



# Living Danube Partnership for restoration: 1+1+1=5?

**Innovative partnership between corporate,  
governmental platform and NGO**

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WWF Central and Eastern Europe

International conference on protecting and restoring free-flowing rivers in Europe;  
April 15-17, 2024 | Groningen, Netherlands

# Danube River Basin



**Most international  
river basin  
in the World**

**19 countries shares  
the basin**

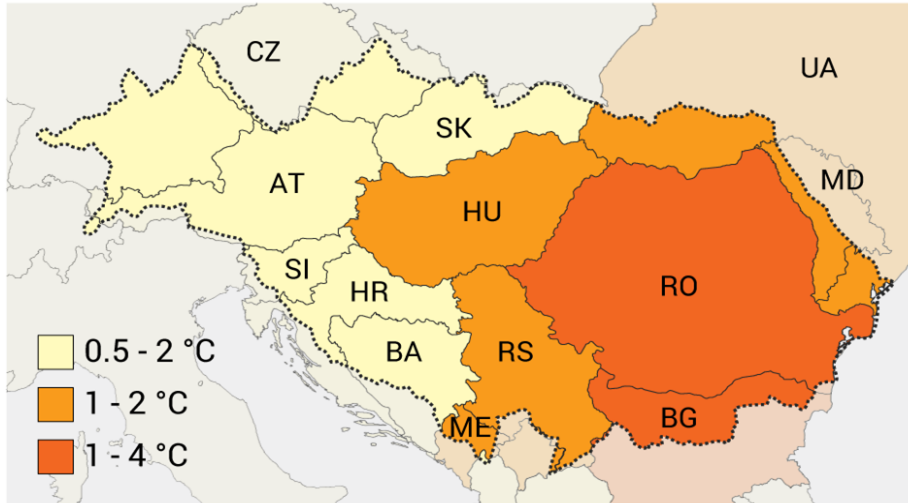


# Main Pressures



# Outlook - Climate change

**FIGURE 12:** ANNUAL MEAN TEMPERATURE CHANGE, 2021-2050



**FIGURE 13:** SUMMER MEAN PRECIPITATION CHANGE, 2021-2050



Source: <https://sos.danubis.org/eng/report/ii-context-for-services/d-water-resources-and-climate-change/>

# Consequences

## Water quality

Low water level in rivers, lakes

Sinking groundwater level

Increased flood risk

Increased drought risk

Reduced climate resilience

Loss of biodiversity, habitats

Heatwaves

Wildfires

Degradation of soil



## Relevant for:

Biodiversity

Climate resilience

Drinking water supply

Industry

Agriculture, food production

Navigation

Hydropower

Tourism, recreation

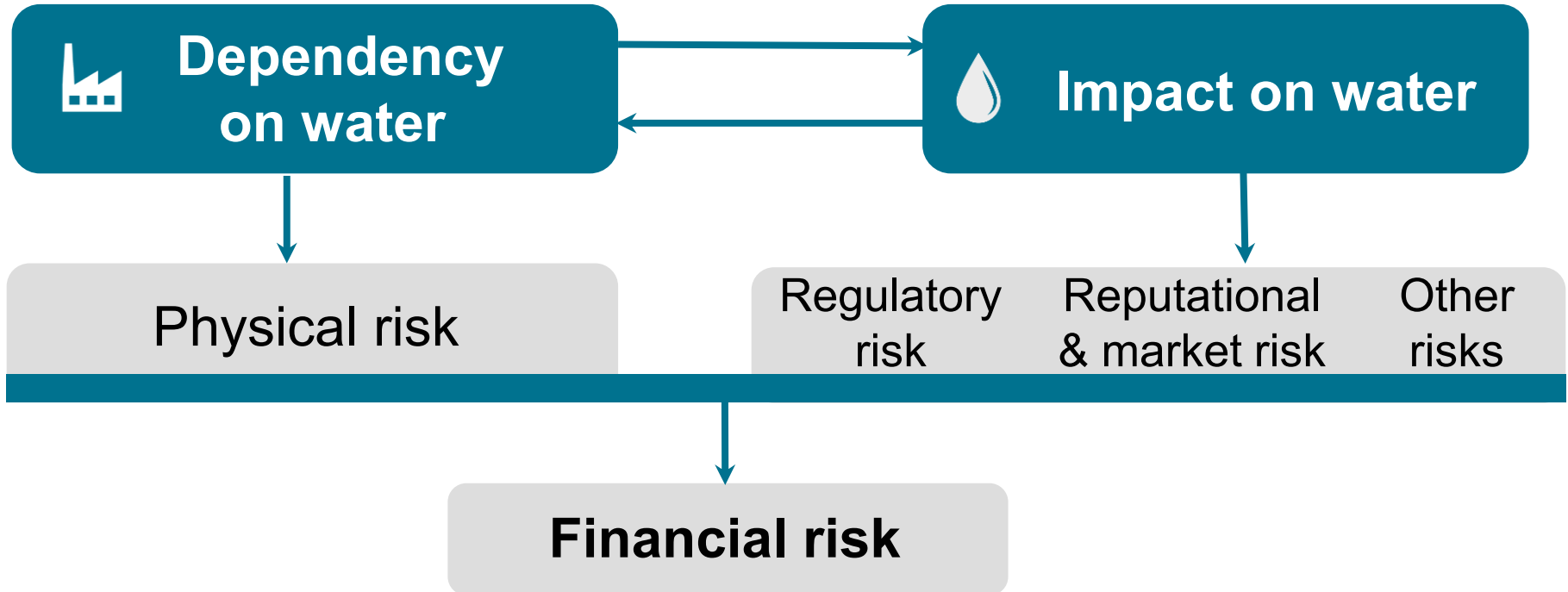
Forestry

Wellbeing and health

# How do businesses and water relate?



**Both direct operation and through supply chain!**





# The Value of Water - ACT NOW



## USD 58 trillion

The annual economic value of water and freshwater ecosystems – equivalent to 60% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Source: WWF, The High Cost of Cheap Water

## 5 times higher

Cost of inaction on water security compared to cost of action

Source: CDP, 2020

# LIVING DANUBE PARTNERSHIP

A Case study of collective action, 2014-2021 and ongoing





# Living Danube Partnership



**The Coca-Cola Foundation and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), with the support of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)**

# Living Danube Partnership 1<sup>st</sup> phase



Longer term cooperation: 8 years (2014 -2021)

Regional / multi-country programme (6 countries + regional activities)

9 restoration projects + communications & engagement

Already defined projects + preparation of future projects

Partnership Steering Group focused on objectives, adaptive management

EU LIFE funds + €3.8 million co-finance from COKE Foundation

# Living Danube Partnership 1<sup>st</sup> phase



9 river and wetland restoration projects completed in 6 countries



## LIVING DANUBE PARTNERSHIP - RESULTS IN TERMS OF VOLUME AND AREA

	FRESHWATER REPLENISHED		RIVERS RESTORED	
	million m <sup>3</sup>	hectares	river km	
NEUSIEDLER SEE (AT)	0.800	400		
CROATIAN DRAVA SIDE-ARMS (HR)*	tbd	1,000	14.5	
LANKÓC FLOODPLAIN FOREST (HU)	tbd	513		
BARCS-OLD-DRAVA (HU)	0.088	176		
ŠIROKI RIT (FRS)	0.145	53		
GÂRLA MARE AND VRATA (RO)	5.190	620		
PERSINA & KALIMOK (BG)	7.400	3,700		
FREE-FISH (BG)	n.a.		120.0	
<b>CUMULATIVE FORECAST 2021</b>	<b>13.45</b>	<b>5,462</b>	<b>134.5</b>	
<b>ORIGINAL TARGET - BY PROJECT END IN 2021</b>	<b>12.00</b>	<b>5,327</b>		

\* to be completed in 2023



# Living Danube Partnership 1<sup>st</sup> phase



## Results 2014-2021



**13.45** million  
CUBIC METERS OF FRESH WATER  
REPLENISHED

**€ 20** million

LEVERAGED FOR RIVER  
AND WETLAND  
RESTORATION



**87 000**

HAVE ATTENDED EVENTS



**70.7** million people

REACHED VIA MASS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

# Field examples



# Neusiedler See soda lakes

In Austria

## 4 soda lakes:

- raised groundwater table to former levels by building (4) weirs
- 400 ha
- TCCC Europe, TCCF; Water Mgmt Authority





# Oxbow at Široki Rit



In Serbia

## Mura-Drava-Danube Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve:

- Restored water level by widening and deepening the existing supply channel and slightly dredging the lake
- 53 ha
- Financed by TCCF only

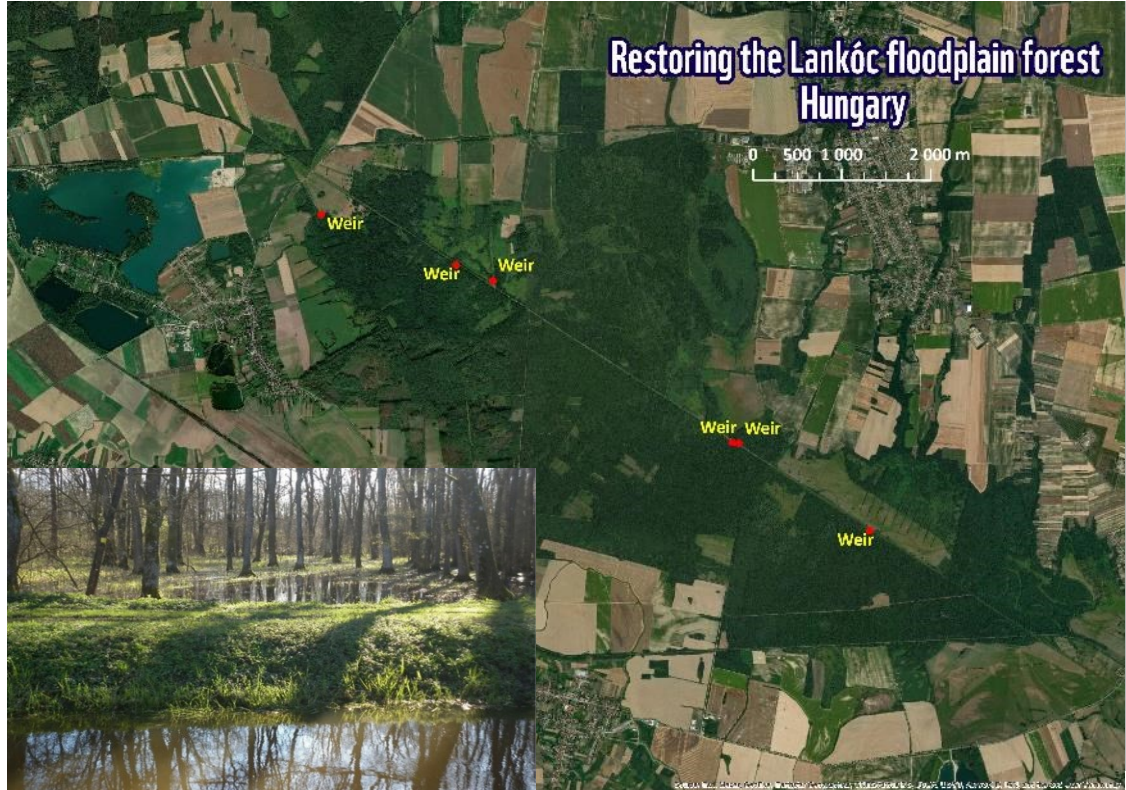
# Lankóc floodplain forest



In Hungary

**Mura-Drava-Danube Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve:**

- 6 water retention weirs
- 6 water-level monitoring devices installed
- Studies on socio-economic impacts and ecosystem services completed





# Garla Mare wetland



In Romania (Lower Danube)  
**Danube floodplain reconnection:**

- inlet channel, dyke reinforcement, creation of open water surface
- $\approx 620$  ha impacted, +5 million m<sup>3</sup> water retention capacity
- Fishing for local community, potential for local business, flood/drought risk mitigation
- Only funded by TCCF



# Free fish – Rusenski Lom area

In Bulgaria:

## Rusenski Lom tributary:

- 120 rkm restored river connectivity : 2 small barriers removed; 1 functioning fish pass built
- Fish populations strengthened
- Guidelines on fish passes finalized, presented to stakeholders
- EU LIFE project, TCCF co-finance



# Leverage / multiplier effects of LDP



- **More sites** are involved than originally planned
- **New, additional follow-up projects also generated** by local water management authorities, stakeholders
- **Cross-border and cross sectoral cooperation**
- **Follow-up activities** for completed restoration ongoing (e.g. monitoring of results, communication).
- **Increased knowledge and reputation of partners**
- Example to be followed by **private sector**

# Living Danube Partnership Continuation



## Raised the bar:

- **Demonstrate and promote restoration** of rivers and wetlands;
- Showcase **NBS**, sectoral benefits (esp. agriculture)
- Promote a supporting **environment of policy, legislation, finance**;
- Demonstrate **good water stewardship and collective action** among business and authorities.





# Call for action



# Collective action: corporates, stakeholders

**Potential type of cooperation for NBS:**

**Restoration measures on the field**

**Sustainable water use/ management implemented**

**Joint policy/advocacy (legal, financial framework)**

**Awareness raising**

**Engagement of stakeholders**

**Funding, fundraising**



**European**

**Danube basin**

**National**

**Sub-basin**

**Local**

# Living Danube Partnership 2.0 (2024-2026)

## Restoration sites and water stewardship pilot areas



Next 3 years:

Slovakia  
Hungary  
Bulgaria  
Romania  
Ukraine



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