The bigger picture:
the 5-country Biosphere Reserve
Mura-Drava-Danube

Arno Mohl, WWF Austria

November 24, 2021

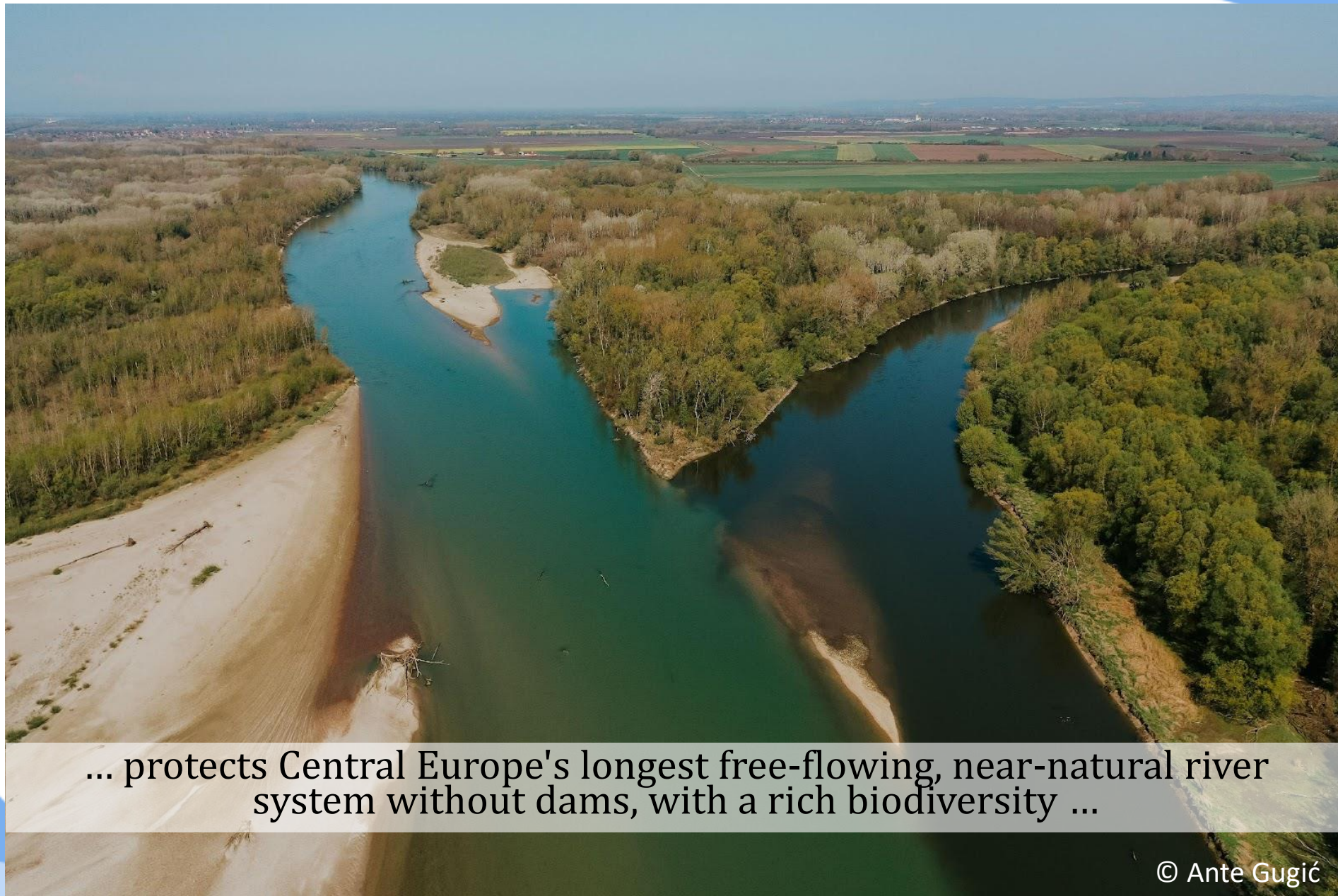In September 2021, 30 years after the Vision was born, the Mura-Drava-Danube region became …
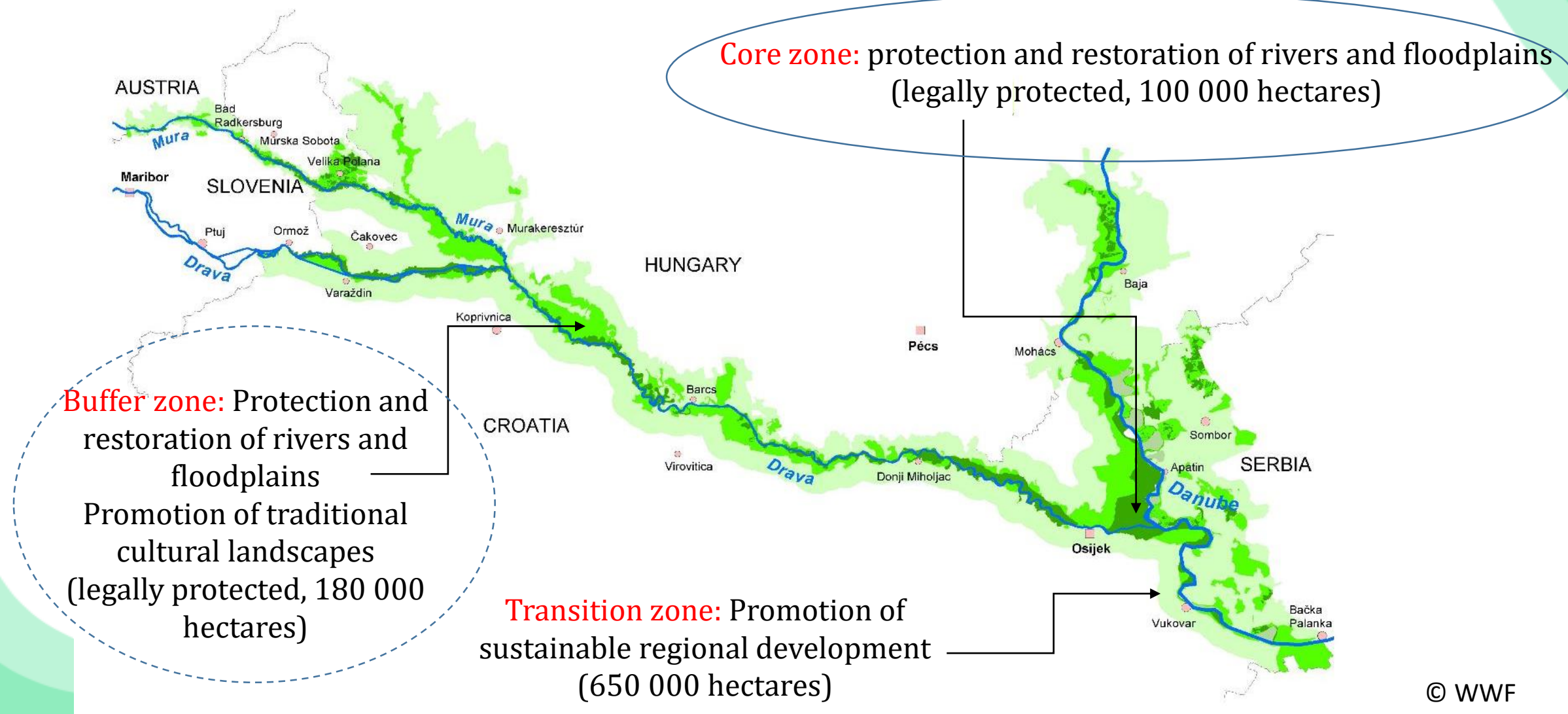
… the world´s first UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve,

© Mario Romulic
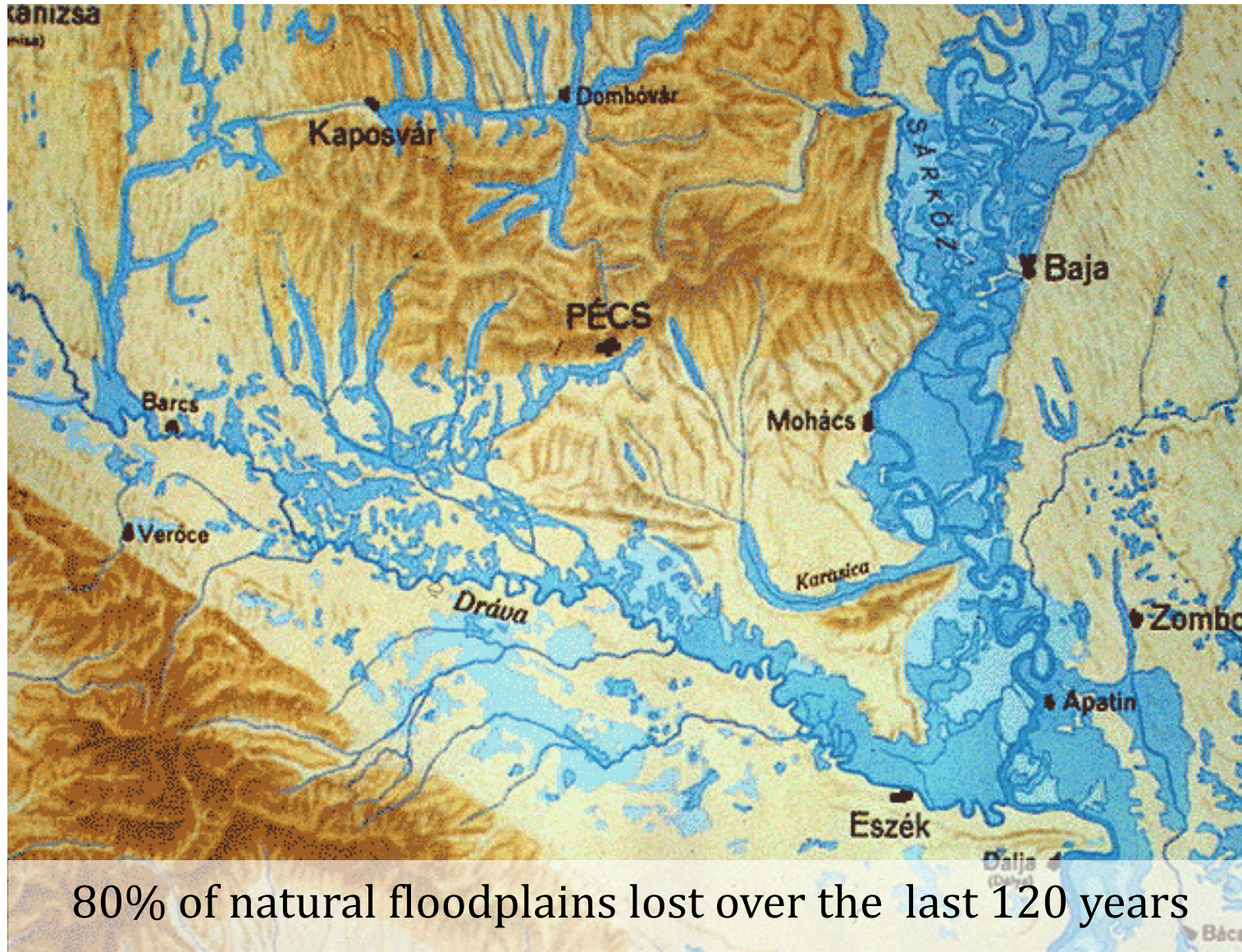
Europe´s largest single river protected area, which ...

© Goran Safarek

... protects Central Europe's longest free-flowing, near-natural river system without dams, with a rich biodiversity ...

© Ante Gugić

.. and forms a flagship people-nature uniting cross border project.

5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube

Core zone: protection and restoration of rivers and floodplains
(legally protected, 100 000 hectares)

Buffer zone: Protection and restoration of rivers and floodplains
Promotion of traditional cultural landscapes
(legally protected, 180 000 hectares)

Transition zone: Promotion of sustainable regional development
(650 000 hectares)

© WWF

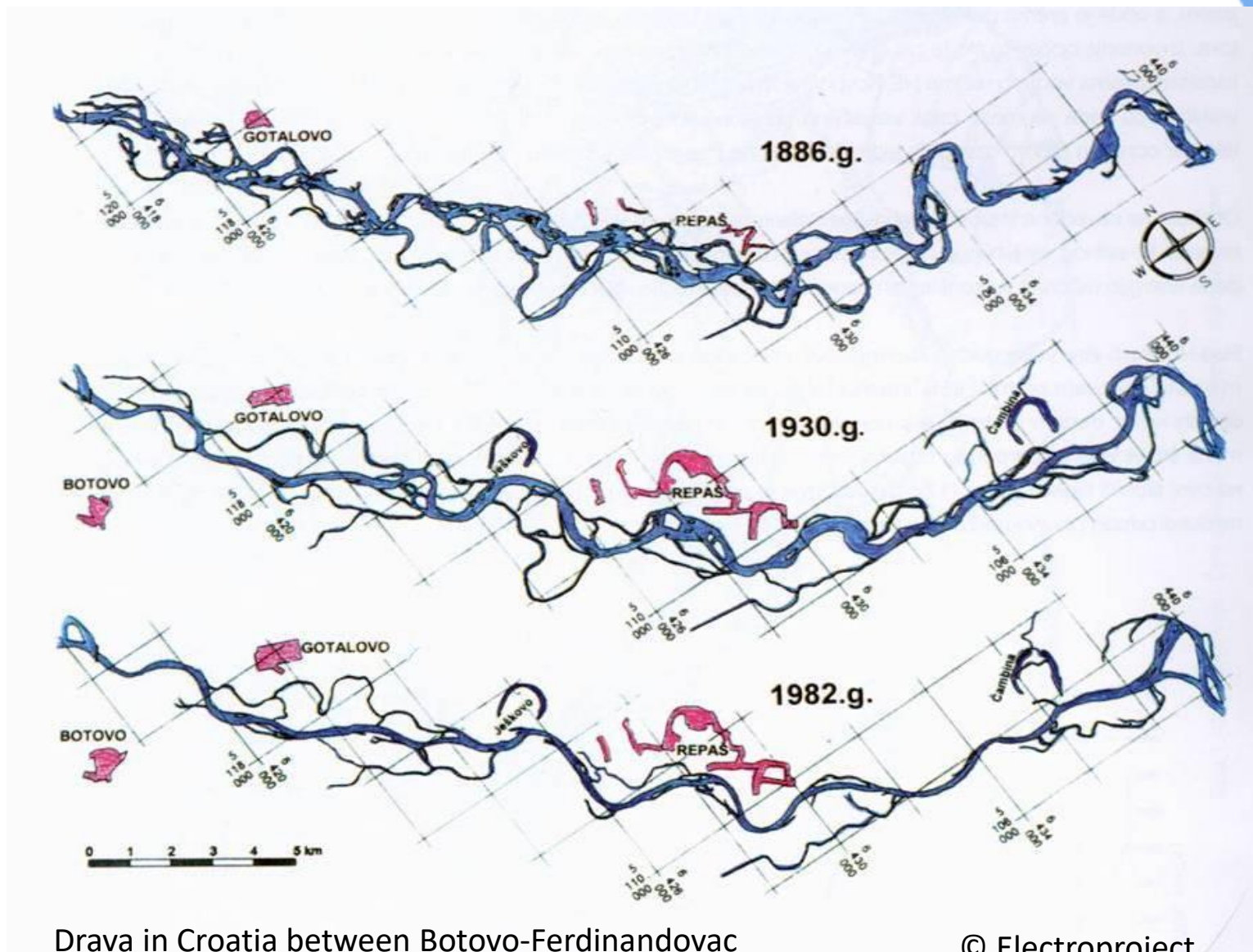80% of natural floodplains lost over the last 120 years

Reduction of natural river dynamics

Length: - 25%
Width: - 75%
Gravel banks: - 90%
Steep banks: - 80%

Drava in Croatia between Botovo-Ferdinandovac

© Electroproject

Long-term Goal (TBR nomination form 2020)

1. Ecological Conservation and ecosystem services:

In the TBR MDD area, the natural processes of a dynamic river and the associated floodplains are preserved and/or restored, as well as the natural hydrological and natural hydro-morphological regime and the corridor function of rivers. The ecological connectivity will be improved and maintained. As a result, there will be a positive influence on the conservation of key species and habitats on a long-term scale.
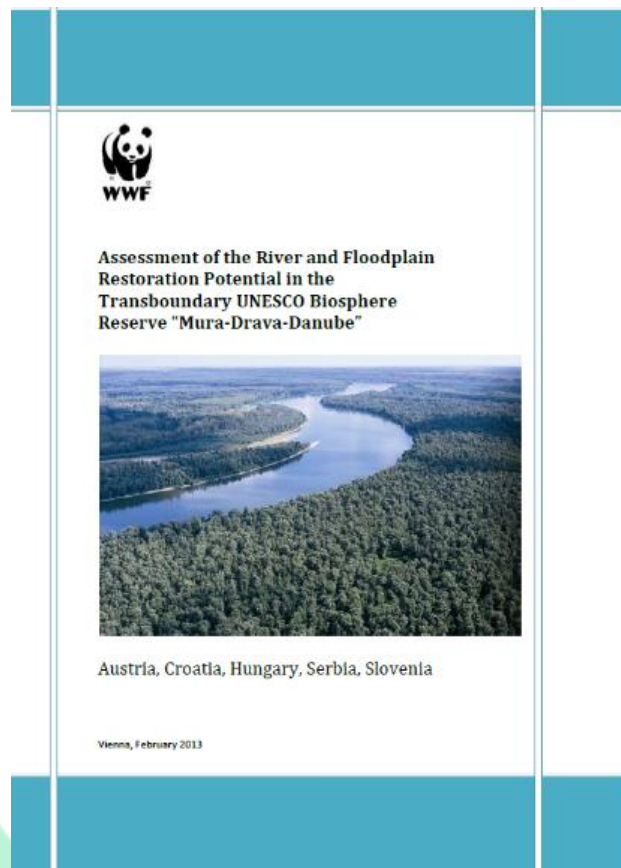

TRANSBOUNDARY NOMINATION FORM

5-COUNTRY BIOSPHERE RESERVE
MURA-DRAVA-DANUBE
(TBR MDD)

Austria | Croatia | Hungary | Serbia | Slovenia

Huge opportunities for river and floodplain restoration

Assessment of the River and Floodplain Restoration Potential in the Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube"

Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Slovenia

Vienna, February 2013

Assessment of the Restoration Potential in the TBR MDD

Prioritisation of Restoration Potential of Floodplains

- 650 km new natural river banks
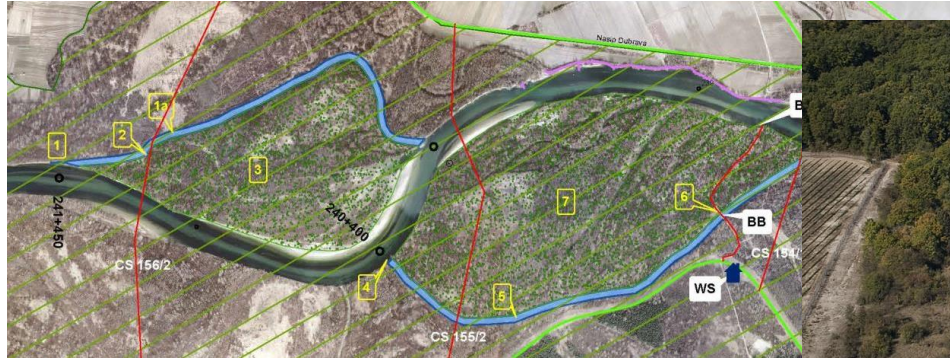- 120 reconnected side arms
- 165,000 ha new floodplains

© WWF, Fluvius 2013

Realizing the potential through cooperation

Stakeholder cooperation in river restoration projects

© Hans Pfeiler, WWF, Croatian Waters

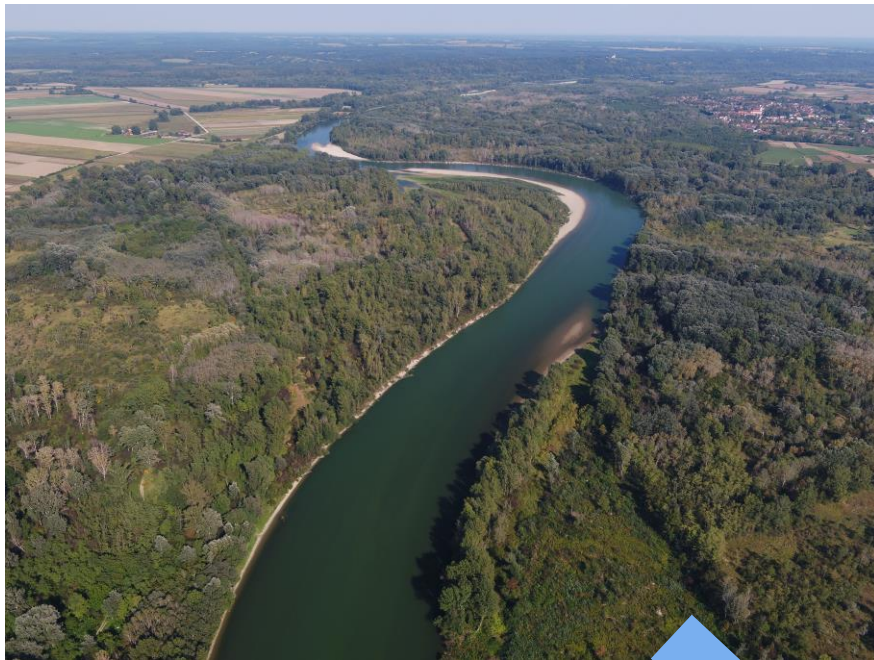# Planned cooperation on TBR level (TBR nomination form 2020)

© Arno Mohl

From single site specific projects to corridor restoration

Today

Tomorrow

© WWF, Google Earth

Transboundary river restoration masterplan for MDD

© G. Safarek, WWF

Transboundary river restoration masterplan for MDD

© G. Safarek, WWF

Transboundary river restoration masterplan for MDD

© A. Mohl, WWF

Living organisms in man-made landscapes

Po (Italy)

Vistula (Poland)

Loire (France)

© Landsat

All benefit

© G. Safarek, A. Mohl, D. Grlica, Halasz, Shutterstock

Loire-Allier (France)

"The straighter the river, the faster it becomes, and the more it erodes and destroys the dyke and the river bottom, therefore it is necessary either to widen such rivers greatly, or to send them through many turns, or to divide them into many branches"
Leonardo da Vinci (1452 - 1519)

Thank you!