



Interreg



Danube Transnational Programme lifelineMDD

Roadmap for proactive cooperation of stakeholders in the TBR MDD

Published in the scope of lifelineMDD WP T4 -
Stakeholder platforms for sustainable cooperation

Output T4.1 Report on options for stakeholder
platforms for TBR MDD

WP T4 Leader – Zavod RS za varstvo narave, Institute of
the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation

IMPRESSUM

Editors

Monika Podgorelec, Tadej Törnär, Katja Berden, Anja Cigan | Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation (IRSNC) – Tobačna ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana

Kerstin Böck, Emöke Györfi | WWF Austria – Ottakringer Straße 114-116, 1160 Wien

Authors

Neža Cerar, Urška Dolinar | ISKRIVA. Institute for Development of Local Potentials – Reteče 215, 4220 Škofja Loka, Slovenia

Lisa Wolf, Daniel Zollner, Ines Schäfer | E.C.O. Institute of Ecology – Lakesidepark B07, 2.OG, 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria

Lifeline MDD Project Manager

Kerstin Böck, WWF Austria

Date

Final Version: 14.10.2022

Recommendation for Quotation:

Dolinar, U., Cerar, N., Wolf, L., Zollner, D., Schäfer, I., Podgorelec, M., Berden, K., Böck, K. & E. Györfi (2022): Roadmap for proactive cooperation of stakeholders in the TBR MDD (Report developed in the frame of the project DTP3-308-2.3). IRSNC and WWF AT, Ljubljana | Vienna.

List of abbreviations

AoE	Amazon of Europe
BCBR	Czech-Polish Biosphere Reserve Bilateral Board
BR	Biosphere Reserve
BRIM	Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring
CB	Coordination Board
CE RAINMAN	Central Europe Integrated heavy rain risk management cooperation
CWP	Common Work Plan
CWSS	Common Wadden Sea Secretariat
D2C	DaRe to Connect - Supporting Danube Region's ecological Connectivity by linking Natura 2000 areas along the Green Belt
DDBR	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve
DDBRA	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority
DK	Denmark
DRA-MUR-CI	Drava-Mura-Crossborder Water Management Initiative
DTP	Danube Transnational Programme
ECOWET	Efficient Coupling of Water and Energy Technologies for Smart Sustainable Cities
EPC	Energy Performance Contracting
FoA	Field of activity
GE-RM	Gewässerentwicklungs- und Risikomanagementkonzept
goMURra	Grenzüberschreitender Managementplan zur innovativen, nachhaltigen Bewirtschaftung der Grenz-Mur und zur Verbesserung des Hochwasserrisikomanagements
INCVP	Institute for Nature Conservation of Voivodina Province
ISG	International Support Group
IRSNC	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MAB	Man and the Biosphere
MAB-ICC	Man and the Biosphere International Co-ordinating Council
MAP	Madrid Action Plan
MDD	Mura-Drava-Danube
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Park
PaNaNet	Pannonian Nature Network
PE	Public Enterprise
SenS Wetlands	Active Sensor monitoring Network and environmental evaluation for protection and wise use of WETLANDS and other surface waters
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SKUPAJ	Gemeinsame urbane und naturräumliche Entwicklung an den Murofern in Gornja Radgona und Bad Radkersburg
SNR	Special Nature Reserve
SPARE	Strategic Planning for Alpine River Ecosystems
TBC	Transboundary Cooperation
TBR	Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
TBR MDD	5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube
TMAP	Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme
TWSC	Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VISITUS	Enriching tourism offer for persons with visual impairment and blindness

WILDCOND	Wildlife health and conservation of selected NATURA 2000 species within the Danube Cross-Border region in Serbia and Croatia
WISEDRAVA	Wise Water Management for the Conservation of Riverine and Floodplain Habitats along the Drava River
WNBR	World Network of Biosphere Reserves
WP	Work package
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Table of Content

I.	Introduction.....	6
II.	Cooperation Framework.....	8
	A. The Aim of an UNESCO Biosphere Reserves.....	8
	B. General Goals of the TBR MDD	10
	C. The Framework of Stakeholder Involvement within the TBR MDD	13
III.	Cooperation Types.....	16
	A. Good-practice Examples of Transboundary Cooperations	16
	B. Challenges for Transboundary Cooperation – <i>Lesson Learned</i>	18
	C. Basic Success Factors.....	19
	D. Options for TBR Multi-Stakeholder Platforms.....	21
IV.	Methodical Approach behind the Roadmap	23
	A. Literature Analysis.....	23
	B. Workshops.....	23
	C. Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis	25
	D. Questionnaire.....	28
	E. Consultations with Municipalities in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura, Slovenia	29
V.	Results of the TBR MDD Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis	30
	A. TBR MDD Stakeholder Analysis	30
	B. Results of the Interactive Workshops	34
	C. Results of the Questionnaire.....	38
	D. Proposals from consultations with municipalities in the Biosphere Reserve Mura, Slovenia.....	39
VI.	Practical Roadmap for proactive Cooperation of Stakeholders in the TBR MDD	41
	A. Roadmap for Stakeholder Engagement within the TBR MDD	42
	B. Stakeholder Platforms in the TBR MDD	44
	C. Implementation and Evaluation	47
VII.	Conclusions	49
VIII.	Literature	53
IX.	ANNEXES.....	55
	A. List of further Transboundary Biosphere Reserves Examples	55
	B. Stakeholder Mapping Table (Excel File).....	58
	C. Stakeholder Overview of the Nomination Process of the TBR MDD	58
	D. Additional Results from Interactive Workshops with Stakeholders.....	60
	E. E-participation Tools for Stakeholder Engagement.....	64
	F. Questionnaire.....	69
	G. Discussion and Questions for Municipalities in Biosphere Reserve Mura River, Slovenia.....	102

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Main Functions of Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO 2020)	8
Figure 2: Main Goals of MAB Strategy 2015-2025 (UNESCO 2017)	9
Figure 3: Zonation of the 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD) (WWF AT; basis shape files created by E.C.O. Institute of Ecology)	11
Figure 4: Common Work Plan (CWP; Zollner & Wolf 2019)	12
Figure 5: Transboundary, harmonised management structure according to the CWP and proposed in the Nomination document of the TBR MDD (Zollner & Wolf 2019)	14
Figure 6: Organizational structure of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (Common Wadden Sea Secretariat - https://qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org/reports/introduction#subsection_3)	18
Figure 7: Issues along a life cycle of a protected area. The large dots indicate issues of major, the small dots indicate issues of minor importance. Obviously, most issues occur in the phase of implementation planning (Jungmeier et al. 2009)	20
Figure 8: Stakeholder Categorization in TBR MDD (ISKRIVA 2022)	27
Figure 9: Identified Stakeholders by Country (ISKRIVA 2022)	30
Figure 10: Identified Stakeholders by Category (ISKRIVA 2022)	31
Figure 11: Identified Stakeholders by Sector (ISKRIVA 2022)	31
Figure 12: Examples of the TBR MDD stakeholder map (ISKRIVA 2022)	33
Figure 13: Virtual discussion from group 1 "General Design - how can it work, what is needed" (Miro Board by E.C.O. 2022)	34
Figure 14: Virtual discussion from group 1 "Concrete Topics ...for stakeholder involvement" (Miro Board by E.C.O. 2022)	35
Figure 15: Virtual discussion from group 1 "Good Practices of stakeholder involvement" (Miro Board by E.C.O. 2022)	36
Figure 16: Analysis of the Question 3.1 (How important do you find the listed areas of intervention for the development of the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube? see Annex – G.)	39
Figure 17: Analysis of Question 4.1 (In what form of projects are you interested to cooperate with other stakeholders? see Annex - G.)	39
Figure 18: Life Cycle of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (E.C.O. 2022)	41
Figure 19: Roadmap - The Stakeholder engagement from the Nomination to the Evaluation within 10 Years	43
Figure 20: Overview based on figure 5 of potential Stakeholder Platforms for the TBR MDD referring to the National BR Managements and the TBR MDD harmonised management (Own presentation)	44

List of Tables

Table 1: Criteria to identify priorities for multi-stakeholder collaboration (adapted from Kusters et al. 2018)	21
Table 2: Models of cooperation in transboundary protected areas (adapted from Erg et al. 2012 and Vasiljević et al. 2015)	22
Table 3: Example of the Roadmap underlying categorisation of stakeholders (adapted from Marega & Uratarič 2011)	25
Table 4: Approaches and tools for stakeholder engagement (adapted after Haddaway et al. 2017)	48

I. Introduction

The **UNESCO Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR) “5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube” (TBR MDD)** is the first one of its kind worldwide, that has been designated by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Republic of Croatia and Hungary with the “Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve”, the Republic of Serbia with the “Bačko Podunavlje Biosphere Reserve”, the Republic of Slovenia with “The Mura River Biosphere Reserve” and the Republic of Austria with the „Biosphere Reserve Lower Mura Valley“ merged to form one large network.

The complexity of this undertaking is not only visible through the size of the area, but also – and above all – through the complexity of the stakeholder interface. Five countries, with their respective governance and policy structures, regional development strategies, five languages, cultural and natural unique habitats as well as ecosystems, collaborate in an area stretching across nearly **1,000,000 hectares**. The area is defined by specifications created by UNESCO within the framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves¹, and underlined by the respective national legal requirements.

The “**Roadmap for proactive cooperation of stakeholders in the TBR MDD**” has been developed in the scope of Interreg DTP project lifelineMDD, a transnational project focusing on cross-sectoral partnership for improvement of connectivity and biodiversity within the MDD river corridor by restoration of natural river dynamics. The outcomes of this report refer to the work package “WP T4 - Stakeholder platforms for sustainable cooperation” and define structural possibilities in form of a Roadmap of how to ensure transboundary cooperation within the TBR MDD.

The term “**stakeholder**” in this Roadmap refers to any organisation or person affected by the planning, communication, results, measures and actions related to the nomination, implementation and evaluation of the UNESCO TBR MDD. Therefore, the focus is the implementation of multi-stakeholder platforms. This approach opens the possibility to ensure transboundary cooperation with stakeholders from several relevant sectors in and around the TBR as well as along the rivers Mura, Drava, and Danube. Social, economic, and ecological management perspectives influence this Roadmap according to stakeholders needs and interests.

The authors understand the term “**stakeholder platforms**” as “*an opportunity or a place for somebody to express their opinions publicly or make progress in a particular area*” (Oxford Dictionary 2022²). Based on this, different possibilities to do this within the framework of the TBR MDD will be shown in the following. Different communication tools, measures and organizational forms - partly given by UNESCO, partly to be assigned to the regional structures - are shown.

This **Roadmap** is based on a detailed literature review and expert input via interviews, workshops and a questionnaire. The first chapter of the report (I. Cooperation Framework) provides the reader with an overview of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) and its implementation as well as its specific objectives. The implementation of the strategies and frameworks is a top priority for the long-term existence of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Chapter

¹ For detailed specifications on the zonation, please, visit: <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/about>

² Oxford Dictionary 2022: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/platform?q=platform>

I. and VI. also sets out the goals of the Roadmap. Based on the methods presented here (chapter IV.), chapter V explains the results of the stakeholder analysis, workshops, interviews and questionnaire in more detail. Recommendations for the further involvement of stakeholders in the TBR MDD and the cooperation between them can be found in the final chapter (VI.).

The Roadmap presented towards the end of the report should be seen as a **recommendation**. Involved stakeholders - of which there are many under the umbrella of the TBR MDD - should be shown possibilities to network in a coordinated way in the future. This can be done in projects, in a regional context, on an international, bilateral, personal and virtual level. The TBR MDD is connecting partners from five countries (Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia), aiming to establish a scientific knowledge base, to raise ecological awareness among locals and to develop a sustainable cooperation approach connecting stakeholders across sectors.

II. Cooperation Framework

Although there is no single model for Transboundary Cooperation (TBC), the TBR MDD stakeholder platforms can refer to existing platforms, cooperation examples and structures as well as to a strong foundation of lessons learned from other transboundary protected areas (see below). Besides general approaches, the frameworks of international institutions like UNESCO or The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) need to be considered whenever possible.

A. The Aim of an UNESCO Biosphere Reserves

The implementation of international framework strategies, principles and guidelines is important for a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. For an implementation (as well as evaluation) of the TBR MDD, UNESCO's MAB (Man and Biosphere) programme and **The Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)** is crucial. The MAB programme was launched by UNESCO in 1971. Its main aim is to "establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments." (UNESCO 2017). In 1976, the MAB programme established WNBR, which has since declared 727 Biosphere Reserves (22 of which are transboundary) in 131 countries around the globe (UNESCO 2021a). In the Statutory Framework, WNBR has determined three main functions of BRs (figure 1).

Conservation	Development	Logistic support
<i>Contribute to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation</i>	<i>Foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable</i>	<i>Support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development</i>

Figure 1: Main Functions of Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO 2020)

The main **MAB programme** governing body is the International Coordination Council (MAB-ICC). It consists of 34 Member States elected by UNESCO's biennial General Conference. In between meetings, the authority of the MAB-ICC is delegated to its Bureau, whose members are nominated from each of UNESCO's geopolitical regions. Two bodies provide advice to the MAB programme (UNESCO 2021b).

In 2015, the MAB programme has issued an MAB strategy for 2015-2025. It contains four main goals (figure 2). In the same year, deriving from the MAB programme strategy 2015-2025, the Lima action plan 2016-2025 has been developed with a mission to (UNESCO 2017):

- develop and strengthen models for sustainable development in the WNBR;
- communicate the experiences and lessons learned, facilitating the global diffusion and application of these models;

- support evaluation and high-quality management, strategies and policies for sustainable development and planning, as well as accountable and resilient institutions;
- help Member States and stakeholders to urgently meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through experiences from the WNBR, particularly by exploring and testing policies, technologies and innovations for the sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, as well as mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

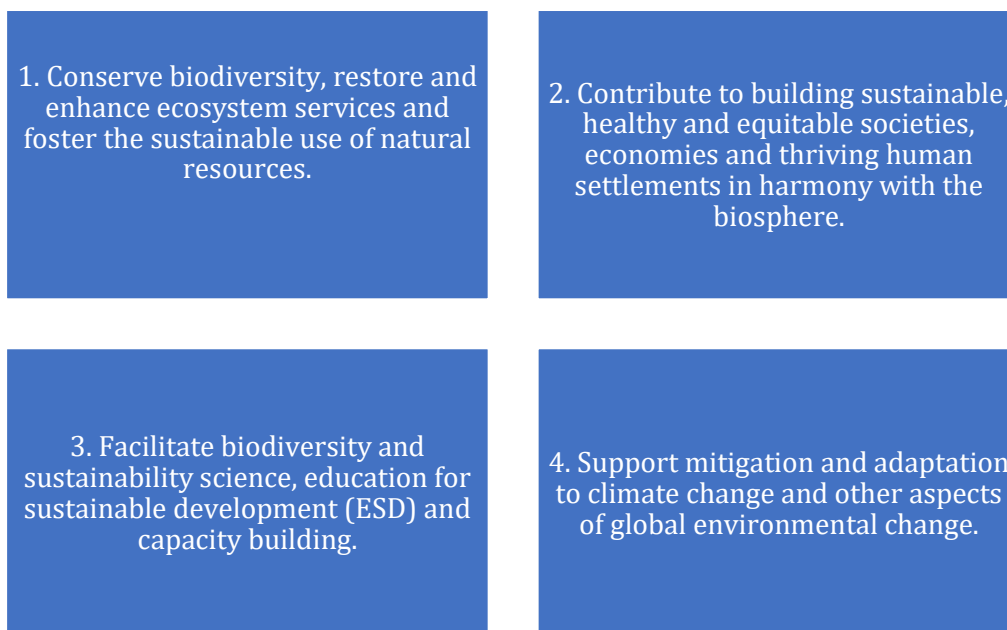


Figure 2: Main Goals of MAB Strategy 2015-2025 (UNESCO 2017)

Biosphere Reserves should learn from and grow with each other.³ Stakeholder engagement plays a major role in developing a stable Biosphere Reserve. Two of the three main goals for UNESCO Biosphere Reserves deal with people:

- Goal II: Utilize Biosphere Reserves as Models of Land Management and Approaches for Sustainable Development
- Goal III: Use Biosphere Reserves for Research, Monitoring, Education and Training

The Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves⁴ has been formulated to promote good working examples of Biosphere Reserves and to encourage communities to engagement, communication and cooperation at regional and international levels with the overall aim of sustainable region development.

Yet another important organisation involved especially in conservation aspects of Biosphere Reserves is the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. In the IUCN Guidelines for initiating transboundary conservation by Erg et al. (2012) and Vasilijević et al. (2015), they highlight 10 main elements for TBC, based on challenges transboundary protected areas face⁵:

³ For detailed information on the WNBR, please visit: <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/wnbr>

⁴ Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373378>

⁵ Detailed information and the full list of key issues can be found in Chapter 3.1, p. 24ff, under: https://www.tbpa.net/docs/4_Erg_Vasilijevic_McKinney_Initiating_effective_transboundary_conservation_FINAL.pdf

- catalyst – through crisis and threat, people take advantage of the opportunity to collaborate and benefit from transboundary cooperation;
- leadership – TBC invites people and different stakeholders to take ownership of their habitat;
- representation – roles and responsibilities need to be thought of carefully;
- regional fit – roles, measures etc. need to be defined in coordination with people’s needs and interests as well as their cultural and social background;
- governance – clear communication and clarification by the decision-making authority, along with mechanisms for funding and conflict resolution need to be established;
- knowledge and experience-sharing;
- strategy – the formulation of a clear vision, goals, and management plans should be developed with people involved and influenced by it;
- implementation – the plans formulated need to lead to concrete measures and therefore, actions;
- outcomes – the process needs to be transparent, and people should be aware of the steps taken;
- adaptation – establishing a transboundary protected area is always accompanied by a civic and political learning process regarding nature conservation activities.

The rivers Mura, Drava and Danube form the core area of the TBR MDD and thus its lifeline. Within the Interreg project coopMDD partners worked on the **Guidelines for a dynamic river corridor** that includes a vision, five objectives and fifteen sub-objectives (Nemmert et al. 2018 & 2018a). The main objectives are the following:

- management and coordination institutions of Protected Areas within the TBR MDD effectively cooperate within a well-developed transboundary coordination framework;
- all relevant stakeholders are contributing to the good management of the TBR MDD both on regional as well as transboundary levels;
- all people and organizations dealing with the TBR MDD have a good understanding of river ecosystems’ functioning, their values and the goals of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve;
- experts and scientists of all relevant fields work together intensively across borders and exchange research data and results as well as field experience openly,
- the public perceives the TBR MDD as one joint region and Protected Area due to attractive joint branding and communication on a transboundary level.

The cooperation according to the guidelines should be cross-sectoral and lead to a joint effort, supported by joint communication measures. The message spread should be that of one connected region, ensuring public outreach, and support (Huber et al. 2018).

B. General Goals of the TBR MDD

The 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD), designated by UNESCO in September 2021, connects the individual national Biosphere Reserves, designated by UNESCO, and 13 protected areas along three rivers. As such, it is Europe’s largest coherent riverine protected area and the world’s first-ever biosphere reserve connecting five countries. The TBR MDD includes the following countries and Biosphere Reserves (Zollner & Wolf 2019):

- “Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve” – Croatia and Hungary, established in 2012

- “Bačko Podunavlje Biosphere Reserve” – Serbia, established in 2017
- “The Mura River Biosphere Reserve” – Slovenia, established in 2018
- “Biosphere Reserve Lower Mura Valley” – Austria, established in 2019.

The TBR MDD area is based on national or bilateral zonation of individual BRs already designated by UNESCO. It is divided into three areas/zones (figure 3):

- Core area
- Buffer zones
- Transition area.

5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD)

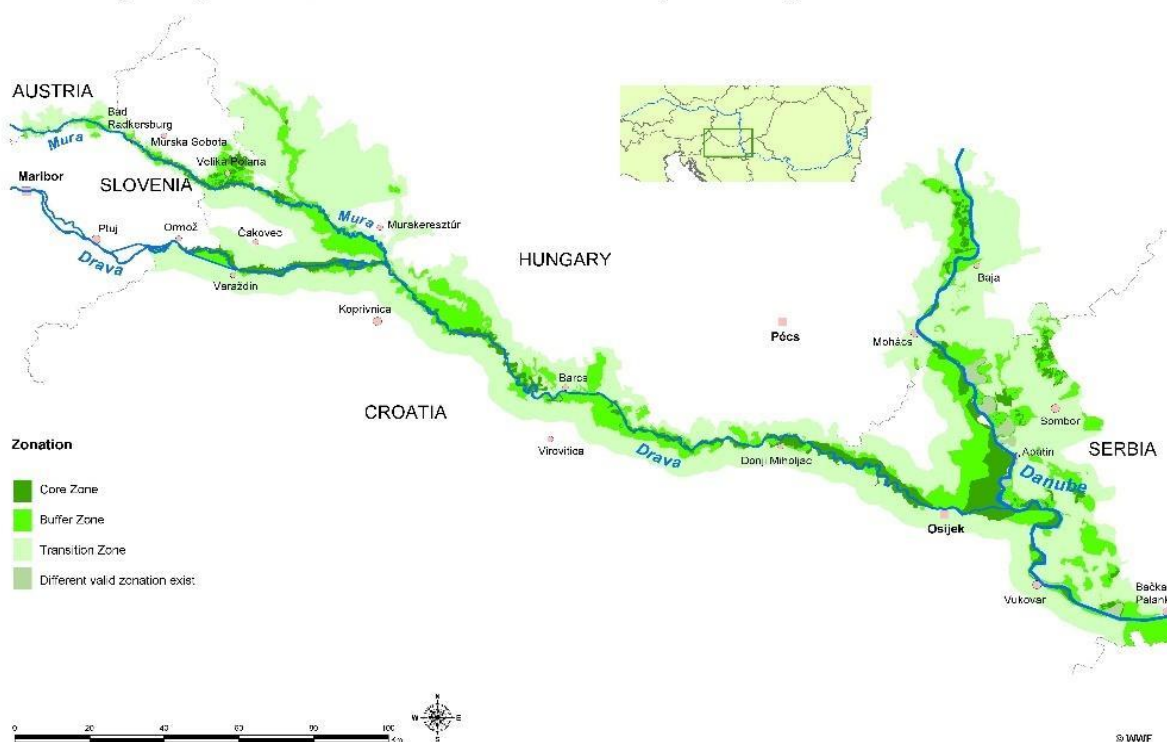


Figure 3: Zonation of the 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD) (WWF AT; basis shape files created by E.C.O. Institute of Ecology)

The core area consists of river bodies and associated habitats, the buffer zones mostly consists of forests, grasslands and meadows and the transition areas consists of more populated land such as towns and villages. Conservation levels, and the role the area plays in the biosphere reserve, is determined by this zonation. The core area is the most protected whereas the transition area is the least protected and serves to support small-scale business and sustainable tourism as well as to provide scientific research and education programmes for the protection and conservation of core and buffer zones.

By the example of the joint vision of the TBR MDD the significance of stakeholder involvement in various contexts is obvious.

JOINT VISION

Comprising nearly 1,000,000 ha along 700 km, the TBR MDD covers Europe’s largest coherent and dynamic river ecosystem. It brings up the responsibility to the global scale and acts as the backbone for the survival of characteristic habitats and species, while ensuring significant ecosystem services for people by its wise use. By “thinking globally, and acting locally”, the States Parties jointly strive for a harmonised management of the TBR, serving as a best practice example of international cooperation in the river basin and in water management. The development is based on a trustful collaboration between all involved States Parties and a cross-sectoral participation of all relevant stakeholders and local communities. With respect to the historic dimension of the region, it is also designed to build bridges between people and nature. Multiculturality is one of the unique values of the TBR MDD, thus it should shine as a symbol of unity in the world’s first 5-country Biosphere Reserve.

(Zollner & Wolf 2019)

The main part of the establishment of TBR MDD is the Common Work Plan (CWP; figure 4) that provides a joint vision, mission, long-term and operational goals of the BR. TBR MDD’s joint vision and mission is to connect rivers, nature and people, by achieving four main goals.

JOINT VISION & MISSION <i>Connecting rivers, nature and people</i>	
Long-term goals	Operational goals
1. Ecological Conservation & ecosystem services	1.1. <i>Conserve and restore ecosystems, habitats and species</i>
	1.2. <i>Preserve and restore natural water regimes and processes</i>
	1.3. <i>Advocate harmonised zonation and protected area management</i>
2. Socio-economic development & livelihood	2.1 <i>Enhance regional identity and protection of cultural heritage</i>
	2.2 <i>Strengthen sustainable agriculture and forestry, hunting and fishing</i>
	2.3 <i>Support spatial development and sustainable tourism</i>
3. Logistic support & capacity building	3.1 <i>Implement scientific research and monitoring</i>
	3.2 <i>Promote environmental interpretation, education and public awareness</i>
	3.3 <i>Secure information exchange and participation</i>
4. Transboundary management & cooperation	4.1 <i>Foster transboundary management and structural development</i>

Figure 4: Common Work Plan (CWP; Zollner & Wolf 2019)

These goals are based on three main functions of BRs from Article 3 of WNBR Statutory: nature conservation, sustainable development and logistic support through research and education. Combined, they serve the abovementioned mission of the TBR MDD and are further divided into operational goals.

- **1. Ecological Conservation & Ecosystem Services:** In the TBR MDD area, the natural processes of a dynamic river and the associated floodplains as well as the natural hydrological and natural hydromorphological regime and the corridor function of the rivers are preserved. Ecological connectivity is improved. This will have a positive long-term impact on the conservation of important species and habitats.
- **2. Socio-economic Development & Livelihood:** The traditional cultural landscapes of the TBR MDD will be conserved through the promotion and revitalisation of traditional, nature-friendly and extensive land (and river) use practices. High sustainability standards are implemented in all areas to reduce negative impacts on nature and improve habitat quality. The TBR MDD contributes to the livelihood, safety and well-being of local people by supporting sustainable economic activities and promoting sustainable tourism with low environmental impact.
- **3. Logistic Support & Capacity Building (Education for Sustainable Development, Science and Research):** Research and monitoring programmes, education and awareness-raising measures for different target groups, as well as appropriate communication and participation formats will help to generate, disseminate and utilise knowledge and experience. This will create a common understanding of the natural values of the TBR MDD and the needs for conservation and restoration. The image of a cohesive region is thus promoted.
- **4. Transboundary Management and Cooperation:** The TBR MDD is effectively managed based on the best available management practices, experience and knowledge, and stakeholder participation. Transboundary cooperation is also an important pillar, leading to a common understanding of river ecosystems and their associated values. The focus is on scientific and technical cooperation. Sufficient resources for institutional development ensure that the long-term goals are achieved.

The last two objectives in particular underline the need for transboundary cooperation between stakeholders.

C. [The Framework of Stakeholder Involvement within the TBR MDD](#)

In the CWP, common goals were set for the TBR MDD, targeting many different levels of stakeholder engagement. The BR management is responsible for the implementation of the goals. The proposition of a coordinating management body of TBR MDD is also provided in the CWP. It consists of three levels (figure 5):

- Level 1: National Biosphere Reserve Management
- Level 2: Coordinating Management Body
- Level 3: Steering Committee.

The level 1 management body (National Biosphere Reserve Management) is already established and contact persons have been defined for each of the consisting BRs. The purpose of this body is to serve as the link between the TBR MDD and the national BRs. The main purpose of the level 2 management body (Coordinating Management Body) is to provide a sustainable institutional mechanism for the implementation of TBR MDD goals. The main aim of the level 3 management body (Steering Committee) is to provide a joint strategic development plan for the TBR MDD, regularly assess its implementation progress and prepare proposals for improvements.

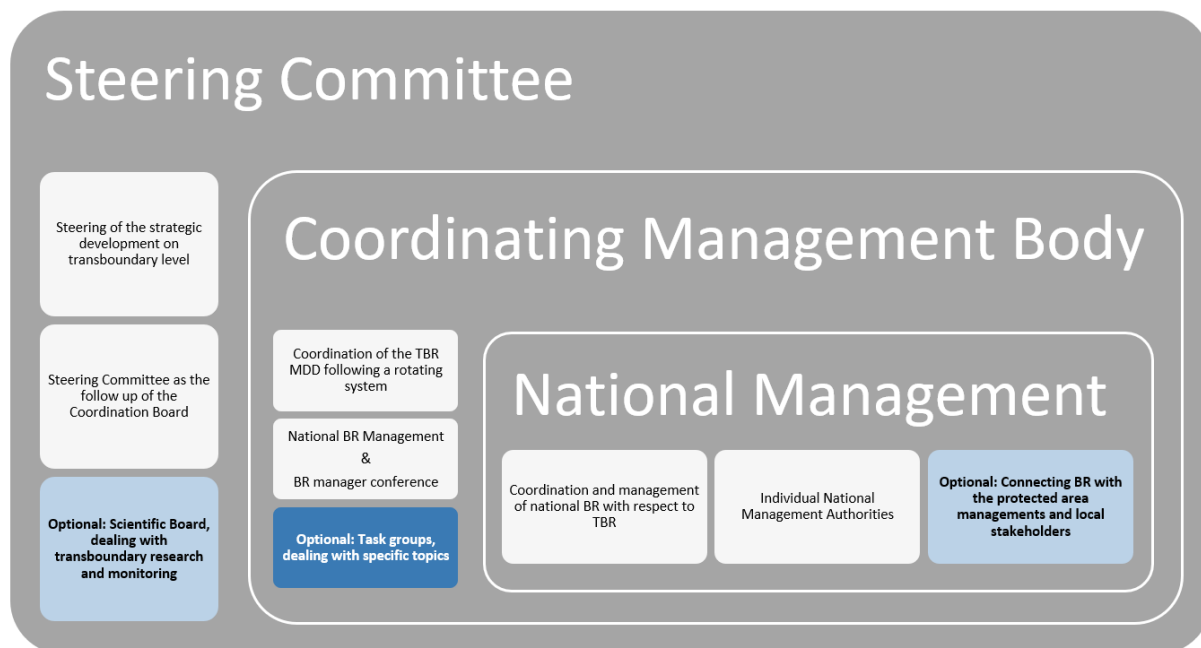


Figure 5: Transboundary, harmonised management structure according to the CWP and proposed in the Nomination document of the TBR MDD (Zollner & Wolf 2019)

The CWP, agreed upon by the States Parties during the nomination process, is the main **technical basis** for the development of stakeholder platforms for the TBR MDD. Since the CWP was jointly elaborated and agreed upon by the States Parties during the nomination process, it is logical to align the stakeholder participation processes as well as the installation of different stakeholder platforms as far as possible according to it. However, as participation processes are dynamic, enough leeway should be left to develop new ideas and to be able to take up current, unpredictable focal points.

The main **structural basis** for the development of the stakeholder platforms is the before mentioned proposed harmonised management structure within the TBR MDD, consisting of three levels, each of them in turn subdivided into three groups (see figure 5). On all levels, these structures are already established (especially the National Management) or are in the process of being established (e.g., the Coordination Board [CB] had been restructured into the Steering Committee). It is important to mention, that this structure is the starting point, adaptations and adjustments are therefore still possible and may be necessary in terms of resources and practicability. Thus, definite stakeholder platforms will have to be constantly adjusted to the structural development on a national and transboundary level over the years. Nevertheless, and independent of future developments, the stakeholder platforms need to be embedded at least into the transboundary level (Coordination Management Body; see figure 5). In this context, the field 'Optional: task groups, dealing with specific topics' represents the placeholder to attach specific transboundary stakeholder platforms (as presented below). A key aspect is the fact that a lively transboundary stakeholder community depends on successful participatory approaches on national levels. The national and transboundary levels are highly interwoven. Partly, they may even consist of the same stakeholders. Thus, these two levels can affect each other positively as well as negatively. Above all, when it comes to the development of management plans, participation is crucial for the acceptance of the national BRs and the TBR MDD as a whole.

Furthermore, the connection to the steering committee level and its proposed scientific board is another key to success and should link international knowledge and research with the needs of the BR management and its stakeholders.

During the concrete nomination phase of the TBR MDD a general stakeholder overview had been created and approved by all States Parties (Zollner & Wolf 2019; ANNEX - C. Stakeholder Overview of the Nomination Process of the TBR MDD). This may be part of the basis for any stakeholder engagement and therefore the implementation of the CWP. It is mainly based on key issues, which were the preliminary outcomes of the CB meetings and workshops of the last 10 years. (Zollner & Wolf 2019). Projects like coopMDD or the follow-up project lifelineMDD directed and guide the way towards future developments within the TBR MDD and provide good examples of project-based collaboration schemes. Hence, objectives and goals for a proactive stakeholder involvement and referring topics already exist (DANUBEPARKS 2019; Nemmert et al. 2018 und 2018a; Wieser et al. 2011; Zollner & Wolf 2019).

Three examples of already existing stakeholder involvement are the following:

In the field of sustainable tourism, two projects set the basis for cooperation platforms between key tourism-related stakeholders across the whole TBR MDD: Amazon of Europe (AoE) Bike Trail and Amazing Amazon of Europe.

- The **AoE Bike Trail** is a long-distance cycling trail, connecting touristic infrastructure, local producers, providers of sports equipment and leisure companies. The Amazon of Europe Bike Trail is the first project that joins the efforts of five countries (Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia) for the sustainable economic development of the whole region based on the valorisation of natural and cultural resources. It is a joint integrated solution for sustainable cycling tourism implemented in the Amazon of Europe TBR MDD. The main goal of the project is to establish a unique, internationally known, bookable sustainable cycling tourism product that will contribute to regional development within all five countries.
- The main goal of the **Amazing Amazon of Europe** project is to bring sustainable development opportunities for managing diversity of natural and cultural heritage and resources in Amazon of Europe destination from local to transnational level, while enabling unique experiences for international visitors. It is aiming to establish a collaboration network of key actors and enable environment for high-quality tourism, responding to limited resources of ecosystems.
- Another trendsetting and already cross-border cooperation was the Interreg project **goMURra**. The project goMURra is a continuation of the long-standing cooperation and joint activities taking place within the framework of the "Austrian-Slovenian Mura Commission" along the 34 km long border section of the Mura. Taking into account the "Water Management Framework Concept for the Border Mura from the year 2000", the measures implemented so far on the Mura as well as the current legal framework and European directives, a strategy and a program of measures for the Border Mura were developed and the management plan "Border Mura 2030" was prepared. During this project, a participatory management plan for the river was developed.

There are, of course, many existing collaborations, most of which were included in the stakeholder analysis. A detailed list of all projects would go beyond the scope of this section.

III. Cooperation Types

The challenge within the TBR MDD is that – as mentioned in the beginning – there are not only five different languages, but also legislations, governance and political systems. Cultural as well as ecological aspects are various. Therefore, it is overall important to create broad, but structured stakeholder platforms based on an equally broad stakeholder map. This map should consider certain categories of stakeholders (Kusters et al. 2017; Marega & Uratarič 2011): Local up to global; public, private, and civic; long-term and short-term.

A. Good-practice Examples of Transboundary Cooperations

The following examples have been deemed representative by the authors for presentation within this report. All examples given in this chapter are transboundary protected area administrations with a long experience. Individual representatives in the respective administrations were known and so it was possible, for example, to talk to representatives of the Wadden Sea.

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA)

The Biosphere Reserve was designated in 1998 and is a mosaic of water and land shared between Romania and Ukraine. The coordination office is based in Tulcea (Romania), the main tasks of it by law are the ecological management of the reserve, nature conservation, the promotion of sustainable use of natural resources as well as the restoration of the habitats that have been destroyed by hydropower projects realized before 1989 (Marill et al. 2015). The DDBRA is a public institution and according to Romanian law represented by a Scientific Council who includes representatives from DDBRA and other organizations such as local authorities, ministries, health services, research institutions and economic companies. This structure is led by a Governor, appointed by the Romanian Government at the proposal of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development with approval of the Tulcea Prefect and the Academy of Science. The Governor is Head of the Scientific Council and the Executive Unit of the DDBRA.⁶

The DDBR is part of different networks, such as The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), the UNESCO Natural and Cultural World Heritage and EUROPARC. The DDBRA signed several Memorandums, first in line the Memorandum of Understanding between the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, the “Danube Delta” National Institute for Research and Development (Romania) and the Dunaiskiy Plavni Natural Reserve Authority (Ukraine). These shall guarantee the cooperation in staff training, research, management, ecological restoration and in raising public awareness. Project cooperation in joint international projects for migratory birds and fisheries exists.

From a historical point of view the border between Romania and Ukraine was causing problems for the management of the ecosystem (Jardin & Fall 2003). Crossing the border was a challenge until 20 years ago. Because of the TBR's size and certain governance structures some weaknesses in the management of the Danube Delta arise too. These sub-optimal issues are the following: lack of regulation of human activities, weak control of pollution, lack of political will to protect the delta, and poor compliance with regulations (Marill et al. 2015).

⁶ A detailed overview of the Organization may be found under the following link: <https://ddbba.ro/despre-institutie-2/>

Positively, it shall be mentioned that the state's regulation also provides it with executive powers, which means that the DDBRA can request assistance from state institutions in order to discourage illegal practices and to supervise and punish minor violations committed within its territory according to the law. The homepage created from the Romanian side of the Biosphere Reserve serves as the joint online presentation of the DDBR.

The Krkonoše/Karkonosze Transboundary Biosphere Reserve

The long-term effort to protect this unique island of arctic nature led to the declaration of Karkonoski Park Narodowy at the Polish side in 1959 and the Krkonoše Mountains National Park at the Czech side of the mountains in 1963. Since 1992 the Krkonoše Mountains have been included into the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) by the MAB Committee.

The Czech-Polish Biosphere Reserve Bilateral Board (BCBR) is a forum of communication between the decision-makers of the cross-border region, local stakeholders and experts hold annual meetings. Coordinating body of the BCBR is one person per country, financed from different grants and foundations. The coordinators represent the transboundary Biosphere Reserve towards the local population, but in legal terms the Biosphere Reserve is managed by the staff of the two national parks.

The Biosphere Reserve as a forum has the advantage of being free from structural difficulties (e.g., differences in legislation, financial resources, administration, and hierarchy). The »Vision for Krkonose 2050«, whose goal is the cooperation between the national parks and local councils, is a key document and mentioned as well as referred to in various planning documents published by the NPs and local councils (Austrian MAB Committee 2011).

The TBR hosts working groups/cooperations in science and research areas, social and economic issues, preservation of regional architecture, historical and cultural sites and traditional crafts, as well as reconstruction and renovation of mountain forests and meadows, among other areas.

Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (TWSC)

The Cooperation between Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands was established in 1978 and is based on the "Joint Declaration on the Protection of the Wadden Sea" signed in 1982 and updated in 2010. In 2018 the Cooperation celebrated its 40th anniversary. Cooperation and exchange between partners, politics, nature conservation, science, and administration, as well as local stakeholders supported this joint declaration. The transboundary ecosystem-based collaboration is according to the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS), prerequisite for the designation of the Wadden Sea as World Heritage site and is part of its Outstanding Universal Value.

The Wadden Sea World Heritage Site is legally protected under international law by several international agreements, conventions, and treaties (e.g. the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat within the Ramsar Convention or the Agreement on the Conservation of Seals in the Wadden Sea) as well as under national law in all partner countries.

The Trilateral Cooperation is organized under the Trilateral Governmental Council, the Wadden Sea Board, the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, special Task Groups, and a network of Expert Groups (see figure 7).

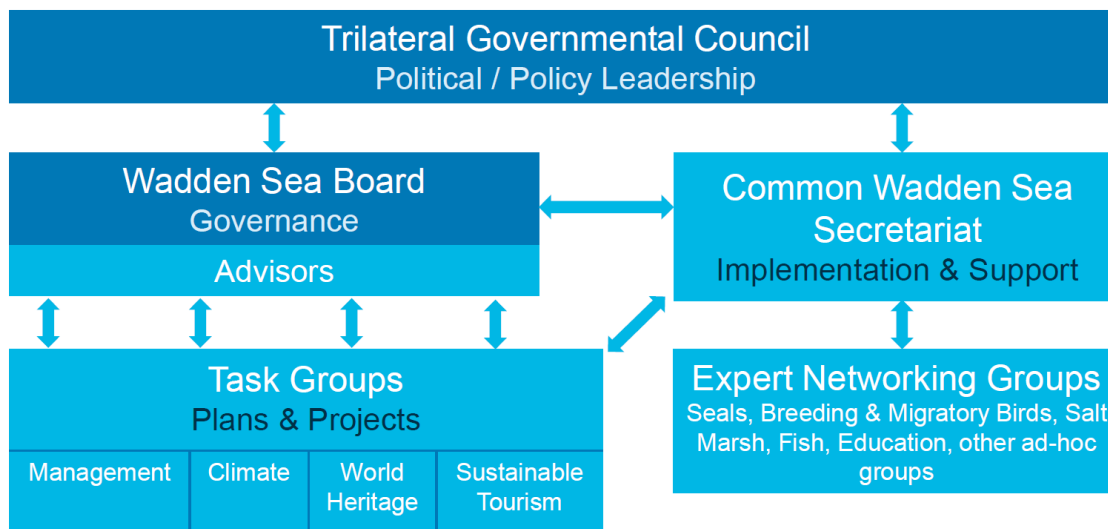


Figure 6: Organizational structure of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation (Common Wadden Sea Secretariat - https://qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org/reports/introduction#subsection_3)

The Memorandum of Intent on the Wash/ North Norfolk Coast and the Wadden Sea (signed on 13th of November 1991, Esbjerg DK) is a voluntary and non-executive agreement between the States Parties; this leads to little pressure related to the implementation of transboundary measures. Stakeholder involvement has not been organised. The public participation has been continuously improved, despite the many different interests (Hans-Ulrich Rösner, WWF Germany – unpublished interview, November 2020).

The Wadden Sea World Heritage has its own homepage, a tourism concept, guiding principles, a Wadden Sea Plan, a Forum, The International Wadden Sea School, a trilateral education strategy “Shaping a Sustainable Tomorrow” and a Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP). The Trilateral Governmental Council meets every three to four years to chart the course of the TWSC. The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS) published three joint Status Reports (2004, 2009 and 2018) (Strempele et al. 2018).

Further examples of TBRs can be found in the ANNEX – A. List of further Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Examples.

B. Challenges for Transboundary Cooperation – Lesson Learned

The challenges in transboundary cooperation are numerous as the previous examples show. The main challenges within the TBR MDD can be identified as follows (see also Jungmeier et al. 2009; Haddaway et al. 2017; Kusters et al. 2017; Zollner & Wolf 2019; Borsdorf et al. 2020):

- Borders:** The challenge of coordinating the management of stretches of three rivers and adjacent habitats in five countries, with different legal, cultural, and historical backgrounds, containing different protected area categories, is obvious. Hence, the different interpretations of some international policies and regulations may as well be a major challenge for the stakeholders.

- **Management:** Somewhat less obvious is the importance of a functioning national BR management body as well as the establishment of the Common Work Plan (CWP). Medium to long-term management plans are needed to ensure sustainable development of the TBR MDD.
- **Growth:** All developments need to come with (a) clearly defined limits to growth, (b) indicators of impact on nature and environment, and (c) responsibility to monitor sustainability. These are supposed to be the profoundest challenges within a joint regional development in the future.
- **Language:** The common working language will be English, but some documents and information are only available in the national languages.
- **Decisions:** Policy, governance and development processes are accompanied by decision-making processes, both on a large and a small scale. These processes may include a variety of actors and large differences in power.
- **Involvement:** In the frame of all regional activities, people can hardly distinguish between BR-related activities and those that were not initiated by the BR management. This fact can cause both positive and negative effects on the BR, depending on the allocation of specific activities to the BR management.
- **Resources:** The involvement of stakeholders needs time and therefore resources. Financial resources are particularly important, but funds are sometimes scarce and obtaining funds is a time-consuming task.
- **Motivation:** Participative processes lead to high expectations (euphoria). The frames of a BR management (e.g., long-term perspectives, intangible benefits, and low legal competences) tend to disillusion actors at a certain stage. Primarily strong networks tend to decrease after some years.

Nearly all transboundary protected areas face the above-mentioned challenges. Therefore, within the process of establishing stakeholder platforms they should be considered or at least kept in mind.⁷ Hereafter some examples of the structure and frame for transboundary cooperations of other transboundary protected areas are listed (see Chapter III. and ANNEX – A.).

C. Basic Success Factors

Participation processes change over the lifetime of a protected area. This can be explained by the so-called ‘Life cycle concept’, which was described by Jungmeier et al. (2005 and 2009). According to this concept, there are four major phases of development (see figure 7). In each phase, specific “Fields of activities (FoAs)” must be carried out and specific needs addressed. As the figure shows, most of these issues are associated with the planning phases that the TBR MDD is currently in.

⁷ Most of the challenges are already considered in the Nomination Form of the TBR MDD (Zollner & Wolf 2019).

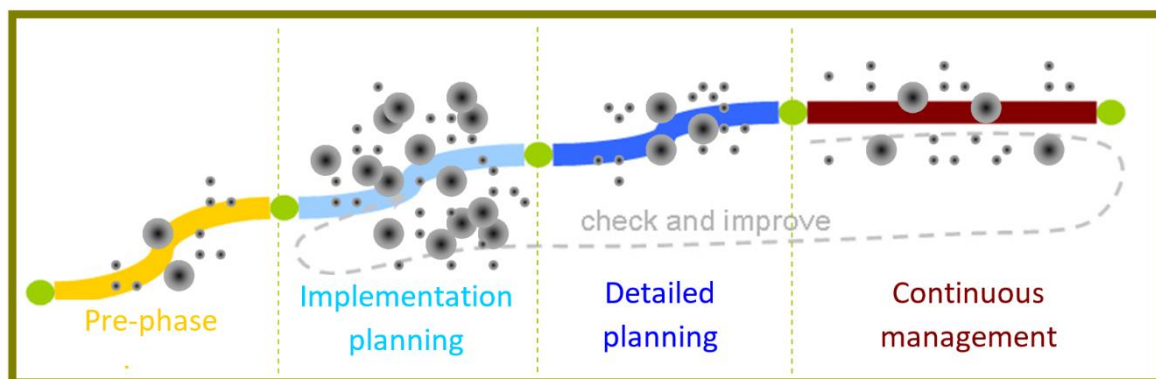


Figure 7: Issues along a life cycle of a protected area. The large dots indicate issues of major, the small dots indicate issues of minor importance. Obviously, most issues occur in the phase of implementation planning (Jungmeier et al. 2009)

Particularly phase 2 – the Implementation planning phase, characterizes the time when it comes to the final and legal establishment of a protected area. At best, it is characterised by a structured process and applied participatory elements (consultations). In this phase, the management and planning are very challenged, because:

- many questions arise for the first time in the process,
- many topics are being discussed extensively for the first time,
- many stakeholders are being informed or want to be informed and involved,
- a massive change in the region is being discussed,
- decision-makers (often for the first time ever) do openly interfere with the whole region,
- the general insecurity is very high (new concept meets old foundations),
- many solutions for “technical” problems must be developed and be brought into discussion.

Therefore, many topics arise for the first time and must be dealt with care:

- emotions, existent anxiety and fears,
- change and intervention into grown structures,
- legislative consequences,
- time and speed of the process,
- historical „backpack“ and preconditions,
- resistance against any changes,
- interests and their ability to connect,
- frame of participation (limitation, final decisions, etc.),
- representations of different groups and interests,
- (un)limitation of brands,
- to let something loose (a specific situation, habits, etc.).

Subsequently, the generation of stakeholder platforms also needs to take the life cycle of a Biosphere Reserve and the current phase of development of the TBR MDD into consideration. In this context, the application of knowledge and experiences from various scientific fields play a key role for success and provides the corresponding scientific answers to a bundle of implementation questions. Following general and transferable conclusions should be considered:

- **Change/transformation management** and the issue of speed: Transforming a region into a BR needs an adequate frame of time (not too much, not too little), enough energy to break the deadlock and certain stages to run through. Specifically, diversity management intends to take advantage of the diversity in an organisation or in a particular environment. In the context of a transboundary biosphere reserve the timely involvement of different groups of stakeholders and their competencies is of relevance.
- **Governance/participation** and the issue of trust and emotions: Planners and managers do have an important, but restricted influence on a „harmonic“ establishment and management of a BR. It must be considered that population/landowners have long-term memories; emotions cannot be reached or discussed in a process of “technical” planning and trust is the most important currency in these processes.
- **Intervention** and the issue of regional resistance: Any transformation must overcome a basic resistance which can be seen as an inherent part of a transformation process. A biosphere reserve development proceeds better if there is a high degree of dissatisfaction with the current situation. Also, there must be clear and desirable perspectives and first results should be visible at an early stage of discussion. Furthermore, the degree of organisation of interests – whether for or against - has an enormous influence on the process.
- **Participation** or the issue to have a say: In the normal course of life, there are limited possibilities to have a say towards public issues. The participative development of a BR seems to act as an outlet for general democratic deficiencies. And it also “brings back” failures and topics of the past. Therefore, BRs can be handicapped in their development since historical topics are overlapping with future topics. However, participation needs to be learnt and be permanently trained by the different actors.

Aspirations	Criteria
Shared long-term goals and action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders have shared long-term goals for the landscape • Stakeholders work together based on a landscape action plan
Practices and policies advance conservation, livelihood, and production goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders work together to promote environmentally friendly production practices and policies • Stakeholders work together to align conservation practices and policies with livelihood and production goals
Improved monitoring and land-use planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders jointly monitor developments in the landscape • Stakeholders catalyse more participatory processes in land-use planning
Responsive institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders keep each other informed and learn from each other • Stakeholders use information from other stakeholders to make decisions

Table 1: Criteria to identify priorities for multi-stakeholder collaboration (adapted from Kusters et al. 2018)

Stakeholder platforms should be reviewed and adapted based on various criteria (see table 1).

D. Options for TBR Multi-Stakeholder Platforms

As experiences all over the world show, the transboundary initiatives were, and continue to be, established for several purposes. The conservation of nature is the primary one, but other purposes include – to highlight only a few – the commemoration of peace, striving to establish synergetic relationships, ensuring political stability, encouraging economic development or facilitating socio-cultural integration.

Model of cooperation	Characteristics
Communication or information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way communication on actions, problems, opportunities or other relevant issues between the protected areas • Sharing of information, e.g., notifying about various management actions in a particular site
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and information sharing on regular basis (at least three times a year) • Seeking opinion, feedback or advice from each other, e.g., on how to solve a problem, how to improve a management action, etc.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative process with the aim to harmonize management • Cooperation on at least four activities, sometimes coordinating their planning and consulting with the other protected area(s) before acting
Coordinated action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of planning, often treating the area as a single ecological unit • Jointly coordinated management actions implemented within the sovereign areas of each party, that contribute to the conservation goals of the entire transboundary ecosystem, • This model is considered to be a form of cooperative management
Joint implementation of decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly coordinated and implemented management actions across the sovereign boundaries, e.g., joint law enforcement patrols, joint fundraising and project implementation, the production of marketing material that profiles the TBCA as a single entity, etc. • This model is considered to be a form of cooperative management
Full cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for the transboundary protected areas is fully integrated, and, if appropriate, ecosystem-based, with implied joint decision making and common goals • Joint planning occurs and treats the protected area(s) as a whole • Joint management occurs • A joint committee exists for advising on transboundary cooperation

Table 2: Models of cooperation in transboundary protected areas (adapted from Erg et al. 2012 and Vasilijević et al. 2015)

Table 2 represents models of cooperation and is helpful to set out a grading from lower to higher levels of engagement that transboundary sites can identify themselves with. The levels of cooperation may overlap and/or occur simultaneously between various actors. One model is not superior or inferior to another, but each model of cooperation can be implemented informally or through more formal arrangements. Often these models complement each other.

Formal arrangements are underpinned by legal mechanisms or agreements, which may be binding (e.g., multilateral environmental agreements, bilateral treaties and ‘international customary law’ (accepted practices recognized by international tribunals) or non-binding (e.g., a Memorandum of Understanding or a Declaration of Intent).

Informal arrangements support the implementation and enforcement of policies and plans. Because they are often built on an understanding of local culture and livelihoods, they encourage a greater sense of ownership of, and willingness to engage in transboundary conservation. They normally require less resources than formal approaches and come with fewer bureaucratic

obstacles. But they may be less robust, making it more difficult to sustain the effort, personnel may come and go more often, and resources may be unreliable. Informal approaches do not require ratification of official agreements but are based on looser arrangements made between the participants.

Various online tools are presented and described in more detail in the appendix (ANNEX – E.).

IV. Methodical Approach behind the Roadmap

Based on a literature review, a comprehensive stakeholder mapping and analysis were conducted to identify relevant stakeholders within and outside the TBR MDD area. In parallel, three interactive workshops were organised to gather input and insights directly from stakeholders. Interviews with community representatives in Slovenia and a questionnaire sent out to the partner network of the Interreg lifelineMDD partners and additional stakeholders from five countries complete the findings and recommendations of this report.

A. Literature Analysis

The basis of this Roadmap was a literature review. Research was conducted on the topic of stakeholder engagement in connection with transboundary cooperation of protected areas. The nomination documents of the 5 national BRs were consulted, as well as the results of previous EU projects. Current literature and reports from other participatory projects and stakeholder processes were also used to develop the Roadmap.

B. Workshops

Three interactive workshops were held during the project. Another reflection workshop rounded off the creation of the Roadmap. The 1st workshop was organized as a kick-off workshop in May 2021 (06/05/2021), the 1st interactive workshop was organised in November 2021 (25/11/2021), coupled with the first scientific conference of the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve, and the 2nd interactive workshop was in May 2022 (05/05/2022).

The first meeting (workshop) was organised as a **kick-off** on 6th of May 2021 between 10.00 and 14.00 using the Zoom platform. The workshop was organised in synergy with the interim conference of Amazing Amazon of Europe Interreg DTP project. 97 participants took part in the workshop together with the interim conference. In the interactive part of the workshop, groups of representatives of the same country prepared a list of stakeholders from their national TBR MDD area. In the discussion, it was pointed out that it is necessary to define the term „stakeholder“ and to define the tasks/responsibilities that a certain stakeholder would have in the TBR MDD.

The 1st interactive workshop was held on 25th November 2021 between 13.00 and 16.05 using the Zoom platform and an interactive tool (Miro board). 38 participants were divided into three groups. Each group had a separate moderator and a different topic with three guiding questions:

- **1. General design – how can it work, what is needed**
 - 1.1 What are the main purposes for stakeholder involvement?
 - 1.2 Which stakeholder groups would you like to talk to, to work with, which are fundamental to reach goals of CWP?
 - 1.3. How should the involvement be organised, which platforms and approaches should be used?
- **2. Concrete topics for stakeholder involvement**

- 2.1 Which ecological topics do have priority in your opinion
- 2.2 Are there social or cultural aspects that are very important?
- 2.3 What are the main goals and tasks in terms of economic development?
- **3. Good practices of stakeholder involvement**
 - 3.1 Which good practices in stakeholder involvement do you know in general?
 - 3.2 Do you especially know good practices in cross-sectoral or cross-border cooperation?
 - 3.3. Can you locate some regional good practices?

The 2nd interactive workshop was held on 5th May 2022 (9.00-12:00) using the Zoom platform and the interactive online Whiteboard Mural. The workshop was divided in two parts: a first part with presentations, outlining the context of the topics for the discussion and a second part with an interactive session in form of a World café, reflecting on the proposed platforms for stakeholder cooperation. All participants were divided into three groups with changing moderators thus having a chance to discuss all three proposed platforms and pre-selected topics. The workshop concluded with a presentation of discussion results done by breakout room moderators.

The main aims of the workshop were:

- to present the progress in planning stakeholder engagement in the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube within the lifelineMDD project,
- to collect concrete solutions and proposals for stakeholder cooperation platforms based on collected topics at the first workshop that will support the implementation of the TBR MDD.

Interactive sessions: The second part of the workshop was the interactive session, starting with the introduction of the guiding questions (linking stakeholder platforms to the future biosphere reserve management) and instructions on the use of a virtual whiteboard tool.

The discussion in the interactive part of the workshop was divided into three parts (working groups), each targeting a different proposed stakeholder platform linked to the topics to be included in the platform:

1. Project working groups / Task Groups

Proposed topics: water management / river restoration, agriculture and forestry, fishing and hunting, nature conservation, restoration, sustainable local tourism, land use planning

2. Market place / TBR MDD stakeholder conference

Proposed topics: regional development, cultural heritage and local crafts, development of SMEs, ecological agriculture, locally produced products, sustainable local tourism

3. Youth forum / parliament

Proposed topics: local tourism, cultural heritage and local crafts, international knowledge exchange, locally produced products, new technologies supporting biosphere reserves and youth empowerment

Before the start of the session, three guiding questions were presented for the proposed stakeholder platforms. All three questions below were only the basis and not a limitation for the discussion:

1. Do you think the proposed platforms are realistic, efficient and promising for improving stakeholder involvement?

2. How to link the proposed stakeholder platforms and topics to the future management of the 5-country BR? What would be needed? Which success factors and necessary steps to you recognize as to be crucial?
3. Do you have further suggestions for stakeholder involvement?

The 3rd **workshop** was initially intended as a reflection workshop. Finally, it was organized in the framework of the final conference of the lifelineMDD project. The results of the report could be presented on September 7, 2022. The findings from the process and the report were discussed in the course of a panel discussion. The results of the panel discussion are reflected in the results presentations of the conference.

Results of the two workshops are presented in chapter V.

C. Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

Stakeholder mapping is a key task when it comes to the development of stakeholder platforms, as their design must meet the needs and possibilities of the stakeholders. Otherwise, the initiated processes run the risk of fading out successively. Based on the existing stakeholder platforms, groups, initiatives and project partnerships, an overall engaging stakeholder mapping was developed. It includes a list of identified stakeholders and their analysis.

Stakeholders involved are typically organised in certain categories/groups, within the public and commercial sector, as well as the civil society (see table 3).

Government/Authorities	Businesses	Civil society	Research and education
Ministry of environment	National business associations	Local inhabitants	Universities and research institutions
Other national ministries	Major employers	Nature protection and environmental NGOs	Schools
Regional government	Private financiers	Landowners	Experts
Local authorities	International/national business	Trade unions	Foundations
Local public agencies/services	Regional/local business	Media	Training institutions
Protected area management bodies	Local business associations	Local forums	...
Regional development agencies	Small businesses	Local community organisations	
Partnership bodies	Retailers	Local interest groups	
Agriculture sector representatives	Utility services	Visitors	
Forestry sector representatives	Engineers/contractors	Initiatives	
Tourist sector representatives	Transport operators/providers	...	
Water management/sector representatives	Infrastructure planners		
Spatial planners	...		
...			

Table 3: Example of the Roadmap underlying categorisation of stakeholders (adapted from Marega & Uratarič 2011)

The groups can be furthermore categorized as follows:

- institutional (ministries, UNESCO - WNBR, institutes, universities, schools, companies, initiatives, NGOs, EUROPARC),
- geographical (local/regional, national, international, global),
- project related (thematic),
- temporal frame (short, medium and long-term involvement),
- informal and formal involvement.

Finally, the nature of the involvement should not be forgotten and, accordingly, the question should always be asked to what extent certain stakeholders are affected by certain decisions, measures or actions; or to what extent certain stakeholders are affecting decisions (Marega & Uratarič 2011).

Additionally, different methods for stakeholder selection were used to create the stakeholder map: (a) use known contacts (Purposive selection); (b) suggestions made by known key stakeholder (Snowballing); (c) need for stakeholder participation advertised publicly (Open call); and (d) search for relevant stakeholders (Systematic selection). For (a) and (b) stakeholders are more likely to be found and easier to engage; in case of (c) it is harder to identify stakeholders and the risk to miss people without access to advertisement is high and for (d) stakeholders found are hard to motivate.

The first step of stakeholder mapping is a **stakeholder categorization** (figure 8). Stakeholder categorization is based on a literature analysis part of the Roadmap, namely recognized stakeholder groups and the three main functions of the MAB programme. The different colours represent the three main functions of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (see Chapter II. A.).

The second step of stakeholder mapping is the **stakeholder identification** (Annex – B.). This is based on a review of the stakeholders involved in known processes and projects in the TBR MDD: the TBR MDD Nomination form development process, project partners from projects implemented in the TBR MDD and further online research and identification of relevant stakeholders. The total number of collected and identified stakeholders is 2462.

There are a few criteria for the selection of stakeholders to be included on the list – to assure the inclusion of the most relevant stakeholders, but also to keep a broad spectrum. Based on the definition of stakeholders used in this report, a broad approach was taken for the selection, meaning that the list represents a wide selection of stakeholders (geographically and sector-wise). Finally, the TBR MDD stakeholder mapping was based on the following three main criteria:

1. location of the organization;
2. location of operations / activities of the organization;
3. thematic relevance of the organization.

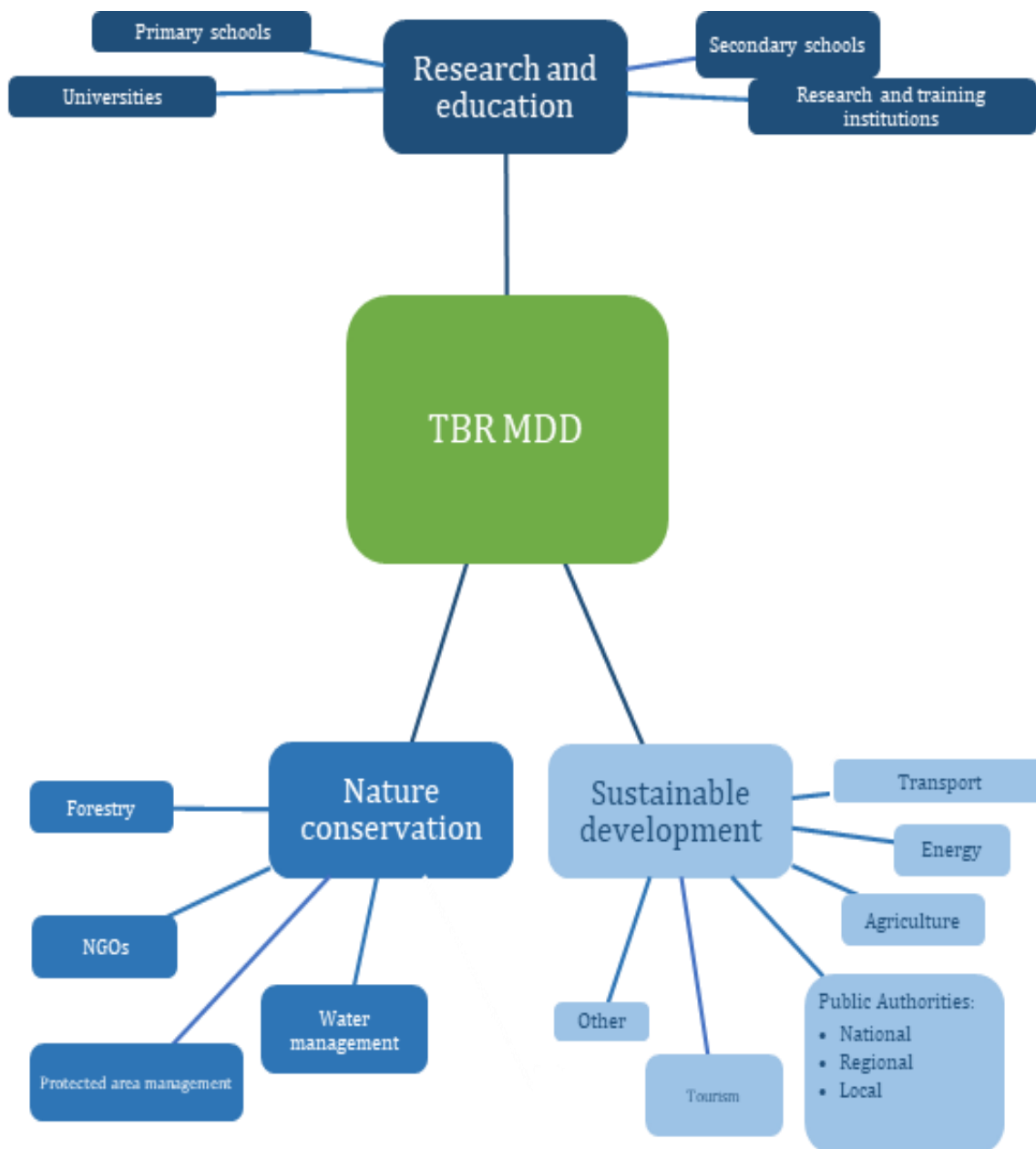


Figure 8: Stakeholder Categorization in TBR MDD (ISKRIVA 2022)

Elaboration of the selected criteria:

1. Location of the organization

First criteria is based on the location of the organisation. The main target were organisations inside the TBR MDD area, however, there are also organisations included on the list, which are located outside. In some of the accumulated data, where the division was not possible (e.g. category research and education: primary and secondary schools), the selection was based on NUTS 3 regions. Included are the NUT3 regions which are partly located in the TBR MDD area. In these subcategories, all stakeholders from the whole NUTS3 region are included.

2. Location of the operations / activities of the organisation

Second criteria refers to the selection of stakeholders which are not located in the TBR MDD, but are very active in the area (e.g. Institute Iskriva, Institute E.C.O), albeit by implementing different projects or some other activities. These organisations are relevant because of their connection to the TBR MDD and engagement in the area.

3. Thematic relevance of the organisation

Third and last criteria refers to the selection of stakeholders, which are not directly located or operating in the TBR MDD, but which are thematically connected to the most important topics of the TBR MDD (based on the MAB pillars). Experience, know-how and willingness to cooperate of these organisations are relevant for the operation and future development of the TBR MDD area. This criteria give the TBR MDD stakeholder list width, which is important for the long-term development of the area.

Selected stakeholders can further be divided into different levels of relevance, depending on their engagement. This division exceeds the preparation capacities of this report and is suggested to be done in a scope of a different project / follow-up activity. The criteria selection also depends on the categories and sectors, which were defined in the first step of TBR MDD stakeholder mapping.

Results are presented in chapter V.

D. Questionnaire

In order to best prepare the stakeholder platforms for the TBR MDD within the lifelineMDD project, the authors prepared an online survey. The questionnaire was prepared by the authors of this report. In addition, the questionnaires were considered by the master student Kathrin Fasch BSc, for her diploma thesis "Stakeholder Management im Biosphärenpark Mur-Drau-Donau" (not yet published at the current stage of the study).

For the online survey 1KA (<https://www.1ka.si/d/en>) was used. This is an open source application that enables services for online surveys (developed and operated by the Center for Social Informatics at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana).⁸

The objectives of this survey were:

- (1) to find out more about people's attitudes, wishes and concerns about this unique biosphere reserve;
- (2) to find out their interest in cooperating with other organizations in the biosphere reserve;
- (3) to find out what common goals and interests are most important to the respondents.

The goal of the survey was to compile a list of key stakeholders that are critical to transnational cooperation and the future success of the TBR MDD. The survey was addressed not only to project partners and associated project partners of the lifelineMDD project, but to all stakeholders active in the TBD MDD area (fisheries and hunting management, agriculture, forestry, nature

⁸ The survey can be found under the following link: <https://1ka.arnes.si/a/da346b73> (See Anex

conservation, water management, river restoration, municipalities, education, tourism...). The questionnaire combined closed and open questions people could fill it in 10-15 minutes.

Results are presented in chapter V.

E. Consultations with Municipalities in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura, Slovenia

To gain better insight into the situation in the field in part of TBR MDD in Slovenia, the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation decided to organize bilateral meetings with the representatives of all 16 municipalities in Slovenia that are members of the Mura River Biosphere Reserve (Mura River BR) and thus also the TBR MDD. Interviews in the field were conducted on 27/06/2022, 28/06/2022, 29/06/2022 and 12/07/2022. In each interview 1-2 representatives of ZRSVN, 1-2 representatives of the external expert Iskriva and 1 or more representatives from the municipality participated.

The purpose of the consultations was threefold:

1. To collect proposals on future thematic activities of the municipalities and the Pomurje region which are relevant for the vision and development of the TBR MDD;
2. To gain feedback on the establishment of the management organization for BR Mura;
3. To collect feedback and proposals on forms of stakeholder cooperation in Slovenia and in TBR MDD based on the opinions of the municipalities.

The discussion in terms of thematic aspects followed the pillars of the MAB programme, which are also represented in the TBD MDD Management Plan/Nomination Form:

1. Ecological Conservation and ecosystem services
 - a. Activities for restoration of the Mura River (presentation of Natura Mura measures)
 - b. Forestry
 - c. Floodplain protection
 - d. Ecological agriculture, local food supply
 - e. Climate change mitigation and adaptation
2. Socio-economic sustainable development and livelihood
 - a. Tourism development
 - b. Nature interpretation
 - c. Cultural and natural heritage
3. Logistic support and capacity building
 - a. Educational activities, cooperation with schools
4. Transboundary/national level management and cooperation
 - a. Cooperation within the municipality
 - b. Cooperation with other municipalities
 - c. Cross-border cooperation
 - d. Transnational cooperation.

The gained insights and proposals can be considered as a general overview of the local situation in the TBR MDD and contributed additionally to the visibility of the TBR MDD and the lifelineMDD activities in the Slovenian part of it, as well as of the BR Mura.

The following municipalities were involved: Beltinci, Šentilj, Tišina, Murska Sobota and Murska Sobota Development Center, Velika Polana, Apače, Gornja Radgona, Radenci, Veržej, Ljutomer, Razkrižje, Lendava and Črenšovci.

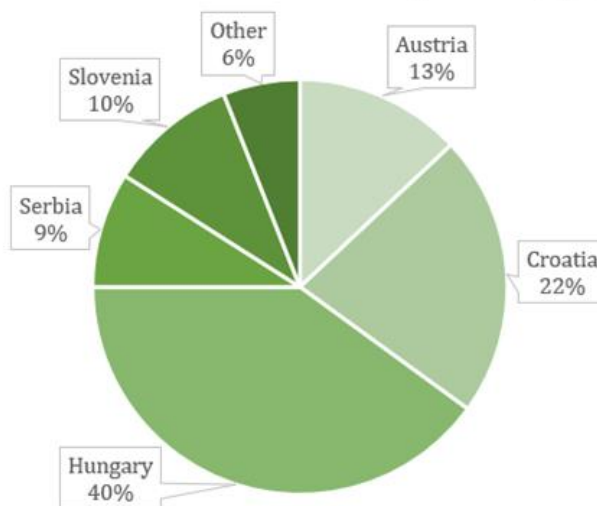
Results are presented in chapter V.

V. Results of the TBR MDD Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

A. TBR MDD Stakeholder Analysis

The stakeholder analysis includes presentation of identified stakeholders by country (figure 9), by category (figure 10) and by sector (figure 11). Percentages of identified stakeholders by country (figure 9) roughly correlate to the percentage of the area of each country in the whole TBR MDD. Most identified stakeholders (40%) come from Hungary, followed by Croatia (22%), Austria (13%), Slovenia (10%) and Serbia (9%). During the nomination process for the TBR MDD, Hungary co-submitted an area extension (Zollner & Wolf 2019). Accordingly, the large share of identified Hungarian stakeholders can be explained. This extension, also expanded the catchment area for potential stakeholders. Since the definition of a stakeholder used in this report is very broad, 6% of identified stakeholders that come from either European countries outside the TBR MDD area or operate internationally are included in the mapping as well. Among these are mostly organizations which are experienced in the field of nature conservation (e.g. Greenpeace, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), etc.).

Identified Stakeholders by Country [%]



N = 2462

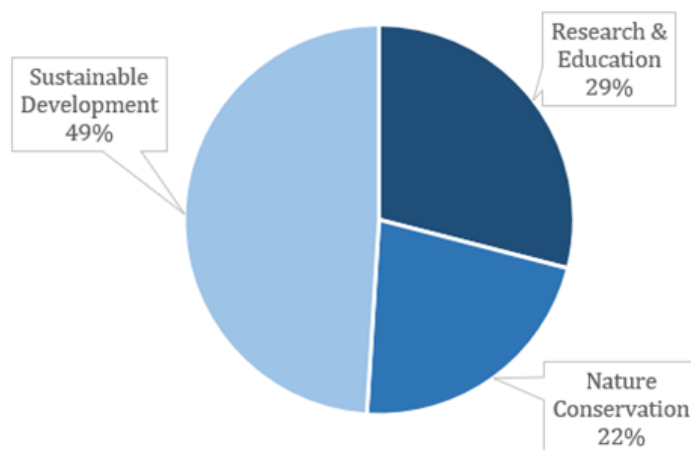
Sources: internal databases and online research and identification

Figure 9: Identified Stakeholders by Country (ISKRIVA 2022)

Identified stakeholders are divided into three categories based on three main MAB programme functions: research and education, nature conservation and sustainable development (figure 10). Most identified stakeholders represent the sustainable development category (49%), followed by

research and education (29%) and nature conservation (22%). The sustainable development category has the biggest representation since it is generally the broadest of the three.

Identified Stakeholders by Category [%]

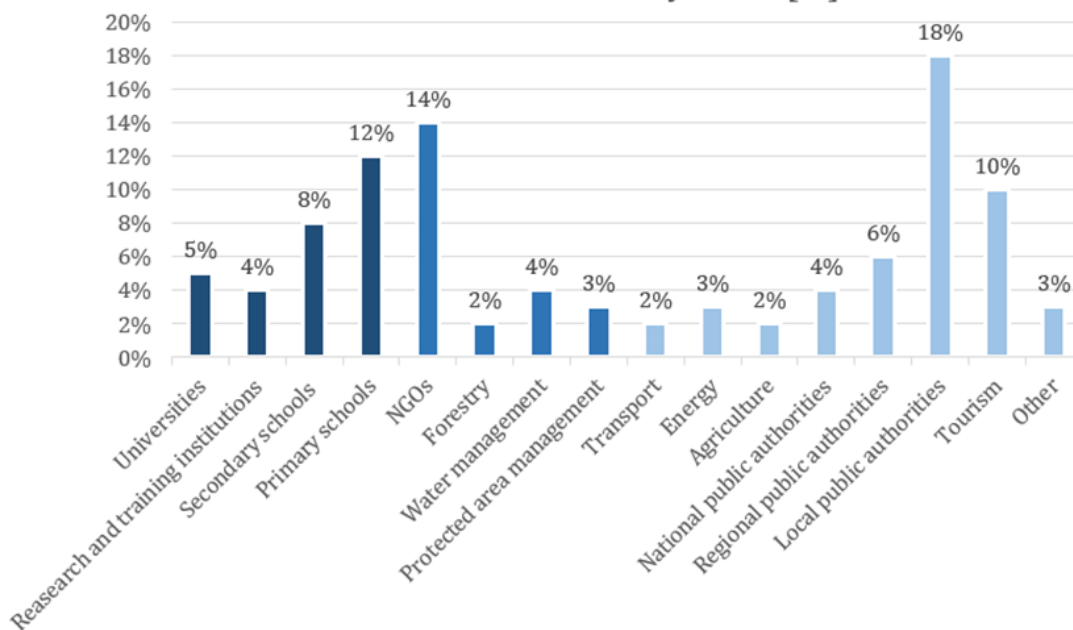


N = 2462
 Sources: internal databases and online research and identification

Figure 10: Identified Stakeholders by Category (ISKRIVA 2022)

Identified stakeholders are further divided by sectors and grouped into subcategory (figure 11):

Identified Stakeholders by Sector [%]



N = 2462
 Sources: internal databases and online research and identification

Figure 11: Identified Stakeholders by Sector (ISKRIVA 2022)

Category **research and education** consists of four subcategories: universities, research and training institutions, secondary and primary schools. Primary schools have the highest representation (12%), followed by secondary schools (8%), universities (5%) and research and training institutions (4%). This correlates to the actual general levels of the number of institutions in the primary, secondary and tertiary education. It is necessary to mention that primary schools included in the list are located in the regions which are part of the TBR MDD, whereas among the secondary schools, universities and research institutions there are also institutions which are located outside the TBR MDD, but are addressing the topics which are relevant for the TBR MDD management body (e.g. Ecology and Ecosystems programme at the University of Vienna).

The category **nature conservation** consists of four subcategories: NGOs, forestry companies, water management companies and protected area management bodies. The most represented sector in this category are NGOs (14%), followed by water management companies (4%), protected area management bodies (3%) and forestry companies (2%). This is due to the fact that NGOs are generally more represented than the other three subcategories, because it is a much broader sector than, for example, forestry. NGOs included in the list are active in the field of nature conservation, mostly in the area of TBR MDD (e.g. BirdLife association). Protected area management bodies included in the list are inside the TRB MDD area (e.g. Danube-Drava National Park Directorate) as well as outside the area (e.g. ARGE Geopark Karavanks) since it is highly valuable to build on the experiences, share the lessons learnt and transfer the know-how.

The category **sustainable development** consists of eight subcategories: transport companies, energy companies, agriculture companies, public authorities – national, regional and local public bodies, tourism companies and other sectors. The most represented sector in this category is local public authorities (18%), followed by tourism companies (10%), regional public authorities (6%), national public authorities (4%), energy companies (3%), transport companies, agriculture companies (2%) and other sectors (3%). This also corresponds with the fact that local public authorities are generally represented in higher numbers than, for example, national public authorities. Local public authorities and regional public authorities on the list mostly include municipalities from the regions which are part of the TBR MDD (e.g. Municipality of Mureck, Regional Management Office South-East Styria, etc.). National public authorities on the list include national public bodies which are included or have the potential to be included in the development of TBR MDD area (e.g. Via Donau - Austrian Federal Waterway Administration). Tourism, energy, transport and agriculture companies included on the stakeholder list are mostly from the regions which are part of the TBR MDD.



Figure 12: Examples of the TBR MDD stakeholder map (ISKRIVA 2022)

Figure 12 represents a possible TBR MDD stakeholder map, based on the stakeholder analysis. It is very important to the authors to note that this is only an exemplary representation. This indicates that the stakeholder interface should not be considered "static" at all. Currently, some important stakeholders are missing from this picture. If one wanted to graphically represent the entire stakeholder interface of the TBR MDD, one would need much more space than this A4 report allows. The authors decided to use this schematic representation to give a first schematic impression of the complex structure. It contains examples of identified stakeholders and their location on the map, categorized by countries, categories and sectors.

C. Results of the Interactive Workshops

Two interactive workshops were organized to get direct stakeholder input for the proposal of the stakeholder platforms for TBR MDD.

Results of the 1st Interactive Workshop with Stakeholders – 25 November 2022

Participants' role was to share their ideas and insights regarding the relevant guiding question using an interactive tool (Miro, a virtual whiteboard). The detailed list of all comments can be found in the Annex – C.

In **group 1. General design – how can it work, what is needed**, three points were emphasized: 1) make sure that stakeholders feel as part of the biosphere reserve; 2) look at the stakeholder groups which are already strong. Under this point, the moderator added that hidden stakeholders should be identified and integrated as well; 3) how the stakeholder involvement should be organized. Under this point, the moderator added that a target-oriented approach should be used, the same approach can't be applied to every stakeholder group.



Figure 13: Virtual discussion from group 1 "General Design - how can it work, what is needed" (Miro Board by E.C.O. 2022)

In **group 2. Concrete topics for stakeholder involvement**, six clusters were identified: 1) ecological topics, large scale river restoration – corridor impact, to focus on different species and habitats; 2) how to upgrade management statuses; 3) promotion of cultural heritage, between countries and outside TBR, joint branding, joint products, promotion of SMEs; 4) transformation of bigger businesses into more sustainable practices, paradigm shift in financing the restoration; 5) development of sustainable farming, use of regenerative farming; 6) sustainable tourism and promotion of local providers.



Figure 14: Virtual discussion from group 1 "Concrete Topics ...for stakeholder involvement" (Miro Board by E.C.O. 2022)

In **group 3. Good practices of stakeholder involvement** in many projects and good practice examples were emphasized that are already implemented in the area. Past projects such as GoMura or coopMDD and their outputs were highlighted. Many stakeholder processes on specific topics started in these projects.

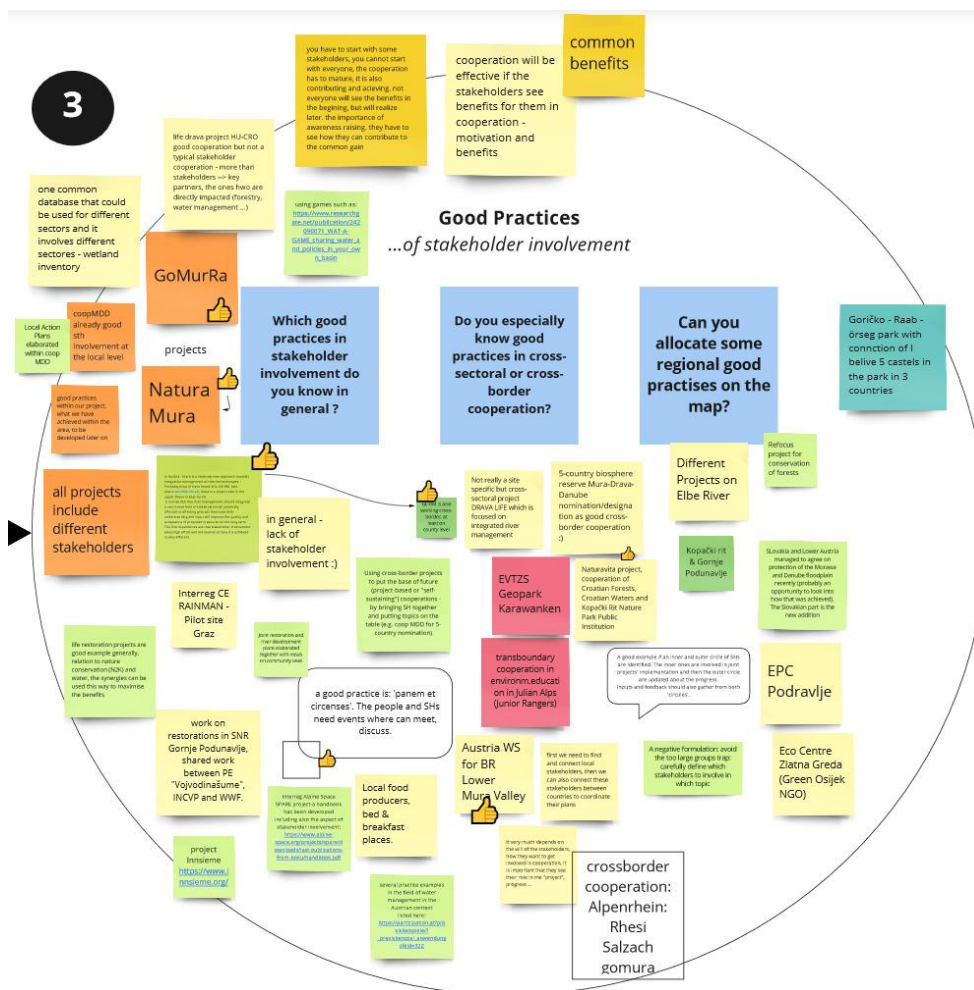


Figure 15: Virtual discussion from group 1 "Good Practices of stakeholder involvement" (Miro Board by E.C.O. 2022)

Results of the 2nd Interactive Workshop with Stakeholders – 5 May 2022

Keynote Presentation by Gerald Hartman (Geopark Karawanks)

The workshop included a keynote presentation: 10 years of formal bilateral cooperation between Austria and Slovenia by Gerald Hartmann from EGTC Geopark Karawanks.

During the Q&A after the presentation, the possibility of application of The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in the TBR MDD was discussed, pointing out the advantages and disadvantages – the advantages being to have the power and responsibilities to make your own decisions and to not be limited to a certain topic or working field and disadvantages being the process to convince each municipality included in the area to agree to the terms. Most EGTC members are bilateral, one example of a transboundary EGTC member is Alpine Pearls.

Mr. Hartmann explained that the Geopark Karawanks has an office in Austria, six employees and that their funding does not come directly from the EU but from the municipalities, the government and the EU and national projects. He added that they are using working groups to collect the ideas, whereas the operative groups are dealing with the actual implementation of projects.

Mr. Hartmann also explained that they established the organizational structure for their own needs, with help from UNESCO later in the process. The difference between Geopark Karawanks and other geoparks is that they have only one bilateral organizational body, whereas others mostly have two national bodies working together.

The main conclusions for Mr. Hartman out of the cross-border cooperation were the following:

- manageable, **identity-generating area**;
- **Bilingualism** – involving regional stakeholders from the cross-border area;
- the voluntarism has to change into „**obligatory cooperation**“;
- the „**decision-making**“ process has to be 50:50 (between both countries);
- equivalent distribution of **personnel**;
- clearly defined **contact persons at the municipalities-level**;
- **own resources** have to be guaranteed annually;
- **suitable legal form** for the bilateral cooperation – EGTC;
- comprehensible and **binding bilateral strategy** of border area;
- „**multi-fund**“ cooperation;
- **clear definition of common projects in the border area**;
- projects have to be **bilateral-focused and innovative**.

Interactive session

Conclusions per each proposed stakeholder platform:

- **Group 1: Project working groups / Task Groups**
 - not all of the of the proposed topics are the most appropriate to be included in project working groups / task groups (e.g. agriculture and forestry, fishing and hunting)
 - some important topics are missing (e.g. climate change, education, awareness raising)
 - NGOs are active and motivated and should be included in the working groups as much as possible
 - consider the language barrier and start forming working groups as early as possible

Key topics:

- land use planning
 - nature conservation, restoration
 - climate change
 - education and awareness raising
- **Group 2: Market place / TBR MDD stakeholder conference**
 - identification with the TBR MDD is crucial
 - create a common marketing brand on TBR MDD level
 - more emphasis on addressing climate change
 - equal role of all 5 countries
 - topics are interlinked - with developing one, also other will develop

Key topics:

- regional development, cooperation
- ecological agriculture

- locally produced products
- **Group 3: Youth forum/parliament**
 - use this platform to develop a common vision, build identity and value of TBR MDD
 - awareness raising on TBR MDD opportunities
 - start with local events
 - important role of NGOs working with youth
 - connecting different generations (each with their own strengths and weaknesses)

Key topics:

- nature conservation
- youth empowerment
- new technologies
- international knowledge exchange

D. Results of the Questionnaire

The survey was opened by 86 people but only answered by 41 individuals mostly by local municipalities, tour information centers, NGOs, project partners, local societies and also individual persons. Half of the answers came from Slovenian stakeholders. Most of the participants of the survey were already aware of the TBR MDD (54%; 37% know it well) and were somehow involved with this. Only 2% haven't heard from the TBR MDD. The answers regarding the attitude towards the Mura-Drava-Danube biosphere reserve are almost completely positive (63% support the TBR MDD; 32% are in favor of a Protected Area in their region). Participants expect that the biosphere reserve will impact the quality of their environment (88% assess the impact on their daily life as „Positive“).

Participants have high expectations for the implementation of the TBR MDD, especially in the following three areas: Protection of the landscape/flora/fauna; Networking of different interest groups; Sustainable regional development. According to the responses, the TBR MDD will have the greatest impact on the quality of the environment. The following main reasons were detected:

- The TBR MDD is an important piece of landscape saved from destruction.
- The TBR MDD promotes the sustainable development of the region.
- The TBR MDD increases the recreation factor for people.

What is required is support for the implementation of measures such as the development of sustainability strategies (73%) as well as transparency regarding future project and measures (68%). Most stakeholders are connected to other stakeholders of the BR (54%) and would like to take the initiative to network with other stakeholders (70%). They also had a say in the development of the TBR MDD (59%).

Most commonly the stakeholders would like to have an internal online platform (65%) where they could find all the latest news about the biosphere reserve and its activities and regular meetings (68%) where measures would be presented, involvement in projects takes place and discourse could take place.

The regular meetings were also highlighted in the individual responses. Many partners would like to see an active exchange at eye level in their context, preferably also in small groups or working groups.

All mentioned areas of intervention for the development of the TBR MDD were rated as nearly equally important (see figure 16).

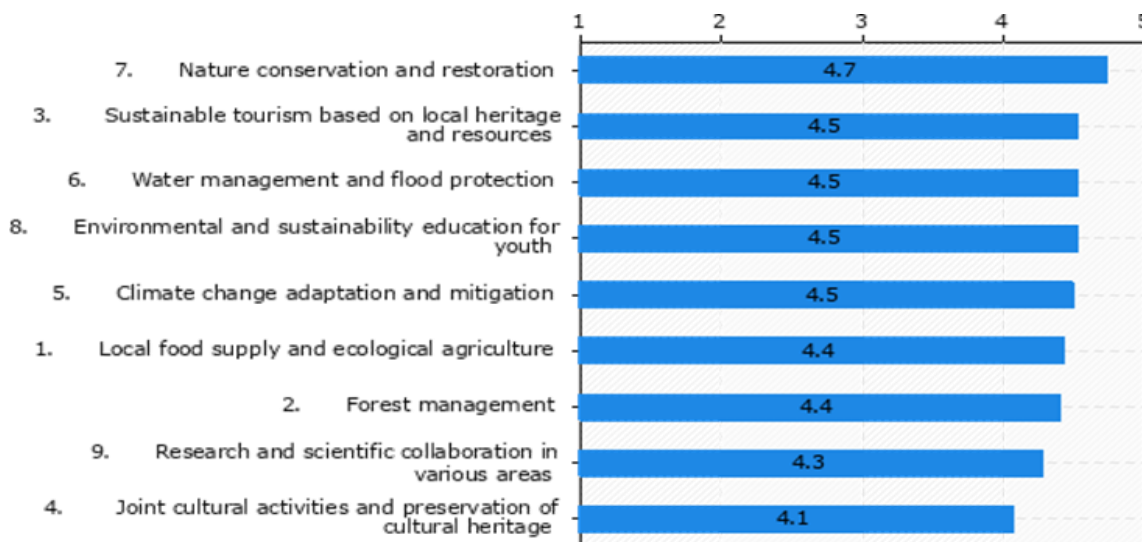


Figure 16: Analysis of the Question 3.1 (How important do you find the listed areas of intervention for the development of the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube? see Annex – G.)

64 % of people/institutions were involved in 1-3 projects in the TBR MDD context or linked to the BR. Most of these projects were Interreg projects on the bilateral or 5-country level so far and are still interested in participating in such (82%; figure 17).

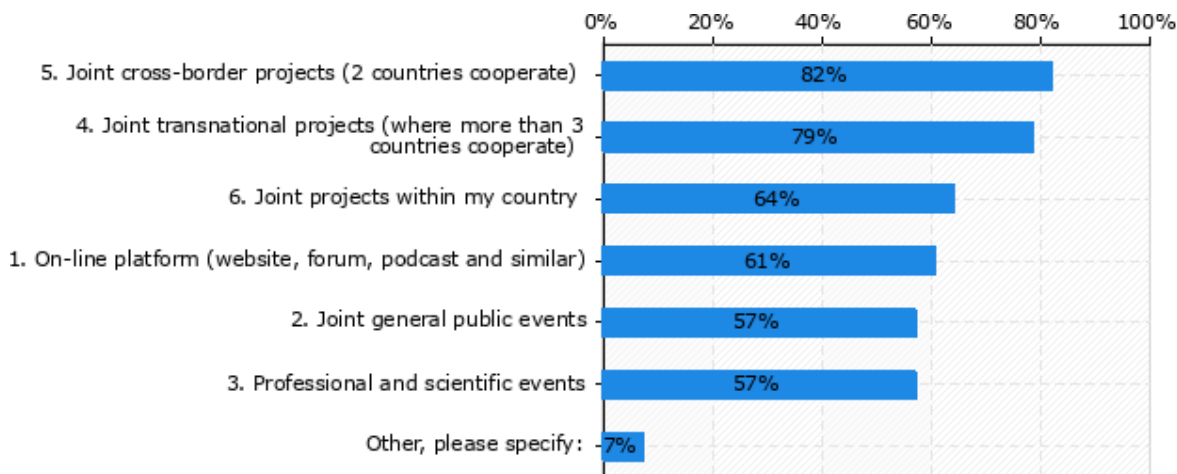


Figure 17: Analysis of Question 4.1 (In what form of projects are you interested to cooperate with other stakeholders? see Annex - G.)

E. Proposals from consultations with municipalities in the Biosphere Reserve Mura, Slovenia

The consultations with municipalities in the BR Mura in the scope of WP T4 Stakeholder platforms for sustainable cooperation gave the authors and participants very valuable inputs for understanding the opinions related to the TBR MDD and BR Mura in the region. The insight was

extremely useful for a more in-depth development of propositions for stakeholder platforms based on sustainable cooperation.

Final conclusions from the consultations are the following:

- A joint foundation is needed to manage the area along Mura. There should be joint coordination and management and clear rules of the game.
- We need a strong dialogue, listening to different opinions and finding solutions.
- There is a crucial role of the local level (municipalities, associations, inhabitants) which should not be overlooked.
- The newly established organisation should bring benefits for all and should not impose new limitations and new structure “above the local level”.
- The local level stakeholders generally support cooperation for all relevant topics and at all levels.
- The local level organisations expect concrete results and follow-up of the proposals they are presenting. They are very busy with operational tasks and have to devote time carefully to additional activities that are not in their core job description.
- The municipalities find crucial relevant infrastructure projects for the good of their inhabitants. They are afraid that the nature conservation status will increase the limitations for developing infrastructure projects.
- It is essential to focus on dialogue, building trust in all steps in the process. There have been too many promises and limited realisation in the past, and therefore the stakeholders are very sceptical and sometimes pessimistic.
- We need to find ways to bring the TBR MDD/BR Mura to the ground and start small motivation projects and events.
- In some cases, it was understood that the BR management “will be someone out there who will put everything at their place” – sometimes the expectations seemed unrealistic.
- Regarding the stakeholder cooperation and various platforms, the feedback was:
 - the proposed stakeholder platforms are mostly relevant
 - municipalities prefer live meetings
 - there should be clear agenda and benefits
 - employees don't have time to join events which do not have a clear follow up.

Regarding the topics of cooperation, municipalities are very active in all areas relevant for the work of BRs, each with different emphases. Based on their core function, they mostly focus on local level, cooperate widely in line with their possibilities, and lack the operational capacity for more intense regional or international cooperation. Following topics were addressed:

- Nature conservation: Natura Mura and other projects implementing measures along Mura and taking care of habitats and species;
- Forestry: management of forests;
- Land use planning: ensuring infrastructure and land use planning related to the BR and the needs of the locals and visitors;
- Flood protection: the dike along Mura will be renovated and additionally built in cooperation with the directorate for waters; other measures are in place;
- Tourism: all municipalities are active in arranging various hiking and cycling paths, managing natural and cultural heritage, organising local and regional cultural, sport and

entertainment events, supporting the environment for tourism development, some are more active also at regional and international level, proposing joint tourism products etc.

- Education: schools are promoting the BR, and could be part of a BR-school-network of schools in the TBR MDD.

The insights from these consultations represent an important step towards forming the final report and building a foundation for future stakeholder cooperation in the TBR MDD area.

VI. Practical Roadmap for proactive Cooperation of Stakeholders in the TBR MDD

The life cycle of a UNESCO biosphere reserve consists of four main milestones: Idea (participation | feasibility study), Nomination, Implementation and Evaluation. The TBR MDD was nominated in 2020 and officially designated by UNESCO in 2021. In a simple national UNESCO Biosphere Reserve the implementation of a functioning management body should be established immediately within three to five years.

In this context, a management plan should be developed, funding should be secured and measures related to the three functions of a BR should be developed and already implemented. These will then be evaluated for the first time after 10 years. The evaluation will be repeated every 10 years to ensure sustainable development.

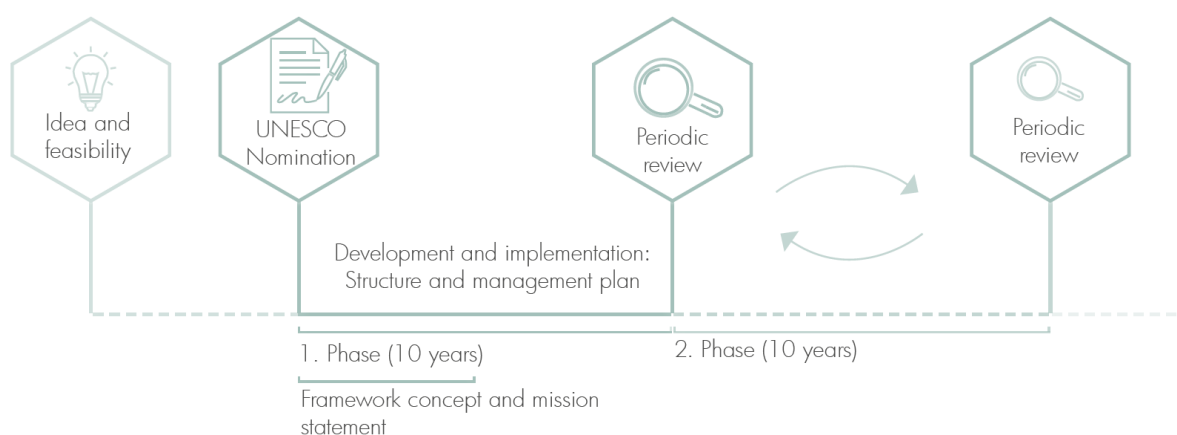


Figure 18: Life Cycle of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (E.C.O. 2022)

In the TBR MDD, this process is more complex. Here, first the national level, i.e. the linear procedure as described above, must be followed. According to current UNESCO guidelines, however, a five-country Evaluation (Periodic Review for Transboundary Biosphere Reserve; Version: January 2013)⁹ should also take place for the TBR MDD as a whole (in 2031). The guideline until then is to establish a functioning joint management and a stakeholder interface in the areas of the three BR functions:

⁹ Periodic Review for Transboundary Biosphere Reserve; Version: January 2013: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/tbr_periodic_review_en.pdf

“The TBR will not function without a joint structure devoted to its coordination. Although this structure can vary greatly from one TBR to another, the following points can be recommended:

- *The coordinating structure is representative of various administrations and the scientific boards, as well as the authorities in charge of the protected areas, the representatives of local communities, interested and affected groups, including youth, and of the private sector.*
- *The NGO sector in the area is also represented in the structure.*
- *This structure has a permanent secretariat, and a budget is devoted to its functioning.*
- *A person is designated on each side to act as a focal point for cooperation.*
- *General and regular meetings of the coordinating structure are complemented by thematic groups, on an ad hoc basis, in order to create a platform for discussion among stakeholders from the countries concerned, with a view to promote all opportunities for exchanging views and knowledge.*
- *Joint staff teams are operational for specific tasks.*
- *An association is set up with the specific aim of promoting the TBR.*

(Pamplona Recommendations (Spain, 2000); UNESCO 2013).”

A. Roadmap for Stakeholder Engagement within the TBR MDD

Within this chapter, the Roadmap follows a multi-stakeholder approach, supported by the presentation of hybrid stakeholder models, towards the involvement, structure, implementation, and evaluation of functioning stakeholder platforms for the TBR MDD. The stakeholder platforms within the TBR MDD shall:

- be the main tool to ensure transboundary cooperation of the stakeholders of the 5 countries involved,
- discuss diverse interests and opinions on a cross-sectoral basis,
- enable stakeholders also to carry out decision-making processes and include various forms of organized multi-stakeholder integration, such as the respective Biosphere Reserve management boards, partnerships, and coalitions,
- be based on the Joint Vision, the joint Common Work Plan (CWP), and the joint draft structure on which all State Parties agreed during the nomination process.

Multi-stakeholder platforms offer the possibility to involve different and many stakeholders in the process of interest exchange and/or decision making (see also Pamplona Recommendations (Spain, 2000); UNESCO 2013).

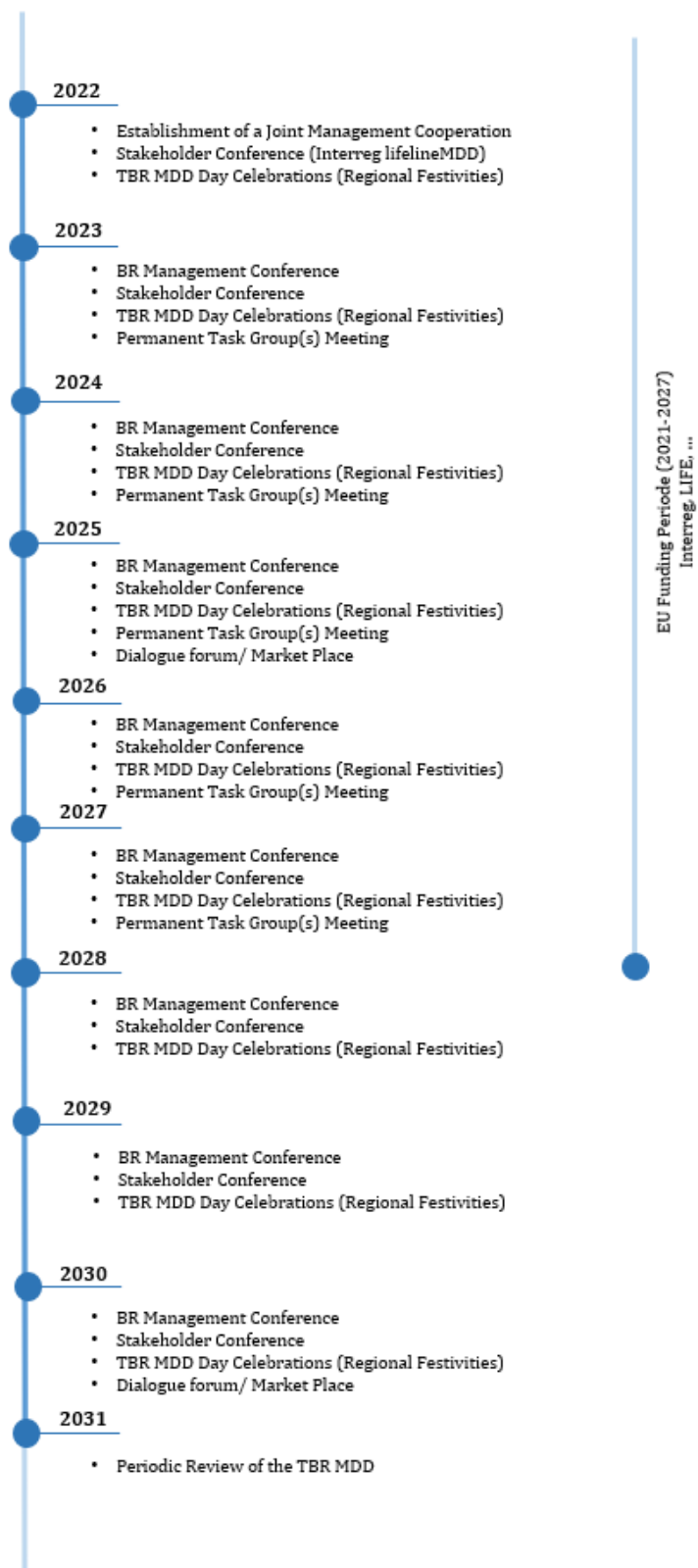


Figure 19: Roadmap - The Stakeholder engagement from the Nomination to the Evaluation within 10 Years

The following chapters describe the individual points of the roadmap, as shown in figure 19, in more depth.

B. Stakeholder Platforms in the TBR MDD

Taking the diversity of methodological stakeholder involvement into account, and based on the information of previous chapters the following forms of transboundary multi-stakeholder platforms could be established within the frame of the TBR MDD¹⁰:

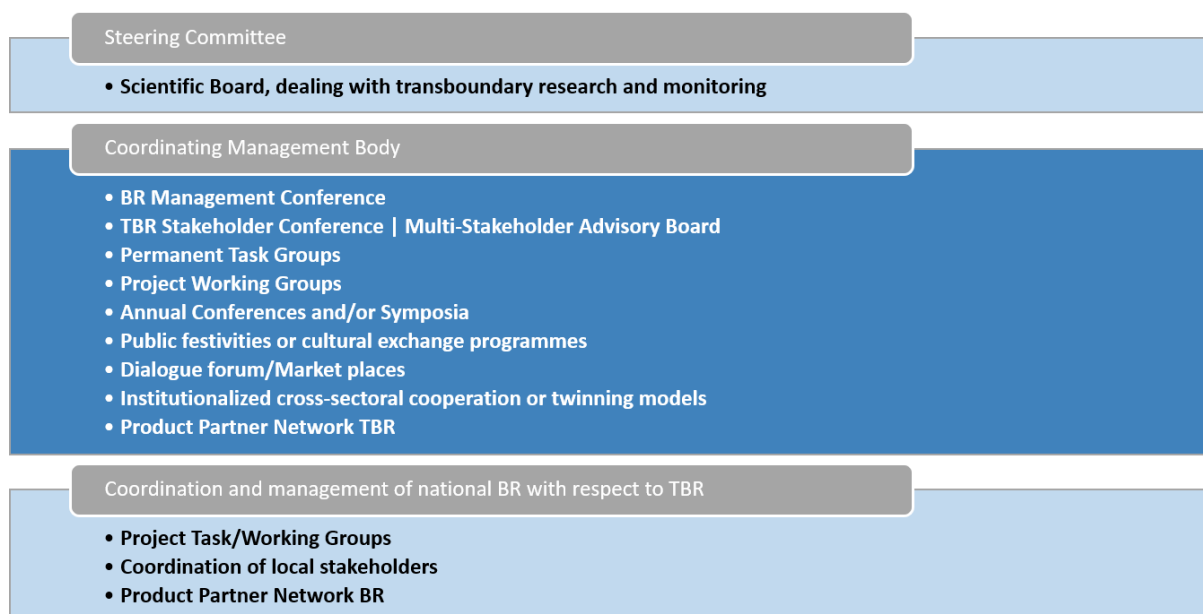


Figure 20: Overview based on figure 5 of potential Stakeholder Platforms for the TBR MDD referring to the National BR Managements and the TBR MDD harmonised management (Own presentation)

Long-lasting stakeholder cooperation and ecological connectivity for the rivers Mura, Drava and Danube can only be achieved through cooperation across borders, sectors and interest groups (DANUBEPARKS 2019). The following list characterises each of the bullet points in figure 20 in detail, describing the main focus and engaged stakeholder group, as well as possible contents and implementation tools (further approaches to the implementation can be found in this chapter):

Annual:

BR Management Conference

- *Main focus:* permanent exchange and alignment of the National BR Managements according the TBR MDD vision, mission and goals
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* BR management bodies
- *Possible contents:* consultation of management plans and management processes, river connectivity, ecological connectivity, youth involvement

¹⁰ For a detailed image of a multi-stakeholder platforms, please see the following link: <https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol21/iss1/art18/figure2.html>

- *Implementation tools:* cooperation agreements, joint projects, joint management committees, staff exchange

TBR Stakeholder Conference | Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Board

- *Main focus:* permanent exchange and orientation for the BR managements and TBR harmonised management structure
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* civil society, great public, entrepreneurs, youth
- *Possible contents:* depending on the focus of the BR Managements and TBR MDD harmonised management, youth involvement
- *Implementation tools:* workshops and large group events

Permanent Task Groups

- *Main focus:* permanent exchange and development of specific solutions and recommendations on actual topics and challenges affecting the Biosphere Reserve
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* institutionalized stakeholder groups from different sectors as well as youth
- *Possible contents:* river connectivity, restoration, joint product development, management of different sectors such as for example hunting, fishing, forestry, tourism and recreation, youth involvement etc.
- *Implementation tools:* workshops during joint management procedures, ideas and inputs for strategies and guidelines, regular online meetings, excursions

Project Working Groups¹¹

- *Main focus:* temporary exchange and cooperation within the frame of international projects.
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* project environment/project and other implementation partners, the public
- *Possible contents:* depending on the topic of the project
- *Implementation tools:* workshops, online meetings, (online) working groups, newsletters, excursions, awareness raising and volunteering actions

Annual Conferences and/or Symposia

- *Main focus:* bridging the gap between the different levels and sectors of stakeholders with regards to interdisciplinary (technical approaches), transdisciplinary (practical fields affected) and governance level (decision maker).
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* decision makers, experts and scientists, stakeholders affected, stakeholders relevant for implementation or funding, companies, land use interest groups, youth
- *Possible contents:* ecological and economic development of the Biosphere Reserve as a whole, youth involvement
- *Implementation tools:* Event (conferences/symposium) in the course of the joint management procedures, online meetings

¹¹ See also the respective project websites of the Interreg projects lifeline MDD and GoMurra: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/lifelinemdd> and <https://www.gomurra.eu/>

Public festivities or cultural exchange programmes

- *Main focus:* integration of the broad public/civil society into the TBR MDD development (e.g., every year in another national BR – TBR MDD Day, ideally the one holding the joint coordination)
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* public/civil society, media, youth
- *Possible contents:* culture, music, arts, social aspects (i.e. Product-Partner Network)
- *Implementation tools:* classical events (festivals, celebrations); specific exchange programmes

Periodically – to be organised:

Dialogue forum¹²/Market places

- *Main focus:* Permanent and coached platforms to collect actual ideas, problems, requests
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* open to all, but especially to small businesses, producers, farmers and local/regional initiatives
- *Possible contents:* searching for partnerships, searching for or providing good solutions or good practices, asking for specific support, offering services, tourism development, development of joint TBR MDD-products, youth involvement
- *Implementation tools:* workshops, online exchange platforms, data bases, joint projects, cooperation agreements

Permanently – to be installed:

Institutionalized cross-sectoral cooperation or twinning models

- *Main focus:* Long-term collaboration of a few stakeholders on topics which they are closely tied to but are looking at it from a different perspective, and thus can benefit from each other
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* different combinations possible like e.g., actors from science and education; tourism and health; forestry and product development; nature conservation and agriculture, youth
- *Possible contents:* scientific project development and research¹³
- *Implementation tools:* cooperation agreements, joint projects, joint management committees,

Product Partner Network Biosphere Reserve

- *Main focus:* Long-term collaboration of partner Biosphere Reserves within the WNBR
- *Engaged stakeholder group:* BR National Managements/TBR MDD joint transboundary cooperation

¹² One example is the Upper Austria River Dialogue, please visit the following link for further details:
https://www.partizipation.at/flussdialoge_oberoesterreich.html

¹³ One example could be a scientific cooperation between the joint transboundary cooperation (or certain National BR Managements) with universities or scientific institutions, such as the SCiENCE_Link^{nockberge}. For further details, please visit the following link: https://www.biosphaerenparknockberge.at/science_link-nockberge/

- *Possible contents:* Implementation of measures and activities on the three main goals of TBRs
- *Implementation tools:* workshops, exchange meetings, joint projects, excursions

The above proposed stakeholder platforms shall be the main tool to ensure cross-sectoral, intergenerational and transboundary cooperation in the TBR MDD after the project end. The involvement of the stakeholders identified here should always be handled within the framework of the TBR MDD with regard to UNESCO certification and its overarching goals. In a first step, the respective Biosphere Reserve managers must act as multipliers. There are already transboundary initiatives and projects being carried out, but the involvement of the population and individuals is just as important as that of institutions and organisations. Communication platforms such as those mentioned above must be created for this purpose.

C. Implementation and Evaluation

The implementation of stakeholder platforms lies in the hands of the respective Ministries of Environment, the Biosphere Reserve Coordination Board as well as the respective Biosphere Reserve managements. However, as the previous chapters show, the implementation, especially of measures and actions, lies with the local population and stakeholders.

Stakeholder processes and the implementation of them works best by integrating tools according to a systematic approach. Nowadays these tools may be analogue and/or virtual (see also Stakeholder Analysis, Chapter V.).

Approaches for stakeholder involvement	Tools
1. Identification of stakeholders	
a. Stakeholder analysis	i. Check for balance
	ii. Prioritise certain stakeholders
	iii. Tailor engagement activities
	iv. Phase engagement
	v. Identify potential conflict/bias and plan for mitigation
b. Selection process	i. Purposive selection
	ii. Snowballing
	iii. Open call
	iv. Systematic approach
2. Initial invitation	
a. Invitation type	e.g., open call/advertisement versus closed invitation (selected stakeholders only)
b. Invitation format and wording	e.g., email/telephone/conference presentation
c. Tailor invitation to specific stakeholders/stakeholder groups	
d. Clarify purpose and format of stakeholder engagement	
3. Initial engagement	
a. Format	i. Group meeting/workshop
	ii. 1-on-1
	iii. Remote (email, online or post)
b. Plan for dealing with conflict	i. Involve experienced mediator/facilitator
	ii. Modify engagement format to minimise conflict
	iii. Plan for dealing with unresolvable conflict, e.g., where compromise would impact the review
4. Maintaining interest throughout the process	
a. Level of on-going communication with stakeholders	i. Regular contact to avoid lack-of-interest
5. Acknowledging stakeholder contribution	

a. Acknowledge all engaged stakeholders	
b. Obtain informed consent before naming specific stakeholders	
c. Describe planned/completed stakeholder engagement activities in the protocol/minutes	
6. Eliciting feedback on stakeholder engagement activities	
a. Request feedback on perceived success of stakeholder engagement process from stakeholders	e.g., through opinions and comments
b. Use feedback to assess success of engagement process	i Define stakeholder engagement success as (1) Stakeholder feeling of inclusion, (2) Stakeholder opinions taken into consideration and (3) Stakeholder endorsement of the review
7. Critical self-assessment	
a. Evaluate stakeholder engagement processes internally	
b. Evaluate stakeholder engagement processes externally by independent body	
c. Publish findings of evaluation	
d. Alter processes in the future where necessary	

Table 4: Approaches and tools for stakeholder engagement (adapted after Haddaway et al. 2017)

In general, the following parameters should be considered for evaluating stakeholder engagement (Marega & Uratarič 2011; Kusters et al. 2018):

- *Representation:* The platforms represent all relevant stakeholders in the landscape; already included members accept the way in which new platforms members are selected.
- *Participation & equity:* All members participate and are heard in discussions; informing and the engagement process started in an early phase of measure implementation when different options were still open; all members can influence decision making within the platforms.
- *Accountability & transparency:* Members can hold each other accountable for their actions and decisions; information and decision-making are transparent.
- *Capacities:* Platform members have proper knowledge and skills to realize the platforms' goals; platform members have access to diverse sources of information (including local scientific, technological, and legislative knowledge)
- *Resources:* Platforms have sufficient financial resources to operate effectively; platforms have a viable plan to secure financial resources in the future.
- *Adaptive management:* Platforms' plans can change based on periodic reflection on their functioning; members are able to address complaints/suggestions/conflicts within the platforms.
- *Leadership:* Members accept and trust the platforms' leadership; members accept the selection process of leadership.
- *Theory of change:* Members agree on most of the platforms' goals for the future of the TBR MDD landscape; the knowledge and skills of participants in the engagement processes improved; platforms have a clear and agreed-upon strategy to achieve these goals.
- *Facilitation and communication:* Platforms are effective in the organization of meetings and mobilization of agreed actions; information is widely shared among members.

- *Trust*: Members feel comfortable sharing information and making agreements; Members feel welcome, informed, and encouraged to contribute.
- *Commitment*: Members are committed to the discussions and the agreements; stakeholders are willing to look for compromises.

Every 10 years BRs are evaluated by the UNESCO. This is done by means of an evaluation form which is officially pre-audited by the National MAB Committee and then sent to the UNESCO in Paris¹⁴: *“The periodic review of Transboundary Biosphere Reserves (TBR), refers to the recommendations of the ad-hoc task force which met during the International Expert Meeting on the Implementation of the Seville Strategy of the WNBR (Seville+5), in Pamplona, Spain, October 2000. Transboundary Biosphere Reserve is an official recognition of a political will to cooperate on key issues for the conservation and sustainable use through coordinated management of a shared ecosystem. It also represents a commitment of two or more countries to apply together the Seville Strategy for biosphere reserves and its objectives.”*

The TBR evaluation or periodic review is based on the principles and goals included in the nomination form. It is important to strengthen and force cultural as well as social cooperation.

Further evaluation concepts for transboundary cooperation that the TBR MDD can benefit from are the development of a specific Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring (BRIM)¹⁵, the Diagnostic tool for transboundary conservation planners by IUCN¹⁶ or the EUROPARC Standards for transfrontier cooperation¹⁷.

VII. Conclusions

The preparation of this report, including the roadmap mentioned above, was a stakeholder process in itself. Various international organisations were involved in the preparation. The framework was primarily provided by the TBR MDD, of course, but above all by the lifelineMDD project, which made the cooperation possible in the first place. In summary, the following points can be made:

Conclusions from Literature Analysis

Through the literature review, a picture of how the TBR MDD fits into international guidance, policies, and principles was revealed. Also that stakeholder processes are complex. This is also shown by the good practice examples developed in chapter III. and Annex – A.. In addition, various communication platforms and known BR platforms were located and listed. These were used for the development of the roadmap.

Conclusions from Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis

The long list of different (2462) stakeholders made detailed analysis and evaluation difficult. Nevertheless, a comprehensive picture of the different stakeholders involved could be drawn. For

¹⁴ For detailed information, please see the following link: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/tbr_periodic_review_en.pdf

¹⁵ For further details, please see the following link: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000120107>

¹⁶ For further details and specific information on the Global Transboundary Conservation Network, please see the following links: https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/tbc_diagnostic_tool_description.pdf and <http://www.tbpa.net/>

¹⁷ For further details, please see the following link: <https://www.europarc.org/nature/transboundary-cooperation/transboundary-parks-programme/>

the development of the TBR MDD, this means that the recommended communication platforms and other platforms should be installed very soon in order to serve the wealth of different sectors with their various interests.

Conclusions from Interactive Workshops

All workshops in the scope of this process gave the authors valuable inputs for more in-depth development of propositions for stakeholder platforms based on sustainable cooperation.

During the **1st workshop**, it became clear that some stakeholders were not familiar with the concept of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and its functions. Furthermore, few representatives of BR management were present. However, in principle, they should be significantly involved in the implementation of stakeholder processes and should also be considered as drivers in such a process.

Final conclusions from the **2nd workshop**:

- the proposed stakeholder platforms (Project working groups / Task Groups, Market place / TBR MDD stakeholder conference, Youth forum/parliament) are relevant;
- focus on long-term planning;
- work towards establishing a formalized form of cooperation;
- build a link between TBR MDD representatives and other organizations.

The workshop took place online during lockdowns. Many were familiar with the online tools. The participants had the opportunity to actively participate in the discussions. However, there was no substitute for a face-to-face setting. The meetings were result-oriented and focused on specific topics, but limited by the fact that a stakeholder process benefits from being in relationship with each other. This is only possible to a limited extent online or virtual. On the other hand, some groups of stakeholder are included in the participation process - as during this project - precisely because of the online formats that take place. Some groups are excluded from on-site events, e.g. due to lack of financial resources, restricted travel and/or permission. In an area of approximately 1 million hectares, distances are easily overcome through virtual conversations.

Conclusions from Interviews with Community representatives in River

Mura Biosphere Reserve, Slovenia

The municipalities surveyed were exclusively Slovenian, so views from other countries of the TBR MDD are not represented here. In order to draw a broader picture and to generate a comprehensive opinion, the survey should also be conducted in the future with other municipal representatives in the TBR MDD.

It is felt that a common foundation is needed for the management of the area along the Mura. There should be joint coordination and management as well as clear rules of the game. In some cases, it was assumed that the BRs would act as a coordinating body and driving force.

In principle, the local level (municipalities, associations, residents) plays a crucial role that should not be neglected. Local level stakeholders generally support cooperation on all relevant issues and at all levels.

Ways must be found to put the TBR MDD/BR Mura into practice and to launch small motivational projects and events. It will be a big challenge in the future to actively involve local women

representatives in the work of BR management. However, this will require more resources, both human and financial.

Conclusions from Questionnaire TBR MDD

The results of the online survey, the low number of answers in contrast to the high number of stakeholders, show that there is still a lot of work to be done in communicating with stakeholders of the TBR MDD and the need to focus on communication in local languages.

In Slovenia, the link to the questionnaire was sent to all key stakeholders (including hunters, fishermen and farmers with whom we were in contact) and all 16 municipalities were personally asked to respond to the questionnaire. This is also reflected in the analysis of the respondents when we look at the countries in the charts. This is of course related to the fact that the authors are also the project promoters of WP T4, and that the authors may have also widened the circle of recipients through their participation and involvement in the "Amazon of Europe Biketrail" network.

Concrete recommendations according UNESCO standards

The following results should be created until the 1st Periodic Review Process in 2031 (Pamplona Recommendations (Spain, 2000); UNESCO 2013 - *with comments from the authors*):

Joint activities on research and monitoring should be led by scientific boards and planned in joint sessions; these activities could be carried out along the following lines:

- Define and implement joint research programmes –*partly done through previous projects like coopMDD and lifelineMDD, regular exchange needs to be established.*
- Develop common data collection formats, indicators, monitoring and evaluation methods – *especially important for the (joint) management of the core zone.*
- Develop joint mapping and GIS. Exchange existing data, including maps and geographical information, and facilitate access to results of research – *i.e. done through Nomination Form and previous projects like coopMDD and lifelineMDD, regular exchange needs to be established.*
- Jointly publish results of common research. Share scientific information, including through the organisation of workshops, conferences, etc. – *i.e. done through previous projects like coopMDD and lifelineMDD, regular exchange needs to be established.*
- Share equipment when feasible.
- Exchanges of scientists between universities and academic and research institutions of each country.

Many **joint activities in the field of education and training** can be recommended, such as:

- Organisation of joint training courses and technical meetings for managers and field staff – *regular exchange needs to be established.*
- Promotion of staff exchanges – *regular exchange needs to be established.*
- Promotion of understanding of neighbouring country's culture and organisation of linguistic training when needed – *regular exchange needs to be established.*
- School exchanges – *regular exchange needs to be established.*
- Launching of participatory training programmes for various groups of stakeholders – *established through lifelineMDD in Austria.*

Information and public awareness are crucially important to develop a common understanding and build support for and appropriation of the objectives of the TBR by the different stakeholders. Therefore, the rationale and objectives of the TBR should be explained by varied means to different target groups (decision makers, local populations, visitors, schools, scientists, managers, etc). Among other activities, the following can be recommended:

- Develop a common public relations' strategy with the aim of raising awareness and promoting the TBR – *established in previous projects (e.g. coopMDD, lifelineMDD, AoE Bike Trail)*.
- Produce information material, brochures, books, etc – *established in previous projects (coopMDD, lifelineMDD, AoE,...)*.
- Organise exhibits and events around the TBR – *established in previous projects (coopMDD, lifelineMDD, AoE,...), but regular events need to be established*.
- Develop a common logo for the TBR, as well as a common design for published material – *need to be developed*.
- Implement joint demonstration projects.
- Set up a common website – *need to be developed*.

The TBR MDD as such lives from its residents. Biosphere reserves aim at linking people-environment relationships and should bring exactly this to the fore. Diversity plays an overriding role, especially in the transboundary area, and this diversity should be lived. Communication platforms between different institutions, associations, initiatives and organisations, but also between individual inhabitants, virtual or analogue, can keep the TBR MDD alive and that is what it is all about: creating a living space that allows the natural resources, the protected areas to grow and the people to identify with them, protect them and to live in them.

VIII. Literature

Austrian MAB Committee (Ed.) (2011): *Biosphere Reserves in the Mountains of the World Excellence in the Clouds?* ÖAW. Wien, Austria.

Borsdorf, A., Jungmeier, M., Braun, V. & K. Heinrich (2020): *Biosphäre 4.0 – UNESCO Biosphere Reserves als Modellregionen einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung*. Springer Spektrum. Berlin, Deutschland.

DANUBEPARKS (2019): *Ecological Connectivity in the Danube River Basin. Future Perspectives and Guiding Principles*. Orth an der Donau, Austria.

Erg, B., Vasilijević, M. & M. McKinney (Ed.) (2012): *Initiating effective transboundary conservation: A practitioner's guideline based on the experience from the Dinaric Arc*. IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe. Gland, Switzerland and Belgrade, Serbia.

Haddaway, N. R., Kohl, C., Rebelo da Silva, N., Schiemann, J., Spök, A., Stewart, R. Sweet, J. B. & R. Wilhelm (2017): *A framework for stakeholder engagement during systematic reviews and maps in environmental management*. In: Haddaway et al. Environ Evid (2018) 6:11.

Huber, M., Jungmeier, M., Glatz-Jorde, S. Höfferle, P., Berger, V. (2018): *Ecological Connectivity in the Danube Region. Final Report. Study commissioned by Bayrisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz*. E.C.O. Institut für Ökologie. Klagenfurt, Austria.

Jardin, M. & J. Fall (Ed.) (2003): *Five Transboundary Biosphere Reserves in Europe. Technical Notes*. MAB Programme, UNESCO. Paris, France.

Jungmeier, M. Paul-Horn, I. Zollner, D., Borsdorf, F., Lange, S., Reutz-Hornsteiner, B., Grasenick, K., Rossmann, D., Moser, R. & C. Diry (2009): *„Part_b: Partizipationsprozesse in Biosphärenparks – Interventionstheorie, Strategeanalyse und Prozessethik am Beispiel vom Biosphärenpark Wienerwald, Großes Walsertal und Nationalpark Nockberge“ – Band I: Zentrale Ergebnisse*. Studie im Auftrag von Österreichisches MAB-Nationalkomitee, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. E.C.O. Institut für Ökologie. Klagenfurt, Austria.

Jungmeier, M., Kirchmeir, H., Kühmaier, M., Velik, I. & D. Zollner (2005): *IPAM-Toolbox. Transnational Results (Expert System, Toolbox and Best Practice) – Study commissioned by: Office of the Carinthian Government Dept. 20*. E.C.O. Institute for Ecology Ltd., Klagenfurt.

Kusters, K., Buck, L., de Graaf, M., Minang, P., van Oosten, C. & R. Zagt (2017): *Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms in Integrated Landscape Initiatives*. In: Environmental Management (2018) 62: 170-181.

Marega, M. & N. Uratarič (2011): *Guidelines on Stakeholder engagement in preparation of integrated management plans for protected areas*. Regional environmental center for Central and Eastern Europe, Country Office Ljubljana. Ljubljana, Slovenia. NATREG: <http://www.southeast-europe.net/document.cmt?id=261>

Marill, L., Feral, F., Schachtner, E., Scovazzi, T., Tani, I., Zuna, V., Skourtos, M., Zanou, B., Tourkolias, C., Kontogianni, A., Grande, V., Foglini, F., De Leo, F., Frascchetti, S., Terribile, K., Schembri, P. & S. Sefrioui (2015): *Review and Analysis of Legislation Relevant to the Establishment and Management of MPAs*. Deliverable 6.3. CoCoNet Towards Coast to Coast NETworks of marine

protected areas (from the shore to the high and deep sea), coupled with sea-based wind energy potential.

Nemmert, A., Umgeher, L. & M. Wagner (2018): **Guidelines for a dynamic river corridor. Part of the Transboundary Cooperation Programme for the future 5-Country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (Part I)**. WWF Austria. Wien, Austria.

Nemmert, A., Umgeher, L. & M. Wagner (2018a): **Transboundary Mura-Drava-Danube Action Plan. Part of the Transboundary Cooperation Programme for the future 5-Country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (Part II)**. WWF Austria. Wien, Austria.

Stempel, R., Bostelmann, A., Busch, J. & Klöpffer S. (Eds.) (2017): **Wadden Sea Quality Status Report**. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Last updated 01.03.2018. Downloaded 19.03.2021 qsr.waddensea-worldheritage.org/reports/introduction

UNESCO (2013): Periodic Review For Transboundary Biosphere Reserve [January 2013]. Via: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/tbr_periodic_review_en.pdf [31.08.2022].

UNESCO (2017): **A New roadmap for the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and its World Network of Biosphere Reserves**. Downloaded 01.09.2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247418>

UNESCO (2020): **Statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves**. Downloaded 01.09.2021 <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373378>.

UNESCO (2021a): **Biosphere Reserves**. Retrieved on 1st October 2021 from: <https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/wnbr>.

UNESCO (2021b): **Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**. Retrieved on 1st October 2021 from: <https://en.unesco.org/mab/governance>.

Vasiljević, M., Zunckel, K., McKinney, M., Erg. B., Schoon, M. & T. Rosen Michel (2015): **Transboundary conservation: A systematic and integrated approach. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 23**. IUCN. Gland, Switzerland.

Wieser, M., Grieser, B., Drapela-Dhiflaoui, J., Leitner, H. & J. Leitner (2011): **Guidelines for regional, interregional and cross-border development strategies creating ecological corridors**. Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung, Abteilung 16 Landes und Gemeindeentwicklung. Graz, Austria.

Zollner, D. & L. Wolf (2019): **UNESCO Transboundary Nomination Form for the proposed 5-country Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube" (TBR MDD), Implementation**. E.C.O. Institute of Ecology. Klagenfurt, Austria.

IX. ANNEXES

A. List of further Transboundary Biosphere Reserves Examples

This list is based on a comprehensive literature review, online research and interviews with partners out of the network of TBRs.

The East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve, Poland/Slovakia/Ukraine

- Organisation:
 - there is no official governing body for the entire BR and no joint management plan
 - each protected area is a subject to its applicable national legislation, which dictates the standards for the establishment of management plans in its respective country
- Means of collaboration:
 - Transboundary cooperation in the ECSR has been managed primarily by members of the administration of the various protected areas throughout the TBR, transboundary cooperation in Ukrainian protected areas is informal
 - Governments, nongovernmental organizations, forest administrations, and scientific institutions are other key partners involved in cooperation
 - The predominant employers on the Polish side are forestry and tourist services, whereas subsistence agriculture and forestry dominate on the Slovak side
- Challenge:
 - competing and opposing values are at the core of the sustainability challenge (Taggart-Hodge & Schoon 2016)
 - most park personnel are well informed and have the capability to foster the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage. However, disinformation and misunderstandings (e.g., lack of protection for radio collared wolves) persist both within and among the respective agencies and protected areas in different countries. Cultural differences remain a barrier (e.g., differing attitudes towards predators)

The Tatras Biosphere Reserve, Slovakia/Poland

- Organisation:
 - In Poland management is undertaken by the Tatra National Park, Ministry of Nature Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry,
 - In Slovakia, the area is managed by the Tatra National Park Administration, which reports to Ministry of the Environment through the Headquarters of the State Nature Conservancy
- Means of collaboration:
 - There is a common action plan for functioning of the Tatra Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
 - Advisory function is performed by TTBR Steering Committee, which includes directors of national parks, representatives of local governments from municipalities located within or at the borders of the reserve, science representatives, non-governmental organizations as

well as institutions and associations which conduct activities around TTBR (<http://tpn.pl/poznaj/mab/mab-en>)

The Vosges du Nord/Pfälzerwald Biosphere Reserve, Germany/France

- Organisation:
 - The Biosphere reserve "Vosges du Nord-Pfälzerwald" is not yet owned and operated by an independent organization
 - The Biosphere reserve is operated by the two national administrative authorities – SYCOPARC and Naturpark Pfälzerwald and it does not have its own staff (<https://www.mab-france.org/en/biosphere/reserve-de-biosphere-transfrontiere-vosges-du-nord-pfaelzerwald/>)
- Means of collaboration:
 - Memorandum of Understanding, established in 1996 and regularly revised, the Reserve is managed by a Coordinating Committee which are comprised from representatives from the two former national Biosphere reserves, the cooperative union for the Northern Vosges Regional Natural Park (SYCOPARC) on the French side, and the Naturpark Pfälzerwald (Palatinate Forest Nature Park) on the German side and representatives from their partners and most notable sponsors
 - The committee makes decisions about policies and actions to be implemented across the Reserve. Depending on circumstances, these are implemented by one or other administrative authority or by third-party organizations

The Mont-Viso Biosphere Reserve, France/Italy

- Organisation:
 - The governance of the Mont Viso cross-border Biosphere reserve is based on a participatory principle associating the policymakers of the territory and the socio-professional and associative representatives, in a Steering Committee, backed up by thematic work groups.
- Means of collaboration:
 - A permanent cross-border secretariat ensures the coordination and animation of the reserve.

The West Polesie Biosphere reserve, Belarus/Poland/Ukraine

- Means of collaboration
 - International Coordination Council of the West Polesie Transboundary Biosphere Reserve – annual meetings
 - Management and action plan for the Activity TBR West Polesie
 - Strategy of Transboundary Cooperation between Lubelskie, Volyn Province and Brest Province Region for 2014 –2020 includes management issues in the TBR
 - The strategies and action plans in accordance with strategy of regional development (Report on the Belarus MAB National Committee activity for 2015-2017)

The Ohrid-Prespa Transboundary Biosphere reserve, Albania/North Macedonia

- Organisation:
 - The proposed TBR has no direct corresponding legal status

- Means of collaboration:
 - Bilateral Agreement by the respective national parliaments ensures governance, networking, and proper functioning of the TBR
 - No management plan yet (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-years-ohrid-prespa-biosphere-reserve-unesco-my-future-panovski>); Albanian National Park Prespa a joint Management Plan with a General Urban Plan is under development
 - manager/coordinator of the biosphere reserve: institutional governance The Ohrid Watershed committee; is the secretariat of the committee, are represented by institutional representative (Mayors, Ministry representatives)– stipulated entity to manage the watershed of Ohrid and Prespa lakes and especially the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve
- Challenges:
 - The existing and potential conflicts in the proposed TBR area are mostly of two sorts, inter-ethnic conflict between the minorities in the area and conflict over the use of the land for different purposes (building permits, modification of PA to allow new infrastructural interventions like i.e., new roads)
 - Overlapping of planning procedures between different authorities (Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Ohrid 2013)

Geres/Xures Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, Portugal/Spain

- Organisation
 - In Galicia, the Regional Government holds the power to designate, manage and plan the Galician parks; the North of Portugal Region does not have a devolved government and relies on Lisbon’s direction and decisions regarding the Gerês National Park
- Means of collaboration:
 - A steering committee consisting of regional representatives, local politicians and directors of both park and an advisory council – TBR management bodies are not working as envisaged (Meetings and Regular staff meetings were not held)
- Challenges:
 - problem of mutual management between the Portuguese and the Spanish sides (different legislation - difference in the involvement of the various layers of government between the two sides – i.e., centralism in Portugal vis-à-vis devolved management in Spain), “The TBR joint action plan is not working, it is not going to be implemented, there is neither the money, nor the intention to do so (In fact, the document was done because it was obligatory for UNESCO approval)”
 - local transboundary participation was reported to be inactive - weak local municipalities in Galicia contrasting with powerful municipalities in Portugal
 - the Galician and Portuguese populations living on both sides of the border as disconnected from the TBR ☐ lack of community consultation and participation in the TBPA declaration and management

B. Stakeholder Mapping Table (Excel File)

Due to the EU data act and the large size of the stakeholder list, it is not included here as an annex.

C. Stakeholder Overview of the Nomination Process of the TBR MDD

The transboundary aspect has been a core element of the participative process at local, regional and national level in the involved countries from the outset. A short summary of the stakeholders involved per country (in alphabetical order) during the national/bilateral nomination procedures of recent years is as follows:

- **Austria:** Austrian Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism, Austrian MAB National Committee, Government and responsible authorities of the Federal State of Styria (Amt der steiermärkischen Landesregierung: Abteilung 14 Schutzwasserwirtschaft and Baubezirksleitung Südoststeiermark) Projektmanagement Landesentwicklung Steiermark, WWF Austria, four municipalities along the Mura River (Bad Radkersburg, Mureck, Halbenrain, Murfeld), Regional Development Agency – Steirisches Vulkanland, local stakeholders (hunting grounds manager, farmers, tourism industry, water management), different environmental initiatives
- **Croatia:** Ministry of Environment and Energy, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Permanent Delegation of Croatia to UNESCO, Ministry of Culture, National MaB Committee, Commission for UNESCO, representatives of counties and municipalities, public Institutions of protected area management – both Nature park PI and management bodies on regional level, local and regional governance in the TBR MDD area, relevant institutions managing/using the area — Croatian Waters, Croatian Forests, Croatian Electricity Industry, hunting and fishing associations, non-governmental organisations dealing with nature protection, tourist boards, schools and faculties, the media, WWF Adria and other local stakeholders.
- **Hungary:** Danube-Drava National Park Directorate, Ministry of Environment and Water, Agricultural Ministry, State Secretary for Nature Conservation, National MaB Committee, municipalities, authorities, NGO-s, other stakeholders, General Assembly of Zala County, Balaton-Felvidéki National Park Directorate (BfNPD), local TBR MDD Team at BfNPD, WWF Hungary
- **Serbia:** Ministry of Environmental Protection, Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning and Environmental Protection, National MAB Committee, National Commission of the Republic of Serbia for Cooperation with UNESCO, Protected Area Managers - Public Enterprise Vojvodinašume, Military Institution Morović and Sport and Recreation Center Tikvara, Coordinating Council of Biosphere Reserve Bačko Podunavlje, Stakeholder Forum (municipality administration – municipalities Sombor, Apatin, Bač, Bačka Palanka and Odžaci, hunting grounds managers, agriculture, fish farm owners; local communities; farmers' associations, agricultural companies, fish farm owners; recreation – organisations of dwellers in weekend settlements and cottages owners, angling clubs; business cluster, tourist agencies; civil sector – environmental NGOs, beekeeper NGOs, community development NGOs, rural development NGOs, hunting – Hunting grounds managers), Vode Vojvodine Public Water Management Company, Zapadna Bačka Public Water Management Company and Dunav Public Water Management Company, WWF DCP and WWF Adria
- **Slovenia:** 16 municipalities along the Mura River, Slovenian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, national, local, regional stakeholders while running projects (coop MDD, Amazon of Europe Bike Trail, REFOCUS). In Slovenia, the national nomination for the BR was carried out between 2014 and 2018 when the Biosphere Reserve Mura was approved by the ICC MAB. Important part in the preparation of the national nomination was a communication process with local, regional and national stakeholders. During this process, the stakeholders were informed about the Ministerial Declaration signed in 2011 and were made aware that the national nomination is the first step of the transboundary BR,

which extends along the Mura, Drava and Danube Rivers in the five countries. Additionally, activities organised by local stakeholders and different project carried out recently or still running (including coop MDD, Amazon of Europe Bike Trail, REFOCUS) include also communication activities with local stakeholders referring to the planned designation of TBR MDD. Biggest annual awareness raising event in the Mura River BR – 24 hours with the Mura River, which 2019 was organised by the IRSNC and partners in June in Veržej. It also referred to the TBR MDD. There are also continuous articles and news in local and national public media. In September 2019 a meeting was organised to review and discuss the nomination and to be well informed about the 5-country nomination.

The establishment of the national biosphere reserves took place step by step over a certain period, hence national, regional and local stakeholder involvement was very strongly tailored to the national processes. The core institution and driving force behind the transboundary nomination process was the CB (now: Steering Committee):

- *Coordination Board Members from Austria:* Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism, Department Environment and Water Management; MAB National Committee – Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna; Water Management, Division 14, Flood Risk Management, State Government of Styria
- *Coordination Board Members from Croatia:* Ministry of Environment and Energy, Sector for Protected Areas and Appropriate Assessment; Public Institution for the Management of Protected Parts of Nature and Ecological Network of Virovitica – Podravina County; Ministry of Environment and Energy, Service for Protected Areas
- *Coordination Board Members from Hungary:* Department for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Rural Development; Department for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Rural Development; Duna-Dráva National Park Directorate; Director of the Balaton National Park
- *Coordination Board Members from Serbia:* Ministry of Environmental Protection; Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province, Serbia; Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning and Environmental Protection of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina
- *Coordination Board Members from Slovenia:* Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning, Nature Conservation Division; Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
- *Observers and/or technical adviser (in alphabetical order):* Construction Site District Management South-East Styria, Natura 2000 Site Manager, Austria; Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Slovenia; WWF Adria; WWF Austria; Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province, Serbia; Ministry of Environment and Energy, Institute for Environment and Nature Conservation, Croatia

In the final phase of the nomination process, five National Contact Persons were agreed to work on and steer the elaboration of the Nomination Form, as well as to keep the link with the involved national stakeholders and decision makers. The States Parties informed the municipalities involved about the 5-country TBR nomination process. It should be noted that most stakeholder involvement activities were carried out during the national BR nomination process and that the most important stakeholders were informed about the process through contact points so that they could discuss all issues directly with the national focal points and/or contact persons.

D. Additional Results from Interactive Workshops with Stakeholders

Results from the 1st Interactive workshops with stakeholders

1. General design – how can it work, what is needed
1.1 What are the main purposes for stakeholder involvement?
Sustainability; providing a sustainable system of management within different sectors as well as developing models for sustainable economic development
The purpose should be to make them active in defining TBR MDD goals and then involving them to reach these goals
For exchange of local knowledge - citizens/scientists
For monitoring reasons
Which aims do we share and how to maximise synergies
Cultural topics, working together on projects, door opener
Continuation and upgrade of existing projects
The purpose should be that there is a platform which support to teach stakeholders what TBR is all about
Start the SH inv. parallel: bottom up and top-down approach: bottom up = develop local cooperation; top down = the SG should also motivate and manage the stakeholders' involvement
Create a strong basis for projects, and more generally, to gain acceptance for the work of the biosphere reserve
To connect relevant stakeholders which can or have an impact on the development, conservation of TBR MDD
Cooperation of stakeholders in the plans for development of TBR
For trans-boundary harmonisation of goals and the strategy to achieve them
To make sure stakeholders feel as part of the BR
Joint bold decisions, strong results
To make TBR MDD as much as inclusive
1.2 Which stakeholder groups would you like to talk to, to work with, which are fundamental to reach goals of CWP?
Regional and local authority
Water management bodies
Which stakeholder do I need for reaching goals
Forestry, nature conservation, water management, agricultural sector, + tourism, + land users +law enforcement
It is a wide range from children to adults, from national authorities to local
Professional communicators and PR professionals to promote goals and potentials
Depending on whether you would like to work together or raise awareness
Local NGOs and citizen groups (activists)
Local communities
Water management, nature conservation, national/regional/local authorities, forestry, agriculture, education, ministries
Youth as stakeholder group
Citizen initiatives
Public enterprises, "Vojvodinašume" e.g.
1.3 How should the involvement be organised, which platforms and approaches should be used?
Face to face conversations. I know it is a lot of effort, but I think SH can be best reached by this!

Not regularly (like 2 times only due to its obligatory), but co-organize them with forum, workshop, etc. where stakeholders discuss about topics in their interest
Personal meetings work best in the beginning, find a local opinion leader (hierarchical level)
Forums
Forums and informal settings
Informal meetings (dining etc.)
Institutional and informal meetings/get-togethers
Annual circulation management, with a CWP
Probably, combination/ different approaches are necessary to reach different stakeholders
Try to find the best platform to keep the stakeholders engaged and not to feel "left alone"
National, regional and local level
E.g. low key events such as discussions or talks, accompanied by tastings of regional products or excursions or guided tours ("Frühschoppen"), round tables
Economic component: producers' groups or other similar groups
Depending on topic: top-down or bottom-up approaches used
Never underestimate the time which is needed to gain trust
Youth forums/parliaments
Management plan brings stakeholder together
2. Concrete topics for stakeholder involvement
2.1 Which good practices in stakeholder involvement do you know in general?
Restoration of water, forest and meadows habitats, take care about ground waters, which have a huge impact on ecology
Continued restoration measures (esp. Opportunistic vegetation)
Enough water for floodplain of Kopački rit
Conversion of the agro-fields to pastures and meadows
Dam removal
Restoring channels from Danube and Drava rivers
Develop projects for transboundary conservation or introduction of species
Large scale river restoration to improve the ecological corridor
Key (umbrella) species
Protecting/restoring longitudinal & lateral connectivity
Pollution gradient
How does flood protection potentially counteract ecological goals, what/where are potential synergistic fields.
Joint monitoring of biotic and abiotic elements ((Related to restoration and need for restoration)
Upgrade the protection status and harmonise management of 13 protected areas - how to work towards the common goal within different national statuses
Water retention vs embankments vs flooding
Sediment continuity
Maintain a database on biotic & abiotic data
Invasive species management
Preparation of coordinated river development concepts for the Mura, the Drava and the Danube with measures located as concretely as possible as a basis for step-by-step implementation
Stop gravel and sand extraction from riverbed
2.2 Are there social or cultural aspects that are very important?
Local communities as main protectors of the landscape
Emphasize the cultural landscapes' importance & focus on their protection
Fishing, hunting, forestry in protected area, as regular and illegal
Develop and present local culture abroad in the TBR MDD and further on

Invest in promotion of cultural heritage (promotion of innovation)
Intercultural and environmental education and environmental awareness raising for all age groups
Education and youth empowerment
Including different kinds of stakeholders/different age groups
Citizen science
Environmental education (field practices, using gardening, birdwatching etc)
2.3 What are the main goals and tasks in terms of economic development?
Joint tourism products
Limited use of resources
Transformation to eco agriculture
Traditional and regional products (honey, mushrooms, food, culinary delicacies)
Sustainable local tourism, promotion of local products (food, drinks, local points) ...
Local traditions
Joint branding TBR level
Local crafts, traditions: pottery, wood, etc.
Development of sustainable farmer products
Define criteria for sustainable farmer products
Transformation of big industries to sustainable practice
Promotion and development of SME that are sustainable and integrate env. Standards in their everyday business
Joint TBR-level Visitor guidance strategy - applied
Sustainable and regenerative agriculture, agroforestry
Paradigm shift in financing in managing the river corridors
Macroeconomic assessment of the TBR vs business as usual in protected area and water management
Environmental education (field practices, using gardening, birdwatching etc)
Promoting events for the visitors, e.g. at River'Schools, fairs, harvest festivals etc.
3. Good practices of stakeholder involvement
3.1 Which good practices in stakeholder involvement do you know in general?
In general - lack of stakeholder involvement :)
Interreg CE RAINMAN - Pilot site Graz
Joint restoration and river development plans elaborated together with locals on community level
Using cross-border projects to put the base of future (project-based or "self-sustaining") cooperation - by bringing SH together and putting topics on the table (e.g. Coop MDD for 5-country nomination)
In Austria - there is a relatively new approach towards integrative management of riverine landscapes. - Probably most of have heard of it: GE-RM. (see also https://life-iris.at/ , there is a project also in the upper Drava in East-Tyrol). It is intended that river management should integrate a very broad field of stakeholders (all potentially affected or affecting groups), because their understanding and input will improve the quality and acceptance of proposed measures on the long term. The first experiences are that stakeholder involvement takes high effort and the level as to how it is achieved is very different. GE-RM is also working cross-border, at least on county level.
Natura Mura
All projects include different stakeholders
Good practices within our project, what we have achieved within the area, to be developed later on
Coop MDD already good stakeholder involvement at the local level
Local Action Plans elaborated within coop MDD
Gomurra
Using games such as: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242090071_WAT-A-GAME_sharing_water_and_policies_in_your_own_basin

Life Drava project HU-CRO, good cooperation but not a typical stakeholder cooperation - more than stakeholders --> key partners, the ones who are directly impacted (forestry, water management ...)
One common database that could be used for different sectors and it involves different sectors - wetland inventory
You have to start with some stakeholders, you cannot start with everyone, the cooperation has to mature, it is also contributing and achieving. Not everyone will see the benefits in the beginning but will realize later. The importance of awareness raising. They have to see how they can contribute to the common gain
Cooperation will be effective if the stakeholders see benefits for them in cooperation - motivation and benefits
Common benefits
A good practice is: 'panem et circenses'. The people and stakeholders events where can meet, discuss.
Work on restorations in SNR Gornje Podunavlje, shared work between PE "Vojvodinašume", INCVP and WWF.
Project Innsieme https://www.innsieme.org/
Interreg Alpine Space SPARE project-a handbook has been developed including also the aspect of stakeholder involvement: https://www.alpine-space.org/projects/spare/downloads/last-publications-from-boku/handbook.pdf
Local food producers, bed & breakfast places.
Several practice examples in the field of water management in the Austrian context listed here: https://partizipation.at/praxisbeispiele/?praxisbeispiel_anwendungsfeld=322
Life restoration projects are good example generally, relation to nature conservation (N2K) and water, the synergies can be used this way to maximise the benefits
3.2 Do you especially know good practices in cross-sectoral or cross-border cooperation?
Not really a site specific but cross-sectoral project DRAVA LIFE which is focused on integrated river management
5-country biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube nomination/designation as good cross-border cooperation :)
EVTZS Geopark Karawanken
Naturavita project, cooperation of Croatian Forests, Croatian Waters and Kopački Rit Nature Park Public Institution
Transboundary cooperation in environmental education in Julian Alps (Junior Rangers)
A good example if an inner and outer circle of stakeholders are identified. The inner ones are involved in joint projects' implementation and then the outer circle are updated about the progress. Inputs and feedback should also gather from both 'circles'.
Austria WS for BR Lower Mura Valley
First we need to find and connect local stakeholders, then we can also connect these stakeholders between countries to coordinate their plans
A negative formulation: avoid the too large groups trap: carefully define which stakeholders to involve in which topic
It very much depends on the will of the stakeholders, how they want to get involved in cooperation, it is important that they see their role in the "project", progress ...
It very much depends on the will of the stakeholders, how they want to get involved in cooperation, it is important that they see their role in the "project", progress ...
Cross border cooperation: Alpenrhein: Rhesi, Salzach, Gomura
3.3 Can you locate some regional good practices?
Eco Centre Zlatna Greda (Green Osijek NGO)
EPC Podravlje

Slovakia and Lower Austria managed to agree on protection of the Morava and Danube floodplain recently (probably an opportunity to look into how that was achieved). The Slovakian part is the new addition
Kopački rit & Gornje Podunavlje
Different Projects on Elbe River
Refocus project for conservation of forests
Goričko - Raab - Őrseg park with connection of I believe 5 castles in the park in 3 countries

E. E-participation Tools for Stakeholder Engagement

The lifelineMDD project and the associated creation of this Roadmap were characterised by the active involvement of various stakeholders on the one hand and the Covid-19 crisis on the other. It was common practice to hold online meetings during this time. Zoom, Miro, Google applications and the various Microsoft apps were used for this purpose. In addition to the online tools used during the project, the following could be identified and used in the future to establish different platforms.

Al-Dalou', R. & E. Abu-Shnab (2013): *E-participation levels and technologies*. ICIT 2013 The 6th International Conference on Information Technology.

Machintosh, A. (2004): Characterizing E-Participation in Policy-Making. *In the Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-37)*, January 5 – 8, 2004.

Stage	Technical Tools	Examples Apps and programme	Explanation	Device
E-informing	E-Mail (mailing list)/Newsletter	Mailchimp	Mailchimp is a marketing company from Germany (Aachen). The web application offers the opportunity for e-mail and newsletter marketing. Once registered, users need to create an address-list. Afterwards these contacts may be informed about news etc. The tool is not for free.	Computer

	Webcasts	meetyoo conferencing	Online conferences and trainings often involve presentations and discussions with many participants. Not all participants are interacting, most are listening. Therefore, special applications need to be used. Meetyoo is a tool that can organise large conferences (online fairs/exhibitions) with different additional applications, such as private discussion rooms. The company is based in Germany (Berlin). The tool is not for free.	Computer
	GIS-tools	Google Earth	Users can travel the world via their laptop. Depending on the Equipment used, it is possible to create a virtual/augmented reality or simply watch 3D pictures of an area. The tool is for free.	Computer
		Biosphere Smart	Biosphere Smart is an online map with data of all UNESCO Biosphere reserves of the world. The tool is for free.	
	weblogs (blogs) [web portals]	Wix	Blogs seem like a homepage but are different in certain kind of ways. Blog content follows a certain kind of narrative focused on a specific topic or topics. Wix is a web application allowing its users to create their own blog in different styles. Users can post stories and/or experience reports. Wix allows - like the creation of a homepage - their users to create their own design. The company is based in Israel (Tel Aviv). There is a free version of the application available.	Computer

E-consulting	E-survey	Survey Monkey	The web application offers the possibility to design, test and analyse online questionnaires. For simple questionnaires there is a free version available.	Computer
	Feedback forms: e-mail/e-polls (see also e-empowerment)	Doodle	Doodle is hosted in the United States. The app offers the opportunity to organise appointments and dates as well as the integration into a calendar. There is a free version available.	All
		Opinary	The web application offers the possibility to design, test and analyse online questionnaires and integrate them into a homepage. The company is based in Germany (Berlin).	All
E-involving	Virtual e-meetings	Zoom	The communication platform Zoom is a software company from the U.S.A., California, owned by Eric Yuan. It is free for students and up to 45min talks. The moderation used the professional version of the application because it allows meetings up to 100 people and 24 hours meetings. It has been used to create a stable virtual meeting room. Participants could only enter after the host allowed access.	All
	social networks (community networks)	Facebook/Instagram/Twitter etc.	Social media channels may inform stakeholders and communities about news. They open up the opportunity to also interact with people who follow ones feed or posts.	Mobile phone

	chat rooms	Signal/WhatsApp/Telegraph/etc.	Through a chat room via special apps people and/or institutions are able to inform and communicate with their community and/or stakeholders. Therefore, one needs the telephone number of the respective person and/or community who they want to interact with.	Mobile phone
E-collaborating	E-debates/virtual meetings	Slido	Slido is a Slovak company offering a tool to host large online meetings. It is possible to interact with participants via e.g., polls. The tool is not for free.	All
		Nearpod	Nearpod was originally created to host online lessons for pupils, but it is possible to host interactive meetings including polls, Q&As, Videos, Chats etc. There is a free version available. Information can be implemented into Google Slides.	Computer/Tablet
	Decision-making games	Global Player	This game is played by a group of people. Participants use the internet-link via their browser and start immediately playing the game. Goal of the game is to safely move earth between rocks. The game demonstrates group dynamics. If all players move in the same direction earth will survive, if not, not.	Computer
E-empowering	E-petition	openPetition	The Austrian company offers their users the opportunity to create, manage and promote an online petition.	All

	e-voting tools/-polls; argument visualization tools (e-referendum: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292651648_IC_T_in_Direct_Democracy_E-Referendum_a_Well-Structured_Direct_Democratic_Participation_Evolvement_or_a_Democratic_Illusion)	Poll-Everywhere	Poll Everywhere is hosted in the United States. The app offers the opportunity to address different kinds of questions (e.g., multiple choice questions) to a large audience. The audience answers the questions via their mobile phones, or the app. Results appear in real-time on the users/moderators screen. Results can also be directly added into a presentation e.g., via PowerPoint. There is a free version available.	All
		Mentimeter	The web application offers the possibility to design, test and analyse online live polls, quizzes and word clouds. For simple questionnaire there is a free version available.	Computer
	e-bulletin boards	Mural	The application is free Meetings can involve up to 100 participants and video-chats up to 25 participants. This is a creative tool for interactive workshops.	Computer/Tablet

F. Questionnaire

Empty Questionnaire – *Questions*

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Consent to collect personal data in the survey Survey is collecting personal data (GDPR):

- **Name**
- **Email**

As we will collect above listed personal information along with your answers, we kindly ask you to agree to the collection of your personal information before completing the survey. The conciliation of survey and personal data is voluntary and a condition for participation in the survey. If you do not provide the information, you cannot continue to complete the survey. Details about collecting, storing and processing your information in this survey can be found here. Privacy policy and general terms are available on this link.

Please indicate whether you agree with collecting your personal information:

- No, I do not agree with collecting my personal information
 Yes, I agree with collecting my personal information

Dear Sir or Madam,

The region along Mura, Drava and Danube rivers was in 2021 designated by UNESCO as the first 5-country biosphere reserve in the world. The biosphere reserve is unique for connecting numerous stakeholders from five different countries: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and Serbia. With this questionnaire, we would like to (1) find out more about your attitudes, wishes and concerns about this unique nature park and (2) know your interest in participating with other organisations in the biosphere reserve. We are also interested which common goals and interests are most relevant for you. The questionnaire combines closed and open questions so you can fill it in 10-15 minutes. We strongly appreciate your input and would like to thank you in advance for your contribution. With your help, we will be one step closer to establishing joint management of the 5-country biosphere reserve.

Kind regards, Urška Dolinar, director of Iskriva, Institute for Development of Local Potentials, External expert for the project lifelineMDD – Protecting and restoring ecological connectivity in the Mura-Drava-Danube river corridor through cross-sectoral cooperation

Katrin Fasch, BSc, Survey for the master thesis "Stakeholder Management in the Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube" at the University of Vienna

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Q1 - Section 1: Awareness and attitude towards the Mura-Drava-Danube biosphere reserve

Q28\ _ 3 - I answer the questions below as ...

- an individual person,
- as a person within an institution,
- on behalf of the institution.

Q2 - 1.1 Which level of interaction with the biosphere reserve applies to you?

- I have not heard about it yet
- I have already heard about it
- I know about it well
- I am in contact with representatives of the biosphere reserve

Q3 - 1.2 What is your attitude towards the Mura-Drava-Danube biosphere reserve?

- I actively support the reserve
- I am in favor of a protected area in my region
- I do not care if the biosphere reserve exists or not
- I reject the reserve, but accept it
- I am explicitly against the biosphere reserve
- I actively resist

Q4 - 1.3 How do you assess the possible impact of the reserve on your daily life?

- Positive
- None
- Negative
- I cannot decide

Q5 - 1.4 What do you expect from the emerging biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube

Multiple answers are possible

- Protection of the landscape/flora/fauna
- Networking of different interest groups

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



- Sustainable agriculture
- Sustainable regional development
- Research
- Other:

Q6 - 1.5 In what ways do you expect it to affect your daily life?

Multiple answers are possible

- Impact on my employment
- Impact on my leisure activity
- Impact on the quality of my environment
- Impact on my property (forests, fields, meadows, ...)

Q20_ 2 - 1.6 I think that because of the biosphere reserve...

	1 - strongly disagree	2 - disagree	3 - undecided	4 - agree	5 - strongly agree
... the local population will not be able to have a say anymore.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... the farms have to fulfill more requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... recreational activities such as hunting or mountain biking will be restricted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



...the region becomes a "museum" where you are not allowed to do anything anymore.

...the expansion/construction of larger infrastructure is hindered (e.g. hydropower, electricity supply).

...more tourists come to the area.

...an important piece of landscape is saved from destruction.

...the sustainable development of the region is promoted.

...the recreation factor for people is increased.

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Q7 - Section 2: Networking and involvement of the stakeholders

Q8 - 2.1 What are your needs as a stakeholder?

Multiple answers are possible

- A say in decisions
- Transparency regarding future projects and measures
- Support for the implementation of measures such as the development of sustainability strategies
- Tourist integration of enterprises in the biosphere reserve area, by promoting sustainable businesses
- Other

Q9 - 2.2 Are you connected with other stakeholders of the biosphere reserve?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
- I cannot judge

Q10 - 2.3 Would you like the biosphere reserve to take the initiative to network you with other stakeholders?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Q11 - 2.4 Do you feel that you are given a say in the process of developing the biosphere reserve?

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No
- I cannot judge

Q12 - 2.5 In which form would you like to be involved and more specifically addressed in what

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



is happening around the biosphere reserve?

Multiple answers are possible

- An internal online platform where you can find all the latest news about the biosphere reserve and its activities
- Mailings in the form of newsletters or internal newspapers
- Regular meetings where measures are presented, involvement in projects takes place and a discourse can take place
- Volunteering actions
- Presentations/information evenings in communities
- No interest

Q13 - 2.6 What suggestion do you have for the future biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube in terms of shaping the relationships between the individual stakeholder groups, but also with the reserve itself?

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Q27 _ 2 - Section 3: Key areas you find relevant for stakeholder cooperation in the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD)

The third section is structured in two parts. First, we would like to know how important the listed areas of intervention are for your work field. Secondly, we would very much appreciate if you can provide us further with details on your past work and future plans in the listed areas.

Q14 - 3.1. How important do you find the listed areas of intervention for the development of the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube?

	1 - Not a priority	2 - Low priority	3 - Neutral	4 - Medium priority	5 - High priority
1. Local food supply and ecological agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Forest management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Sustainable tourism based on local heritage and resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Joint cultural activities and preservation of cultural heritage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Climate change adaptation and mitigation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Water management and flood protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



7. Nature conservation and restoration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Environmental and sustainability education for youth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Research and scientific collaboration in various areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15 - 3.2 In how many projects (i.e. activities that lasted longer than 3 months) you participated in the TBR MDD or linked to the 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube?

- No projects
- 1-3 projects
- 4-7 projects
- More than 8 projects

Q16 - 3.3 Can you please list up to 5 the most relevant projects (or activities) that you or your institution implemented in TBR Mura-Drava-Danube in the last 10 years.

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Q17 - 3.4 Can you please let us know your planned projects and activities in the TBR MDD for the following 5 years (if any).

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Q27 _ 3 - Section 4: Forms of cooperation

Q18 - 4.1 Are you interested to start/continue cooperation with stakeholders from other countries of the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know yet.

IF (1) Q18 = [1] (if yes)

Q19 - If yes, in what form are you interested to cooperate with stakeholders:

More answers possible nbsp;nbsp;

- 1. On-line platform (website, forum, podcast and similar)
- 2. Joint general public events
- 3. Professional and scientific events
- 4. Joint transnational projects (where more than 3 countries cooperate)
- 5. Joint cross-border projects (2 countries cooperate)
- 6. Joint projects within my country
- Other, please specify:

Q20 - 4.2 Which type of organisation do you represent:

- Higher education and research
- Local public authority
- National public authority
- Regional public authority
- SME (small and medium-sized enterprises)
- Non-profit organization
- Other public service provider
- Interest groups including NGOs
- Business support organization
- Education/training centre and school
- Sectoral agency
- Large enterprise
- International organization

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Other:

Q21 - 4.3 Are you willing to take over an active role in cooperation within the TBR MDD?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know yet.

IF (2) Q21 = [1]

Q22 - If yes, in what form:

More answers possible

- 1. As event organiser
- 2. As lead partner of a project
- 3. As project partner
- 4. Any other form, please describe:

Q23 - 4.4 Which country are you from?

- Austria
- Slovenia
- Croatia
- Hungary
- Serbia
- Other country:

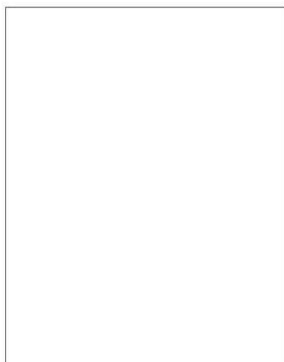
Q24 - 4.5 What is your link with the TBR MDD:

More answers possible

- 1. I live in the TBR MDD
- 2. My work is related to the TBR MDD
- 3. I am interested in the activities of the TBR MDD
- 4. Other, please specify:

Q25 - 4.6 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about cooperation and active participation in the TBR MDD?

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Q26 - Gender

- Female
- Male
- Other

Q28_ 2 - Which age group do you belong to?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 50
- over 50

Q27 - If you prefer, you can provide us your contact details for any further activities related to stakeholder engagement in TBR MDD. We will also send you the invitation to joint events planned in the following months.

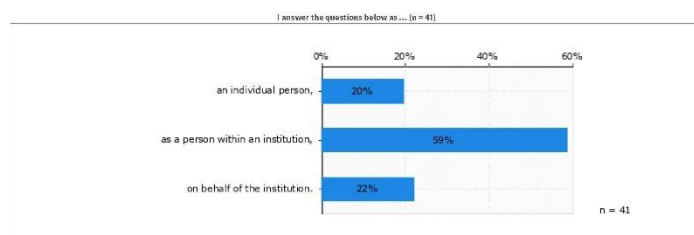
- Name and surname:
- Organisation:
- Position:
- e-mail:

Analysis

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



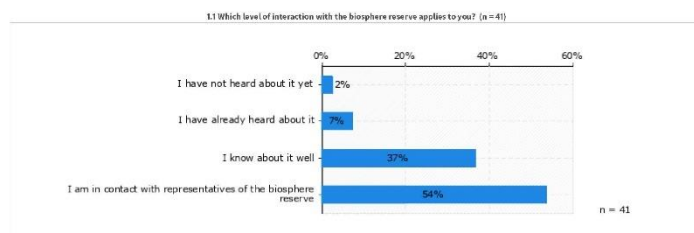
ANALYSIS - CHARTS



www.tka.si

1

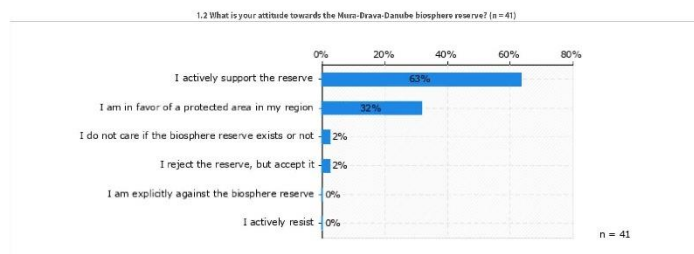
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

2

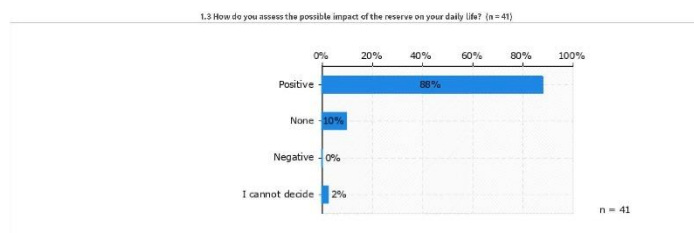
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

3

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



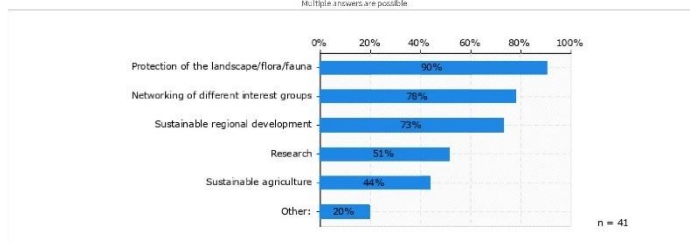
www.tka.si

4

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



1.4 What do you expect from the emerging biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (n = 41)
Multiple answers are possible



Qst_text	Q3 (Other:)	Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
		education	1	2%	13%	13%
		education and promotion on and of nature	1	2%	13%	25%
		sustainable tourism (international)	1	2%	13%	38%
		sustainable green tourism	1	2%	13%	50%
		adaptations to climate change	1	2%	13%	63%
		tourism	1	2%	13%	75%
		education and raising awareness	2	5%	25%	100%
valid		valid	8	20%	100%	
		-2 (skipped question IF logic)	88	80%		

www.ika.si

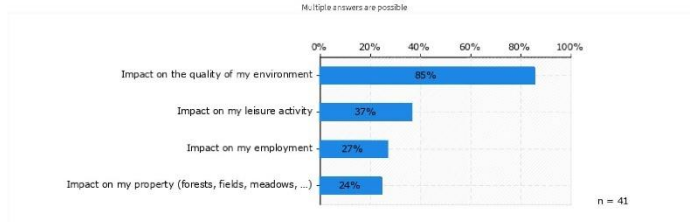
5

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



	valid	88	80%		
	Total	41	100%		

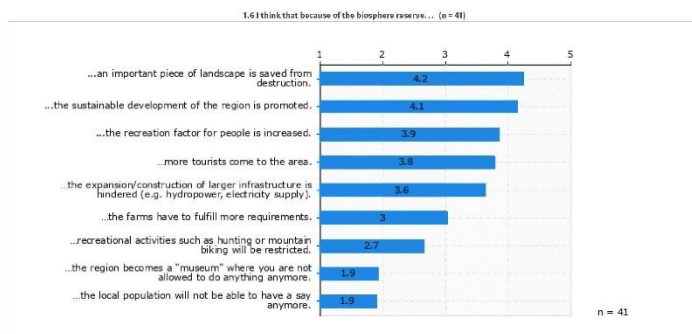
1.5 In what ways do you expect it to affect your daily life? (n = 41)
Multiple answers are possible



www.ika.si

6

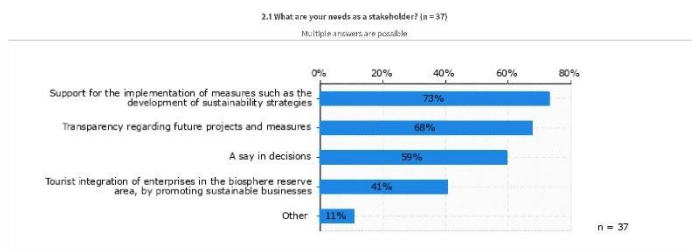
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

7

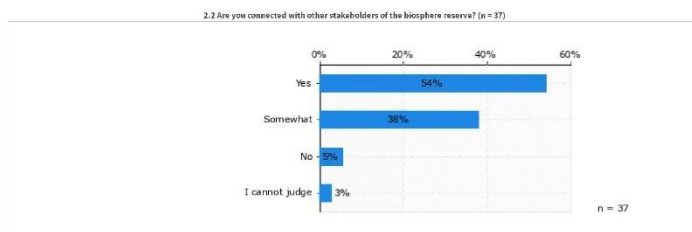
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

8

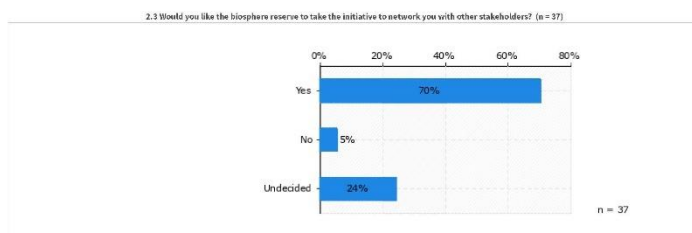
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

9

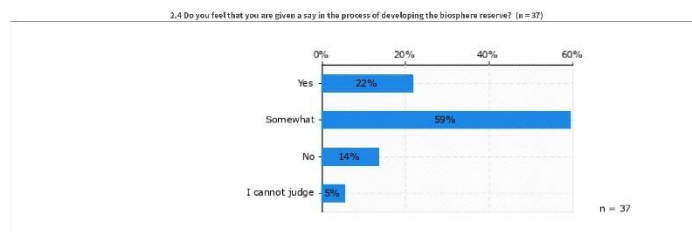
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

10

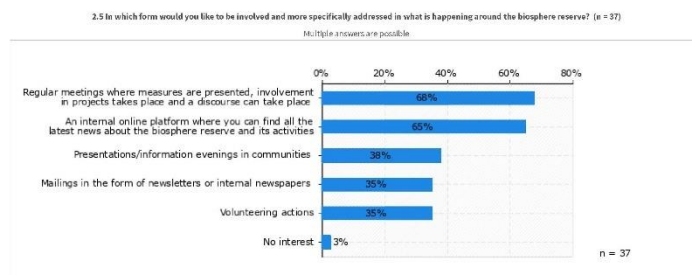
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

11

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

12

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



2.6 What suggestions do you have for the future biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube in terms of shaping the relationships between the individual stakeholder groups, but also with the reserve itself?

Q13	2.6 What suggestion do you have for the future biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube in terms of shaping the relationships between the individual stakeholder groups, but also with the reserve itself?	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
	I believe that it would be necessary to connect all stakeholders who are part of the biosphere area as constructively as possible, we have tried to become a part of it and I think it is imperative that all stakeholders come together for the welfare of all living beings, only this can be the appropriate path to correct concrete solutions. I also believe that joint meetings of all stakeholders ...	1	2%	3%	3%
	-	1	2%	3%	5%
	-	1	2%	3%	8%
	/	3	7%	8%	17%
	annual meetings	1	2%	3%	19%
	It can be useful if not only the state, but also the local governments (municipalities), local civil organizations in the area of biosphere reserves actively try to involve local business and producer groups.	1	2%	3%	22%
	more decision-making to be shared among the groups and each group has proposals which would need to be evaluated.	1	2%	3%	23%

www.ika.si

13

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



	It is important to have a central coordinating office that always tries to bring everyone together around the table and where all the information comes together, e.g. tourism and nature conservation should be specially coordinated so that there is enough space in the biosphere reserve for everyone (animals and plants, but also tourists), here you should pay special attention to genetic tourism, a ...	1	2%	3%	28%
	s	1	2%	3%	30%
	find and define common interests and work on it	1	2%	3%	33%
	firstly, there should be organised one per year international the mds stakeholder conference or market place, where all of the key stakeholder in the mdd should be invited, to stay connected, each country should clearly define the management structure of the national biosphere reserve (suitable legal form) and guarantee own resources annually, each country should clearly define their key ...	1	2%	3%	36%

www.ika.si

14

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



consider all interests equally and have respect for all opinions, although they can not be fully integrated - give the possibility to express the opinions and interests and include them in the thinking of future of the mtd areas. give the information what you have included and what not and also the reasons why so. the communication is two-way process and in management you have to give and receive. ...	1	2%	3%	39%
establish or create off line and online platforms, where stakeholders meet each other, share experience and actively participate in a joint work.	1	2%	3%	42%
none	2	5%	6%	47%
Involving the local people into participation	1	2%	3%	50%
Use the more activities with local people and organisations	1	2%	3%	53%
do better for nature but not disable landscape management (forest and agriculture)	1	2%	3%	56%
use and restore the land sustainably connection of stakeholders bilateral and pentilateral, different scales and measurements of implementation projects and researches.	1	2%	3%	58%
cooperation with nature protection institutions and municipalities	1	2%	3%	61%

www.tka.si

15

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



- education, information events, round tables - connecting with local schools (primary school, high school) - organising events with them - education of natural science teachers relating to the Biosphere reserve - raising awareness about voluntary work in your local area - connecting with municipalities and proposing new solutions related to the preservation of nature (for example amphibian ...)	1	2%	3%	64%
zoning of the area should be carried out where the core would be a legally long-term protected area, an external transition area encouraging sustainable development and use of natural resources and creating respect between tourists and hosts and helping to strengthen local pride and build trust. In a green and sustainable future, there is no more room for harmful projects such as the ...	1	2%	3%	67%
branding products and joined market, connecting tourism and farmers for availability of local products, organizing community for utilizing natural goods in joint plan for some nature 2020 site for example	1	2%	3%	69%
respect the plans of the municipality	1	2%	3%	72%

www.tka.si

16

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD

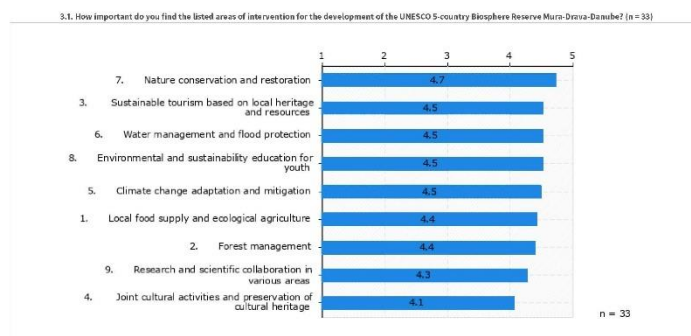


an internal platform is needed for regular exchange between all 5 countries, less online meetings, more through interactive forums where each country can get information when it needs it, events once a year like a management meeting of all 5 countries for exchange, a different country hosts each year.	1	2%	3%	75%
options for feedback from stakeholders:	1	2%	3%	75%
non	1	2%	3%	81%
kk	1	2%	3%	83%
mechanizma treba nega tim od trans- internationalizacija, drzava, domovni	1	2%	3%	89%
regular transparent communication and strong unified visual identity/branding	1	2%	3%	89%
more contact	1	2%	3%	92%
cooperation and respect the nature	1	2%	3%	94%
strong cooperation and good promotion	1	2%	3%	97%
there should be brief stakeholder meetings with obligatory conclusions.	1	2%	3%	100%
valid	36	83%	100%	
-1 (Unanswered question)	1	2%		
-3 (Drop-out)	4	10%		
valid	5	12%		
Total	41	100%		

www.tka.si

17

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



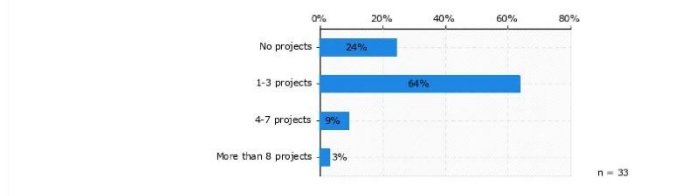
www.tka.si

18

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



3.2 In how many projects (i.e. activities that lasted longer than 3 months) you participated in the TBR MDD or linked to the 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube? (n = 33)



3.3 Can you please list up to 5 the most relevant projects (or activities) that you or your institution implemented in TBR Mura-Drava-Danube in the last 10 years.

Q16	Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
	eco music festival regeneration of danube amazon of europe bicycle trail our mission of european mdd with wwf	1	2%	3%	3%
	improvement and renovation of habitat types: ht 9aC – alnus glutinosa, fraxinus excelsior (alno-pedion, alnion incanae, solicion albae), ht 9b0 ribarian forests quercus robur, fraxinus excelsior, fraxinus angustifolia, ulmus savi	1	2%	3%	5%

www.tka.si

19

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



	-partner in smarter ace project-will implement 3 applications in scope of smarter ace project	1	2%	3%	5%
	Interreg in skienungen lebensraum unteres murta: 1996-1999 wasserwirtschaftliches grundholkonzept 2001 Interreg in pharecbc ma3nahmen unteres murta, 2002-2008 flussmurd Interreg olo a 2010-2013 almuat sicherung und schutz des grundwassers und der grundwasserqualitat, 2016-2019 (crossrisk verbesserung der hochwasserprognose; 2018-2021 goturra managementplan gekumar 2015, 2018 2021 ...	1	2%	3%	13%
	Implementation of several life projects: interreg cross-border programs, projects of the european regional development.	1	2%	3%	16%
	preservation of the biosphere reserve nomination form for mura river in slovenia, preparation of the tbr mdd nomination form, project coopmdd, comprehensive awareness-raising event mura festival (former 24-hours with mura river) in slovenia, otolo restoration project (damurs), cooperation with the mura commission (at-slo)...	1	2%	3%	18%

www.tka.si

20

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



associated partner in the project "biosphere area of the mura river", - active participation in the preparation of the proposal for the nomination of the mura biosphere area - raški župe municipality, a signatory of the obnove development partnership (omsp)	1	2%	3%	22%
associated partner in the "coop mdd" project - active participation ...	1	2%	3%	22%
natura 2000 management plan draws life	1	2%	3%	28%
Mura	1	2%	3%	28%
fighting against hydro plans on mura river, promoting biodiversity to children and local population, presenting the live in the mura river thru exhibitions...	1	2%	3%	30%
learning center of river mura, a ferry boat on the mura river and cycle path	1	2%	3%	34%
• wildlife health and conservation of selected natura 2000 species within danube cross-border region in serbia and hungary - wildland ipa 2012 hu-ser • danubioserki zap. d.o.o. - projekt dinarskog loka - european charter for sustainable tourism - coop mdd - danubeparkconnected - wwf aku domija za prirodu - danubepark - danube wild island habitat corridor - integracija ...	1	2%	3%	38%
river and habitat restoration projects and projects for improving policy cooperation.	1	2%	3%	41%
gornura jf lifeline mdd	1	2%	3%	44%
lifeline mdd, demarci, blomura, naturamura	1	2%	3%	47%

www.tka.si

21

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



tzajgh	1	2%	3%	50%
š	1	2%	3%	53%
.	1	2%	3%	56%
7	1	2%	3%	59%
0	1	2%	3%	62%
6	1	2%	3%	64%
go in nature project different workshops on nature activities	1	2%	3%	69%
local steering group, corporate logo for the regional part, awareness-raising activities to inform the locals but also responsible institutions (water management, forest management, agriculture management, etc.), training for multipliers	1	2%	3%	72%
we are currently participating in a project that has just started called smarter aoe, otherwise, we participated mainly in projects related to digitalization, but industry strengthening them skills etc. by joining the smarter aoe project, we hope to gather experience and knowledge that we will be able to offer in other similar projects.	1	2%	3%	73%
go in nature (okoj) na ul' mura natura mura (vešiba a gornelara) in komacki kraljevi	1	2%	3%	78%
lifeline mdd naturamura refocus gornemura blomura	1	2%	3%	81%
different activities related to dopps (voluntary actions, education events, bird monitoring) etc. (if those count)	1	2%	3%	84%

www.tka.si

22

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



	water management bike and hiking trails sustainable agriculture	1	2%	3%	88%
	project "skupa" within interreg-st project "trile park" within interreg-st project "city cooperation it" within interreg-st project "cooperation" within interreg-st on-going smarter area project (some co-funded)	1	2%	3%	91%
	my institution has realized several river restoration projects at the border rivers, e.g. - gorzov - gordov - scheldorf	1	2%	3%	94%
	ekologija	1	2%	3%	97%
valid	valid	33	78%	100%	
	-1 (Unanswered question)	1	2%		
	-3 (Drop-out)	8	20%		
	valid	8	22%		
	Total	41	100%		

www.ika.si

23

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



3.4 Can you please let us know your planned projects and activities in the TBR MDD for the following 5 years (if any).

Q17	3.4 Can you please let us know your planned projects and activities in the TBR MDD for the following 5 years (if any).	Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
		regata trnava	1	2%	3%	3%
		continuation of training for multipliers, corporate design for the country Biosphere reserve for communication within the region, concept for sustainable tourism within the biosphere reserve	1	2%	3%	6%
		implement new projects in the area and help to create a regional park	1	2%	3%	8%
		life project	1	2%	3%	12%
		projects with management bodies who are responsible for the mdd or who have impact on its status	1	2%	3%	16%
		- life museum sava-danube- restoring the amazon of europe- reconnecting riverine habitats in the first five country unesco biosphere reserve- wlp	1	2%	3%	19%
		as stated above	1	2%	3%	22%
		In the coming years, we want to deepen cooperation with neighboring states, especially the municipality of Bad Radkersburg in the field of tourism and flood protection, and we are also planning projects in connection with the promotion of natural and cultural heritage.	1	2%	3%	25%

www.ika.si

24

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



restoring the amazon of europe: reconnecting riverine habitats in the first five-country UNESCO biosphere reserve	1	2%	3%	28%
annual festivals dedicated to the mdd and danube	1	2%	3%	31%
	1	2%	3%	34%
	3	7%	9%	44%
	0	2%	5%	50%
	1	2%	3%	39%
life projects:	1	2%	3%	56%
walking and cycle paths, educational content about the importance of nature	1	2%	3%	58%
hiki	1	2%	3%	63%
collaboration in the development of sustainable, smart, green tourism destination of the mdd biosphere reserve.	1	2%	3%	66%
nature-based activities and workshops	1	2%	3%	69%
bike trail mura river bike restoration of water protection embankment	1	2%	3%	72%
a new planned life project to implement measures from the eu projects gomura and lifelinemdd work in the mdd for steering committee	1	2%	3%	75%
' expansion of the residential neighborhood', ' prehistoric settlements', ' gravel pits', ' village core of Sopolin', ' tourist settlement valMica', ' digital transformation of the municipality', ...	1	2%	3%	79%
partner in smarter use project will implement applications in scope of smarter use project	1	2%	3%	81%

www.ika.si

25

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



participate in the creation of an interationally supported digital ecosystem of tourism zones in the aoe and in improving the business of zones by developing a digital solution that will facilitate business and enable the measurement of environmental footprint.	1	2%	3%	84%
tourist projects, sustainable mobility for protected areas, agriculture projects	1	2%	3%	88%
life project natura 2000 management	1	2%	3%	91%
through projects to implement the mura river restoration action plan (prepared in copmedd), establish a network of schools in the mura river biosphere reserve, cooperate with local stakeholders, inclusion in sustainable tourism activities, work on the protection status of the area (mura regional park)	1	2%	3%	94%
ideas are currently being discussed how to contribute to the biosphere reserve in regard to water and nature management	1	2%	3%	97%
improvement and rehabilitation of habitat types: H3160* - alnus glutinosa, fraxinus excelsior (alno-poplon), alnus incanae, salix (ion albae), h3161* riparian forests quercus robur, fraxinus excelsior, fraxinus angustifolia, ulmus laevis	1	2%	3%	100%
Valid	32	78%	100%	
-1 (unanswered question)	1	2%		
-3 (drop-out)	8	20%		
Valid	9	22%		

www.ika.si

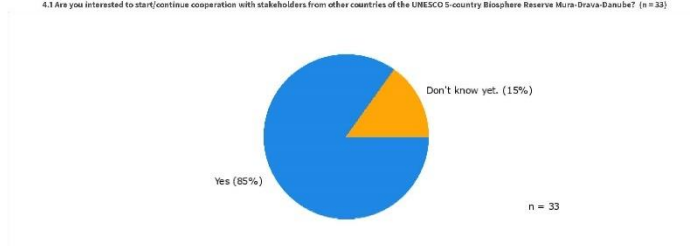
26

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



Total	41	100%	
-------	----	------	--

4.1 Are you interested to start/continue cooperation with stakeholders from other countries of the UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube? (n = 33)



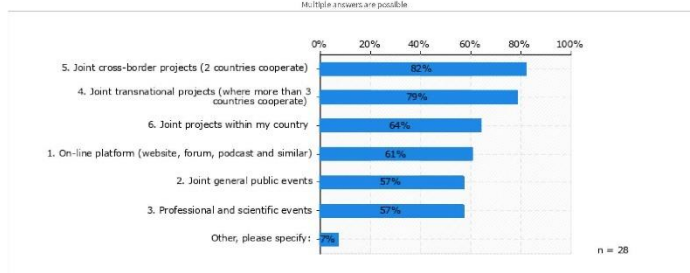
www.ika.si

27

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



If yes, in what form are you interested to cooperate with stakeholders: (n = 28)
Multiple answers are possible

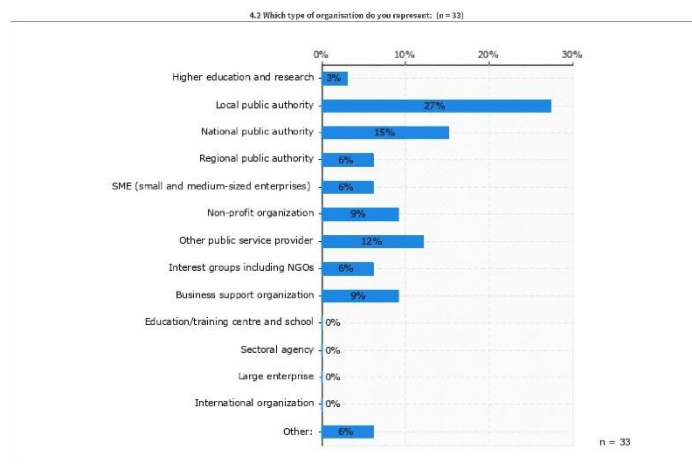


q19_text	q19 (other, please specify:)	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
	Answers:				
	regular meetings to discuss future of the area	1	2%	50%	50%
	regular meetings	1	2%	50%	100%
valid	valid	2	5%	100%	
	2 (skipped question: If logic)	31	76%		
	-3 (drop-out)	3	20%		
	valid	38	95%		
	Total	41	100%		

www.ika.si

28

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



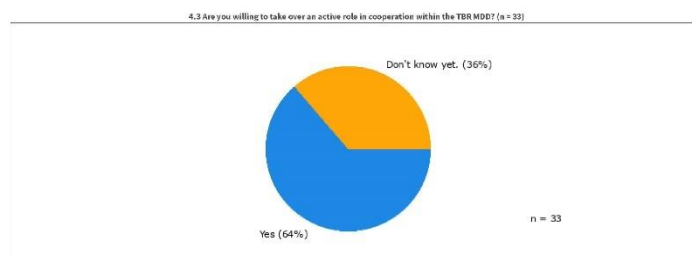
www.tka.si

29

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



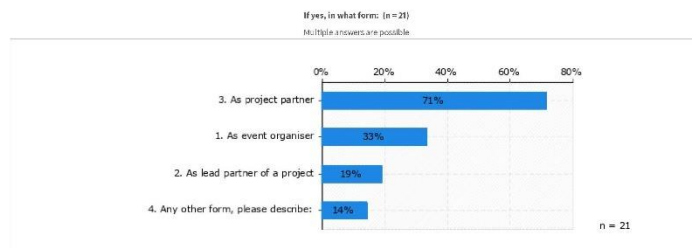
Q20_14_text	Q20 (Other:)	Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
		Individual	1	2%	50%	50%
		city tourist organization	1	2%	50%	100%
Valid		Valid	2	5%	100%	
		-2 (Skipped question 1 (F logic))	31	76%		
		-3 (Drop-out)	8	20%		
		Valid	39	95%		
		Total	41	100%		



www.tka.si

30

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD

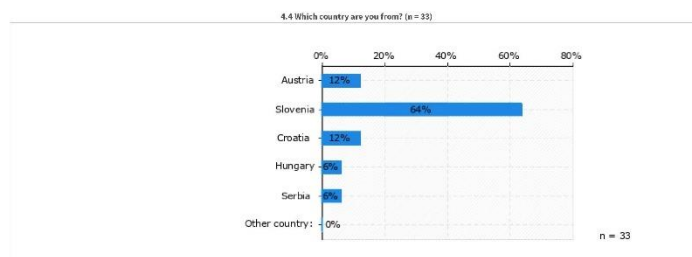


Q22c_text	Q22 (4. Any other form, please describe:)	Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
		not only lead partner, but also contributing partner:	1	2%	33%	33%
		support	1	2%	33%	62%
		sup partner	1	2%	33%	100%
valid		valid	3	7%	100%	
	-? (skipped question) (if logic)		35	73%		
	-3 (Drop-out)		8	20%		
	Valid		38	93%		
	Total		41	100%		

www.ika.si

31

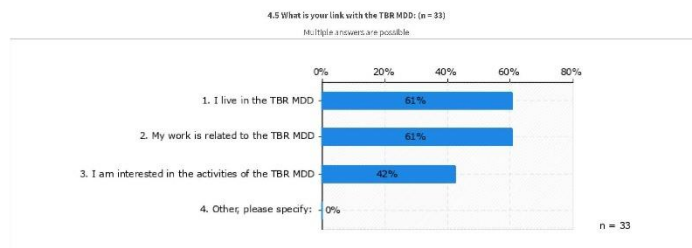
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.ika.si

32

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.tka.si

33

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



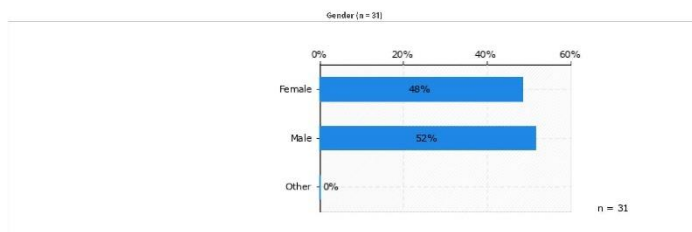
4.6 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about cooperation and active participation in the TBR MDD?

Q23	4.6 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about cooperation and active participation in the TBR MDD?	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative
	Answers				
	keep cooperate and keep going on!	1	2%	7%	7%
	good luck!	1	2%	7%	14%
	together we are stronger and the results of the activities have more impact...	1	2%	7%	21%
	si!	1	2%	7%	23%
	-	1	2%	7%	28%
	/	4	10%	29%	64%
	6	1	2%	7%	71%
	sodelovanje z rečno regijo čimde in bi	1	2%	7%	73%
	I am just an organiser.	1	2%	7%	81%
	I think that we should also start using the graphic image of the unesco-declared area. we should be proud to be part of such a large area and start actively promoting it.	1	2%	7%	93%
	I wish you many success	1	2%	7%	100%
valid	valid	14	34%	100%	
	-1 (Answered question)	19	46%		
	-3 (Drop-out)	8	20%		
	valid	27	66%		
	Total	41	100%		

www.tka.si

34

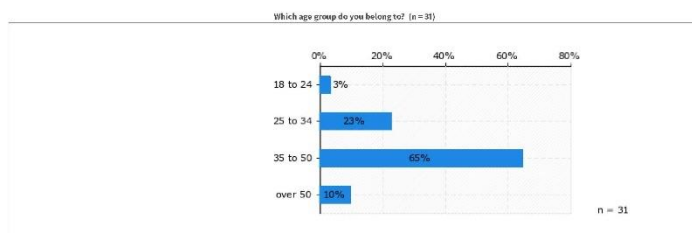
Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.ika.si

35

Survey collecting input of stakeholders on proposed topics and methods of cooperation in the TBR MDD



www.ika.si

36

G. Discussion and Questions for Municipalities in Biosphere Reserve Mura River, Slovenia

Summarizing the main topics discussed. Each report presents:

- Summary of main **implemented projects** related to the goals of the TBR MDD and/or BR Mura,
- Key **proposals** for future activities related to the goals of the TBR MDD and/or BR Mura,
- **Feedback** on the establishment of the management structure of the BR Mura,
- Proposals and feedback for forms of stakeholder cooperation in the biosphere reserve.

In the next chapter, the main proposals and conclusions are summarised.

1. Implemented projects

- Application was sent to Interreg Central Europe: Beltinci as zero-emission community
- Call MGRT: proposal for a new ferry (brod) and floating mill, results are expected in July
- Renovation of the Mura ferry, there is a lot of visitors
- Institute for tourism has 20 bikes for rent
- LAS projects: Kaj nas uči Mura: info points, motoric playground
- Managing cycling and walking paths
- Good cooperation with associations
- Zgornja Velka pilgrimage church, beekeeping museum
- Protestant cycling path
- 4 new cycling resting areas with drinking water
- Managing the route along Mura river (grass cutting), we propose to asphalt the route
- Expano as regional promotional centre
- Action plan by Slovenia Green scheme of sustainable tourism
- Krog ferry, interpretation
- Biciklin bike sharing system
- Go in Nature project: concept of development of the Mura area in the municipality: Krog, Bakovci, gravel pit Krog: OPPN spatial plan with a nature swimming pool and a natural arrangement
- Natura Mura: upgrade of the school in nature
- Various activities in the Natura Mura project: 3 new buildings + renovation of the existing ones
- Amazing AoE project: Copek's mill: digitization
- Accommodations are planned - so that it will be like a unified thematic plan
- It will not be open to the public this year
- BR Mura -we see it as a basis for various tenders, in addition to LAS, also others
- Preservation of meadows – restore them and improve condition, e.g. meadow near Brezovica
- Short supply chains – local products that are presented at various markets; use in recipes; learning new local dishes = an existing project (e.g. using a native variety of corn, etc.)
- At Copek's mill, there are only local crops
- Organic farm Kasaš in Lendava
- Naša Bauta, the zero-waste store of Pomurje delicacies - is starting in this direction, it is not yet recognized enough
- Tastes of Pomurje – brand exists
- Gourmet over Mura - has broken up
- The problem is that the local providers do not have uniform, established working hours
- Scattered hotel in Lendava - does it work?
- Copekov mlin – for visit, announcement is required, contact is the municipality or TIC, general telephone from the municipality

- Bicycle station connected to Soboški Biciklin, also Beltinci and Turnišče, Moravske Toplice – 2 electric, one ordinary, creating a joint bike sharing system in the countryside, including Ljutomer and Veržej
- Energy restoration, use of photovoltaics, RES - encouraging citizens
- Education, a tourist course (krožek) for pupils - they have received a gold award for several years; they present interesting local stories - e.g. certificate that Polana water is the best in Slovenia, children educate residents
- Lifeline MDD – education
- Connecting schools of biosphere zones
- Meeting is planned in September: BOM municipalities and schools - Gašper Hrastelj - SNK UNESCO (Slovenian National Commission) - funds for the BO coordinator
- UNESCO poster was done for children - what does a biosphere reserve mean to you - stickers for notebooks: bee, flower etc.
- We organise many events and promotions, e.g. on 22.10., day of BRs, there will be an event in the municipal park, raising awareness of the importance of BR
- We cooperate with neighbouring municipalities in Slovenia and abroad, also in Ukraine, Macedonia
- We are members of the Network of stork villages, we exchange good practices
- LAG cooperation
- Area of Zgornje Konjišče: there is a plan for glamping, OPPN/spatial plan has been completed, there are no obstacles for investment, the plan has been published
- At the Črnci bridge, there is also a possibility for a camp, schools in nature
- Activities in the Natura Mura project – implementation of measures, expansion of the Konjišče riverbed for about 100 m inland where the new bank protection will be implemented; info point Črnci bridge
- They are also working on the Austrian side at Gossdorf - they are widening the sidearm so that the water will flow, there will be an island on the Mura river
- Good cooperation with neighbouring municipalities: Šentilj - both supported Life; Gor. Radgona - they work well together
- Education – school and kindergarten are involved in BR activities; Mura Festival is well received.
- Experiments with clone poplar in the whole region, forested areas were developed on previously non-productive areas
- Despite that at the Mura river we have a treasury of genotype for plant and animal species
- Generally, the Natura/protected area's conditions are too strict: conditions can be set, what is or is not allowed under which conditions, only forbidding is not welcome at the local level
- We participated in the Mura bike trail; the website was discontinued (Dravska remained)
- Lisjakova struga - integrated arrangement, bringing water from the Mura - revival of the old oxbow
- City centre – turned into a place for relaxation and recreation, a lot of renovation has been done
- In the municipality we have strong health and sport tourism, thermal springs and spas
- The spring of mineral water, which is redundant, the red water flows into the Mura, which is an interesting point
- The famous marathon is organized by the municipality and Radenska company each year
- We placed benches along the Mura – it is a flood zone, the equipment must be adapted to this
- We purchased VR glasses for the Radenci underground
- At the municipality there is the project office, 2 people, work well
- We developed small gardens at the municipal land, the very successful LAG project, users pay 30 EUR/year for water and waste management
- We are a small municipality, but we have a large part along the Mura - the core zone of BR, with a lot of natural and cultural heritage
- We have Plavček's cycling and walking path, we see an opportunity for further development here
- Sports centre, they want to make an additional football court, there are limitations by Natura2000

- There should be stronger collaboration connecting municipalities, tourism, service providers, as cooperation, otherwise the local population does not listen
- Still a dilemma: nature or HPP, If the decision-makers clearly said that they will protect the Mura as the European Amazon, measures would be adapted to this - the direction is not clear (nature conservation or HPP)
- We are fighting, but Mura is flowing and taking chances away
- It also carries away gravel, deepens the groundwater (riverbed), the forest dries up - due to the impossibility of agreeing how to manage this space
- That nature, culture, sports, recreation and tourism, agriculture can coexist with a correct and clear strategy
- Project BioMura: there was a lot of promises and little realisation, generally a lot of papers/documentations are produced in different Interreg projects and not sufficient realisation in local nature
- The protected area has no value if we are not able to promote and sell it
- There is a need for wider dialogue, talking about priorities and looking for solutions, not just insisting on own interests
- When we protect nature, we need clear rules of the game what is allowed under which conditions
- Due to one bad experience we then don't realise next 10
- The main and good tourist points along the Mura, which they want to further promote are Gezove jame, Tinekov brod ferry; by the latter passes also the Slovenian hiking trail Camino de Santiago (Jakobova pot)
- For cycling paths, we need one coordinator who will coordinate the work with the national level
- The municipality has specific location between the Mura and Ščavnica rivers and the border with Croatia - we are daily facing real problems because of this
- Project Natura Mura - we are disappointed with realisation - we support cooperation, but we would like to give our opinion and our yearly experience with the flow of Mura, often measures are planned and are not sufficiently discussed with the people who live in the affected area for decades
- Cadastre near the river land is not updated and the plans are not the same as on paper
- Old Mura oxbow named Gosposka Mirica should be deepened (dried up due to silt) and arranged (this oxbow is an old border between Prekmurje and Prlekija)
- Another old Mura oxbow named "Vučkov berek" is still deep enough
- The agreement was signed with the Directorate for waters, new dike will be built, the municipality must buy all land until 2023, the investment will be 3 Mio €
- Mura Development partnership was agreed but is not working in practice
- is strong for such small municipality, on a voluntary basis:
- Razkriški kot, areological settlement
- Gibina area, working mill
- Interpretation for beaver
- Cooperation with Croatia: yearly events in hills with vineyards (Štrigova): run, cultural events, procession among the vineyards on 15.8. celebration
- Ivan's spring is very popular, would need geologically sound solution for the spring area to keep the water quality
- Razkriški kot path, natural and cultural heritage - 3h cultural programme for groups, 3-5000 visitors yearly
- We started eco market with local agricultural products, it is very successful
- We also have the **certificate Slovenia Green Bronze** (evaluation each 2 years, price is 800 EUR)
- together with the municipalities of Tišina and Martin na Muri (CRO), they initiated the international (AT, SI, CRO) boating event on the Muri river called the "Spust murskih ladij" - unfortunately, the event officially no longer takes place because there was too much frivolity (drunkenness on boats)
- First, we need the good foundation, and the regional/landscape park is the solution → we sent our proposal to the ministry to establish the protected areas, firstly in the Municipality of Lendava and

then other municipalities can join as well (otherwise there is no coordination and no clear rules of the game)

- There is a lot of cooperation with Hungarian partners: Interreg, among others Iron Curtain Cycling with Zala County.
- Good work of Lendava Museum
- New product ZipWine
- Tourism - footpaths along the Mura
- Three existing tourist points along the Mura: Tinekov brod, Kantina & Bobri
- Razkrižje - we would make another ferry, then we can create new bicycle route/connection - from HU, Dobrovnik, Črenšovci, Razkrižje and to Croatia
- Interested in/Proposal for an Interreg project - management is too large for the municipality, we would be partners
- Restaurant Bistrica Bobri - there is a classroom in nature, the other facility could be for catering
- Tinekov Brod ferry - belongs to Ljutomer, it was restored through LAS project
- We should make existing points more attractive, add value to them
- Tourism in a limited form, small groups, no buses
- Arrangement of the village centre
- When the tourists sign up, they would have a contract person available to guide them around the tourist spots (now they find themselves, they call people)
- Accommodations: we have Repincel apartments Gornja Bistrica – Old House
- If we had multiple accommodations, we would link them to joint products
- Dike will be established along the Mura: newly built or renovated (18 km on this side)
- The idea of the directorate of waters - there could be a gravel footpath on these embankments, below is a service path for tractors

2. Proposals

- Biosphere reserves as generator for climate neutral areas
- Municipalities as pilot areas, proposal to form a working group in each municipality
- Combining environmental, social and economic component
- New cycling bridge over Mura to Ceršak – financed from own funds, funding is needed
- New attractive areas along Mura river: camping places, natural swimming areas
- Developing better conditions for economic players
- Better offer at the Ižakovci Island of Love
- Eco Museum Mura, Miller's path
- Navigation regime – it was promised to be developed by the Development centre Murska Sobota
- Local rafting service providers should be included, DČD – Društvo čolnarjev Dokležovje
- Joint electricity supply
- New European Bauhaus as an opportunity
- Changing mindset, increasing community engagement, key role of NGOs
- Supporting use of local materials, food
- It is essential to establish the regional level of government.
- Navigation regime should be established.
- More cooperation with the chamber of crafts and chamber of commerce.
- Infrastructure arrangement
- Arrangement of navigation regime
- **Sustainable mobility**
 - o We need to ensure planning of sustainable mobility in the BR.
 - o Navigation regime (plovni režim) should be established.
 - o More cooperation with the chamber of crafts and chamber of commerce.

- City bike sharing system Soboški Biciklin has a stop in Krog.
- The system will be expanded to municipalities of Moravske Toplice, Puconci, Veržej, etc.
- There is a problem with the name (soboški biciklin) among other municipalities.
- **Navigation regime**
 - There is a joint initiative by the municipalities, boat companies, tourism sector
 - There should be a limited number of entry points to the river, 12 in total (1 per municipality)
 - Each entry point must have complete infrastructure:
 - Entry point
 - Road access
 - Interpretation
 - Sanitary space
 - Licenced guides
 - There should be a limitation of the tourism exploitation of Mura, max 100 rafts per year, and to make clear when they can raft on the river and where they can stop (gravel bars)
- **Preparation of documents for establishing the Mura regional park**
 - The aim of BR Mura is preserving and improving the status of habitats. There should be close cooperation between inhabitants and economic interests of forestry, fishermen, boat tours, etc.
 - The aim of the park is to coordinate the allowed activities of tourism service providers
- **Education and competence building**
 - There is the need to increase competences of people for local experiences: service providers, tourism info points
 - Interpretation points in Krog and Bakovci
 - We need to work on managing tourism flows. Example of Triglav National Park – BR Mura is similar as most people don't live in the core zone
- **Tourism cooperation**
 - Expanso was established as a regional cooperation centre for promotion and cooperation of tourism organisations in the region.
 - Promotion of local agriculture and connections between growers and farmers
 - Education, working with children
 - Interpretation
 - Restoration of habitats, meadows
 - Cooperation from local to international level
 - Proposal for the concept of campsites/visitor centres throughout the park, a model can be Kruger National Park, South Africa
 - A Life project will start with additional measures in Zgornje Konjišče, rejuvenation of sterlet, together with NGO Revivo - nature conservation together with tourism – municipality will provide some financial support, they also expect benefits, Murski zmaj – kečiga ("Mura dragon" – sterlet), would be a good story
- A complementary project could apply to the CBC cooperation
- Local communities: hunters say that their hunting grounds (benches, bins) are shrinking - coordination of interests between stakeholders
- Nature is what we can market
- Good cooperation with AT, there is interest.
- Proposal to restart the railway connections and build a new railway bridge from Austria to Slovenia
- Plan to build a pedestrian bridge over Mura
- Ideas for an island behind a retirement home

- The thickest clone poplar in Pomurje behind the Retirement home - it is in the inventory (not yet a natural value) - it had 5-6 m³, now it has over 30 m³ - a historical heritage of the development of forestry, planted according to the world war I
- The aim is that these projects prevent the energy use of the river
- Project: zipline from the castle to the park in Austria
- Proposal for UNESCO protection of Gornja Radgona and Bad Radkersburg as one site
- On February 4, 1919, the city was divided, the last conflict, from then on there was a border here
- Mineral springs area: there is an iron spring of mineral water - Radenci - red water flows, could be a more popular attraction
- Black poplar, plavček - world treasury – who will finance it
- Good cooperation with the municipalities of Apače and Radenci
- Common water resources in the Apače, a special regulation on the Apaško polje aquifer has been adopted here, 3 zones, reforestation of almost the entire area, only a small amount of agricultural land remains, the quality of drinking water has greatly improved
- The project with the Karavanke geopark - a "geyser" at the Retirement home
- Denationalization of Radenski Park, almost 5 million EUR are planned for the renovation of the park
- There is a lack of tourist roads, the restoration of the path along the Mura is needed
- Hrastje-Mota - Rihtarovci, there is still border stone and remains of the military object, we would like to restore it into a touristic point, we are waiting for the opinion of ZRSVN
- Tourism info centre is part of the municipality
- Approximately 200,000 EUR in tourist tax is returned to tourism for various events and renovations
- Good cooperation with neighbouring municipalities
- The border with Tišina has not been resolved – they have land across the Mura, Tišina on this side; Mura is a logical border
- They have developed a project in the park - 9 concrete umbrellas, they will be "dressed", 3D displays of water conditions - crystals, ice...
- Stronger cooperation, clear rules of the game
- Tourism: joint offer it is difficult
- We should focus on short supply chains, local supply
- Promotion of BR and education
- The contract is signed to start building the new flood-protection dyke
- Mura cycling path should be built on the dyke, the project was stopped – there are various interests to track the path away from the Mura river
- We understand that we need to act sustainably, it is not possible to build industry and new buildings
- Gravel pit Krapje is for us of strategic importance, we need construction materials, we believe it is better to enlarge the existing pit; if this gravel pit is closed, there will be a big damage and negative reputation regarding the nature conservation and Natura 2000 in the local community (damage for next 50 years)
- Some projects along Mura were implemented, some are listed in the catalogue (action plan) for the future
- We need to take care of spatial planning: ensuring flood protection of the road between Lendava and Ljutomer (in charge of national level directorate): the road is flooded with the smallest downpours, so they want the road between the bridge over the Mura and the beginning of Razkrižje village to be elevated; culverts should ensure flow between both sides of the road - they understand this well,
- therefore, they want a joint project with the Infrastructure Directorate, which would find a solution to maintain traffic flow even during downpours (together for ...)

- Wastewater treatment was built and has sufficient capacity also for municipality of Štrigova from Croatia, but we could not obtain allowance from Slovenian Ministries
- We support gravel cycling path on the dike (gravel, no need for an asphalt path)
- We propose a new *brod* (ferry) as cultural and technical heritage
- We propose the network of schools in the Biosphere Reserve
- We propose construction of a new viewing platform for the interpretation of nature along the Mura (at the location of the entry/exit point for boats, along the Mura, north of the bar Stari Pil)
- We propose a joint tourism product: cycling path on the dike along Ledava from Murska Sobota to Lendava.
- Next year Schengen border will be eliminated with Croatia, there are no more obstacles for joint projects.
- We have trails in the Murska šuma forest (this area was proposed for protection); Individual cyclists are already in Murska šuma, cycling in Murska šuma should be institutionalized
- Big events: Bogračijada on last Saturday in August; event Lendavska trgateg (grapes harvesting) on first Saturday in September
- Several hiking events
- Good work of ZTR Lendava: cycling centre Murania, accommodation (glamping), bikes to rent: 6 electric, 15 gravel
- Scattered hotel Vinarium
- A lot of individual cyclists, it would be better to manage them in an institutionalised way
- Local and ecological agriculture: there will be a new market
- Several tenders to support local agriculture and associations, support for public institutions
- At the meadows in Kot they would build agrarian community, have local animals and sell meat to public organisations; the problem is there are 70 owners
- Plan for a new local restaurant at “3springs”
- Ecological local products Lendvai – the brand is registered (change to LendWay) – good practice example in Hungary: Matre – Mymatra for wines
- They will implement the TIC, they would hire someone
- Tourism cooperation between accommodations and other providers
- Arranging Mura area, villages
- New ferry between Bistrica and Razkrižje
- We propose Bobri the mascot (as Oli in Vulkanija)
- They want to restore existing tourist facilities along the Mura, not build new ones; in this light, they want to restore another facility at the Kantina, which they would offer for catering (one facility has already been renovated and you can rent it for picnics/events)
- We opened a new tourism info point in the centre of Veržej
- We are open to wider networking
- There was an attempt for the destination organization of Prlekija area
- Terme Banovci as the biggest provider – spa center
- Babic mill is privately owned: the mill as a link between nature and culture
- A few smaller providers (farms, apartments, boutique hotels) are developing, they are connecting
- Infrastructure obstacle: bicycle connection to Križovci - in the process of acquiring ownership of land to build the cycling path
- The path to Dokležovje is one of the most dangerous sections – they want to connect also this part in future renovation of the road
- Cooperation with neighbouring municipalities: we work in LAG with Križovci - monuments, memorial rooms, info boxes for tourists
- The event 24 hours with the Mura river – it is organizationally demanding, and it stopped in the former way, but festival Mura is ongoing
- Cooperation across borders: in the past: a handicraft academy with Hungarians; cooperation with the Institute for Agriculture

3. Feedback

- We support the establishment of the management organisation
- For successful development we need the regional government (Pomurska regija) and staff, we have ambitions
- We strongly support the establishment of the management organisation; the proposal was already sent to the Ministry of Environment.
- For successful development we need the regional government (Pomurska regija)
- Mura Development Partnership in practice does not work
- We strongly support the establishment of the management organisation or the regional government
- Development centre MS is willing to cooperate in the project that will prepare the documents for the establishment of the park in cooperation with other stakeholders (IRSNC): how to develop the management organisation, development zone, cooperation of stakeholders, competence building. Development centre MS would not take over the role of park management
- We need to calculate how the pressure on nature will increase with the development of tourism
- Big importance is preserving nature for drinking water, which is in many places endangered
- We must maintain the infrastructure
- We need to know that the procedure takes 5-7 years
- We strongly support establishment of a regional park or even a national park Mura.
- Proposal for the regional park should be again proposed at the next meeting of the council of the region
- There is also RRP of the Pomurje region - a healthy region
- There are many spas and hot springs - a network of healthy spots

- We must be aware that establishing the regional park Mura will sooner or later be a reality.
- There should be clear conditions of functioning for local inhabitants, not only limitations but also benefits.
- We should build on the legacy of past experts, e.g. Jurij Vega.
- We need collective responsibility of the EU to such special and specific places.
- Proposal for **joint management of the park with the Austrians**
- AT is already working on a management plan for the park
- There are other possibilities for **use of water for electricity**: there were 3 HPP planned On the Mura river (Apače, Konjišče, Hrastje-Mota), such as A chain of mills that generate electricity + photovoltaics: a small wheel every 50 m - chain of mills (submerged in water on the Mura); example on streams is a jet (copotnica), e.g. near Negovsko jezero
- Establishment of EGTC together with Bad Radkersburg
- A proposal for a meeting at the level of all municipalities and tourism institutes in order to make common, more coordinated plans
- We should consider a single administration for the entire Mura - for border Mura additional connection with AT and HR
- The proposal of the regional council + financing - not only projects, after the end of financing the municipality does not want to take on this burden
- People do not yet feel what BR is for, also due to bad practices and interpretations from the past, they take it as an obstacle instead of an opportunity
- Natura, BR, landscape park - there is no manager - a structure is needed that enables joint care of this space - to crystallize what is possible and what is not
- Space, requirements, limitations - it is not clear what is possible and what is not, so the opportunity turns into a clog

- Similar solutions at home and abroad, a kind of manager, the content is important, not the form - a coordinated interest in protecting nature and people; without consensus there is no development
- Many small municipalities, this requires looking outside the municipal fences
- If we want the BR to be a successful story, everyone should live for it and have benefits from it
- We need a holistic approach: who takes care of development, who has economic interest: public institutes should ensure infrastructure and good conditions, then private owners should take care of economic activities
- There are many fragmented small projects, and a larger project that would connect all the municipalities along the Mura is missing
- We need to be smart – how to find smart solutions that enable development together with protection
- We should give allowances under conditions – e.g. to build small tourism facilities, only at selected locations
- We support good stories and solutions
- We need one coordinator
- We should consider good examples (Pohorje)
- We need to involve local associations, local people (firemen, tourism associations)
- We should not become like big touristic centres (Kranjska Gora, Portorož) where all the locals moved out and all the houses are owned as tourism apartments and weekends, the culture is lost
- There is a problem with coordination, we have 5 development agencies, RC MS coordinated the Svet regije in Regionalni razvojni svet
- At the meeting of the Council of the region there was unified support to establish a region with the headquarters in Murska Sobota, this would mean decentralisation and local people employed who would make decisions
- their comments: until now they have not received logos for the Biosphere Reserve and UNESCO and instructions on how to use them
- First, we need good foundation, and the regional/landscape park is the solution → we sent our proposal to the ministry to establish the protected areas, firstly in the Municipality of Lendava and then other municipalities can join as well (otherwise there is no coordination and no clear rules of the game)
- We support the establishment of the BR
- We need concrete results
- We propose to introduce this point at the meeting of the Council of the region (organised by Sabina Potočnik, RC MS; the chair is Mr Škalič, mayor of Kuzma)
- We conditionally support the establishment of the management organisation, considering that there are concrete results and no additional limitations due to the new status.
We in principle support the Biosphere Reserve/park; on the long term we are afraid that there will be another governmental body giving opinion for each project and it will be even more difficult to implement activities in the municipality.
- The park should live together with the local community and not be placed on a higher level above the local community/Municipality.

4. Cooperation forms

- There should be a joint brand of the BR, sort of “biosphere chamber of commerce” – the question is how to implement this into strategic documents
- Cooperation between Municipalities
- There should be more cooperation of joint work, as well as professional input
- We propose to increase the role of NGOs and create connections with them
- Crucial role of education, digital tools.
- They are willing to cooperate, if there will be (is) a will from the local initiative
- Cooperation must include all relevant stakeholders

- Any kind of cooperation, best way would be a regional park Mura
- Cooperation on several levels, platforms, meetings, ...
- We support the following forms of cooperation:
 - o Joint platform
 - o Joint meetings on a monthly basis with all stakeholders on the Slovenian side
 - o Joint project preparation in close cooperation of all
 - o Also with neighbouring countries
- We need partners to implement actions from the action plan, one municipality is too small for that.
- Stakeholders with whom they already cooperate are also the Hungarian Municipality of Zala and the LEA Pomurje Development Agency from Martjanci
- Cooperation is supported when needed and with concrete results.