

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT IN THE SAVA RIVER BASIN

One of the essential parts of the river system is sediment, which forms a variety of habitats and environments. Nevertheless, its important role has been somehow forgotten many times. Consequently, there are as yet no examples of the fully-fledged integration of sediment management into river basin management. This was a key driver for UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) to establish the global International Sediment Initiative (ISI), and to – independent of, and complementary to, ISI – establish the European Sediment Network (SedNet). Both ISI and SedNet promote and provide ample arguments for sustainable sediment management (SSM).

On the other hand, within the implementation of the *Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB)*, the Sava countries have drafted the *Protocol on Sediment Management to the FASRB*, which will provide a legal basis for future cooperation of the countries on the development of the *Sediment Management Plan for the Sava River Basin (Sava SM Plan)*. The *Protocol* highlights comparable guiding principles to SSM as those endorsed by ISI and SedNet.

These 'shared' principles set an excellent condition for cooperation among the Sava countries that will implement the *Protocol*, and ISI and SedNet to support that implementation through the project entitled *Towards Practical Guidance for Sustainable Sediment Management using the Sava River as a Showcase*. The project will bring together the state-of-the-art in scientific as well as practical knowledge on SSM and make that knowledge available through a practical training course. Therefore, the ISRBC, ISI and SedNet teamed up to jointly look for funding to develop the course and to apply the practical SSM guidance – as trained in the course – in the Sava river basin as a showcase. It is expected that such an experience will inspire other river basins (globally) to apply the SSM guidance, as well.

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BRGM and Deltares, while the ISRBC offered an in kind support by assisting in the organization and execution of the planned activities. This combined offer covers the first two steps of the project. Thus, it was decided to start with the implementation in April 2012.

The first step includes the development and execution of the first part of the SSM course, as well as the drafting of the corresponding guidance document. It will address the sediment balance throughout the river system, sediment monitoring and sediment quality and quantity evaluation, i.e.



the first three elements of a SM plan, as foreseen by the *Protocol*. In the course, planned to be held in October 2012, experts assigned by ISI and SedNet will train the state-of-the-art related to these issues, while the participants – local experts from the Sava river basin, involved in sediment management – will transfer their learning experiences into the draft practical guidance. In the second step, starting just after the course, the local experts will apply that draft guidance to elaborate the first elements of the *Sava SM Plan*, under the coordination of the ISRBC.

All the parties involved are optimistic to find the remaining funding needed to develop the second part of the project, which will address measures, dredging, sediment disposal, treatment and use, as well as institutional arrangements, and then again apply the lessons learned in the Sava practice to facilitate further development of the *Sava SM Plan*.

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