transboundary, national and local levels related to protection of quality of drinking water groundwater supplies replenished by floodplain ecosystems, biological diversity in restored floodplains and adjacent rivers, and additional floodplain wetland ecosystem goods and services including flood storage and damage reduction of urban areas. It is therefore fully in line with the GEF IW strategy.

This GEF project will strengthen capacity of Danube basin countries, in particular non-EU countries, to restore floodplains and rivers through improved integrated water resource management across the region. This will improve conditions for globally important species such as migratory fish and birds. It will also bring back the flow of critical ecosystem services in pilot sites and in the medium term across the basin such as reduction of flood peaks, provision of spawning and nursing areas for protected and commercially harvested fish, and landscapes attractive for nature and fishing tourism.

Through the ICPDR's lead role in the project, multi-country cooperation as well as support to regional institutional capacity building will ensure long-term and sustainable regional results with a global impact by reducing threats to both transboundary watersheds and adjacent coastal areas, in particular the Danube Delta, a World Heritage Site. Sustainable multi-country management is reinforced through the project by assisting countries to reduce their vulnerability to climate variability and climate-related risks across freshwater and coastal sectors through improved capacity, data management and decision making.

Ultimately, this GEF project will help achieve the ICPDR's long-term objectives:

- Anthropogenic barriers and habitat deficits do not hinder fish migration and spawning anymore – sturgeon species and specified other migratory species are able to access the Danube River and relevant tributaries; Sturgeon species and specified other migratory species are represented with self-sustaining populations in the Danube basin according to their historical distribution;
- The integrated function of these riverine systems ensures the development of self-sustaining aquatic populations, flood protection and reduction of pollution in the Danube basin;
- The aquatic ecosystem is not influenced in its natural development and distribution;
- Impacts on or deterioration of the good status and negative transboundary effects are fully prevented, mitigated or compensated;
- Bringing non-EU countries in the basin in full alignment with EU Water Framework Directive and Flood Risk Management Directive.

6) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up:

Innovation: The project will build understanding and capacity for integrated approaches to river infrastructure planning and to flood risk management. These are highly demanding approaches as they require crossing the cultural and educational divide between different disciplines, in particular ecologists, water managers, and civil engineers. Ecological systems are highly complex and require more holistic way of thinking than the traditionally reductionist engineering disciplines. This GEF project will bring these different thoughts together, using the ICPDR as a platform which unites different experts and hierarchy levels to work towards the same goal of integrated water resource management. It will facilitate the cross-disciplinary dialogue among agencies and fill critical methodological and data gaps which form the basis of sound planning and management.

Another innovative aspect is that the project will foster better involvement of relevant external stakeholders into the planning process of authorities tasked with water management. In the five non-EU countries the project will focus on, authorities are largely dependent on their own internal capacity, which is limited. By building capacity of the external expert community, e.g. at universities, for hydromorphological monitoring, assessment and design of measures, authorities will extend the basis of professionals prepared for integrated river planning and management. Stronger involvement and communication with Civil Society Organisations will mobilise another source of knowledge and experience and reduce conflicts related to river infrastructure plans.

Sustainability and potential for scaling up: The work of the ICPDR is based on the Danube River Protection Convention, the major legal instrument for cooperation and trans-boundary water management in the Danube River Basin. It is a transnational body, which has been established to implement the Danube River Protection Convention. The ICPDR is formally comprised by the Delegations of all Contracting Parties to the Danube River Protection Convention, but has also established a framework for other organisations to join. WWF and other international NGOs enjoy observer status and have established trustful and fruitful working relations with the ICPDR for current and future cooperation. The International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) has similar objectives and modes of operation and its work is closely interlinked with that of the ICPDR for mutual support. Utilizing these two well-established and permanent international cooperation fora for project development, implementation and upscaling ensures strong sustainability,

In 2000, the ICPDR contracting parties nominated the ICPDR as the platform for the implementation of all transboundary aspects of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). In 2007, the ICPDR also took responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the EU Floods Directive in the Danube River Basin. Furthermore, at the ICPDR Ministerial Meeting in 2010 the Danube Declaration was adopted in which the Danube Ministers committed themselves to make all efforts to implement the EU Floods Directive throughout the whole Danube River Basin and to develop one single international Flood Risk Management Plan. Both of these EU laws require trans-basin cooperation on management plans as well as programmes of measures and form the legal basis for country-level water laws not only for EU countries but also for non-EU countries in the process of accession to the EU. These obligations and commitments of Danube basin countries advanced by the building of capacity of the external expert community for hydromorphological monitoring, assessment and design of measures etc. thus foster sustainability.

Upscaling of project results will be ensured by involvement of major donors of the non-EU countries in the project and influencing their programming. The EU for examples programmes its IPA and ENI funding programmes in cooperation with country authorities. Follow-up and upscaling activities can thus be pitched to these EU funding programmes with a good chance of success.

In order to advance national investments across the Danube basin towards implementation of follow-up river restoration activities, this project will involve a broad set of donors, including IFIs. towards identifying potential bankable projects across the five non-EU Member States. This will culminate in a donor conference at the end of the project, aimed at consolidating international support for identified national level investments towards full implementation of measures and maximum long-term impact of this project.

2. Stakeholders. Will project design include the participation of relevant stakeholders from civil society organizations (yes /no) and indigenous peoples (yes /no)? If yes, identify key stakeholders and briefly describe how they will be engaged in project preparation.

This GEF project can rely on a vast stakeholder support built up by the ICPDR and national governments over the past decades in the context of integrated water resource management and in particular river basins management planning, which require public consultations. At Danube basin level, ICPDR observers cover the most important stakeholder groups, from nature conservation organisations such as WWF to private sector infrastructure developers. While at basin level, stakeholder involvement can be called excellent, stakeholder relations at national level can be improved and comprises an important objective of this project.

Stakeholder(s)	Engagement
ICPDR	ICPDR was central in preparation of this proposed project and will continue to be main lever for next stages. Through the Heads of Delegations at ICPDR and members of River Basin Management Expert Group (RBM EG) of and its Hydromorphology Task Group (HYMO TG), representing all Danube countries, the project will secure proper engagement of all relevant stakeholders at both basin and country level.
The International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)	Similarly to the engagement through specialized groups of ICPDR, the project will secure and strengthen engagement with all relevant stakeholders, using the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)/ “Sava Commission’s permanent and ad-hoc expert groups (The Permanent Expert Group for River Basin Management (PEG RBM) and the Permanent Expert Group for Flood Prevention (PEG FP)) . In addition to these, there is a Sava Water Council which was established by the Sava Commission as an additional platform to support the Commission’s activities related to the public participation plan, as well as for the purpose of consultation and active involvement of primary stakeholders in the Basin, including ‘knowledge’ institutions, private sector, and civil society.
Ministries responsible for water and flood	The ministries/specialized agencies with water management responsibilities were identified and already informed/engaged in project development: Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ministry of Agriculture, Water-Management and Forestry of the Federation of BiH, Ministry of

risk management in the 5 focus countries/ and relevant Water Management Agencies	Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Srpska; Moldova: Moldovan Waters (Apele Moldovei) Agency and Moldovan Hydrometeorological Service; Montenegro: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development/ Directorate for Water Management; Serbia: Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection/ Directorate for Waters; Ukraine: State Water Resources Agency of Ukraine. These ministries will be actively engaged in design and implementation of the project.
Environment Ministries or other relevant Ministries for the project scope	In addition to the Ministries/Agencies with direct mandate for water management, other ministries such as: Ministry of Environment and Tourism; Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology (Bosnia and Herzegovina and both entities); Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Regional Development for Moldova; Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism/ Directorate for EU Integration and International Cooperation for Montenegro; Division of water ecosystems and resources, Department of nature resources conservation, Ministry of Ecology and Nature Resources for Ukraine will be consulted for project design.
Protected areas agencies	Specialised governmental agencies will be consulted by the project in order to carry out effective integrated river basin management planning. Already identified: Sava Parks Network is the network of protected areas along the Sava River and its tributaries from the source in Slovenia to the mouth in Danube in Serbia. The goal of the Network is the preservation of natural and cultural values of the Sava River and its floodplains, its biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural heritage.. DANUBEPARKS is the network of protected areas along the Danube River, currently consisting of 17 Protected Areas from nine Danube countries, all hotspots for biodiversity. The goal is to finally bring together all Protected Area administrations along the Danube as well as the bigger tributaries (Prut, Sava, Tisza, Morava, etc.), which share the same problems and are therefore able to solve these issues more efficiently by close cooperation. The DANUBEPARKS Network is an observer to the ICPDR, integrating the voice of the Protected Areas in General Assembly and Working Groups.
Local communities	Local communities, especially those at the pilot project sites will be engaged early during project development and throughout project execution, including reaching out to both women and men during stakeholder discussions. Participatory planning will be central to local stakeholder engagement. Project will engage with the local communities and their organizations, including safeguard requirements focused on avoiding negative impacts on the human and customary resource rights of these.
Non-governmental organizations	A series of NGOs were already identified, informed and/or consulted during the PIF preparation, among which Ecological Counseling Center Cahul, Eco-tiras-Network of river keepers, National Environmental Center from Moldova; GreenHome from Montenegro, Society for Study and Protection of Fishes, International Association for Danube Research from Serbia; The Centre for Regional Studies from Ukraine. Some of the identified NGOs at country level have also observer status in the ICPDR. The project will continue engagement with the NGOs during both design and implementation, including engaging with NGOs that are formed predominantly by women.
WWF	In the Danube basin, WWF is the strongest nature conservation organization working on freshwater issues, including river basin management, nature based flood risk management, wetland restoration, freshwater species conservation, sustainable infrastructure planning, advocacy work at various levels, developing capacity and knowledge for sustainable

	<p>management of waters including towards achieving good ecological status and benefits for local communities and societies.</p> <p>WWF is active in all five focus countries and most of the other Danube basin countries. WWF has the technical knowledge and strong relationships with governments, civil society, private sector, research and academia as well as local communities in the area of work.</p>
Private sector stakeholders	<p>Engagement with private sector stakeholders is critical to integrated river and flood risk river management. The proposed project will engage with:</p> <p>The Coca Cola Company (TCCC): Water is critical to beverage companies such as Coca-Cola, with which the ICPDR pursues the “Green Danube Partnership” for over 10 years. WWF and TCCC have also been working on a seven year partnership to restore vital wetlands and floodplains along the River Danube and its tributaries. The ambitious project aims to increase the river capacity by 12 million m³ by 2020. The partnership will reconnect former floodplains to the river system by opening dikes and dams, as well as retaining water on the floodplains by working closely with relevant local authorities and stakeholders. At the same time, a regional movement will be created for wetland conservation and restoration, as well as good water stewardship.</p> <p>Navigation sector: Historically the Danube and some of its main tributaries, such as the Sava, have formed important trade routes across Europe. The harnessing of these rivers to facilitate navigation has, however, radically changed their physical and ecological characteristics of rivers. Various current plans designed to help shipping along the Danube are also a possible threat to the last remaining natural areas of the Danube and the region’s freshwater resources. The ICPDR linked up with the Danube Commission, and the International Commission for the Protection of the Sava River Basin to execute in 2007 an intense, cross-sectoral discussion process, which has led to the <i>‘Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin’</i>. Since 2013, Priority Area 1a of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region has provided a platform for public and private representatives of the navigation sector to which ICPDR and WWF are frequently invited e.g. for the promotion of the Joint Statement.</p> <p>Hydropower sector: Following a request by the Danube Ministerial Conference 2010, the ICPDR has become active in initiating a dialogue with representatives from the hydropower sector. As an essential step in this process, "Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development in the Danube Basin" have been developed by an interdisciplinary team and were finalised and adopted in June 2013. The practical application of the Guiding Principles on the national level are being facilitated by an exchange of experiences in the frame of a follow-up process and building on the established network.</p> <p>Agricultural sectors: Fostered by the Danube Ministerial Declaration of February 2016, the ICPDR and its partners have embarked on a multi-annual process of strengthening cooperation with the agricultural sector as a key stakeholder in water management, including hydromorphological aspects. The project will involve these high level contacts during implementation of relevant project component and dissemination of results. At pilot project level, the involvement and buy-in of farmers will be essential as restoration measures usually involve a change in agricultural land-use.</p>
Research/Academia	<p>A series of relevant research entities were also identified and project will seek involvement of these towards consideration of best available knowledge on the technical aspects of implementation, such as: Institute for development of water resources “Jaroslav Černi” from Serbia or Laboratory of Hydroecological Problems of the Danube River, Institute of Hydrobiology, and The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.</p>

Adequate involvement of stakeholders will be ensured through participatory planning and other measures as part of adherence to WWF GEF Agency social safeguard policies.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Are issues on gender equality and women's empowerment taken into account? (yes /no). If yes, briefly describe how it will be mainstreamed into project preparation (e.g. gender analysis), taking into account the differences, needs, roles and priorities of women and men.

Women will be a key stakeholder group for the project. All demonstration pilot projects will consider women empowerment at community level, decision making and knowledge dissemination towards national, basin and international level. The project commits so being in line with the GEF Gender Equality Action Plan, to mainstream by seeking ways to increase the understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment, to develop and strengthen capacity so that gender equitable participation to project design and implementation is secured.

The five project target countries have undertaken¹ (to different degrees) international and national commitments to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. The project will build on the existing knowledge and frameworks developed and further enhance the gender mainstreaming through designing measures for gender empowerment in all possible activities the project will consider. To ensure this, the project will collect as much information as possible during the ProDoc development to allow best design of measures for gender mainstreaming/women empowerment activities as well as capitalize on results and lessons learned from past projects.

The project will capitalize on results of projects such as the WWF Adria' Protected Areas for Nature and People (PA4NP), currently implemented in Albania, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Croatia, Kosovo*, Macedonia, **Montenegro**, **Serbia** and Slovenia, in which context, the Strategy and Action Plan on integration of Human Rights -Based Approach and Gender into the PN4NP project activities is currently in the finalization stage.

Likewise, the project will investigate how to build on the Gender Strategic Platform - a coalition of women's and human rights organisations comprising over 45 civil society organizations (CSOs) in Ukraine.

The Serbian experience following the 2014 floods has revealed that gender is an important aspect of risk exposure, but is also an important aspect in building resilience.² Since, UNDP Serbia undertook action to provide a platform for learning, to exchange experiences and lessons learned, as well as to identify the main challenges and potential solutions for integrating gender in DRR (Disaster Risk Reduction) at the basin regional and national level, very much of relevance for the scope of the proposed project and where the project will use the existing basis and platforms to build further.

There tends to be a very good gender balance in ICPDR working and task groups as well during decision taking meeting (ICPDR Standing Working Group and Ordinary Meeting). Based on this baseline and the results of a gender analysis to be conducted during ProDoc development, with the aim to identify gender-related issues and gaps with gender equality, the project will aim to ensure that women and men will profit equally from project interventions.

¹ Gender Action Plan (GAP) **Bosnia-Herzegovina** 2013-2017 is a strategic document containing goals, programmes and measures for the realization of gender equality in all areas of social life and work, in the public and the private sphere, providing guidelines for the development of annual operational plans at the entity, cantonal and local level. This strategic document still contains all areas of social life but prioritized and cross-cutting areas were defined, as well as areas related to strengthening the system, mechanisms and instruments to achieve gender equality and strengthening co-operation and partnership. In this manner, the obligations of institutional gender equality mechanisms were clearly defined, as well as the obligations and responsibilities of competent ministries in each priority area.

In **Moldova**, UNDP alongside other UN Agencies is supporting the Government of Moldova in developing the next National Programme on Gender Equality for 2016-2020, and will continue to support gender mainstreaming and women empowerment across key development areas in the country.

Montenegro has also adopted the Action Plan For Achieving Gender Equality in Montenegro (APAGE) for 2013-2017.

On February 2016, The Government of the Republic of **Serbia** has adopted a new National Strategy for Gender Equality for the years 2016-2020. The Strategy highlights key national policies to reduce gender stereotypes and change some harmful cultural norms, as well as focusing on the development of new policies that would promote equal opportunities between women and men.

The Government of **Ukraine** ratified the Decree "On adoption of the state program of ensuring gender equality in Ukrainian society for 2006-2010" and developed the similar one for 2011-2016.

² UN WOMEN 2014, Gender Equality in Post-Disaster Needs Assessment: Floods Recovery and Reconstruction In Serbia; Bacanovic, 2014; 2015.

In line with WWF's commitment to strengthen the social dimensions of its project, programmes and policy work, WWF's social principles are fundamental to creating effective, lasting and equitable solutions to today's environmental challenges. These principles are intended to strengthen our conservation results and ensure their sustainability into the future. WWF currently has four social policies that are intended to guide the integration of social dimensions in our conservation work: The Statement of Principles on Indigenous Peoples and Conservation prepared in 1996 and updated in 2008, the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR) since 2009, the Policy on Poverty and Conservation adopted in 2009 and its Gender policy in 2011.

4. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design (table format acceptable).

Risk	Level	Proposed mitigation
Political and Governance: There is a risk that conflicting and competing demands among the different countries, entities and sectors, and vested interests, may delay decision-making and undermine the collaborative process essential for the achievement of project outcomes.	Moderate	During preparation, the implementation arrangements, including clear roles and responsibilities of the institutions involved will be defined to ensure transparency and efficiency in decision-making processes.
Sector strategies and policies: There is a risk that changing political priorities and frequent governmental changes may alter the strategies and policies in the water sector, although transboundary water management has gained prominence in light of the recent severe flood events which have severely affected many parts of the region. The riparian countries are therefore strengthening their cooperation on water issues.	Moderate	The project aims at raising awareness of decision makers on values of hydromorphological measures not only for nature, but also for society. In case of a change of government or leadership in relevant authorities, this awareness raising activities will be repeated to strengthen the willingness to act.
Stakeholders: Local stakeholders may object to certain investments.	Moderate	To mitigate this risk, investments will be chosen carefully, which are not considered controversial. At the same time, extensive consultations will be taking place to also ensure transparency.
Political instability in particular in Ukraine, where armed conflicts with Russia create an extra layer of uncertainty.	Moderate	The part of Ukraine impacted by the armed conflict lies outside the Danube basin and capacity building measures can be planned outside of conflict zones.
Lack of political will at the level of decision makers is a permanent challenge, which this project aims at increasing; however, in the instable political settings of today, decision maker enlightened by this project might be removed one day later, so that sustainability is a permanent challenge.	Moderate	Awareness raising measures targeted at decision makers are expected to increase the political will to act. Knowledge management products will be targeted towards government officials and key government personnel will be encouraged to participate in project activities, including IW: LEARN.
Climate risks: The Danube River Basin, like all major river basins of the world, are subject to the impacts of climate change – most acutely floods, for which there is a good likelihood for increase in frequency and severity, and droughts in some	Moderate	The scope of the project aims to alleviate the threat of flooding through stronger hydromorphological management and planning. The project will take all efforts to mainstream the latest in climate impact

regions of the Danube basin, including those this project will focus on		forecasting to be incorporated into current and future basin management plans.
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5. Coordination. Outline the coordination with other relevant GEF-financed and other initiatives.

The project will build on a very strong and extensive partnership basis which ICPDR already has established in the Danube Basin, as well as a strong GEF investment since its pilot phase, such as the Danube Regional Project, the Black Sea Danube Basin Partnership and many other transboundary or country-focused investments.

In order for the proposed project to reach its objectives and even go beyond it in terms of impact, close coordination with other GEF and non-GEF financed initiatives is critical and needed.

a) GEF initiatives

Project title	Implementing/ Executing Agencies	Short description/Coordination
Enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the Dniester River Basin; Country(ies): Moldova and Ukraine	IA: UNDP; EAs: UNECE, OSCE	It is expected that Dniester project to start during second half of 2017 and run for three years, which means overlapping with the proposed project for ProDoc preparation but also partially during implementation. Component 2 and 3 of Dniester project looking at strengthened basin-level cooperation and strengthened water resources and biodiversity monitoring and conservation, and information exchange respectively are very much related to the issues the proposed project tackle. In this regard, specific coordination will be ensured with the Dniester project PPG team and Dniester River Basin Commission.
GEF/SCCF Regional Drina River Basin Management project (to cover Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia)	IA: World Bank	Expected to start at the end of 2016 and be implemented until 31 October 2020, the GEF/SCCF Regional Drina Basin Management project aims to improve the mechanisms and capacity of the three riparian countries to plan and manage the transboundary Drina river basin, incorporating climate change adaptation. The proposed project will coordinate closely with the established Drina Task Force, especially in regard with Component 1: Multi-State Cooperation in Transboundary DRB Management and Component 2: Pilot Investments for Integrated DRB Management Including Flood and Drought Management and Climate Change Resilience
Technology transfer for climate resilient flood management in Vrbas River Basin (Bosnia-Herzegovina)	UNDP	Started in April 2015 and estimated to end in April 2020, the Vrbas River Basin project works closely with state, entity and local governments and institutions to enable strategic management of flood risk through the legislative and policy framework and appropriate sectorial policies and plans that incorporate climate change considerations, including development of Flood Risk Management plan for Vrbas river basin and associated capacity development of very much relevance for the proposed project.

b) Other initiatives

At the moment when this PIF was finalized, several new projects were expected to enter the EU funded project pipeline with relevance to this GEF project. However, details can only be provided during the ProDoc phase. Below is one project whose implementation just started.

Project title	Implementing/ Executing Agencies	
Strengthening the Capacities for Implementation of the Water Framework Directive - Montenegro	Consulting Consortia	Recently started and planned to be implemented until 2020, beneficiary of IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession), the objective of this project is to establish optimal conditions for water management within the River Basin Districts (RBD) in Montenegro in accordance with the requirements of the WFD. Expected results include (1) ensured preconditions for preparation of water management and river basin plans, and (2) developed RBMP for Adriatic and Black Sea basin, including inter alia, reference conditions, definition of impacts and pressures, and definition of programmes of measures. This project will develop the needed baseline for GEF Danube's successful implementation.

6. Consistency with National Priorities. Is the project consistent with the National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions? (yes /no). If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc.

The project is fully consistent with several national and regional strategies and plans, including direct and secondary benefits under several key conventions. The project directly builds off ICPDR regional River Basin and Flood Management Plans, including national-level management plans. Additionally, the project is consistent with the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Floods Directive and with the basin-wide transboundary priorities towards achieving good ecological water status, also with the commitments outlined by: the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) aiming to protect and ensure the quantity, quality and sustainable use of transboundary water resources by facilitating cooperation, Convention to which all five focus project countries are in the Accession stage; the Danube River Protection Convention, and the Ramsar Convention towards “the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation”, where all five project countries are contracting parties. The Memorandum of Understanding for Strengthening of the Tisza River Basin cooperation binds the Tisza riparian states to cooperation on water management issues. A bilateral “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Ukraine on the Joint Use and Protection of the Cross-Border Waters” was signed in 1994 and a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries was instituted as a cooperative mechanism.

The **National Water Management Strategy of the Republic of Serbia** will run until 2034 and call for the integration of hydromorphological aspects with such goals as conservation of hydromorphological characteristics and aquatic and alluvial ecosystems, reducing hydromorphological pressures on natural water bodies, reaching and sustaining good ecological potential and of highly modified water bodies, and integrating ecological needs in regulation of water bodies.

While not directly accessing GEF Biodiversity Focal Area resources, the project will also indirectly support goals under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through protection of important freshwater habitats of key flora and fauna. Specifically, the project is consistent with the drafted **Serbia NBSAP 2016-2026** which notes change in hydromorphology as one of the most significant pressures on biodiversity and ecosystem functions and proposes to restore 15% degraded ecosystems under Aichi Target 15, the Strategy on Biological Diversity of the Republic of

Moldova for 2015-2020 and the Action Plan which proposes “to recover the riparian protection stripes of the waters of rivers and water basins”; the Main Principles (Strategy) of the National Environmental Policy of **Ukraine until 2020**, which notes that the system of state governance in the area of protection of waters requires immediate reforming towards transfer to integrated management of water resources; The Strategy and Action Plan for Protection of Biological Diversity of **Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2015-2020** which notes that “the water in BA is increasingly viewed in the light of an economic resource (esp. hydropower), which is the cause of one of the major conflicts in sustainable water management”.

7. Knowledge Management. Outline the knowledge management approach for the project, including, if any, plans for the project to learn from other relevant projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge management is recognized to be a critical element of the project and has been incorporated into project design through proposed component four. The project will rely heavily on the management, dissemination, and scaling up of knowledge, experiences, and results in order to achieve the overall project objective and ensure long-term sustainability of the Danube River and the ecosystem services it provides. As part of the GEF incremental investment and ensuring cost-effectiveness, interventions made towards knowledge management objectives identified within the project will be building off a number of key baseline initiatives presented below.

The ICPDR publishes a range of documents, from its magazine Danube Watch to maps, annual reports and other technical papers. Most ICPDR documents are open for the public and disseminated via ICPDR’s website www.icpdr.org. Almost all of these publications are also available in print and can be ordered from the ICPDR Secretariat. The ICPDR has been empowered by the Danube countries to organise data collection and to process the received information to serve the decision-making processes. Everybody can access this database, although there are several layers not open for the general public for confidentiality reasons. These knowledge management mechanisms will be used extensively for disseminating results from this project, especially to communicate and scale up the pilot demonstration projects to target audiences. Similarly, the Sava Commission is acknowledged for its excellent database and information policies and will be used to contribute to knowledge dissemination.

For more hands-on and peer to peer knowledge generation and dissemination, ICPDR working and tasks groups are excellent mechanisms. For this GEF project, the River Basin Management Expert Group and the Hydromorphology Task Group will be key platforms. The ICPDR also organises workshops and field trips for filling knowledge gaps of its partners. This project will make use of this experience and contribute to planned capacity building events or initiate new ones.

Lastly, results from the project will be disseminated within and beyond the Danube River Basin geography through the GEF IW: LEARN community. The project will allocate at least one percent of the total GEF project financing for a suite of IW: LEARN activities to share lessons learned and results from the project to the broader GEF IW community, as well as actively participate in IW: LEARN capacity building workshops, forums, and biannual GEF IW Conferences. The project will also look for other opportunities within the region and globally to share project results with the international community, such as Stockholm Water Week, convention CoPs, and other fora.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S) AND GEF AGENCY(IES)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT³ OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):
 (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this SGP OFP endorsement letter).


NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE (MM/dd/yyyy)
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³ For regional and/or global projects in which participating countries are identified, OFP endorsement letters from these countries are required even though there may not be a STAR allocation associated with the project.

Mr. Senad Oprasic	Head of Environmental Protection Department	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (Bosnia-Herzegovina)	03/13/2017
Mrs. Inga PODOROGHIN	State Secretary	Ministry of Environment (Moldova)	02/28/2017
Mrs. Marija VUKCEVIC	Director General for EU Integration and International Cooperation	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism (Montenegro)	02/27/2017
Mrs. Stana Bozovic	State Secretary	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection (Serbia)	02/28/2017
Mr. Vladyslav Marushevskiy	Head of International Project Coordination Division	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine (Ukraine)	02/28/2017

B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies⁴ and procedures and meets the GEF criteria for project identification and preparation under GEF-6.

Agency Coordinator, Agency name	Signature	Date (MM/dd/yyyy)	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email
Herve Lefeuvre, World Wildlife Fund, Inc.		03/03/2017	Andrew Hume	(202) 495-4161	Andrew.hume@wwfus.org

C. ADDITIONAL GEF PROJECT AGENCY CERTIFICATION (APPLICABLE ONLY TO NEWLY ACCREDITED GEF PROJECT AGENCIES)

For newly accredited GEF Project Agencies, please download and fill up the required **GEF Project Agency Certification of Ceiling Information Template** to be attached as an annex to the PIF.

⁴ GEF policies encompass all managed trust funds, namely: GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF and CBIT

PIF ANNEX ON GEF FINANCING CEILINGS FOR GEF PROJECT AGENCIES ⁵

Date: 3/3/2017

To: The GEF Secretariat
Washington, DC 20433

Subject: *GEF Project Agency Certification of Ceiling Information*

Per Council requirement for GEF Project Agencies, I am pleased to inform you that

(a) the value of the largest project implemented (or executed) by World Wildlife Fund, Inc. to date is \$65,500,700⁶; and

(b) the total value of all projects under implementation by World Wildlife Fund, Inc. as of the end of FY16 was \$549,478,246.⁷

I certify that the GEF financing currently being requested by World Wildlife Fund, Inc. for the project, Danube River Basin Hydromorphology and River Restoration, in the amount of \$4,970,000, is lower than the largest project that World Wildlife Fund, Inc. has implemented (or executed) to date.

I further certify that the total amount of GEF financing currently under implementation by World Wildlife Fund, Inc. plus the requested GEF financing for the above mentioned project does not exceed 20 percent of the total amount of all projects that World Wildlife Fund, Inc. had under implementation as of the end of FY16.

Sincerely,



Herve Lefeuvre
GEF Coordinator
World Wildlife Fund, Inc.

⁵ This annex needs to be submitted together with the PIF.

⁶ This amount excludes co-financing.

⁷ In support of these statements, a copy of (a) the signed loan/grant agreement for the largest project implemented (or executed), and (b) a list of all projects (together with their amounts in US dollars) need to be sent via email, under a separate cover, to the GEF Secretariat at Project_Agency@theGEF.org. These supporting documents will be treated as confidential and will not be shared with any parties external to the Secretariat. The PIF will not be approved in the absence of these supporting documents.