



First penta-lateral biosphere reserve in the World - the story of Mura-Drava-Danube region

International workshop on defining transboundary conservation principles, 16-18 October 2013,
Hainafal National Park, Austria

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WWF Programme “Transboundary Biosphere Reserve “Mura-Drava-Danube”

•TBR MDD Programme:

Creation of a
Trans-Boundary Biosphere Reserve
„Mura-Drava-Danube“

Lead: WWF Austria





Project characteristics

- Time period: January 2011 – December 2013
- Project Partners: WWF AT, EuroNatur, WWF MedPO, WWF DCPO, WWF Hungary, Croatian Society for the Protection of Birds and Nature
- Local and International Partners
- Financed by MAVA



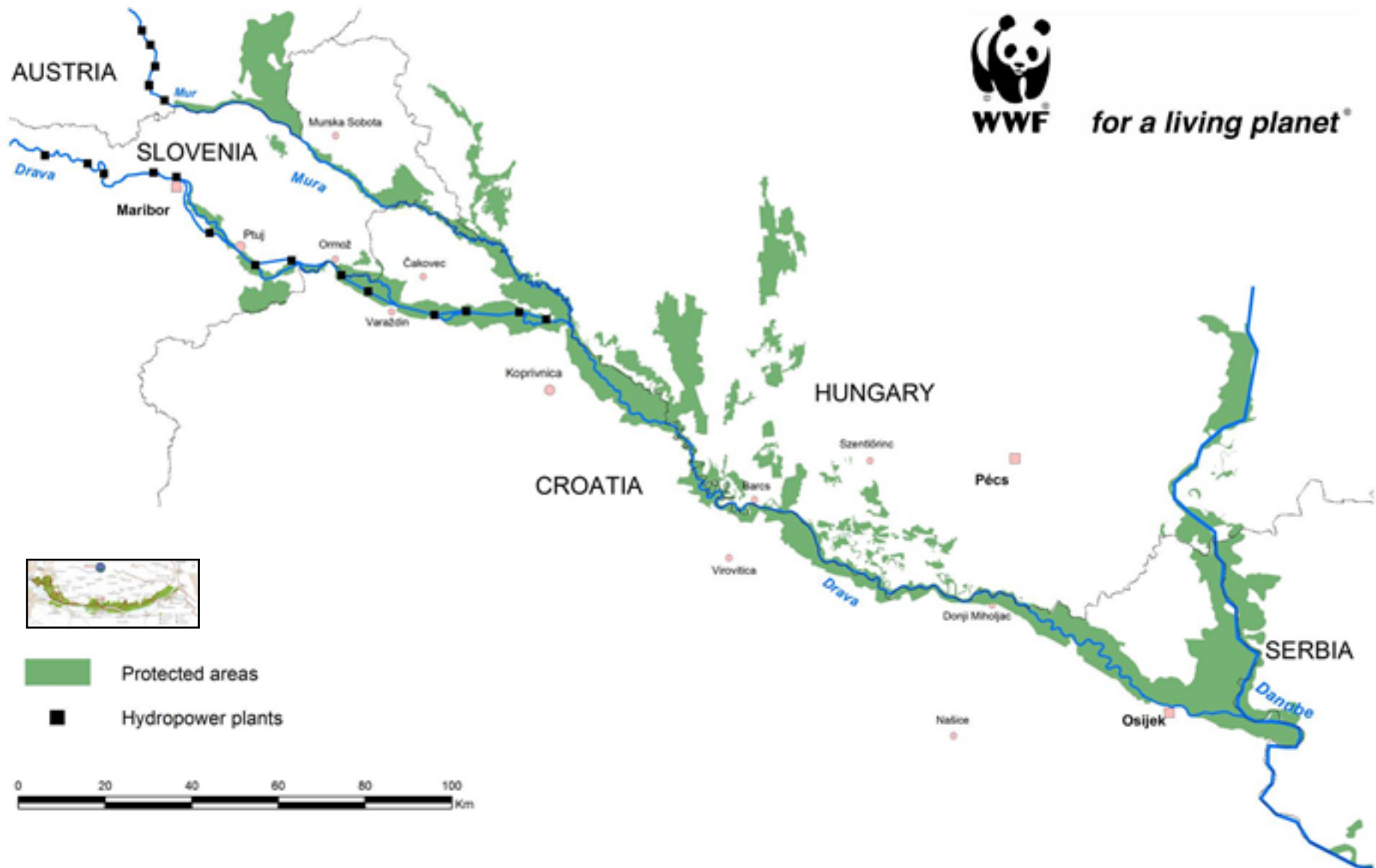
Protecting „Europe’s Lifeline”

The creation of a Trans-Boundary Biosphere Reserve along the Danube, Drava and Mura Rivers

Protected areas along the lower Drava and Mura Rivers



for a living planet®





Lower Drava and Mura Rivers: Large intact river stretches and floodplain areas

- 500 km free flowing river system without dams through 5 countries (AUT, SI, HR, HU, RS)
- 250.000 ha riverine landscape
- River stretches with extensive sediment dynamic

The „Amazon of Europe”



Unique selling points

- **800 000 ha:** Europe's Largest Riverine Protected Area
 - The **first** Biosphere Reserve in the World, which is commonly shared and managed across 5 countries
 - Powerful symbol for **regional cooperation, international understanding** and peace keeping across international boundaries
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3 Programme-Pillars





TBR MDD establishment in 5 countries

UNESCO TBR nomination

- CRO and HU signed commitment for TBR establishment in **2009**
- 5 countries ministerial agreement signed for a joint TBR MDD in **2011**
- July **2012** – CRO and HU got the nomination
- September **2013** – SRB sent the nomination in UNESCO
- Several stakeholder workshops
- Public celebration by the CRO and HU governments, WWF and partners of this major achievement – **Day of Amazon of Europe**, 14th July



Main challenges – how to reach....

- ▶ Common understanding - complexity of the 5-country region in political, social, economic, administrative and cultural terms = any kind of transboundary progress needs time
- ▶ Cooperation in management - national perspective and attitude and local and sectoral interests represented above the joint and transboundary one = constant open dialogue
- ▶ Financial stability- no or little means on national level for transboundary cooperation available = open another sources of funding



In the same time....

- How to make TBR MDD alive?
- Stop mayor destructive projects – HPP on Mura and Drava, navigation on Danube
- Functional and sustainable TBR – management structure is missing
- Ownership of the countries is missing





Improved common understanding and transboundary cooperation in the management of the TBR between all 5 countries

International working group

- Transboundary cooperation
- Platform, forum of stakeholders
- Cooperation, common activities

Know How transfer and learning from existing Biosphere Reserves

- experience exchange from international best practice examples





TBR MDD as a joint trademark for all 5 countries

- **Website “TBR MDD”**

- Basic information in 5 languages
- News, events in English, photos
- Information platform

- **Transboundary information platform, monitoring and GIS**

- Common GIS and data basis for the whole TBR MDD
- Bird indicators, common zonation, threats

- **Leaflet about the TBR MDD**

- Multilingual
- Highlight values and threats





Prevent major river regulations and sediment extraction projects and potential new hydropower dam projects

- **Dravawatch campaign**

- Opposing destructive projects, Lobbying and policy work (Danube regulation, Drava sediment extraction, dams, etc.)

- Lobbying (EC, national), communication, networking, actions on site, etc.

- Involve NGO network (Planning meetings, etc.)





Major river restoration project preparation

- **Transboundary river restoration project**

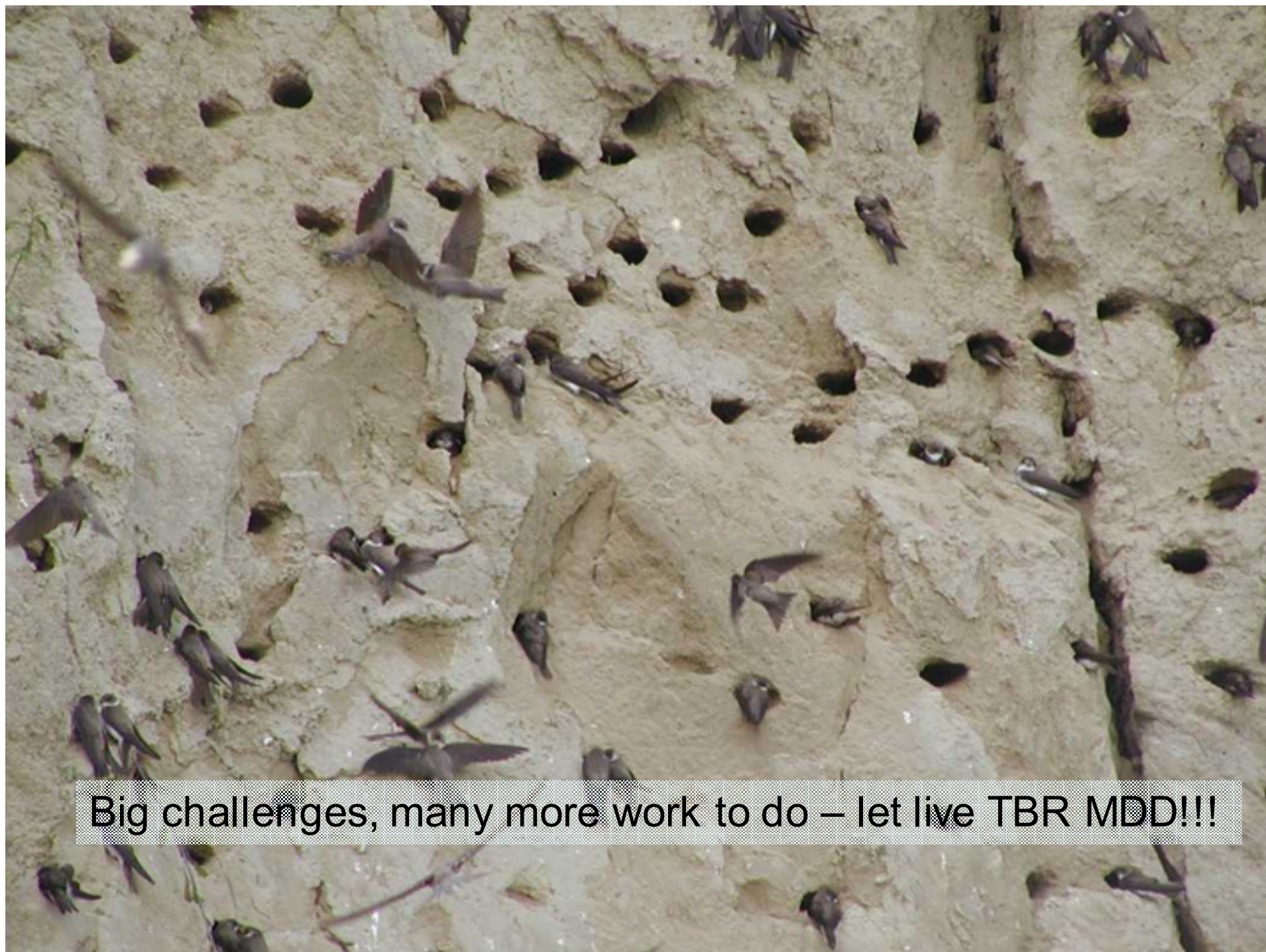
- Working group
- Site specific
- Development of restoration concept
- Excursions to restoration sites (to best practice example, e. g. Upper Drava, share information and exchange expertise)

- **Study “Restoration potential along the MDD”**

- Prioritisation of future river restoration efforts in the MDD area

- **Lobbying and Policy work**





Big challenges, many more work to do – let live TBR MDD!!!