

Joint report on the implemented workshops for performing SWOT analysis in pilot area on the border region of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

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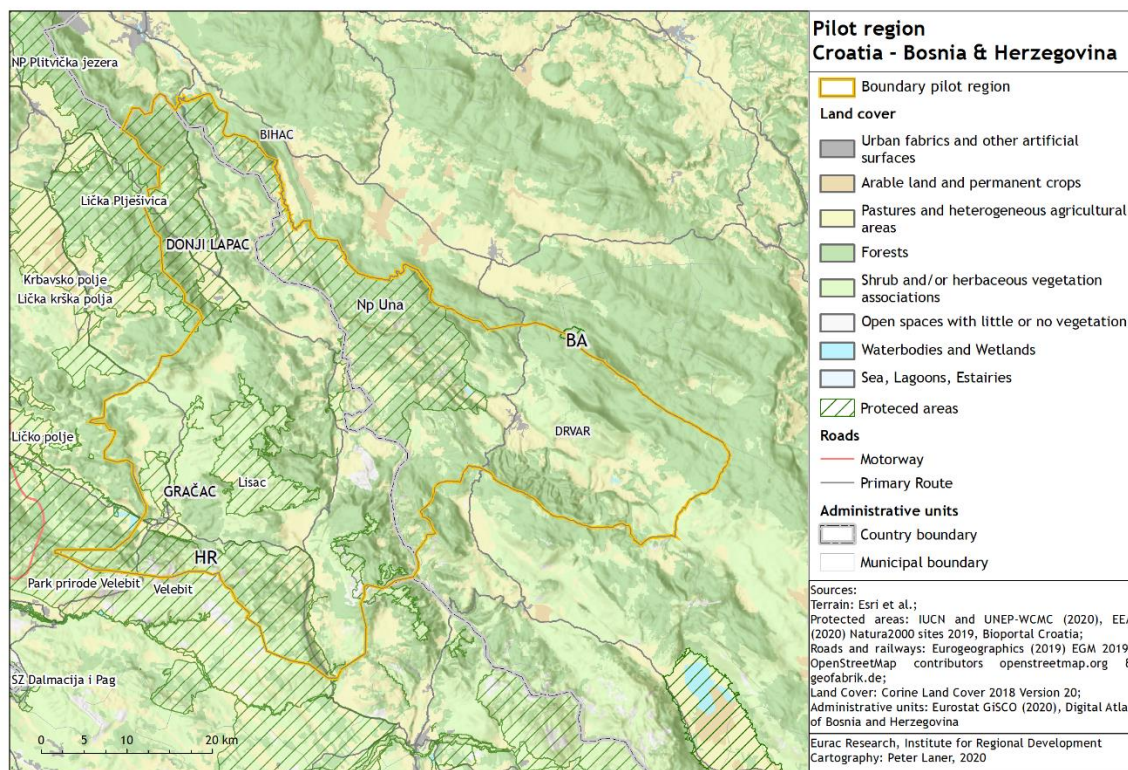
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1. Map of the Pilot Area



2. Introduction

The purpose of the workshop was to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of cross-border ecological connectivity and the nature of economic development in the cross-border area of Natura 2000 site Lisac (Croatia) and Una National park (BiH).

The cross-border pilot area on the territory of BiH and Croatia is an area of exceptional landscape and biological diversity. Natura 2000 areas on the Croatian side and Una National Park in Bosnia and Herzegovina form an important stepping stones in protection of endangered Natura 2000 species and habitats. Lisac is the habitat of the threatened species meadow viper (*Vipera ursinii*) and protected species - Yellow bellied toad (*Bombina variagata*). Mixed forests are the habitat of brown bear (*Ursus arctos*).

As part of the SWOT analysis, with the contribution of participants, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of cross-border environmental connectivity and sustainable development in the wider cross-border area were identified. This joint analysis will be the basis for the development of an action plan for the cross-border pilot area of NP Una and the municipalities of Drvar (BiH) - Lisac (Hr).

Workshop on the Croatian side of the pilot area was held on 5th of February 2021 and took place in the town of Gračac with 7 participants – organizers excluded (see list of participants in chapter 2 and workshop agenda). In addition, two important stakeholders were addressed after the workshop and provided important contributions via e-mail, which were integrated in the SWOT analysis.

Workshop on the BiH side of the pilot area was held on 25th of February 2021 and took place in the town of Bihać with 14 participants – organizers excluded (see list of participants in chapter 3).

3. List of participants and affiliations

Table 1: Participants of the workshop in Gračac, Croatia

No	Name and surname	Organisation
1	Nives Rogoznica	NATURA-JADERA
2	Edita Bilaver Galinec	Bilaver Consulting
3	Roko Pavić	Hunting Association of Zadar County
4	Josip Frketić	Nature part Velebit
5	Vesna Krezić	Development agency of the Municipality of Gračac
6	Mladen Tomašević	Croatian forests, branch Gračac
7	Monika Valjak	NGO „Prospero“
8	Tanja Rastović	NGO Una
9	Andrea Solić	WWF Adria / NGO Dinarica
10	Mileva Desnica	NGO Una
11	Damir Perić	NATURA-JADERA
12	Martina Jurković	LAG ‘Lika’ – contacted after the workshop
13	Petra Kovačević	Cluster ‘Lika Destination’ – contacted after the workshop

Table 2: Participants of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina

No	Name and surname	Organisation
1	Jovica Balaban	UL. Drvar
2	Dragan Simurdić	UL. Drvar
3	Brankica Ždero	NGO Dinarica
4	Haris Hadžihajdarević	Una National Park
5	Matevž Premelč	ZaVita, d.o.o.
6	Andrea Solić	WWF Adria
7	Kenan Solaković	NGO Dinarica
8	Šemsudih Bajrić	Udruga Gljivara – Klaster ‘Una’ / NGO
9	Damir Ruždjić	Town of Bihać
10	Ajdin Alagić	Town of Bihać
11	Mirela Alijagić	Town of Bihać
12	Emir Delić	Town of Bihać
13	Denis Huskić	ULO Bihać
14	Muhamed Smajlović	Veterinary Faculty
15	Vedad Škopur	PPP
16	Amaildo Mulić	Una National Park
17	Mersija Talić	Ministry of construction, spatial planning and environment protection
18	Šeherezada Begić	Ministry of construction, spatial planning and environment protection

4. Asked questions

In order to steer the discussion of the workshop in line with each elements of the SWOT analysis, the following questions were used;

STRENGTHS;

- What are the advantages of cross-border management?
- What is the current state of ecological connectivity?
- What has been done good?
- What are we good at?
- What are we doing competitively?
- What are our resources?

WEAKNESSES;

- What are we doing badly?
- What is blocking the ecological connectivity?

OPPORTUNITIES;

- What changes do you see coming in the short, mid-term and long-term period?
- How can the implementation of ecological connectivity enhance current local and cross-border cooperation?
- What are the opportunities for pro biodiversity business in light of sustainable management of habitats?

THREATS;

- What do in other places do that we do not do?
- What future changes (landscape, climate change, wildlife presence, etc.) will affects our cross-border cooperation?

5. SWOT analysis

On the basis of the posed questions (see above in chapter 4), the outcome of replies and debate is schematically presented in a form of SWOT table;

Table 3: SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rich biodiversity along the entire border Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina - The pilot area on the Croatia side Lisac provides the following protected habitats of eastern Mediterranean dry grasslands; and species <i>Vipera ursinii</i>, <i>Bombina variegata</i>, <i>A. brevipennis</i>, and <i>P. hystrix</i> ➤ Protected area on each side of the border; on BiH side there is National park Una and on the Croatian side the Natura 2000 site Lisac, and most of the wider area is under the protection of Nature Park Velebit. The Lisac hiking trail is marked as an e-route. ➤ Strong scientific research capacities - experts of various professions, accredited laboratory -> capacities for adequate habitat mapping ➤ Much of the preserved nature that man has not yet disturbed ➤ Biodiversity rich and fairly well preserved natural resources (forests, waters, habitats) ➤ Water and natural resources; Wider Pilot area on the Croatian side encompasses: Cerovačke špilje (part of Nature Park Velebit), and Una River source considered the fifth river in the world for its depth. Cerovačke špilje and Nature Park Velebit both have their Management plan in implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of environmental strategy and vision on the national level – <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Lack of adequate legislation (eg Federal Law on Nature Protection, Law on Forests) - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Lack of bylaws as a consequence of lack of adequate legislation - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Long administrative procedures - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Lack of human strength and lack of education of people (staff) working on nature and environment conservation at different administrative levels. - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Lack of protected area managers - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Lack of regulations for forest management in the protected area - forest managers do not differ in the park and outside the park - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Current situation with hunting and poaching - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Existence of protected areas on paper, but without a manager - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Insufficient harmonization of the criteria for the use of incentive measures from the Rural Development Program with the situation in the field, an example are the deadlines for land leases for which incentives and grants

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spatial plan of the Una river basin ➤ Existing management plan of NP Una ➤ Competitiveness - richness of nature and culture as economic potential for sustainable tourism ➤ Existing level of regional cooperation connecting BiH – CRO and SLO ➤ Una Cluster - the bearer of the idea of Una protection ➤ NGOs and their potential for research and involvement in the tourist offer + implementation of activities in the field ➤ Current operational programs of several EU Funds available in Croatia recognize dry grasslands as habitats that are worth for protection and within them the financial funds are available. Incentives and economic value for owners is available through different measures from the Rural Development Program 2014-2020 (most likely it will be the same in new operational programs) ➤ A number of family farms who has a capacity to market their products on in Zadar region and the tradition of Fair in Gračac presents solid ground of already existing businesses and its market 	<p>are provided - <u>relevant only for Croatian side</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demographical prevalent older population in the pilot area can be a threat to planned economic development and touristic orientation. Also, concentration of the large plots in hands of a few owners within non-adequate business model lacking of working force (both in numbers and profession). ➤ Pilot area on the Croatian side doesn't have its Touristic office/Tourist board that presents barrier to the development of coordinated sustainable strategy of the touristic activities. ➤ The pilot area is not equipped with outdoor vehicles and equipment necessary for monitoring of the area and follow up of all the activities, insufficient control over waste dump activities and nonexistence of wild animals' corridors in the pilot region. ➤ Insufficient knowledge / awareness of inhabitants/communities of fire consequences on their grasslands that is usually considered as a traditional tool. This leads to hundreds of hectares of grasslands under the fire during a year.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment of the state of nature - research of the pilot area ➤ Connecting experts from different sciences ➤ Cooperation between various initiatives and associations (Una Cluster, Una Emeralds - children's association as an opportunity to work on education, kayakers, cyclists' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Illegal migrations (especially the area of Plešivica) ➤ COVID-19 ➤ Tycoonization ➤ Mass tourism - growth of Chinese and Arab tourists who have different expectations and desires - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u>

<p>associations) with NP Una and local administrations - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expansion of NP Una - spatial plan (opportunity and challenge!) - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Existing capacity of human resources (experts, stakeholders and service providers). ➤ Geostrategic location of the area - tourist transit ➤ Lack of linguistic barriers ➤ Existing tourist boards - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Networking municipalities, private initiatives and civil sector in the cross-border area ➤ Identification of carrying capacity of visitors in protected areas as a preventive measure ➤ Development of agricultural activity ➤ Establishment of Plješivica Nature Park as a way of connecting NP Una and NP Plitvice Lakes ➤ Raising environmental awareness with the support of regulations for tourism service providers (souvenirs, medicinal plants, organic production) ➤ Family farms -> development of sustainable tourism in rural areas with stakeholder education ➤ Unesco list - Una Waterfalls (Martinj Brod) ➤ Revitalization of old mills on the Una ➤ Connecting producers (farmers) and consumers (gastronomy, tourism) ➤ Focusing on food ecological production and development of agritourism offer. Development of outdoor activity such as biking trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of awareness on the level of policy makers ➤ Illegal construction - <u>relevant only for BiH side</u> ➤ Depopulation of residents and negative demographic trends on the both sides of the pilot area ➤ Illegal landfills ➤ Rehabilitation of illegal and existing landfills and identification of new landfills ➤ No green crossings on the V.C. highway corridor through Bosnia and Herzegovina ➤ Lack of a continuous framework for financing the development potentials of the protected pilot area and the continuation of the practice of exclusively project financing ➤ Fragmentation of habitats and migration of organisms due to climate change ➤ Karst terrain in the pilot area on the that might easily enhance pollution of the underground watercourse
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- Gathering and cooperation of different interest groups ('if there is no honey, there is no bear')
- Research on the number of wild animals and their management
- Connecting researchers, experts, different professions from BiH and Croatia in the field (biology, economics, agriculture, veterinary medicine, landscape architects, etc.)
- Work on popularization of the environment
- Development of tourist capacities (eg Čardaklije - rural tourism)
- Synergy among hunters, foresters and rangers
- Incentives deriving from Rural Program in Croatia and possible benefits from INTERREG projects
- Potential of branding of products and services related to the ecological connectivity – value of brand Natura 2000 network and value of Lika quality certification
- Potential of Destination management of the wider pilot area for implementation of sustainable tourism (Cluster Lika mission)
- The pilot wider area on the Croatia side encompasses Cerovac Caves, located in the south part of the Velebit Nature Park, are one of the best known and most important speleological features in Croatia and Una River source, a protected hydrological monument of nature, fifth in the world for its depth.
- Habitat for wild animals: wolf, bear, lynx, wild cat and chamois.

6. Conclusion – comments of the moderator

Workshop in Gračac, Croatia:

Since it was a small group of participants but with all relevant stakeholders' presence, discussion on SWOT elements was very detailed and extensive. Croatian legislative framework and national policies that tackles ecological connectivity was already investigated through questionnaires and these results were a starting point for introduction of the workshop. It was necessary to facilitate the discussion starting from all detected problems in the field in order to make a strong connection to the notion of ecological connectivity – still, not very clear to all stakeholders. The participation in workshop was very active, there were many suggestions and some concrete initiatives. There was a mayor understanding among the present stakeholders, they presented common vision for the development of pilot region and it was clear that there is already a well-established communication among them.

Additional inputs were added to the workshop outputs by e-mail from two very important stakeholders; Local action group „Lika“ and Cluster “Lika Destination” who were not able to participate at the workshop.

The results from evaluation reports demonstrate that all participants appreciated the usefulness of the workshop discussions, in particular most of them considered that the transnational dimension of the problem actually makes easier the problem-solving process and presents an opportunity to find some new solutions. All of them stated that they gain new, concrete ideas for problem resolving and understood better the topic after the workshop. Finally, they all agreed that the application of the ecological connectivity is possible and that this workshop was valuable for their understanding of the topic from another point of view.

Main outputs from the analysis of the evaluation forms containing structured statements instead of usual rates:

Ecological connectivity, is implementation possible?

7 out of 8 participants confirmed that it is possible, and one that either one or the other can be

This workshop was useful to understand the problem from another point of view?

7 out of 8 participants answered with a simple yes, and one with yes, completely

Transnational dimension of the problem represents ...

6 out of 8 participants answered that it represents an opportunity for seeking new solutions, and 2 of them that makes it easier to solve problem

I will go from this workshop with

6 out of 8 participants gain new concrete ideas to face the problems, and 2 of them said that they now understand the problem better.

Workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina:

All participants actively expressed their comments, visions and suggestions for future approaches in relation to the regional sustainable development, a part of which is also ensuring ecological connectivity that would preserve rich biodiversity.

Reflecting the outcome of the workshop, it is especially welcomed that more opportunities and strengths were identified in comparison to obstacles and threats. That provides a promising and optimistic implementation of the project next steps (notably preparation of the joint action plan). At the end of the workshop, evaluation poster was presented to the participants, asking them to assess the usefulness and effectiveness of the held discussion. All participants indicated that they have found workshop useful for their understanding of the topic from another point of view. Furthermore, they see cross-border cooperation as an opportunity for searching common solutions and a step that will facilitate the implementation and safeguarding of ecological connectivity. All participants thus learned something new and that it will benefit their work. You can see the evaluation poster in the Annex 6 of this report.

7. List of annexes

1. Agenda of the workshop in Gračac, Croatia
2. List of participants of the Workshop in Gračac, Croatia
3. Photos of the workshop in Gračac, Croatia
4. Analysis of evaluation forms of the workshop held in Gračac, Croatia
5. Agenda of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina
6. List of participants of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina
7. Photos of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Evaluation poster of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina

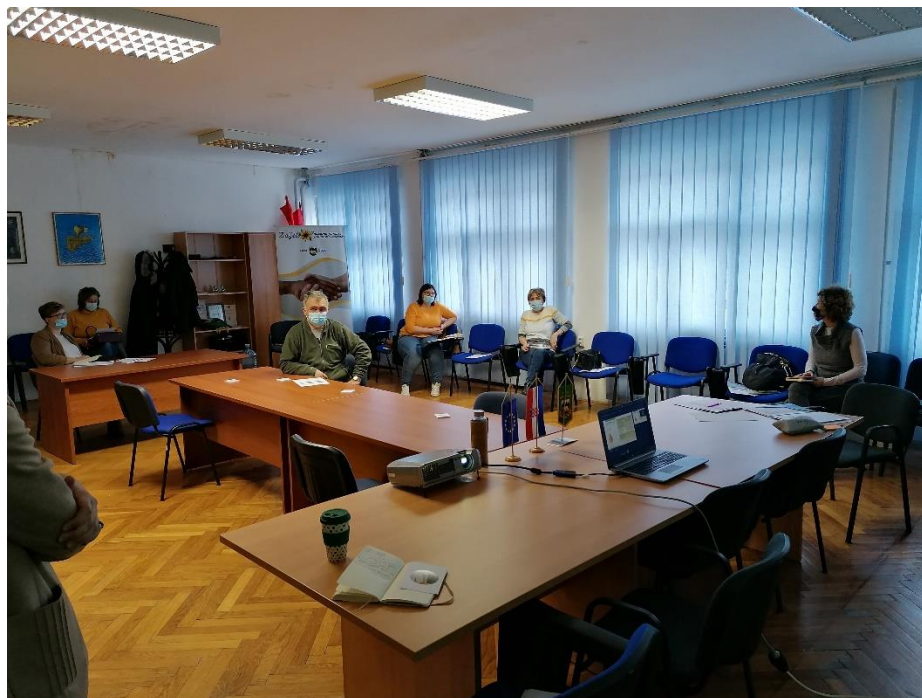
Annex 1: Agenda of the workshop in Gračac, Croatia

10:30 – 10:45	Arrival of stakeholders and registration
10:45 – 11:15	Introduction (presentation of the project and the concept of Ecological Connectivity)
11:15 – 12:00	Discussion
12:00 - 12:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
12:15 – 13:00	Working in groups
13:00 – 13:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
13:45 – 14:00	Presentation of the results and conclusion

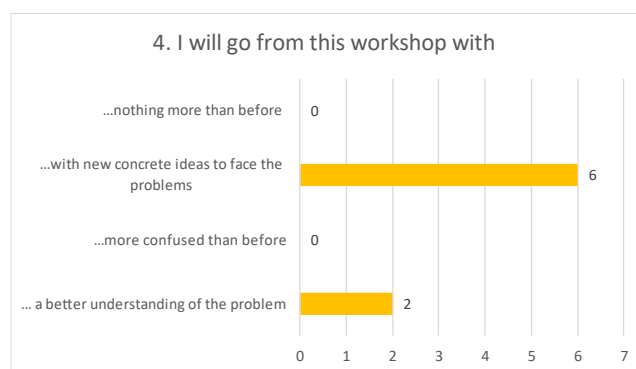
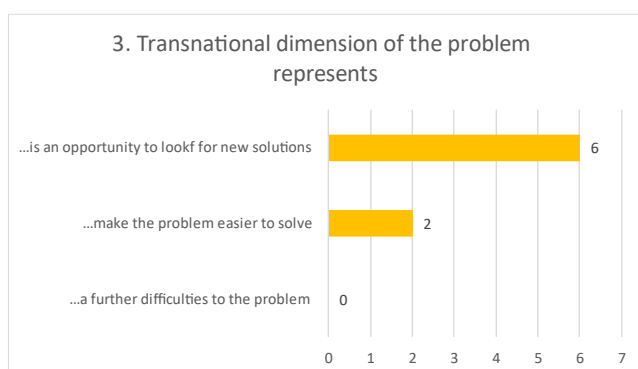
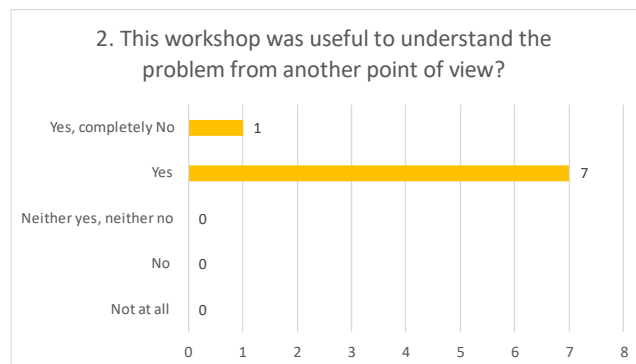
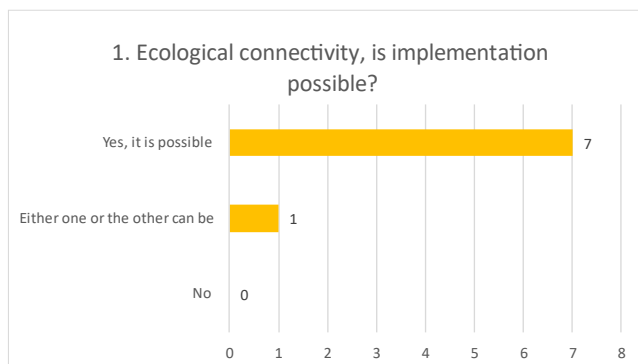
Annex 2: List of participants of the Workshop in Gračac, Croatia

No	Name and surname	Organisation
1	Nives Rogoznica	NATURA-JADERA
2	Edita Bilaver Galinec	Bilaver Consulting
3	Roko Pavić	Hunting Association of Zadar County
4	Josip Frketić	Nature part Velebit
5	Vesna Krezić	Development agency of the Municipality of Gračac
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7	Monika Valjak	NGO „Prospero“
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9	Andrea Solić	WWF Adria / NGO Dinarica
10	Mileva Desnica	NGO Una
11	Damir Perić	NATURA-JADERA
12	Martina Jurković	LAG ‘Lika’ – contacted after the workshop
13	Petra Kovačević	Cluster ‘Lika Destination’ – contacted after the workshop

Annex 3: Photos of the workshop in Gračac, Croatia



Annex 4: Analysis of evaluation forms of the workshop held in Gračac, Croatia



Annex 5: Agenda of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina

10:30 – 10:45	Arrival of stakeholders and registration
10:45 – 11:00	Welcome words from the hosts
11:00 – 11:15	Presentation of the DinAlpConnect project activities on the pilot area
11:15 – 12:00	SWOT workshop session – part 1
12:00 - 12:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
12:15 – 13:00	SWOT workshop session – part 2
13:00 – 13:30	Presentation of the workshop results and conclusion
13:15 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>

Annex 6: List of participants of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina

No	Name and surname	Organisation
1	Jovica Balaban	UL. Drvar
2	Dragan Simurdić	UL. Drvar
3	Brankica Ždero	NGO Dinarica
4	Haris Hadžihajdarević	Una National Park
5	Matevž Premelč	ZaVita, d.o.o.
6	Andrea Solić	WWF Adria
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8	Šemsudih Bajrić	Udruga Gljivara – Klaster 'Una' / NGO
9	Damir Ruždjić	Town of Bihać
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14	Muhamed Smajlović	Veterinary Faculty
15	Vedad Škopur	PPP
16	Amaildo Mulić	Una National Park
17	Mersija Talić	Ministry of construction, spatial planning and environment protection
18	Šeherezada Begić	Ministry of construction, spatial planning and environment protection

Annex 7: Photos of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Annex 8: Evaluation poster of the workshop in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina

① Radionica je bila korisna za razumijevanje problema sa druge točke gledišta:

NE NEZNAM DA

② Prekogranična suradnja će:

- Dodati dodatne poteškoće implementaciji ekološkog povezivanja.
- Olakšati implementaciju ekološkog povezivanja
- Biti prilika za traženje novih rješenja

③ Jeste li NAUČILI/SAZNALI nešto novo?

NE DA

④ Jeste li NAUČILI/SAZNALI nešto što će vam koristiti u vašem radu?

NE DA

⑤ Komentari na radionicu:

SUPER JE BILLO!

Q1 – The workshop was useful for understanding the problem from another point of view: No / I don't know / Yes

Q2 – Cross border cooperation will;

- Pose as an additional problem in the implementation of ecological connectivity.
- Ease the implementation of ecological connectivity.
- Be an opportunity for seeking new solutions.

Q3 – Have you learned/get informed about anything new today?

Q4 – Have you learned/get informed about something that will be an asset on your work?

Q5 – Any additional comments: