



Co-financed by:

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Climate Action, Environment,
Energy, Mobility,
Innovation and Technology

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Agriculture, Forestry, Regions
and Water Management

LIFE RESTORE for MDD

Preparing FAIRway2 works in the Rhine Danube
Corridor

Stakeholder Forum

31.01.2024

5-Country Biosphere Reserve approved by UNESCO on 15.9.2021



© Goran Safarek

What makes the Biosphere Reserve unique?

- Central Europe's longest near-natural river landscape without dams
- Europe's largest coherent river protected area
- World's first biosphere reserve established by five countries (1000 000 hectares, 700 km)
- Flagship initiative for joint understanding and regional cooperation on a green vision

The Project



- Acronym: LIFE-2022-SAP-NAT
- EU LIFE project “LIFE RESTORE for MDD”
- Full title: *Preserving and restoring floodplain forest habitats along the Mura-Drava-Danube rivers*
- Duration: 5 years (Oct 23 – Sept 28)
- Total budget: € 20,024,000.-
- EU-funding: 67%
- Habitat types: HT 91E0* and HT 91F0



Project consortium



LIFE Project Team



Co-financed by:

- Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology
- Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management



Project is embedded in ...



LIVE

European Parliament plenary debate

Nature restoration

| Tuesday, 11 July, 9.00 CEST



Project goals



7 General Project Objectives:

- **Restoration of natural hydro-morphodynamic processes** for sediment mobilization and pioneer habitat creation
- **Improvement of lateral connectivity and water level dynamics** between river and floodplains
- **Restoration and preservation of floodplain forest structures** and functions
- Improvement of key habitat structures in floodplain forests
- **Ensuring sustainability, replication and utilization of the project results** by establishing an intersectoral and transboundary large-scale restoration plan
- **Increasing awareness and knowledge** of importance of Natura 2000 sites
- **Monitoring** of project impacts



Our project in numbers



52 / 100

Tasks / Subtasks

From project management to restoration works and their communication



37

Milestones

From restoration works to monitoring

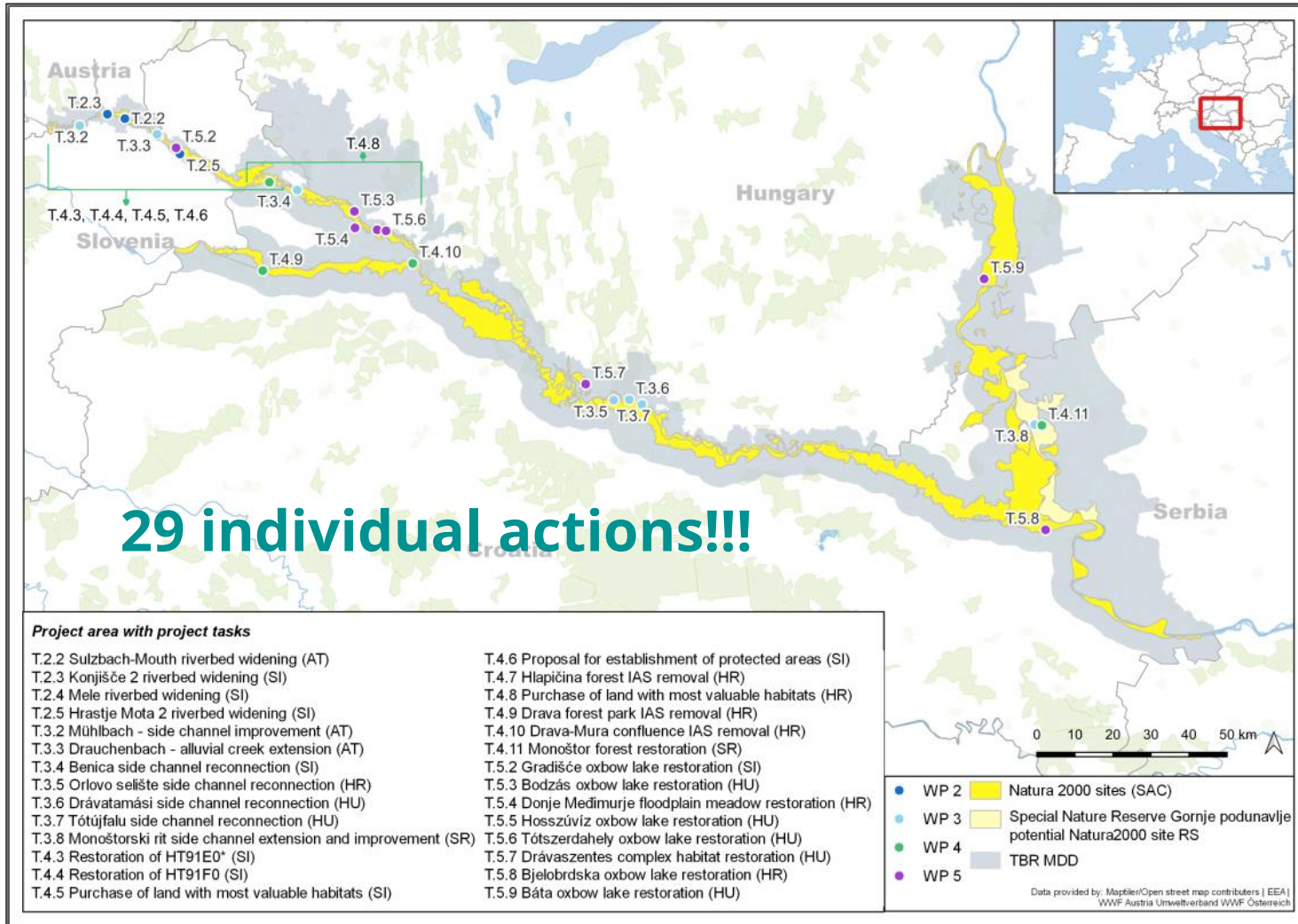


80

Deliverables

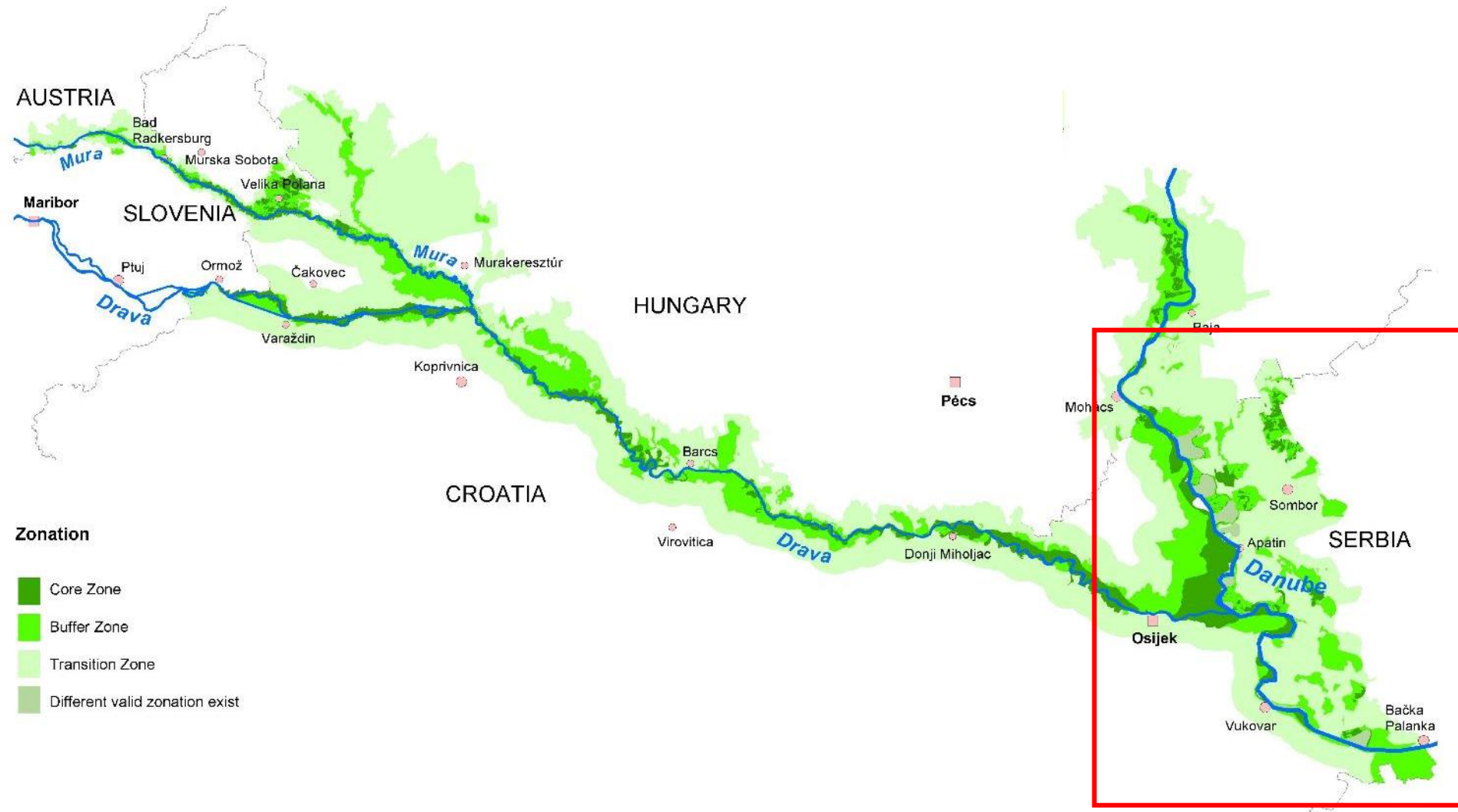
From Action Plans to guidelines and communication materials

The Project Area

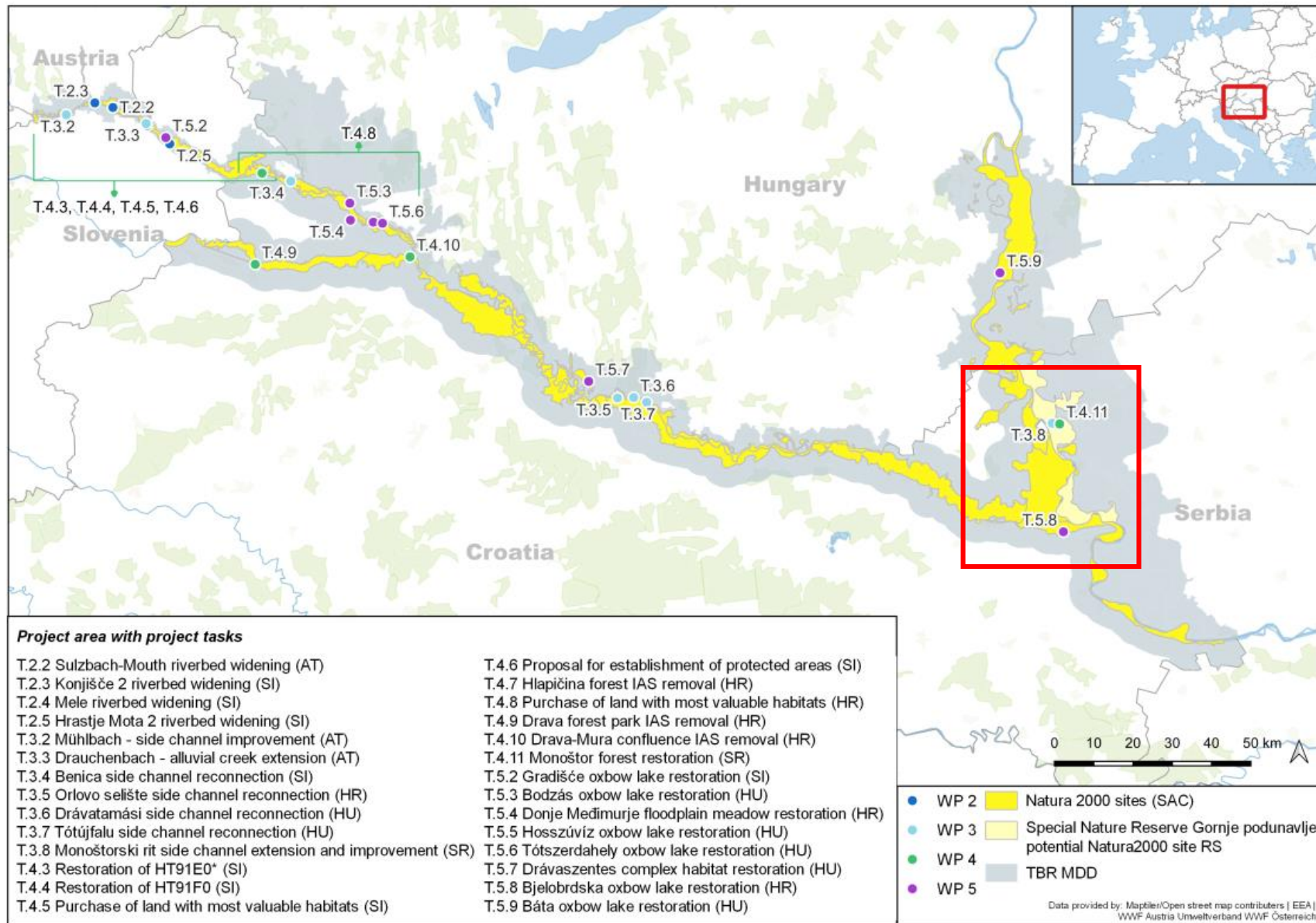


- **Restoration** of river morphology for natural forest regeneration - *4 sites*
- **Reconnection** of tributaries to the river and restoration of oxbow lakes - *14 sites*
- **Conservation**, improvement or afforestation of natural forests - *11 sites*
- Integrative **cross-border river restoration planning** - *3 river sections*

Croatian-Serbian Danube - key area of the 5-country Biosphere Reserve



Project sites in the Fairway 2 project area

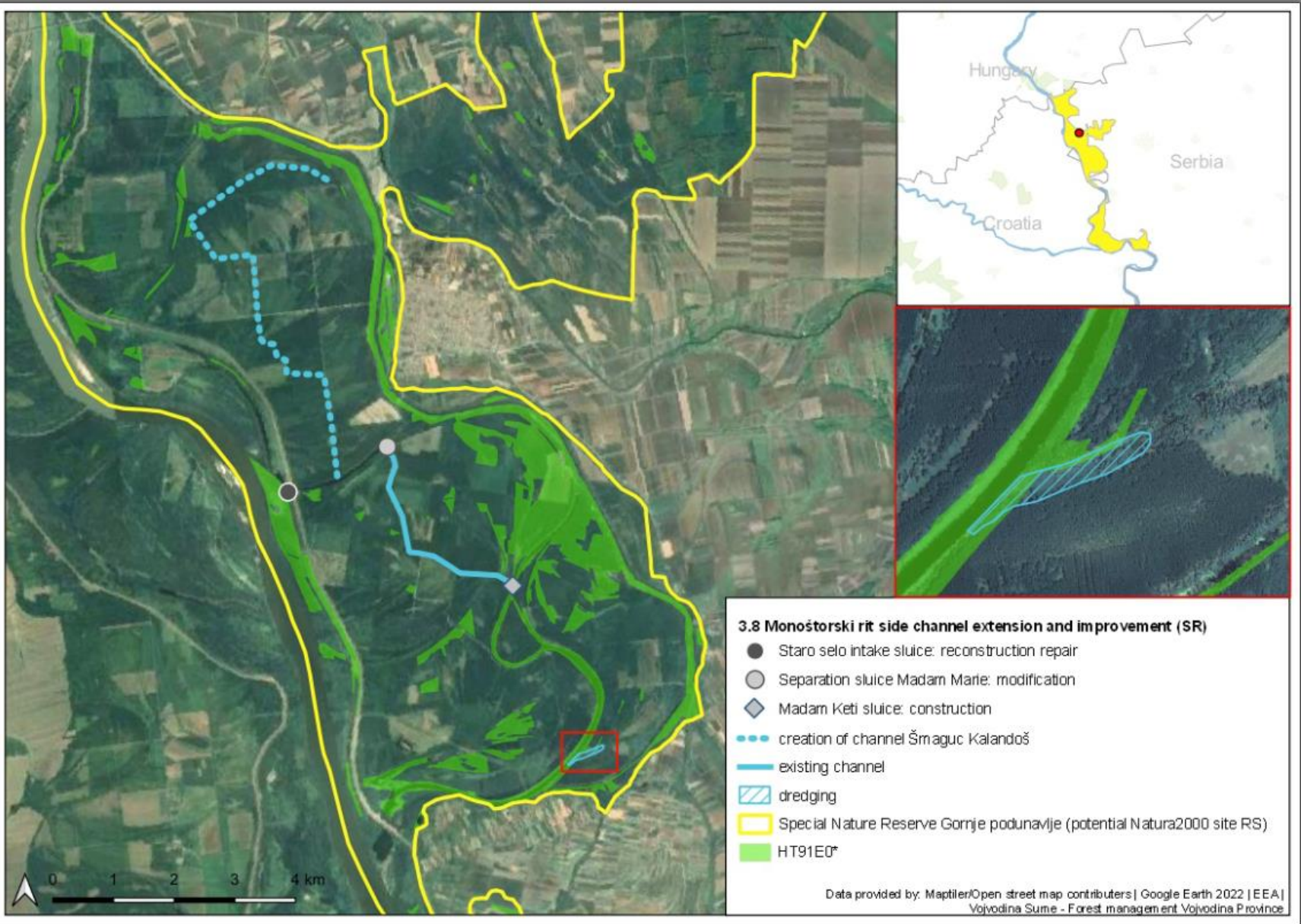


T.3.8 Monoštorski rit side channel extension and improvement (RS)



- **Responsible BEN:** Vojvodinasume (VSUME)
- **Timing:** 01.2024 – 07.2027
- **Location:** Danube river near the village of Bezdan (RS)
- **Problem:** In the 1960s the site has been cut off from the Danube natural water regime by a flood protection dyke → hydrological alterations → serious ***habitat alterations and drying of valuable marshes and of floodplain forests***
- **Goal:** ***Improving the hydrological conditions*** of the floodplain forests and marshes through improvement of the connection of the area with the Danube water regime
- **Planned procedure:** Improving 1 existing sluice and building a new one, building an 8.6 km long channel, and improving hydrological conditions on the 3.7 km existing channel, as well as restoring an oxbow
- **Planning and obtaining permits:**
 - Planning of the restoration of the area is almost 20 years old → review process of the old plan and, potentially, a new planning will be conducted
 - Necessary permits (water and nature) will be obtained with this documentation.
- **Expected effects:**
 - Improvement of about 7 ha of water body in the floodplain forest.
 - Improvement of the hydrological conditions in an area of 950 ha for target habitats HT 91E0* and HT 90F0 as well as important wetland habitats.

T.3.8 Monoštorski rit side channel extension and improvement (RS)



T.4.11 Monoštor forest restoration (RS)



- **Responsible BEN:** Vojvodinasume (VSUME)
- **Timing:** 04.2024-04.2026
- **Location:** Danube river near the village of Bezdan (RS)
- **Problem:** In the past, *intensive forestry* has transformed large parts of natural floodplain forest tree compositions into Euro-American poplar plantation → decrease of the ecological value and biodiversity in this area
- **Goal:** Convert poplar plantations into the floodplain forest HT 91F0 in an area of 26.5 ha
- **Planned procedure:** Using seedlings from the autochthonous common oak *Quercus robur* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* from two tree nurseries

T.4.11 Monoštor forest restoration (RS)

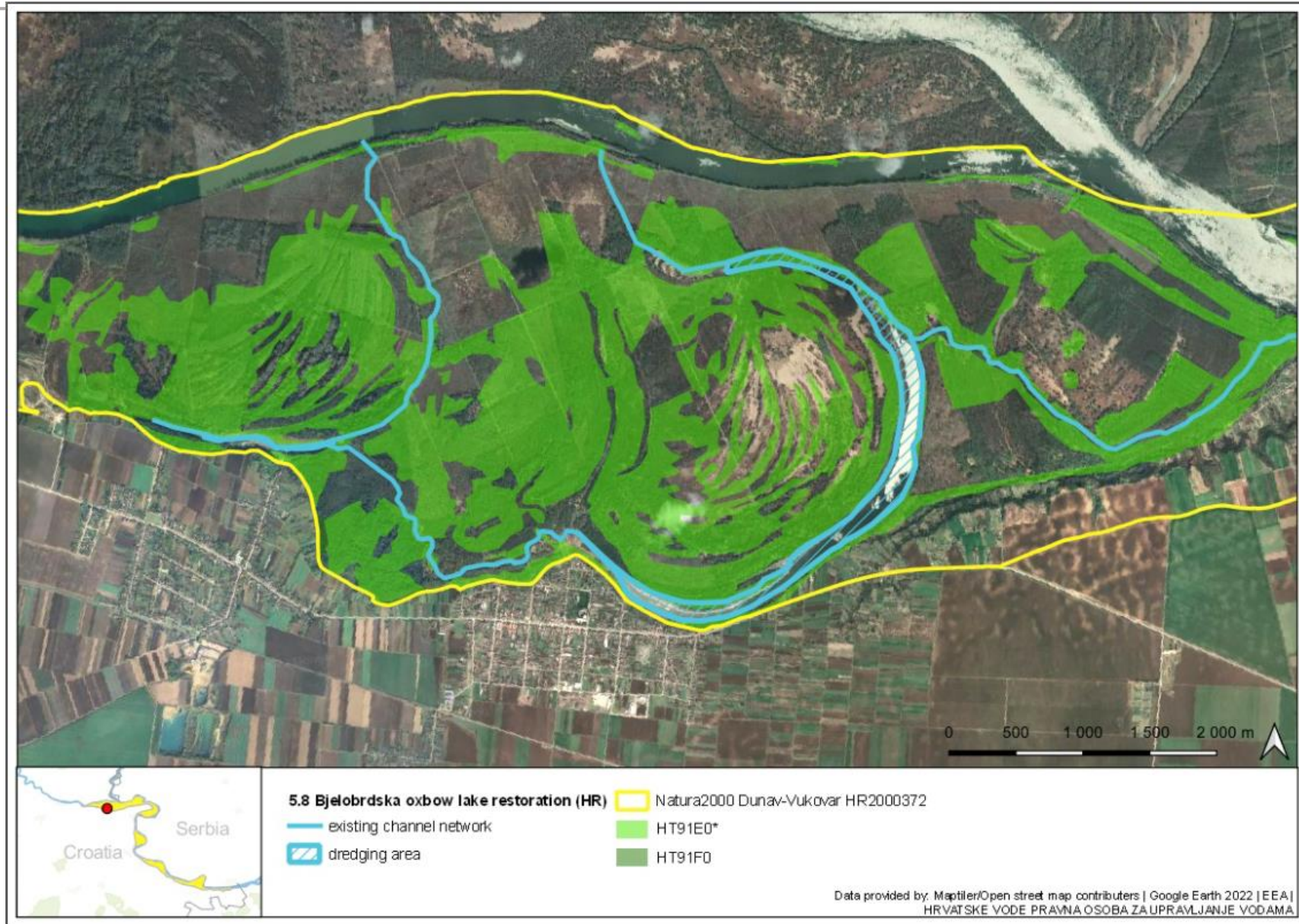


T.5.8 Bjelobrdska oxbow lake restoration (HR)



- **Responsible BENs:** HV (Hrvatske vode), FAZOS (Fakultet agrobiotehničkih znanosti Osijek), GO (Zeleni Osijek)
- **Timing:** 10.2023-06.2028
- **Location:** Along the Drava River, in the Aljmaški rit floodplain, which is situated between the villages of Nemetin and Aljmaš (HR) close to the Danube and the Nature Park Kopački Rit
- **Problem:** The **oxbow lake is continuously drying out** due to siltation and falling groundwater tables. It only receives water from the Drava River during floods.
- **Goal:** Restoring the water body on 65 ha
- **Planned procedure:** Dredging the oxbow along approx. 5,5 km
- **Planning and obtaining permits:**
 - Nature conservation permit has been issued in line with the Ecological Network of the Republic of Croatia, the predecessor of NATURA 2000. Water and forests authorities permits were also granted.
- **Expected effects:**
 - **Improved hydrological conditions** of the adjacent floodplain forest as well as habitat structure for several typical floodplain forest species (including Natura 2000 species) like amphibians, birds, beetles.
 - **Improved microclimate** of the site through higher evaporation due to new and enlarged water surface.
 - Improvement of an area of 193 ha for HT 91E0* and HT 91F0

T.5.8 Bjelobrdska oxbow lake restoration (HR)



Mura-Drava-Danube Natura 2000 Habitat Map (AT, SI, HR, HU, RS)



- A Base GIS Map will be developed for the Natura 2000 sites along the Mura, Drava and Danube in Austria (AT), Slovenia (SI), Croatia (HR) and Hungary (HU) as well as for protected areas (future Natura 2000 sites) in Serbia (RS)
- Total length of 651 km and overall area of about 2072 km²
- **Steps:**
 - Compilation of existing GIS Data from different areas of expertise into a GIS data pool
 - Demarcation and interpretation of habitat types
 - Creation of an overview and base map as ArcGIS Pro project in a geodatabase and in pdf format

Pilot River Restoration Action Plans



- Will build up capacity and mobilize support, trust and commitment amongst key stakeholders for the implementation of transboundary coordinated restoration measures
 - **Pilot section 1:** Pilot River Restoration Action Plan Section MURA SI-HR-HU– Gibina-Dekanovec; + Murarátka–Tótszerdahely (RKM 40-25) length: ~32 km+15 km= ~ 47 km, 3 countries
 - **Pilot section 2:** Pilot River Restoration Action Plan Section DRAVA HR-HU – Barcs-Noskovacka Dubrava; length: ~37 km
 - **Pilot section 3:** Pilot River Restoration Action Plan Section DRAVA HR – Osijek-river mouth; length: ~21 km

The joint mission of the TBR MDD is the **conservation, restoration and wise use of the Mura, Drava and Danube Rivers** and its ecosystems within the world's first five-country UNESCO Transboundary Biosphere Reserve.

Joint Mission | Nomination Form 2020

- **Status of (preparatory) works:** Start in 2024
- **Involvement of Transport Sector:** No stakeholder forums within LIFE project are planned on the Danube; the local project partners are well networked regionally and involve stakeholders in their active work
- **Possible implication on main (navigation) Danube:** no implications, as the project tasks do not affect the Danube in terms of navigation
- **What can/shall be considered an input from LIFE project into e.g. modelling in Preparing FAIRway 2:** nature conservation areas/the core zone of the TBR MDD shall be considered



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Further Questions?