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Jablonica Dam on Neretva river,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
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Duman, karst spring in the town of Livno,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
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Fisherman on Deranjsko lake,
Hutovo Blato Nature Park
© Edward PARKER / WWF-Canon

Cormorant, Skadar lake
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River Neretva
© Edward PARKER / WWF-Canon

River Neretva
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Neretva River flowing through downtown Mostar
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DRAFT

7-8 October 2009
Dubrovnik, Croatia

International Conference on Sustainable Hydropower in the Western Balkans

**For further information,
please contact the Conference organizers:**

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Brief overview/background

In recent years, wetlands and freshwater ecosystems of South-Eastern Europe have been facing increased pressure from the planned development of new hydropower infrastructure in the region.

Hydropower is seen as **an increasingly attractive source of energy** for the mitigation of climate change, for energy security and as a source of revenues for many Western Balkan countries, which are indeed endowed with a significant potential in this sector.

However, the development of hydropower infrastructure can represent **a severe threat to local high biodiversity and downstream ecosystem functions**, and to still quite unique pristine landscapes, thus to the precious natural and cultural heritage of the region.

WWF, since 2001, strives to address conservation issues that South-Eastern European freshwater ecosystems are facing (with the aim of **minimizing the impacts of infrastructure** - including dams), by promoting integrated river basin management, the implementation of the principles laid down by the World Commission on Dams, the **adoption of sustainability standards** for the siting, design and operation of dams, and the **introduction of the environmental flows** concept into river basin management.



Objective and scope

The objective of the Conference is to **gather the key stakeholders in dam development and operation** in the region in order to discuss the possibilities to enhance the sustainability of hydropower schemes through the adoption of environmental standards, including the environmental flows concept.

The Conference will also aim at sharing with the participants **examples of sustainable hydropower and innovative approaches** from all over the

world, such as the ongoing multi-stakeholder review of the International Hydropower Association's (IHA) Sustainability Assessment Protocol, to improve the environmental performance of such infrastructure.

The ultimate objective is to **help decision-makers** both in the public and private sectors to **make informed and science-based choices** for mitigating the impacts of dams in the region and start collaborating with a view to achieve sustainable solutions and alternatives.

Target audience

The Conference is primarily targeted at representatives of the region's national energy companies and water agencies (e.g. Elektroprivredas, river basin agencies, etc.), the hydropower industry (i.e. IHA, international investors interested in the region, national companies), river basin commissions and authorities, regional and national civil society organisations, as well as International Financial Institutions, donors and the EU Commission.

Key topics to be discussed

- **Needs of freshwater ecosystems with regard to flows, connectivity and sediment transfer**
- **Best practices and environmental standards in the hydropower sector (including SEAs and EIAs)**
- **EU accession requirements, notably relevant for the water and energy sectors**
- **International Financial Institutions' sustainability policies, principles and/or safeguards**



Practical information

The Conference is to be organised from 7th and 8th October 2009 in Dubrovnik. Information about the exact venue and accommodation will be made available on time. Special hotel rates will be arranged for participants. Working languages will be English and local language. There will be no registration fee.