



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM  
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (TURIZAM)



**11** SARAJEVO  
BUSINESS  
FORUM '22



**MAY 11-12**

SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

USAID DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (TURIZAM)

&

SARAJEVO BUSINESS FORUM

*Present*

**THE POWER OF  
TOURISM TO FUEL  
ECONOMIC GROWTH  
FORUM**



HILLS HOTEL  
AND  
CONGRESS CENTRE  
SARAJEVO



THURSDAY  
MAY 12 / 2022  
10:50 - 12:30



# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING DESTINATIONS IN THE WORLD!



Bosnia  
and  
Herzegovina

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** was the second fastest growing tourism destination in the world pre-COVID, and has regained much of its pre-pandemic arrivals. Already, its mountain and skiing attractions resulted in the best winter season in history. The country is situated close to many of the world's most important outbound tourism markets, such as the high-spending German market, the European Union in general, and within a short flight from the United Kingdom, Turkey and the Middle East region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is also popular with travelers from Asia and the Far East, and with faith-based travelers, including, among others, Catholic pilgrims attracted by Medjugorje and the Franciscan heritage, and by Muslim visitors attracted by the prevalence of Halal tourism options. Bosnia and Herzegovina

boasts diverse assets ranging from UNESCO World Heritage Sites to mountainous terrain that is a haven for ski and winter tourism and for summer retreats. The country's rivers are world renowned and will host the World Rafting Championship in May 2022.

The rich and diverse nature and cultural assets, proximity to key global tourism markets and the largely untouched nature, make Bosnia and Herzegovina prime for tourism investments in hotels, resorts, conference facilities and entertainment complexes.

The panel *The Power of Tourism To Fuel Economic Growth* will explore international best practices and consider local initiatives that will drive growth and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Balkan region.

## ABOUT

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# USAID DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (TURIZAM)

USAID Turizam is working to fuel broad-based tourism-driven economic growth by capitalizing on Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) rich cultural heritage and distinctive nature. It is engaged in supporting the BiH tourism industry to capitalize on new market opportunities and build resilience against market risks, setting it on a robust growth trajectory toward a sustainable tourism economy.

A dynamic industry-driven approach is being implemented to enable BiH to communicate its attractiveness as a destination with a distinctive country brand which is sought year-round by higher spending visitors. The project is working to creatively drive visitation to rural areas and magnify the value of traditional agricultural products and traditions.

Jointly implemented with a diversity of local partners, USAID Turizam is fostering collaboration among all levels of government and industry and community stakeholders, to improve capacities and investment returns. To achieve long-term economic growth, all activities begin with sustainability planning and putting people first in all initiatives.

Our activities include:

### Destination Marketing & Promotion

USAID Turizam is working with public and private sectors to enhance Bosnia and Herzegovina's global brand recognition and promote the country in the international marketplace as an attractive year-round destination prioritizing higher-yield and longer stay travelers from key markets.

Growing trade and consumer sales and distribution channels, expanding and developing new aviation routes and digital transformation are amongst the key destination promotion activities USAID Turizam is working on.



## **World Class Services Quality and Workforce**

USAID Turizam is working on advancing BiH's tourism workforce by reforming vocational school curricula, introducing international standards in higher education and expanding industry-based learning opportunities. Our experts are assisting BiH universities in obtaining UNWTO's prestigious TedQual certificate, the golden standard for global tourism education. USAID Turizam has also launched the Turizam Academy, BiH's first online platform for tourism education. The project is working on enhancing classification standards for hotels and rural households and food safety and hygiene standards in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

## **Policy, Strategy and Destination Competitiveness**

In partnership with ministries of tourism and other public and private sector stakeholders, USAID Turizam is working to develop strategies for tourism development and their implementation plans. Through strategic interventions and partnerships, USAID Turizam will support BiH in succeeding in the more competitive post COVID-19 international marketplace, where international destinations are vying for a smaller number of travelers through aggressive and creative promotional campaigns to fuel their recovery.

## **World Class Experiences**

USAID Turizam is guiding the tourism industry along a process of 'reinvention' by developing a clearer vision of the future and improving competitiveness across the value chain. The project supports efforts to design and promote world-class experiences and more immersive cultural itineraries to satisfy the needs and expectations of modern-day travelers. Flagship initiatives include the Herzegovina Wine Route, the Most Beautiful Villages of BiH and the World Rafting Championship 2022, aiming to transform the country's tourism products into interesting, exciting and highly sought-after experiential offerings that are culturally and environmentally sustainable.

## **Sustainability and Environmental Protection**

USAID Turizam is supporting the governments of BiH in increasing the percentage land area classified as protected to safeguard biodiversity and contribute to sustainable local livelihoods. Initiatives supported include: enhanced nature parks management; promotion of sustainable tourism practices and promotion of international standards and environmental best practices in hospitality and tourism operations.

## **Investment Facilitation & Finance**

USAID Turizam is fostering private sector engagement in managing publicly owned assets through public-private partnerships and concessions. Initiatives also include facilitating lending and equity finance for tourism micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and attracting foreign direct investment.



# BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA A MELTING POT OF CULTURES





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# AGENDA & SPEAKER PROFILES

THE POWER OF TOURISM TO  
FUEL ECONOMIC GROWTH

SARAJEVO BUSINESS FORUM

# THE POWER OF TOURISM TO FUEL ECONOMIC GROWTH FORUM



Implemented by USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia & Herzegovina (Turizam) and Sarajevo Business Forum

## This forum will explore:

- International trends shaping the future of global tourism
- Projected growth of the global tourism sector and forecast for Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina post COVID
- Ways to build industry resilience
- Sustainability and nature conservation as essentials in the new age of tourism
- Opportunities to invest in the accommodation sector
- The need for qualified workforce and opportunities for investing in human capital institutions to support local, regional and global tourism investments
- How to capitalize on the lucrative MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Congresses, and Events) sector and opportunities for capital investments to rise as a key business travel hub
- Aviation and the role of vibrant airports in destination growth
- Models for private sector management of publicly owned assets
- Religious and faith-sensitive tourism as a growth opportunity

## Our Experts

Session panelists bring global recognition as industry experts, notable speakers on the international circuit, business executives and advisors to destinations, companies and governments. They come from Bosnia and Herzegovina, United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Malaysia, Bahrain and Serbia.



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# THE POWER OF TOURISM TO FUEL ECONOMIC GROWTH

**Session Curator and Moderator:**

Ibrahim Osta, Chief of Party, USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**SPONSOR KEYNOTE**  
10:50 - 11:00

## IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - CASE STUDY: PORTO MONTENEGRO

David Margason, Managing Director of Porto Montenegro

 **SESSION 1**  
11:00 - 11:45

## MARKET TRENDS AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE FOCUSED ON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**Moderator:** Ibrahim Osta

**Panelists:**

- David Goodger - *Economic impacts, market growth trends and risks*
- Alan Elliott Merschen - *Brand and innovation*
- YB Dato' Seri Diraja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir - *Aviation private sector management of public assets*
- Anita Mendiratta - *The five facets of sustainability*

 **SESSION 2**  
11:50 - 12:30

## GROWTH AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**Moderator:** Ibrahim Osta

**Panelists:**

- Dr. Nicholas Joseph Ruddy - *Workforce & hospitality*
- Milos Milovanovic - *MICE*
- YBhg Dato Dr. Mohmed Razip Hasan - *Muslim-friendly travel*
- Jawad Yousuf Alhawaj - *Bosnia and Herzegovina as an attractive destination*

 **MEDIA  
STATEMENTS**  
12:30 - 12:40

**Karl Wurster**, Economic Development Office Director  
USAID/Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Azra Čolić**, Head of BBI VIP Business Club

SARAJEVO BUSINESS FORUM

# THE POWER OF TOURISM TO FUEL ECONOMIC GROWTH



## KARL WURSTER

**Economic Development  
Office Director**

USAID/Bosnia and  
Herzegovina

**USAID Representative &  
Media Statement**

Karl Wurster, a diplomat with USAID since 2008, is the Director of USAID/BiH's Economic Development Office where he oversees the strategic development and management of USAID's \$77m economic portfolio covering activities in the energy (Energy Policy Activity), private sector investment (Diaspora Invest), digitalization (E-Governance Activity), banking (FINRA), and tourism (Turizam Activity) sectors.

His fourteen year diplomatic career has spanned Europe, Africa, and Asia; living and working in Morocco, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bangladesh, and Nepal, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. With USAID, he has managed a variety of nature-based tourism development projects in Africa and Asia. He has also worked as the Digital Advisor with the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security at USAID headquarters.

Prior to USAID, Karl was a research fellow with the NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center and an environmental consultant for various international environment NGOs. Karl is a proud father of two teenage boys, a husband, an outdoor enthusiast, and avid traveler. He was raised in a small Minnesota farming town. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Montana State University and a Master's and PhD in Geography from the University of Maryland.



## **IBRAHIM OSTA**

### **Chief of Party**

USAID Developing  
Sustainable Tourism in  
Bosnia and Herzegovina

### **Tourism Forum Curator and Moderator**

Ibrahim Osta is an international tourism development expert based in Sarajevo with experiences in international trade and investment promotion, youth entrepreneurship and tourism development. He has managed international development projects exceeding \$140 million in scope with additional quarter billion dollars in leveraged funds from public, private and international institutions. Currently, he is chief of party of the USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Earlier he was based in Washington, D.C. as Senior Economic Growth Advisor and Middle East & North Africa Region Director for Chemonics International. Between 2005 and 2017, he served as Chief of party of the \$100 million USAID tourism development portfolio in Jordan which helped grow the tourism sector several billion dollars. He has led, advised and supported tourism development activities in various countries such as Nepal, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Timor Leste, Egypt, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Lebanon. Currently, he is member of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Panel of Experts and served earlier on the Governing Body of United Nations Foundation World Heritage Alliance, where he co-designed the People Protecting Places campaign adopted by UNESCO to conserve World Heritage sites.

With a background in finance and economics, Mr. Osta is a regular speaker in international tourism forums and co-led the UN International Year of Sustainable Tourism Global Forum with the World Bank, UNWTO and Government of Jamaica. He advises on tourism development and economic impact strategies, destination resilience and experience design. He supported formulation of Egypt's business reform agenda in 1999, the first of its kind since the Gamal Abdel Nasser socialist revolution, and led creation of Injaz a youth entrepreneurship organization modeled after the US-based Junior Achievement International, that has now reached over three million children in over 12 Arab countries. In his early career, he was Executive Director of the US-based American Arab Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Osta holds a degree in Finance and Economics from the University of Michigan, A Masters of Tourism Administration from George Washington University and Postgraduate Diploma in International Business Law from the University of London.



## ANITA MENDIRATTA

### Founder and President

Anita Mendiratta & Associates

A trusted and respected global strategic advisor, diplomat, author and on-air personality in Tourism, Aviation & Development, Anita Mendiratta is the Founder and President of ANITA MENDIRATTA & ASSOCIATES – a successful, London-based consulting firm working closely with global leaders in governments, businesses, and international organisations across the essential sectors of Tourism, Aviation and Development.

Originally from Canada and with international professional foundations with IBM, Unilever and The Coca-Cola Company, Anita now has over two decades of professional experience across almost all continents, with extensive engagement across the Middle East, Africa and Asia. This direct, global experience has created an innate ability to feel the ‘heartbeat’ of societies, including understanding economic, social, political, and environmental dynamics. Importantly, since 2020 Anita has taken on a critical global role as an immensely valued advisor of government and business leaders seeking to understand the impact of COVID-19, guiding them through short, medium and long-term decision-making to re-build the strength and sustainability from not just an economic perspective, but from a humanitarian perspective. Anita is also honoured to be:

- SPECIAL ADVISOR to the Secretary General of the UNWTO
- STRATEGIC ADVISOR TO CNN INTERNATIONAL in Tourism & Development as lead t of CNN T.A.S.K.
- ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER – Royal Commission for AIUIa
- STRATEGIC RESOURCE TO THE UN in Tourism, Aviation and Development incl. WORLD BANK and ILO, as well as WTTC, IATA and ATAG
- Anita’s impact has resulted in her securing a respected position of pride and value within the global leadership community including being recognised within the industry as:
  - ‘Most Influential Woman in Tourism’ in 2019, and
  - ‘Top 25 Inspirational Executives in Travel/Hospitality’ in 2021.



## ALAN ELLIOTT MERSCHEN

Partner MMGY Global

During his time as an educator at several universities, Merschen started consulting projects for a variety of industries. This is when he discovered it was travel that captivated his real interest. Merschen created Myriad, a full-service marketing company specializing exclusively in the international travel industry with private clients and governments on five continents. For over 30 years, Merschen developed strategic solutions to client challenges, creating industry partnerships, research projects and global solutions. In 2016 Myriad became part of MMGY Global portfolio of companies. As a partner at MMGY, his focus is on the development of International Insights. He also serves as Chairperson of the MMGY international marketing agency consortium.

In 2020 Merschen created the Sigmund Project. A digital not-for-profit dedicated to travel and tourism innovation through collaboration.

Merschen also serves on several non-profit, as well as start-up advisory boards. Always the educator, he still conducts marketing presentations throughout the world.



## AZRA ČOLIĆ

Head of BBI VIP Business Club

- Expert in commercial banking with over 25 years experience. Performed different positions in banks – from credit analyst, executive director and CEO – general manager
- Establishing the development bank structure and organizational unit for corporate banking
- Banking product development
- Reorganization and restructuring of private commercial bank after provisional administration
- Experienced in building and maintaining relationship with corporate clients
- Conception, promotion and implementation of specific financing lines
- Business networking development within BBI VIP Business Club whose members are successful local and international companies
- Participation and organization of international investment conferences (Sarajevo Business Forum 2013-2022) and international halal fairs (Sarajevo Halal Fair)

Education – Economic Faculty, University of Sarajevo



David has been instrumental in developing Oxford Economics' tourism forecast models and continues to manage regular database updates. These areas include the global tourism database of tourism flows and spending, covering 185 countries; the global city travel database of 300 cities; the air passenger forecast database; the hotel performance forecast models developed in conjunction with STR; and custom forecast models for specific destinations or groups.

David has led Tourism Economics' analysis of the importance of online interactions for evolving tourism behavior for a range of well-known online travel businesses. He regularly presents the economic and tourism outlook to client groups and conferences.

## DAVID GOODGER

### Managing Director

Tourism Economics EMEA,  
Oxford Economics



David is a property development and investment professional with over 30 years' experience, his portfolio of projects has focused significantly on international leisure, hospitality and mixed-use waterfront investments. His previous experience includes Development Director for the Majid Al Futtaim Group focusing on acquisitions and developments within the Middle East and North Africa, Head of a Middle Eastern Family Office and Development Director for Lendlease Corporation in The United Kingdom.

## DAVID MARGASON

Managing Director of  
Porto Montenegro





## JAWAD YOUSUF ALHAWAJ

### Chairman

Bahrain Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Friendship and Business Society

The President & Chairman of Al Hawaj Group of companies. Established the Al Hawaj groups as the prime player in the field of luxury retail in the Kingdom of Bahrain apart the strong business interests in hospitality and electronics sector.

Mr. Jawad studied Economics and Political science at the Beirut Arab University in Lebanon and started his career in the early 1960's as a co-Founder of the business house AL HAWAJ with his late father. This company was starting point to many family business and investments in retail, trade, education, electronic established by other members of Alhawaj family.

Visionary, Philanthropist and true statesman, Mr. Jawad holds key positions in various government and non- government organizations.

Mr Alhawaj is an elected member of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry since 1997- 2018 as Board Member and Second Deputy Chairman. Founder and Chairman of Commercial Sector and Traditional Markets Committee at the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI).

### Awards and recognitions

Receipt of special award from Kingdom of Bahrain's Ministry of Labor for his outstanding contribution to the Bahrain Economy and his valuable contribution to the private sector the Ministry of Labor's 31st Annual Honoring Ceremony for Excellence in Private & Public sectors held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Recipient of "Chevalier - Ordre national de la Legion d'honneur" (National Order of The Legion of Honor) award which is the highest French honor for civil merits from French Government.

Awarded First Class National Order of Action by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Founding member and Chairman of Bahrain - Bosnia and Herzegovina Friendship and Business Society. Due to Mr Alhawaj efforts and dedication relations between Bahrain and Bosnia and Herzegovina develop in various fields. His influence was crowned in 2021 with opening of direct flight of Gulf Air from Bahrain to Sarajevo, which resulted with significant increase of number of tourist and visitors from this small but friendly country.



## MILOŠ MILOVANOVIĆ

### GainingEdge, Consultant

Head of the GainingEdge  
Analysis & Research

Milos Milovanovic is international consultant, with deep expertise in the activation and development of convention bureaus as well as destination marketing in Europe and Middle East regions. He has over 15 years of experience in the meetings & conventions industry and has consulted many destinations around the world. In GainingEdge, Milos is responsible for the development of research & analysis projects as Head of the GainingEdge Analysis & Research (GEAR) Department.

Milos is author of the Destination Competitive Index, a global benchmarking tool for international convention destinations, published annually since 2018. He is also author of the Leveraging Intellectual Capital global report, aimed at identifying the relative strengths of destinations in terms of the presence of their local association executives who are leaders in the governing bodies of international associations.

Milos has a diploma in Economics from the University in Belgrade and Master's degree from Ecole Centrale Paris. In his previous career as a marketing and project management specialist he worked with universities, business associations, international donors and AID agencies creating a number of educational and training programs.



## YBHG DATO DR. MOHMED RAZIP HASAN

### Director-General

Islamic Tourism Centre,  
Ministry of Tourism, Arts and  
Culture Malaysia

A leader in Malaysia's tourism industry for decades, YBhg Dato Dr. Mohmed Razip Hasan is director-general of the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC), a body under Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture that is developing Islamic tourism as one of the country's key sustainable economic drivers. YBhg Dato Dr. Mohmed Razip began his career in the public sector with the State of Selangor in 1980, before joining Tourist Development Corporation Malaysia (now Tourism Malaysia), which he served in overseas postings in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and London, UK.

Upon returning to Malaysia Dato' Dr. Mohmed Razip led Tourism Malaysia's communications, advertising and international promotions for America, Europe and Oceania, before becoming deputy director-general in 2018. YBhg Dato Dr. Mohmed Razip joined ITC in February 2020.

He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Tourism Management from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and Master in Business Administration (MBA) from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

Currently, he is also serving as an Adjunct Professor at Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management of Universiti Teknologi MARA and active member of Chartered Institute of Logistic and Transport (CILT), Malaysia Institute of Management (MIM) and Institute of Corporate Directors of Malaysia (ICDM).



## **NICHOLAS JOSEPH RUDDY**

**Quality Assurance and Human  
Capital Development Expert**

Senior manager and international development specialist in human capital development, education and training development, academic quality assurance and industry development with more than 30 years' experience in international development.

Graduated with a Doctorate (Ph.D) in Management Development and Career Planning from University of Salford, UK; a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Science, (Hons) in Management from University of Dublin - Trinity College, and a Graduate Diploma in Advanced Marketing, Dublin College of Marketing (Technical University Dublin). Holds numerous other qualifications in tourism, hospitality and education, including a Diploma in Management, Shannon College of Management, Ireland; and a Certificate in Higher Education (Cert Ed), University of Leeds, UK. Recently served as Team Leader, Job Creation, Decision Support and Destination Excellence for the USAID funded Building Economic Sustainability Through Tourism Project, Jordan.

Parallel and prior to entering direct international development he spent over 25 years in education development and management at both technical and university levels. He has implemented management projects in Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa for donors including USAID, World Bank and European Union. Extensive experience in the private sector industry both working and owning businesses. Industry work experience in Switzerland, UK, Ireland and USA.

Written and presented approximately 140 research studies with a focus on education, training, and human capital development.



## **YB DATO' SERI DIRAJA DR ZAMBRY ABD KADIR**

**Chairman** of Malaysia Airports  
Holdings Berhad

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Appointed as the Non-Independent Non-Executive Chairman of MAHB on 12 August 2020. Dato' Seri Diraja Dr Zambry possesses a wide and varied working experience which among others include serving as Adjunct Professor at University Sultan Azlan Shah (USAS), Professor in Practice at Putra Business School, University Putra Malaysia (UPM),

Adjunct Professor at the Department of Political Science, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), CEO of Mind Institute, as well as CEO of Centre for Leadership and Development Studies. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Master's degrees from Temple University, USA, as well as Master's degree and Bachelor of Economic (Hons) degree from IIUM. He has also attended the prestigious Harvard Leadership Program at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.





**BOSNIA AND  
HERZEGOVINA  
BREATHTAKING  
ADVENTURES  
ON RIVERS AND  
MOUNTAINS**



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