



WWF-CEE activities

**EUSDR PA4 SG meeting
2025.06.03, Bratislava**

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WWF-CEE – for the “Green Heart of Europe”

Our purpose

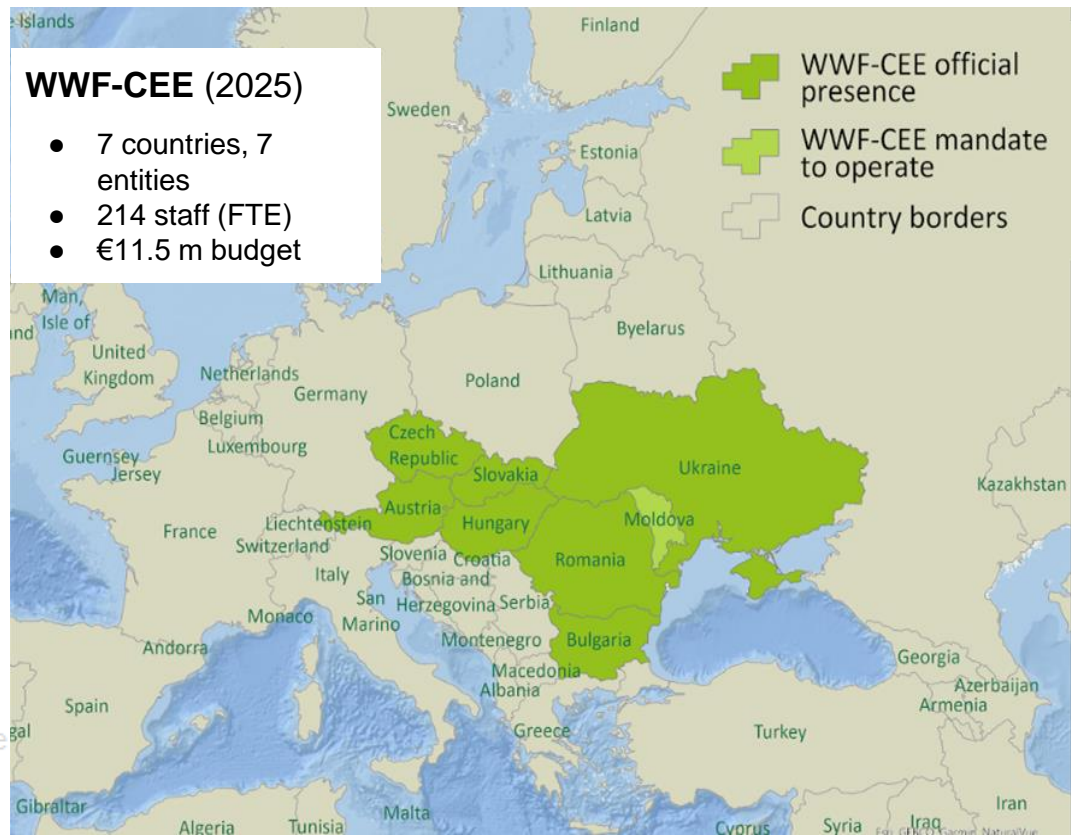
We are here to save the globally important forests, rivers, wetlands and species in the “Green Heart of Europe”.

WWF has worked toward conserving the great natural values in the region. Together with partners, we have protected 350.000 ha of old growth **forests**, restored 15.000 ha of **wetlands** and 700 km of **rivers**, and engaged stakeholders in the conservation of **bears, wolves, lynx and bison**. Our **sturgeon** conservation work has gained ground nationally and across the Danube basin.

In the next years we will upscale this work to conserve High Conservation Value Forests get 1.6 million sturgeons released, and make bear-smart communities the model of choice. We will strengthen national **nature restoration plans**, convince farmers and businesses of the benefits of **Nature-based Solutions**. Integrated planning of **renewable energy** will help preserve nature.

WWF-CEE (2025)

- 7 countries, 7 entities
- 214 staff (FTE)
- €11.5 m budget



Freshwater related objectives of WWF-CEE's Strategic Plan



**Sturgeon
conservation**

**Sustainable
navigation**



**Restoring river
continuity**



Freshwater related objectives of WWF-CEE's Strategic Plan



**Nature-based
Solutions for
climate adaptation**



High natural values to save



Main pillars of WWF-CEE Freshwater Programme



Rivers and floodplains



**PROTECT/
SAVE**

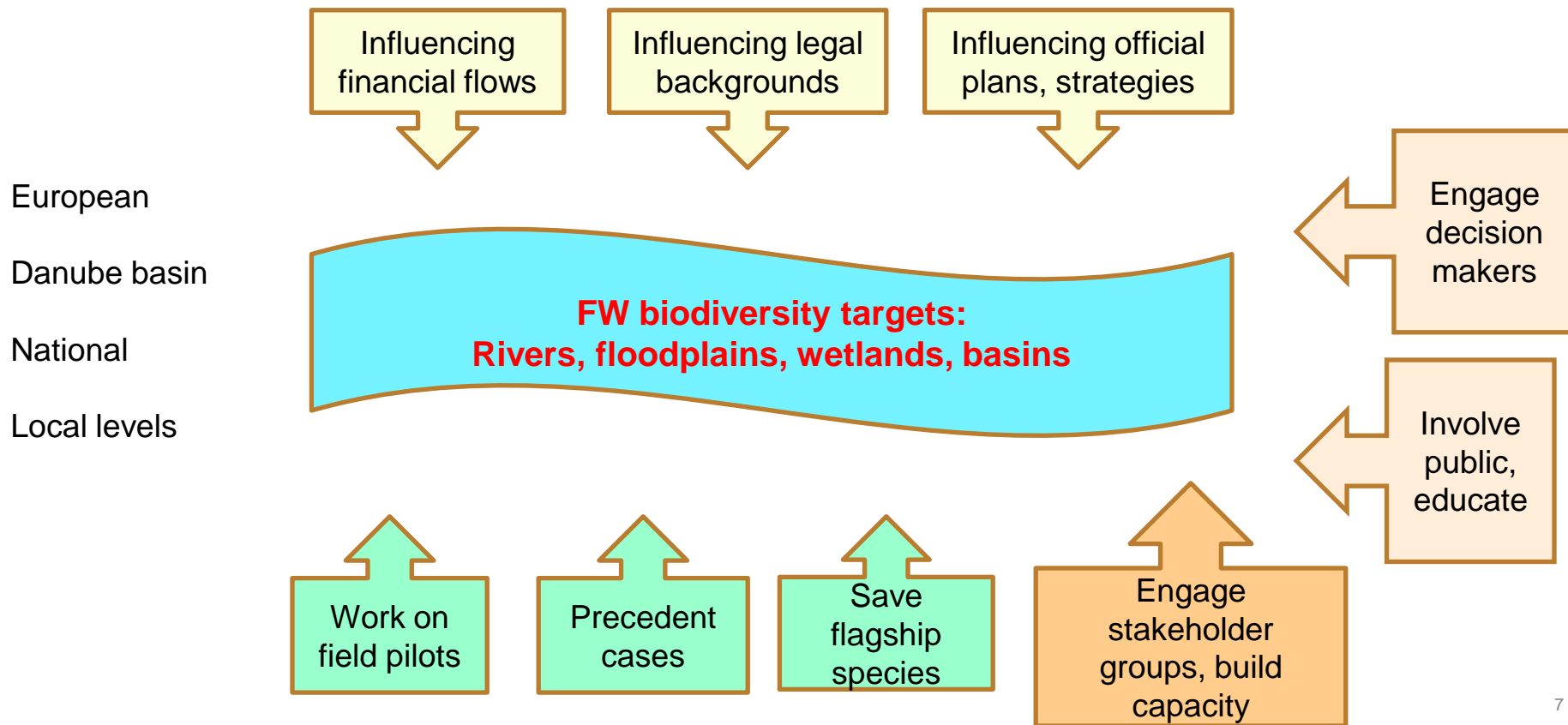


RESTORE

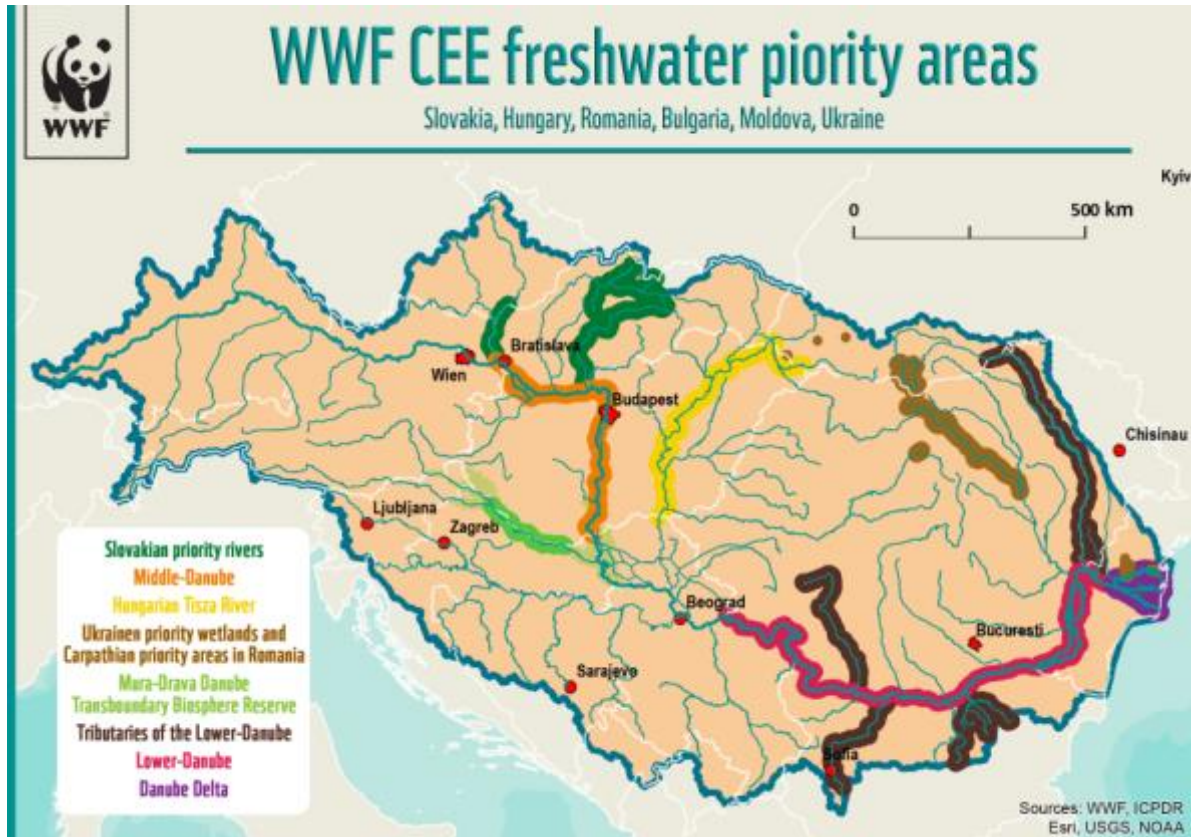
Climate change adaptation/mitigation
Sturgeon



FW strategy: Integrated approach → FW biodiversity targets




WWF CEE priority rivers




Restore rivers, floodplains, wetlands



Restore degraded FW habitats

Lateral connectivity: 
Reconnect river floodplains
NBS

Longitudinal connectivity: 
Barrier/dam removal



Parallel work on different levels to push for NBS



National, EU

SHAPE ENABLING CONDITIONS

- *Shape financial flows* (CAP, OP, NRRF)
- *Influence legal background* and strategic official documents
- Engage and support *decision makers, different sectors, public*

Local, cathment

FIELD DEMONSTRATION

- *Implemented field measures*
- *Stakeholder engagement*

Restored

RESTORE – example from HU



Before restoration:
Closed Danube side-arm, silted, drying out



After restoration:
Opened and slightly dredged side-arm, with free-flowing water

RESTORE rivers and floodplains – example from BG



Improve water supply through modernising sluices and installing real time water level detection

RESTORE – example from UA



before



after



Improve longitudinal connectivity via dam removal
Height of dam > 4 m; Altitude - 930 m

RESTORE rivers and floodplains – example from SK, BG



Dam removal



Building fish-pass

RESTORE – example from RO



Lack of water on the disconnected floodplain, massive homogeneous reedbed



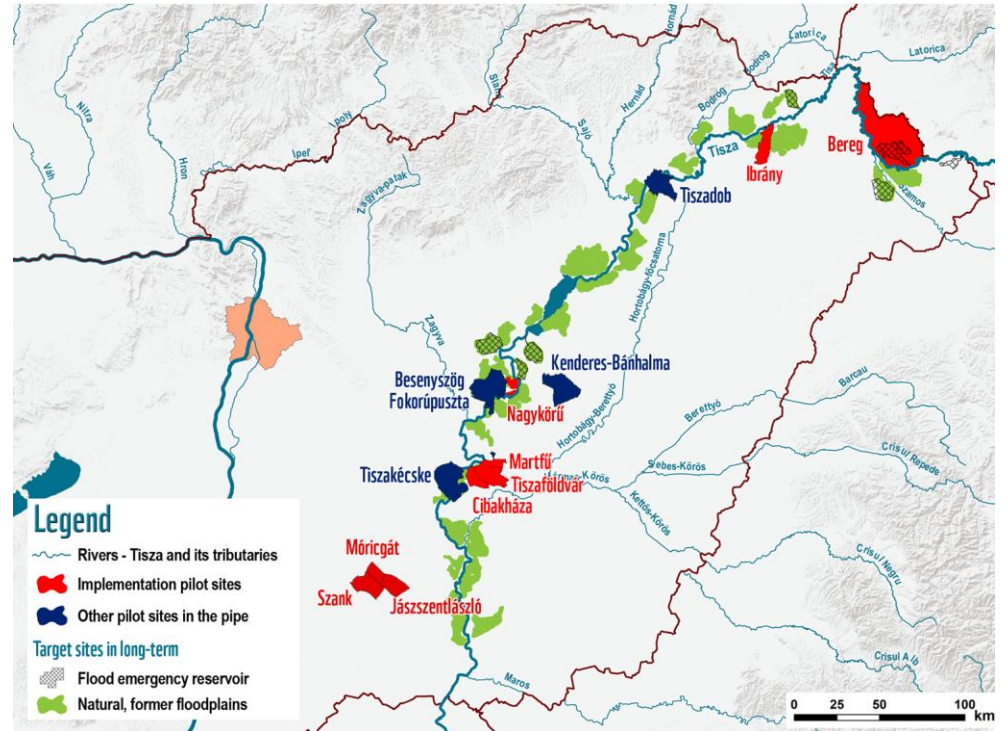
5 million m³ water replenished through improved water supply channel, dredging, creation open water surface to diverse habitat

Large scale NBS programme along the HU Tisza



- Large scale NBS Programme
- Long term target: 150 000 ha
- Improve biodiversity and resilience

biodiversity, NWRM, flood-drought mitigation, adjust agriculture practice



Large scale restoration along the Lower Danube



- Large scale restoration programme along the Lower Danube, RO part
 - Long term target: 160 000 ha
 - Improve biodiversity and resilience
- biodiversity, NWRM, flood-drought mitigation, fishery, agriculture



Protect : push back new deterioration



Stop or at least mitigate negative impact of future infrastructure projects:

Physical alteration by-

Hydropower

Navigation

Flood protection

Dredging

Irrigation



Protect : push back new deterioration



CASES:

- **Selected threatening infrastructure projects**
- **National precedent cases** (legal actions)

NATIONAL ENABLING CONDITIONS:

Move from harmful to sustainable

- **Shape financial flows**, investments
- **Influence legal background**, **strategic official documents**
- **Engage decision makers**, **different sectors**



Protect: Save Sturgeons from threats





Restoration in cities – regional movement under development



Slovakia, Hungary , Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Croatia – strong engagement potential



Living Danube Partnership

Working with corporates

An aerial photograph of a river flowing through a dense forest. The river is a deep blue-green color, and the surrounding forest is a mix of green and yellow trees, suggesting autumn. In the foreground, there is a large, light-colored, rocky outcrop with a textured, layered appearance. A black rectangular box with the text "Thank you!" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Thank you!