Docusign Envelope ID: 08B082F4-E97E-430D-8BAF-BB64BE089C19

KBF Project Document

I. Basic Information			
Fund Name	*Kunming Biodiversity Fund*		
Project Title	Restoration and connectivity of priority habitats for species conservation in Serbia		
Project Number	00141384		
Thematic area	The project shall support the following thematic areas: **Thematic area 1. Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services; Thematic area 2. Biodiversity effectively mainstreamed into policies, regulations, planning and strategies; and Thematic area 4. Biodiversity mainstreamed among businesses and consumers to drive positive behaviors.**		
Project Description	*The project will restore priority forests, wetlands, and grasslands in Serbia and establish ecological corridors to strengthen habitat connectivity. By reinforcing policy frameworks, mobilizing private sector finance, and engaging PAs alongside local communities, it will enhance biodiversity resilience, ecosystem services, and sustainable livelihoods in line with GBF targets.*		
Timeframe	*Anticipated start date: 01/09/2026*[1]		
	Duration (in months): 27		
Participating Organization(s) and Project Focal Points (No more than 3, with a preference for 1-2)	United Nations Development Programme (Country Office – Serbia)	**Primary project focal point:** *Focal point name:* Monica Moldovan *Title: Regional Technical Specialist* *email: monica.moldovan@undp.org* **Secondary project focal point:** *Focal point name* Zorica Korać *Title* Portfolio Manager *e-mail* zorica.korac@undp.org	
Geographical scope	*Geographical scope*	*Region(s)*	*Country/countries*
	Country	*South-east Europe*	*Republic of Serbia*
Beneficiary Country/Countries and Focal Points (No more than 3, with a preference for 1-2)	*Country name*	*Focal point name:* Jelena Dučić *Title:* Sector for Nature Protection, Ministry of Environmental Protection *email:* jelena.ducic@eko.gov.rs	
	Country name	*Focal point name* *Title* *e-mail*	
	Country name	*Focal point name* *Title* *e-mail*	
Gender Equality Marker[2]	*[Select one]* ☐ GEM-0: The Key Activity is not expected to contribute to GEWE ☐ GEM-1: The Key Activity contributes to GEWE in a limited way ■ GEM-2: GEWE is a significant objective of the Key Activity's overall intent ☐ GEM-3: GEWE is the principal objective of the Key Activity		
SDG Targets	*SDG 5; SDG 9; SDG 13; SDG 15*		
Total budget (USD)	**Budget Requested**		
	UNDP Serbia Country Office	$1,000,000.00	
	Total Budget Requested	$1,000,000.00	

[1] Official start date of the project will be the date of transfer of fund from MPTFO.

[2] https://gendercoordinationandmainstreaming.unwomen.org/building-block/gender-equality-marker

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	Other Sources (Parallel Funding)	
	Ministry of Environmental Protection (co-financing)	$170,000.00
	Total parallel funding	$170,000.00

Signatures of Participating Organization(s)	
Participating Organization(s)	**Name/Title**
UNDP Serbia	Yakup Beris, Resident Representative Signature: DocuSigned by: Yakup Beris 8E8AB6D378F0463... Date: 03-Dec-2025
Participating organizations (to be selected)	To be determined
Executive Council Approval	
Date of Executive Council Approval: <co-chair name>, co-chair of the KBF Executive Council Signature:	Digitally signed by Doreen Robinson Date: 2025.12.10 15:42:54 +03'00'

II. Situation Analysis

The Republic of Serbia is one of Europe's six biodiversity hotspots, home to around 44,000 species of plants, animals, and fungi. Key ecosystems include forests, grasslands, wetlands, and rivers, each supporting unique species.

Serbia faces rapid habitat loss and fragmentation driven by agriculture, housing, infrastructure, and commercial expansion. Land use changes include wetland drainage, deforestation, tourism development, construction outside designated zones, and conversion of natural meadows and pastures to farmland, threatening the aforementioned ecosystems, and the connectivity between habitats. Although Serbia has 466 PAs, the country lacks a functional ecological network due to incomplete habitat mapping and limited field research. Inadequate financing and weak integration of biodiversity considerations into infrastructure, agriculture, and energy further constrain effective conservation. Fragmentation is most prominent in the following habitats:

- **Old-growth forests**, critical for rare and endangered species conservation; from 2021 to 2024, Serbia lost 20.7 thousand ha of tree cover, of which, 72% was lost within natural forest;[3]
- **Grasslands**, particularly in Vojvodina, which support unique flora and fauna including endangered bird species, have been reduced to under 3% of their historical range due to agricultural expansion;
- **Wetlands,** vital for water purification, flood control, and diverse species habitats; currently facing threats due to agricultural drainage, pollution and hydrological changes.

Progress in species and habitat data collection and mapping—primarily supported through EU projects—has strengthened planning and management of endangered habitats. Building on these gains and addressing the challenges outlined above, the proposed project will focus on restoring and reconnecting priority habitats. Specifically, the following problems will be addressed:

- **Degradation** of key habitats through habitat restoration measures, targeting key areas crucial for species conservation;
- **Limited ecological connectivity** addressed through planning, establishment and reestablishment of ecological corridors;
- **Biodiversity loss** addressed directly through the above two points.

Through habitat restoration and corridor planning, the project will promote species recovery and support healthier ecosystems in 1,000 hectares, linked with 5 PAs. In Serbia, the establishment of ecological corridors is a novel intervention; this initiative will serve as a pioneering model aligned with the CBD and EU nature protection acquis. The project will engage local land users for sustainability of community livelihoods, demonstrating the benefits possible with biodiversity-friendly land use. Strategically, this project aligns with the GBF's (as well CBD priorities

[3] Global Forest Watch (https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/SRB/?category=forest-change)

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and EU Natura 2000, Emerald) goals by addressing habitat loss and fragmentation, promoting ecosystem and biodiversity restoration, and enhancing biodiversity connectivity. This aligns with the GBF 2050 Vision whereby "biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored…" and the 2030 Mission "to take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss".

For additional information, see Annex 1.

The project advances national biodiversity policies, promotes SLM, and engages local communities in conservation, in support of local livelihoods and enhanced food security. By leveraging local and international partnerships, the project will accelerate and scale up biodiversity conservation, contributing to GBF targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23, and fostering a more sustainable future for Serbia's ecosystems and people.

III. Project Objectives

The project's overall objective is to conserve Serbia's natural ecosystems through connecting and restoring priority habitats, through:

Habitat Restoration: Restoration of at least two pilot sites[4] in old-growth forest, wetland or grassland habitats. Support PA managers with restoration activities, e.g., reforestation with native species, habitat restoration for endangered wildlife, water flow modification, soil erosion control, buffer zones for wetlands, and extensive grazing management for grasslands.

Ecological Connectivity: Plan and design at least one new ecological corridor[5] between fragmented habitats, facilitating species movement, genetic exchange, and resilience against climate change. Work with stakeholders to establish corridors between / within PAs. Develop proposals for corridors, riparian buffers, and wildlife crossings for an effective ecological network.

Policy and Coordination: Enhance legislative and institutional capacities by updating regulations[6], improving PA management, enhancing enforcement, and stakeholder collaboration.

Capacity Building: Individual and institutional capacity strengthened through trainings and workshops[7] for authorities, conservationists, managers, scientists, municipalities, and civil society. Increase capacity to plan and implement ecosystem restoration and establish corridors in which communities are land stewards.

4 Specific sites will be determined through a competitive challenge call with partners (as described in project activity details in Annex IV), but likely possible sites are described in Annex II.
5 As with restoration sites (indicated above), the specific corridor site selection will be determined through part of the project activities, as described in Annex IV. Potential sites are identified in Annex II.
6 As described in Annex IV, this is addressed under project Output 2.1, in which the project will review Serbia's Nature Protection Law, Spatial Plan (2021–2035), and Ecological Network Regulation to identify gaps in corridor protection, restoration mandates, and integration into land-use planning. Comparative analysis will draw on EU Natura 2000 directives, the EU Restoration Law, and experiences from neighboring accession countries. The project will prepare technical guidelines to mainstream biodiversity corridors into infrastructure design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes. The project will ensure policy coherence by directly engaging relevant national line agencies, such as the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Institute for Nature Conservation, and spatial planning authorities.
7 Trainings and capacity development activities will address key topics related to ecosystem restoration and corridor design and implementation, including ecosystems vulnerability assessment (including sensitive habitats and species), ecosystem restoration planning, ecological connectivity, relations between nature/ecosystems conservation, spatial planning and infrastructure development; better integration of nature conservation into environmental impact assessments; and valuation of ecosystem services.

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Public Awareness and Community Engagement: Capacitate communities in habitat restoration and connectivity through educational programs, awareness campaigns, workshops, etc., ensuring long-term support and stewardship by local communities.[8]

IV. Theory of change

The ToC (diagram, Annex 3) tackles habitat fragmentation and degradation by working across ecological, institutional, social, and economic dimensions, through three interconnected components: (1) restoring degraded habitats and strengthening ecological connectivity, (2) enhancing institutional and policy frameworks, and finance; (3) fostering knowledge sharing, and community engagement. These levers drive project outcomes to deliver healthy, connected ecosystems, stronger enabling policies, institutional capacity, and community participation / benefits. Assumptions include sustained government ambition, private sector recognition of restoration's value, and community willingness to engage. Transformative impacts include improved resilience and connectivity of key ecosystems, securing biodiversity and ecosystem services, and enhanced Serbian awareness and stewardship.

Outcome 1: Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands

Output 1.1: Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats

- Activity 1.1.1: Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, designing a competitive process / challenge call
- Activity 1.1.2: Implementation of Active Restoration Measures in at least 2 pilot sites selected through competitive process / challenge call
- Activity 1.1.3: Monitoring and Evaluation of restoration activities

Output 1.2: Establishment of Ecological Corridors

- Activity 1.2.1: Design at least 1 new ecological corridor that connects fragmented habitats (through competitive process/challenge call)
- Activity 1.2.2: Community and stakeholder involvement in corridor planning and implementation
- Activity 1.2.3: Implementation of at least 1 pilot corridor project priority habitat to facilitate movement for endangered species and genetic exchange
- Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen management effectiveness of 5 PAs anchoring corridors

Outcome 2: Improved Policy, Finance, and Institutional Enabling Environment for Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Connectivity

Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation

- Activity 2.1.1: Review and update regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international standards.
- Activity 2.1.2: Development of guidelines and regulations for biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment

Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding

- Activity 2.2.1: Develop private sector partnership proposals and business cases to support habitat restoration
- Activity 2.2.2: Engagement with companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials.

Outcome 3: Enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement for ecosystem restoration and corridor management

Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge

- Activity 3.1.1: Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures.
- Activity 3.1.2: Development and dissemination of training materials on habitat restoration and ecological connectivity.

8 For additional details on engagement of local communities, and associated awareness activities, please see Annex IV for activity descriptions under activities 3.1.2 and 3.2.2.

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Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs

- Activity 3.2.1: Design and implement habitat restoration and connectivity awareness campaigns.
- Activity 3.2.2: Educational programs for local communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts.

Outcome 4: Successful project implementation and sustained results: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance

Output 4.1 - Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated risk management system in line with UNDP and national policies

- Activity 4.1.1 Implementation and monitoring of safeguards risk framework
- Activity 4.1.2 Developing a Risk Management system for the project

Output 4.2 – M&E and Quality Assurance Systems

- Activity 4.2.1 Establishing a M&E system for the project
- Activity 4.2.2: Providing quality assurance of technical outputs, knowledge products, M&E and SES implementation

V. Coordination, complementarities and value added

KBF Alignment with SDGs and KMGBF: The project is relevant to and supportive of multiple SDGs (5, 9, 13, 15) and KMGBF Targets, including GBF targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20, 22, and 23. A summary table highlighting the alignment of project outputs with SDG and KMGBF Targets is included in Annex 6 of this document.

Serbia's Nature Protection Programme (2021-2023)[9] (NBSAP): alignment with goals on enhancement of resource utilization and policy support:

- Special objective 1.2: Improving the protected areas, ecological network and species management system
  - 1.2.2: Establishing and developing a natural area of special geological significance
  - 1.2.5: Improving protection status and species management
- Special objective 1.3: Improving the public policy for the nature protection and biodiversity conservation and public participation in decision-making processes
  - 1.3.3: Integration of nature protection and biodiversity conservation into other sectors

Coordination of KBF Investments and Existing Efforts: KBF investments will complement ongoing initiatives by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, UNDP and others (e.g., IUCN ECARO). The proposed project ensures complementarity by aligning with the following efforts/projects and avoiding overlap:

- EU for Green Agenda in Serbia project and "Protecting and Investing in Biodiversity and Water for Enhanced Climate Resilience" - expands focus to additional priority habitats for restoration and integration of the habitat connectivity component.
- GEF-8 "Green Cities" project – builds on ecosystem restoration lessons in the "tri-cities" area to mitigate climate risks and greening of communal infrastructure.

To support coordination, the project will:

- Work with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Institutes for Nature Conservation (republic and provincial), Ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure, to embed restoration and connectivity into national priorities and spatial planning.
- Build synergies with ongoing initiatives of UNDP, the EU, and IUCN ECARO.
- Collaborate with municipal authorities, PA managers, and civil society to secure local ownership and effective delivery.

[9] This is the latest government-approved NBSAP document, which remains valid until the new version is approved. MEP is currently drafting Serbia's new Nature Protection Programme (2025-2033) (new NBSAP), in line with the global KMGBF, EU Biodiversity strategy and national planning system. Programme will include measures for improving the protected areas, ecological network and species management.

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- Use existing coordination forums and technical working groups to align with other UN and non-UN actors, avoiding duplication.

Leverage and Contribution:
The project will align corridor planning with Serbia's **Ecological Network Regulation** and Emerald/Natura 2000 processes, while engaging the **national biodiversity committee** and Carpathian Convention platforms to harmonize regional connectivity. Training and policy dialogue will be channeled through existing **inter-ministerial working groups** on spatial planning and environment. At the local level, coordination will build on **protected area advisory councils** and **municipal stakeholder forums** to strengthen community-driven restoration and ensure lessons feed directly into national policy frameworks.

VI. Lessons Learned & Innovation

The project builds on lessons learned from past restoration efforts[10] in Serbia, emphasizing the lessons of the **importance of integrated planning**, **early stakeholder engagement**, and **long-term community ownership**. Based on previous wetlands Challenge Call, **small competitive funds can catalyze high-leverage pilots**—if paired with a scale-path.

To deliver maximum results, the project builds on the main principles of the Recommendations for Avoiding/Minimizing Fragmentation of Ecological Corridors:[11]

- Create core sites for reducing fragmentation
- Involve people
- Monitor progress
- Start now, plan long-term

Innovation includes piloting ecological corridors as legal spatial categories, mainstreaming biodiversity into national and local planning, and nature-based solutions for climate resilience. By aligning with EU frameworks and mobilizing diverse partners, the project maximizes catalytic impact with limited resources, which is also a novel concept. Innovative digital monitoring tools and partnerships enhance transparency, learning, and adaptation. The project also leverages Serbia's EU accession momentum and regional cooperation platforms, positioning corridors as flagship models within the Carpathian Convention and Natura 2000 alignment. By coupling ecological restoration with policy innovation, financing pilots, and regional knowledge exchange, it demonstrates scalable approaches with relevance beyond Serbia, amplifying both impact and replication.

VII. Sustainability, exit strategy and replication

The project is designed for long-term sustainability across environmental, institutional, social, and financial dimensions.

- **Environmentally**, restored habitats (forests, wetlands, grasslands) and ecological corridors will be integrated into PA management, ensuring continued ecosystem services, biodiversity recovery, and resilience to climate change.

10 Numerous examples of relevant related restoration efforts are documented at https://zelenatranzicija.undp.org.rs/en/oblast/nature-protection-biodiversity/. These initiatives have been supported significantly by the EU through the "EU for Green Agenda in Serbia" initiative, with additional support from Sweden and Switzerland.

11 P. 18 of Kadlečík, J., Okániková, Z., Finka, M., Ondrejička, V., Husár, M. & Staník, R. (2021). Set of Recommendations Developed Together with Spatial Planners to Avoid/Minimise Fragmentation of Ecological Corridors and Natura 2000 Sites. Danube Transnational Programme ConnectGREEN Project "Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin". State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, Banská Bystrica, 42 pg.

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- **Institutionally**, key authorities and PA managers will retain new capacity and skills beyond the project timeline. [12] Through capacity-building and regulatory updates, responsibilities for restoration and connectivity will be embedded into national frameworks. Revised legislation and updated management plans will ensure institutional continuity beyond the project.
- **Financially**, sustainability will be supported by developing business cases for private sector investment, piloting green financing tools (e.g. green bonds, CSR), and integrating biodiversity financing into national planning through the BioFin initiative - initiatives that will last beyond the project.

Exit strategies include formal handovers to public institutions, stakeholder ownership through training and legal mandates, and long-term maintenance embedded in official plans.

This project represents an innovative approach with potential for replication because it attempts to create Serbia's first comprehensive corridor planning model and public-private partnerships for biodiversity. These approaches are designed for replication through national policies, case studies, and training materials, ensuring continued impact and serving as a model for future restoration initiatives.

VIII. Social Impact

The proposed project has been assessed against UNDP's Social and Environmental Safeguards framework, and risk treatment measures have been outlined in the attached Annex 5.

Gender equality and women's empowerment:
Gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the project cycle, in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy. Women will be involved in participatory planning, training programs, and decision-making bodies related to restoration and corridor establishment. Outreach and capacity-building activities will apply gender-sensitive methodologies, ensuring women's equal access to technical knowledge, employment opportunities in restoration, and leadership roles within community-based conservation initiatives. Special attention will be given to women in rural areas, where dependence on natural resources is high, to support economic empowerment and enhance their agency in shaping biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.[13]

Youth and vulnerable groups inclusion:
The project will create opportunities for young people and vulnerable groups—including persons with disabilities and marginalized rural households—through targeted awareness programs, internships, and skills development in green jobs linked to ecosystem restoration and sustainable tourism. Serbia's population has a deep connection to their natural landscapes, but there is still a need for greater public awareness regarding the importance of preserving natural habitats and their connectivity. Training modules and outreach campaigns will be tailored to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness, fostering youth stewardship of ecological corridors and enabling vulnerable populations to directly benefit from conservation-linked livelihoods. By addressing potential barriers to participation, the project ensures that benefits are equitably distributed and that no group is left behind.

Local communities' engagement:
The project emphasizes local community engagement and ownership as a condition for long-term sustainability, and local stakeholders' engagement and input from related initiatives and procedures has been incorporated in the project design. Communities will continue to participate in restoration planning, corridor mapping, and monitoring.[14] and priori and informed consultation will be applied in all activities affecting local resource use. The project is aligned with Serbian national legal requirements, and international best practice to respect community priorities, decision-making structures, and self-governance. Community members will serve as custodians of

12 Capacity strengthening will be sustained through integration and upgrading of training curricula in the training programs on environment and nature under the National Public Administration Academy https://napa.gov.rs/#
13 The project results framework includes gender disaggregated indicators.
14 For example, under Activity 1.1.1. on restoration site assessment and planning, the project will ensure that local stakeholders, landowners, and authorities are consulted, and the activity will build on local capacity for ecological assessment and participatory restoration planning. For additional details, see activity descriptions under Annex IV.

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restored habitats, supported through training, employment, and input to PA management with protected area authorities.

By integrating these social dimensions, the project ensures that ecological outcomes are matched by social gains, contributing to inclusive development and Serbia's commitments under the CBD, SDGs, and EU nature directives. This socially responsive design will foster ownership, equity, and resilience, making biodiversity restoration and connectivity a shared national and local priority.

IX. Communications, outreach and learning

Under **Output 3.2**: the project will implement a comprehensive communication and outreach plan to promote the importance of habitat restoration and connectivity and ensure replication of successful approaches. Through **Activity 3.2.1**, the project will design and launch targeted public awareness campaigns using media outreach, social media, and community events. These campaigns will share compelling stories, visuals, and results from restoration sites, with a focus on the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Content will be produced in Serbian and English to reach both national and international audiences. **Activity 3.2.2** will deliver educational workshops and seminars for local communities, focusing on the role of biodiversity in climate resilience, health, and local livelihoods. Materials such as brochures, posters, and interactive guides will be tailored to diverse age groups and literacy levels.

Key communication products will include a project website, videos, policy briefs, and training manuals. These will showcase project impacts and provide practical tools for replication. By integrating communication and learning into project delivery, and by engaging a broad public beyond project stakeholders, the initiative will catalyze further action for biodiversity conservation across Serbia and support national and international biodiversity targets.

X. Budget

Please fill in the project budget template in the excel file attached (only the budgets using the provided template will be considered) at an outcome, output and activity level. **Additionally, classify each activity into one UNSDG expense category**. If the activity involves more than one type of expenditure (e.g., Travel and Contractual services), you will need to disaggregate said activity into the different types of expenditure involved.

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XI. Results Framework

Outcome 1: Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands					
		Baseline (2025)	**Target** (12-28)	**Means of verification**	**Responsible Org**
Outcome Indicators	1.1 Area (ha) of priority habitats (forest, wetland, grassland) under active restoration *(Aligned with: GBF Target 2 Indicator 2.1 "Area under restoration"[1]; UNDP Nature Pledge indicator: "Hectares of agricultural land, forest, natural grass, woodlands and wetlands under restoration")*	0 ha	200 ha	Restoration site reports, GIS maps, site monitoring data.	PA Managers, Institute for Nature Conservation
	1.2 Area (ha) of terrestrial ecosystems supported with improved management or protection, including ecological corridors established or functionally reconnected *(Aligned with: GBF Target 3 Indicator 3.1 "Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures"; UNDP Nature Pledge indicator: "Hectares of terrestrial ecosystems supported with improved management and/or protection, including protected areas, OECM and other conserved areas")*	0 ha	1,000 ha	Corridor design reports, spatial plans, site verification; METT scores for corridor linked PAs	Institute for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environment
Output Indicators	1.3 Number of enforcement agencies with enhanced capacity to operationalize conservation regulations in protected areas *(Aligned with UNDP Nature Pledge indicator: "Did the project support development or strengthening of governance systems at national, sub-national, or local levels to help operationalize and protect the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment: Y/N")*	0 agencies	2 agencies	Capacity assessment reports	PA Managers; Ministry of Environment
	1.4 Area (number) of protected areas that have completed a site-level assessment of management effectiveness	0 (0)	2,000 ha (5)	Protected area assessment reports (using Management	Lead Project Agency;

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	(Aligned with GBF Indicator 3.1: "Coverage of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures *- By protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures* *- By effectiveness (protected area management effectiveness)*			Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT))[15]	
	1.5 Number of direct and indirect project beneficiaries *(Aligned with UNDP Nature Pledge indicators:* *- Number of direct beneficiaries benefiting from Nature Pledge activities;* *- Number of indirect beneficiaries from Nature Pledge activities (Number of people benefiting from legal and social empowerment and ecosystem services, including enhanced climate resilience, food, and water security, health benefits, increase life expectancy, and overall wellbeing).*	0	100 (direct; >33 women) / (10,000 indirect; >49% women)	Project documentation; methodology to be specifically included in reporting	Lead Project Agency;
Outcome 2: Improved Enabling Policy, Finance, and Institutional Environment					
		Baseline (2025)	**Target** (12-28)	**Means of verification**	**Responsible Org**
Outcome Indicators	2.1 Number of updated regulations, with incorporated recommendations regarding habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity *(Aligned with UNDP Nature Pledge indicators:* *- "Number of legal instruments (laws, policies, regulations, etc.) supported to mitigate and/or reduce nature degradation, or whose enforcement is strengthened at national, sub-national or local levels."* *- "Did the project support the mainstreaming of Nature into national development plans, spatial and sectoral plans and related gender strategies?")*	0	3	Draft amended regulations, Published legal texts, policy briefs, government bulletins	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Construction

15 METT scores will be tracked and reported for participating PAs, with completion of a METT assessment being a condition for participation in project activities, so that a baseline METT value is established. Since the specific PAs to be supported will be determined through the competitive process, it is not possible to establish baseline METT values at this stage. The project will aim to increase participating PAs' management effectiveness by 10%, as measured through METT assessments.

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	2.2 Amount of biodiversity finance mobilized or catalyzed from public and private sources (in USD) *(UNDP Nature Pledge indicator)*, as broken down by: - International public funding - Domestic public funding - Private funding (domestic and international) *(Aligned with GBF indicators:* *D.1 International public funding, including official development assistance for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems* *D.2 Domestic public funding on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems* *D.3 Private funding (domestic and international) on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.)*	$0 - International public funding - Domestic public funding - Private funding (domestic and international)	Up to $1 million USD committed with evidence Disaggregated by - International public funding - Domestic public funding - Private funding (domestic and international)	Project records; records of investment deals; new investments with biodiversity mainstreamed, etc.	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Construction
Output Indicators	2.3 Number of improved national guidelines on biodiversity corridors for infrastructure investment *(Aligned with UNDP Nature Pledge indicator "Number of legal instruments (laws, policies, regulations, etc.) supported to mitigate and/or reduce nature degradation, or whose enforcement is strengthened at national, sub-national or local levels.")*	0	1 nationally consulted draft submitted for government approval	Project records and documentation	Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Construction
	2.4 Number of investment proposals to support habitat restoration and corridors	0	1	Project records	Lead Project Agency;
Outcome 3: Enhanced Public Awareness and Community Engagement					
		Baseline (2025)	**Target** (12-28)	**Means of verification**	**Responsible Org**
Outcome Indicators	3.1 Percentage of training participants who report using / applying knowledge gained within 6 months of training and capacity development materials	N/A	33%	Follow-up survey from participants 6 months after training or capacity building exercise.	Lead Project Agency; Institute for Nature Conservation; National Parks
	3.2 Number of advocacy and communication campaigns launched to elevate the value of Nature across economic sectors and societal groups, and	0	1	Project documentation; media and awareness materials; records of media	Lead Project Agency; Institute for Nature Conservation

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	to catalyze awareness and behavioral change. *(Aligned with: UNDP Nature Pledge Indicator: "Number of advocacy and communication campaigns launched to elevate the value of Nature across economic sectors and societal groups, and to catalyze awareness and behavioral change.")*			and awareness raising publications	
Output Indicators	3.3 Percentage of institutional staff (local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities) trained in planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures, disaggregated by gender	0 Percentage of staff completing training modules	50% of total technical staff (of which 50% or more of women staff participate)	Training attendance sheets	Lead Project Agency; Institute for Nature Conservation; National Parks
Outcome 4: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance					
		Baseline (2025)	**Target** (12-28)	**Means of verification**	**Responsible Org**
Outcome Indicators	4.1 Success of project implementation as measured by achievement of results indicators	N/A	90% achievement of project results indicators; Annual reports, final report, and evaluation rated as Moderately Satisfactory or higher using UNDP reporting and QA mechanisms	Project records and documentation	Lead Project Agency / UNDP Country office
Output Indicators	4.2 Number of project lessons and good practices documented	0	5 lessons / 5 good practices	Project records and documentation / project final report	Lead Project Agency / UNDP Country office

[1] See CBD/COP/16/L.26/Rev.1; "Monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework", February 26, 2025.

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XII. Implementation schedule/timeline

Project Activities		Months																								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Output 1.1 – Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats	Activity 1.1.1 - Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, designing a competitive process / challenge call	X	X	X	X	X	X																				
	Activity 1.1.2 - Implementation of Active Restoration Measures in at least 2 pilot sites selected through competitive process / challenge call							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Activity 1.1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation of restoration activities							X	X	X	X	X	X									X	X	X	X	X	X
Output 1.2 - Establishment of Ecological Corridors	Activity 1.2.1 – Design at least 1 new ecological corridor that connects fragmented	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X													

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	habitats (selected through competitive process/challenge call)																									
	Activity 1.2.2 – Community and stakeholder involvement in the corridor planning and implementation						X						X						X						X		
	Activity 1.2.3 – Implementation of at least 1 pilot corridor project priority habitat to facilitate movement for endangered species and genetic exchange														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen management effectiveness of 5 PAs anchoring corridors														X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Output 2.1 - Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation	Activity 2.1.1 – Review and update regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international standards.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												

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	Activity 2.1.2 – Development of guidelines and regulations for biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Output 2.2 - Secured Private Sector Funding	Activity 2.2.1 - Develop private sector partnership proposals and business cases to support habitat restoration							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
	Activity 2.2.2 - Engagement with companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials										X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Output 3.1. - Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge	Activity 3.1.1 - Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures							X						X					X					X		
	Activity 3.1.2 - Development and dissemination of	X	X	X	X	X	X																			

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	training materials on habitat restoration and ecological connectivity																									
Output 3.2. – Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs	Activity 3.2.1 – Design and implement habitat restoration and connectivity awareness campaigns										X	X	X	X	X	X										
	Activity 3.2.2 – Educational programs for local communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts															X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Output 4.1 – Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated Risk management system in line with UNDP and national policies	Activity 4.1.1. – Implementation and monitoring of safeguards risk framework	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Activity 4.1.2. – Developing a Risk Management system for the project	X	X	X																						
	Activity 4.2.1 - Establishing an	X	X	X																						

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Output 4.2 - M&E and Quality Assurance Systems	M&E system for the project																									
	Activity 4.2.2 - Providing quality assurance of technical outputs, knowledge products, M&E and SES implementation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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XIII. Risk management framework

Using the risk framework provided below, detail the key risks that may impact the achievement of the intended results, along with the corresponding risk avoidance and mitigation measures. Please ensure the risk assessment is comprehensive, addressing social, environmental, economic, conflict-related, and other relevant factors. Where necessary, include a Risk Management Plan for any critical risks as an annex to the proposal.

Risk category	Description
Contextual risks	Land-use Conflicts: Restoration and corridor areas may overlap with agricultural, infrastructural, or private land uses. Political and Policy Instability: Shifting political priorities could affect biodiversity commitments and funding continuity. Climate Variability: Extreme weather events may affect restoration success or delay activities.
Institutional risks	Weak Intersectoral Coordination: Limited cooperation between environment, spatial planning, infrastructure, and agriculture sectors. Regulatory Gaps or Poor Enforcement: Inconsistent or insufficient enforcement of restoration and biodiversity laws. Low Institutional Capacity: Key agencies may lack technical expertise or staff to implement restoration and connectivity plans.
Project level risks	Community Resistance: Local communities may resist land-use changes without clear benefits. Low Private Sector Engagement: Private actors may not recognize value or business case in habitat restoration. Monitoring and Data Gaps: Incomplete baseline data and limited long-term ecological monitoring. Staff Turnover: Loss of trained personnel in government or project team may weaken continuity.

Category of Risk	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Level	Implications for project/ programme	Mitigation measures
Contextual / Programmatic / Institutional	High priority risks for project/ programme	☐ Very improbable (1) ☐ Improbable (2) ☐ Possible (3) ☐ Probable (4) ☐ Very probable (5)	☐ Negligible (1) ☐ Low (2) ☐ Moderate (3) ☐ Significant (4) ☐ Catastrophic (5)	[calculate likelihood x impact] (1-3 negligible, 4-6 low, 8-12 medium, 15 high, 16-25 very high)	Analysis of the implications for the project/programme	Measures being taken and/or proposed to mitigate risk
Contextual	Extreme weather events or climate variability hindering restoration works	Improbable (2)	Moderate (3)	6 Low	Delays in work on restoring the habitats and establishing corridors, or setbacks to the restoration efforts.	Select climate-proof approaches, climate-resilient native species, adaptive restoration methods; monitor ecosystem responses.

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Category of Risk	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Level	Implications for project/ programme	Mitigation measures
Contextual	Land-use Conflicts	Possible (3)	Significant (4)	12 Medium	Competing interests from agriculture, infrastructure, or industry may oppose restoration and corridor development (Outputs 1.1 and 1.2).	Early stakeholder consultations; integration into spatial planning documents; demonstration of ecosystem service benefits.
Contextual	Political Instability or Policy Changes	Improbable (2)	Moderate (3)	6 Low	Changes in political priorities may shift attention or funding away from biodiversity.	Align project with long-term strategies (e.g., NBSAP, CBD, EU acquis); build cross-party ownership and institutional memory.
Institutional	Limited institutional capacity for long-term habitat management	Improbable (20	Moderate (3)	6 Low	Weak sustainability after project ends, need for extended capacity building.	Capacity building, institutional twinning, and long-term technical support.
Institutional	Low inter-institutional coordination	Improbable (2)	Moderate (3)	6 Low	Overlaps or gaps in implementation, slower policy integration.	Maintain the dialogue among institutions through regular meetings and inter-institutional working group.
Project-level	Delays in procurement and contracting for restoration activities	Improbable (2)	Moderate (3)	6 Low	Slower pace of outputs, compressed timelines towards project end.	Prepare procurement plans early; pre-qualify suppliers; use framework agreements; monitor procurement milestones regularly.
Project-level	*High priority risks: Social and environmental safeguards*	*Possible (3)*	Moderate (3)	*Medium (9)*	*Disruptions to implementation and potential failure to deliver intended social and environmental outcomes*	*Described in Annex 5, Social and Environmental Screening Procedure*

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Category of Risk	Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Level	Implications for project/ programme	Mitigation measures
	risks (See SESP, Annex 5)					
Project-level	Low community or IPLC engagement due to competing livelihood priorities	Very improbable (1)	Significant (4)	4 Low	Reduced local ownership, risk of restored habitats not being maintained (Output 1.1).	Integrate livelihood benefits into restoration activities (e.g., NTFPs, ecotourism); conduct participatory planning; use culturally appropriate communication; provide small incentives for participation.

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Annexes

A1. Broader baseline and situation analysis (focus on the country- and area-specific context beyond what is described in section II)

A2. Relevant Maps of the project intervention areas and relevant region/area

A3. Full Theory of Change (ToC) Diagram, including a description of the intervention logic

A4. Detailed description of outcomes, outputs, and activities

A5. Comprehensive Safeguard Strategy (according to each institution's internal requirements and guidelines), Stakeholder Engagement plan, Gender analysis and action plan

A6. Project alignment with and contribution to NBSAP, SDGs, and KMGBF Goals and Targets

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Annex I. Broader baseline and situation analysis (focus on the country and area specific context beyond what is described in Section II)

Baseline and Situation Analysis for Land Degradation and Ecological Connectivity in Serbia

Ecological Regions and Biodiversity Context

Serbia lies at the crossroads of Central and Southeastern Europe, encompassing diverse ecological regions from the Pannonian Plain in the north to the Dinaric and Carpatho-Balkan Mountains in the south and east. This geographic diversity makes Serbia one of Europe's biodiversity hotspots, home to an estimated 44,000 species of plants, animals, and fungi. Together with the adjoining mountainous part of Bulgaria, Serbia is recognized as one of six European centers of biodiversity (per IUCN criteria) (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023). Serbia's landscapes can be grouped generally into lowland continental plains (mainly in Vojvodina Province) and hill/mountain ecosystems (central, west, and east Serbia). Key natural ecosystems include extensive broadleaf forests, seasonally flooded wetlands along major rivers, species-rich grasslands (steppes, meadows, pastures), and highland rocky habitats. These habitats support a high share of Europe's flora and fauna. Serbia hosts around 1,399 plant communities (about 39% of Europe's flora), including many endemics. Notably, grassland ecosystems harbor a disproportionately large share of endemics (18% of Europe's endemic species occur in grasslands, versus ~11% in forests), underscoring their conservation importance (Grassland conservation research; Vojvodina Province biodiversity studies). The Carpathian region in eastern Serbia (e.g. Djerdap National Park at the Iron Gates Gorge) is a particular hotspot for large mammals; it harbors brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), and otter (*Lutra lutra*) among other species. Populations of red deer and Balkan chamois also persist in these mountain forests. Meanwhile, the northern lowlands along the Danube, Sava, and Tisa rivers provide critical habitats for migratory waterbirds and endemic steppe species (Carpathian Convention/ConnectGREEN reports; Wetlands status report). Overall, Serbia's unique biogeographic disposition endows it with exceptional biodiversity. Simultaneously, this poses a challenge for landscape connectivity as species move between these varied habitats (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

Land Use Dynamics and Historical Habitat Conversion

Serbia's landscapes have been profoundly shaped by centuries of land use change. Historically, the Pannonian plain in Vojvodina was a mosaic of floodplain wetlands and natural steppe grasslands. Extensive land reclamation and drainage projects during the 18th–20th centuries transformed these ecosystems into arable farmland — a "cultural steppe" of fertile croplands. In the 18th century, wetlands covered roughly 50% of northern Serbia's territory; today only about 5% remain. Likewise, vast expanses of steppe and prairie have been almost entirely converted (Wetlands status report; Vojvodina Province biodiversity studies). It is estimated that grassland habitats in Vojvodina have been reduced to under 3% of their historical range due to agricultural expansion. What survives are small fragments (often on marginal lands or within protected areas) isolated by a sea of intensive row-crop agriculture. Currently, Vojvodina's landscape is predominantly agricultural, with ~1.5 million ha under traditional farming practices; of this, only ~127,000 ha are natural or semi-natural meadows and pastures — on the order of 8% of the agricultural land. The remainder is mostly plowed cropland, illustrating the massive scale of habitat conversion (Vojvodina Province biodiversity studies; Grassland conservation research).

Land cover data confirm these trends. Between 2000 and 2015, Serbia experienced a net loss of natural habitats and a rapid expansion of human land uses. Forest cover showed a modest net increase (+6.4% by area), but grasslands declined sharply by about 30% over that 15-year period. In 2000, grasslands covered ~5,865 km^2; by 2015 this had dropped to ~4,100 km^2. Conversions to both forest (through succession or tree planting) and cropland contributed to this grassland loss. At the same time, artificial surfaces (urban and built-up areas) increased by over 70% — from 893 km^2 to 1,539 km^2 — reflecting the rapid growth of infrastructure, cities, and industrial zones. Cropland area remained high (about 49,300 km^2 in 2015, slightly down by 1.7% from 2000), indicating that agriculture continues to dominate land use. By 2015, wetlands showed a very slight increase of ~1% (a mere 1.2 km^2 gain), suggesting that any wetland restoration has been minimal compared to past losses (Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035; National LDN Report, 2020). Overall, these land use dynamics paint a picture of habitat contraction and conversion — especially in lowland Serbia — that has greatly simplified landscapes and reduced natural cover. The historical drainage of marshes (for example, the vast swamps of the Danube-Tisa interfluve) and the ploughing of prairies have left only remnant patches of original ecosystems in Vojvodina. In hill and mountain regions, forests were extensively logged and cleared for agriculture throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, though some regeneration has occurred on abandoned lands in recent decades. For instance,

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portions of central and southern Serbia saw farmland abandonment after rural depopulation, allowing secondary forests to expand. This dynamic partly explains the net forest gain in national land cover statistics even as old-growth forest continues to be lost elsewhere (Global Forest Watch data; Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035).

Habitat Fragmentation and Ecological Degradation in Key Areas

Widespread land conversion has led to severe habitat fragmentation, where remaining natural areas are divided into small, isolated patches. This is especially acute in Vojvodina (Northern Serbia), one of Europe's most human-altered landscapes. The province's original steppe-grassland and wetland complexes are now highly fragmented by a dense matrix of fields, canals, roads, and settlements. Native grasslands persist largely as tiny fragments along road verges, on alkaline flats (saline pastures), or within a few protected steppe reserves (e.g. Deliblato Sands and Subotica Sands areas). These fragments collectively amount to only a few percent of Vojvodina's area and are often isolated from each other, leading to local extirpations of grassland-dependent fauna (Vojvodina Province biodiversity studies; Grassland conservation research). For example, the European ground squirrel — a keystone species of open steppe — has lost over 70% of its range in Vojvodina, mirroring the loss and isolation of grassland habitat. Intensive mechanized agriculture not only removed habitat but also created uniform expanses hostile to wildlife movement, with monoculture fields offering little refuge or connectivity for native species. The remaining wetlands in Vojvodina face similar fragmentation. Many survive only as regulated river oxbows, drainage canal marshes, or managed fishponds. Even internationally recognized wetland reserves (like the marshes of Obedska Bara or Ludaško Lake in Vojvodina, both Ramsar sites) are hydrologically isolated and under pressure from surrounding land uses (Wetlands status report).

Habitat fragmentation in these lowlands is exacerbated by infrastructure: an expanding network of highways, railways, and canals crisscross the plains. These linear structures act as barriers for wildlife. The Belgrade–Novi Sad–Subotica highway, for instance, cuts through important remaining grassland and wetland areas in Vojvodina's Banat and Bačka regions. Strategic environmental assessments have identified that such projects intersect designated ecological corridors (e.g. the route of the planned Belgrade–Zrenjanin–Novi Sad highway crosses several internationally important river corridor areas). However, to date Serbia has not implemented wildlife overpasses or other corridor mitigation on existing roads. The result is a highly fragmented landscape in northern Serbia, where species reliant on grassland or wetland ecosystems survive in isolated pockets, and movements (for dispersal, migration, or genetic exchange) are severely impeded (Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035; NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

In the Carpathian and other mountainous regions of Serbia, fragmentation issues are less severe but still significant. These regions (eastern, western, and south-western Serbia) retain larger tracts of forest and natural habitat, yet corridor connectivity between them is limited. The Carpathian Mountains extend into far eastern Serbia at the Djerdap (Iron Gates) area, which connects across the Danube into the Romanian Carpathians. While Djerdap National Park protects a sizeable contiguous forest block (over 630 km^2), infrastructure developments and human land uses around it create chokepoints for wildlife movement. The Iron Gates gorge itself has two large hydropower dams on the Danube, posing a barrier for aquatic connectivity (migratory fish like sturgeon have been virtually eliminated). On land, the Danube River and associated roads can be a north–south barrier for terrestrial wildlife (Carpathian Convention/ConnectGREEN reports). Further inland, expanding networks of secondary roads, tourist facilities, and even fences (border fences or hunting enclosures) interrupt traditional wildlife paths. The Carpathian portion of Serbia is critical for wide-ranging mammals (bear, wolf, lynx) and has been identified as a core area and corridor for these carnivores in transboundary plans. Under the Carpathian Convention's ConnectGREEN project, researchers mapped core habitats and corridors for large carnivores in the Djerdap area to guide spatial planning. This exercise revealed that the development of transport infrastructure (road upgrades, new highways like the planned Bor–Požarevac route, etc.) is fragmenting the Carpathian ecosystem, limiting animal dispersal and genetic exchange. For instance, highway traffic and lack of crossing structures in the Djerdap pilot site were highlighted as key threats to connectivity (Carpathian Convention/ConnectGREEN reports).

Beyond Djerdap, Serbia's "priority corridors" for connectivity include riparian corridors and mountain-valley linkages that have been deemed important at national or international level. The national Ecological Network (defined by a 2010 Regulation) lists major rivers and their riparian zones — such as the Danube, Sava, Tisa, Drina, Great and South Morava, and several smaller rivers — as ecological corridors of international importance. These river corridors are vital for migratory birds, fish, and as linear habitat

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linkages through human-dominated landscapes. However, many suffer from pollution, flow regulation, and disturbance (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; Wetlands status report). For example, along the Danube in Vojvodina, floodplain forests and wetlands have been disconnected by dikes and sedimentation changes; the Danube-Drava corridor, while still hosting some intact floodplain patches, is constrained by navigation infrastructure and agriculture. Another critical linkage is the Morava Valley running north–south in central Serbia — historically a natural corridor between the Carpathians and the Balkans. Today, the Great Morava River valley is also the route of a major motorway and railway (Corridor X), and much of its floodplain is cultivated, leaving scant room for natural movement of species. Intensive use of the Morava corridor has fragmented what was once a key dispersal pathway for wildlife (e.g. red deer or wolves moving between northern and southern Serbia) (Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035; Carpathian Convention/ConnectGREEN reports). Habitat fragmentation in mountain regions is also driven by deforestation and land-use change in valley bottoms, which pinch off connectivity between mountain ranges. For instance, in western Serbia the valleys between national parks (Tara, Zlatibor, Kopaonik, etc.) are often farmland or urbanized, isolating these protected "islands." Overall, while mountain zones have higher natural cover than the lowlands, connections between these natural areas are deteriorating due to infrastructure development, unplanned construction (tourist resorts, ski centers), and expanding settlements (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

The consequences of fragmentation and habitat loss are evident in declining wildlife populations and ecosystem health indicators. Serbia's old-growth forests (mostly in remote mountain areas) are under pressure; from 2021 to 2024 alone Serbia lost approximately 20,700 hectares of tree cover, and importantly 72% of this loss occurred in natural forests (rather than plantations). This recent deforestation — driven by illegal logging, wood demand, and occasionally wildfires — further fragments forest habitats and reduces the extent of undisturbed core areas for sensitive species (Global Forest Watch data). In grasslands and wetlands, biodiversity declines are pronounced: the loss of over 97% of Vojvodina's native grassland has led to local extinctions or endangerment of species like the great bustard (*Otis tarda*) and other steppe birds that once thrived on the plains. Wetland drainage and pollution have caused waterbirds and fish that depend on marshes (e.g. herons, ducks, carp) to be restricted to a handful of nature reserves (Grassland conservation research; Wetlands status report). Ecological degradation is also apparent in soil and water quality measures — for example, many remaining wetland reserves show water quality below required standards due to nutrient and pesticide runoff from surrounding farms. In sum, habitat fragmentation in Serbia — whether the patchwork of tiny prairies in an agricultural matrix, or the carving up of larger forests by roads — has led to isolated and degraded ecosystems. These fragmented habitats support fewer species and are more vulnerable to further loss. Reconnecting and restoring these fragments is, therefore, a critical need to prevent irreversible biodiversity loss (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; Wetlands status report; Grassland conservation research).

Climate Risks and Land Degradation Trends

Superimposed on the above habitat pressures are the growing impacts of climate change and land degradation, which further threaten Serbia's ecosystems. In recent decades Serbia has experienced more frequent extreme weather events — heatwaves, droughts, and intense rainfall — that stress natural habitats. The country's north (Pannonian plain) has a continental climate prone to summer droughts, while mountainous areas see heavy precipitation episodes. Climate projections indicate increased aridity in summer and more erratic precipitation, raising the risk of drought, soil desiccation, and wildfires in ecosystems. This trend exacerbates the ongoing processes of land degradation (National LDN Report, 2020). Already, as of 2015 about 4,759 km^2 of Serbia's territory (over 5% of land area) was classified as degraded land in terms of productivity, with much of it showing declining or stressed productivity on croplands and pastures. If current trends continue, future scenarios are alarming — one study projects that by 2041–2060, approximately 42% of Serbia's land will face high risk of degradation, with 25% experiencing irreversible damage, and only a small fraction (~6%) remaining resilient (National LDN Report, 2020). These figures reflect the compounding effects of unsustainable land use and a changing climate. For instance, intensive agriculture in Vojvodina has led to problems like wind erosion of topsoil (especially on dried-out, over-plowed fields) and salinization in areas with rising groundwater or historic wetland drainage. Climate-related droughts worsen wind erosion and dust storms on exposed agricultural soils. Likewise, in hilly regions, deforestation and heavy rainfall have caused severe soil erosion and landslides — phenomena expected to intensify as rainfall becomes more extreme. The Ministry of Environmental Protection identifies various degradation processes at play: water and wind erosion affect large swathes of farmland and hillside, deforestation in catchments reduces slope stability, and unsustainable farming practices (monocultures, overuse of agrochemicals, improper tillage) degrade soil structure. About 22% of Serbia's land is estimated to be affected by significant erosion, and almost half of

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agricultural soils have low organic carbon content due to long-term cultivation (National LDN Report, 2020; Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035). These issues contribute to *desertification risk* in certain localities. While Serbia is far from any true desert, small areas like the Deliblato Sands (an ancient dune field in Banat) historically experienced desert-like conditions. Without vegetation cover and with rising temperatures, there is concern that marginal lands could undergo increased desertification.

Climate change also poses direct risks to biodiversity and connectivity. Warmer temperatures have already been linked to upward shifts of some mountain species, habitat contraction for moisture-dependent amphibians, and altered migration patterns of birds. Wetland ecosystems are especially vulnerable — more frequent summer droughts can dry out marshes and oxbow lakes, reducing habitat for fish and waterfowl, while extreme floods can scour riverine habitats (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; Wetlands status report). The interplay of fragmentation and climate change is a major concern: small, isolated habitat patches have less capacity to accommodate species' range shifts or to buffer climate extremes. For example, if a steppe insect population goes locally extinct in a drought because its tiny habitat patch desiccates, there may be no nearby source population to recolonize it, given the distances between grassland fragments. Similarly, large carnivores and ungulates will find it harder to migrate or adapt to climate shifts if corridors (like cooler riverine forests or mountain passes) are blocked. In essence, climate change multiplies the challenges of land degradation — increasing the urgency for Serbia to maintain and restore ecosystem connectivity, so that species can move and ecosystems can be more resilient to these changes (Carpathian Convention/ConnectGREEN reports; NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

Serbia has recognized land degradation and drought as key issues by participating in the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In 2020 Serbia set Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets, aiming to stabilize or improve land conditions by 2030. Achieving these targets will require large-scale measures such as reforestation, erosion control, restoring degraded pastures, and sustainable agriculture practices. Some efforts are underway — for example, national programs promoting afforestation of bare lands and anti-erosion works in critical catchments. The LDN baseline assessment confirms that much of the country's degradation is concentrated in agricultural lands (croplands showed the greatest area with declining productivity, ~180 km^2, followed by grasslands ~25 km^2 in one analysis). Encouragingly, it also showed that over 70% of land had *stable or improving* productivity, partly due to cropland intensification and forest regrowth in some areas. However, the "improving" category may mask unsustainable gains (e.g. short-term crop yield boosts) that could degrade in the long term (National LDN Report, 2020). The bottom line is that climate risks and land degradation trends threaten to further diminish Serbia's ecological integrity. Without proactive measures, the combination of hotter, drier summers, continued soil erosion, and fragmented landscapes could lead to permanent loss of certain ecosystem types (such as marshes turning into dry flats, or species-rich meadows transitioning to shrubland or dustbowls). This context underscores the importance of restoring ecosystems and enhancing connectivity as a buffer against climate change — for instance, well-vegetated corridors along rivers can reduce erosion and provide microclimate refuges, and connected forests are less susceptible to wildfire spread than isolated woodlots (National LDN Report, 2020; NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

Policy and Institutional Frameworks for Restoration and Connectivity

Serbia's national policy framework acknowledges these environmental challenges and sets the stage for action on ecosystem restoration and connectivity. The country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) emphasizes the establishment of a functional ecological network and the need to reduce habitat loss. Serbia has committed to the global Aichi Targets and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; notably, this includes aims such as restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems and expanding protected area coverage. As of 2020, protected areas in Serbia covered about 7.6% of the country (678,237 ha), comprising 471 designated areas ranging from national parks and nature reserves to landscape parks. This falls short of the CBD target of 17% (terrestrial) and also below the European average, prompting plans to increase coverage (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023). Spatial planning documents (e.g. the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia 2010–2020 and an updated 2021–2035 plan) explicitly call for enlarging the protected area network and improving ecological connectivity between them. One practical step has been the identification of an "ecological network" at the national level. In 2010, Serbia adopted a Regulation on Ecological Network which defined 101 Ecologically Significant Areas (ESAs) and corridors, covering roughly 20% of national territory as a form of ecological network. These ESAs include all major biodiversity hotspots (many overlapping with candidate Emerald sites under the Bern Convention) and the corridors include the above-mentioned key rivers and certain mountain connections (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035). However, while this ecological network is

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recognized on paper, it does not equate to strict protection, and ecological corridors have no strong legal protection yet. The Nature Protection Law (last amended 2016) provides a definition of ecological corridors and basic protection measures, but it does not mandate their preservation if, for example, a development project is planned. There remains a gap in Serbian law and practice regarding connectivity: connectivity is treated as a cross-cutting issue but not fully integrated into sectoral policies (e.g. transportation or agriculture). The government has acknowledged this gap, and in recent years there have been moves to strengthen the framework — draft amendments to the Nature Protection Law and spatial planning guidelines are being prepared to better safeguard ecological corridors (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

On the conservation planning front, Serbia is in the process of aligning with the EU Natura 2000 network. As a non-EU country, Serbia has developed an Emerald Network list of sites (essentially shadow Natura 2000 sites). A total of 61 areas in Serbia have been identified and officially nominated as Emerald sites, and an ongoing EU-supported project is working to refine these sites and fill data gaps. The expectation is that many of these areas will become Natura 2000 sites upon EU accession. Importantly, the Natura/Emerald process brings more rigorous requirements for maintaining "favorable conservation status", which implicitly includes connectivity between habitats. The NBSAP and Serbia's EU integration strategies both emphasize improving habitat connectivity as part of the country's obligations to halt biodiversity loss. For instance, one NBSAP action is to *"integrate ecological corridors as part of the Trans-European Nature Network to prevent genetic isolation and allow species migration"* (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023). This indicates high-level recognition that creating corridors and green infrastructure is necessary.

Institutionally, responsibilities are divided among several entities. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and its Institute for Nature Conservation are key players in biodiversity and restoration initiatives. The Institute in Vojvodina has been a pioneer in mapping ecological corridors within that province (covering ~25% of the country). Using GIS and field data, they identified corridor areas especially along rivers and between significant habitat patches in Vojvodina, and incorporated these into a geodatabase. This work provides a template that could be extended to central and southern Serbia, where presently such mapping is lacking (Vojvodina Province biodiversity studies). Other ministries — such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, and the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure — are increasingly being brought into the conversation, since their sectors greatly impact land use. There have been localized initiatives to address connectivity in infrastructure planning: for example, the state spatial planning institute (IAUS) has, in a few recent spatial plans for highways and urban expansions, proposed measures like green bridges or culverts for wildlife. One cited example is the plan for the new Belgrade–Zrenjanin highway, where planners consulted environmental authorities and identified where green bridges could be built at critical crossing points. While these are still proposals, they mark a shift toward incorporating connectivity into development planning (Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035). Additionally, Serbia participates in regional initiatives like the Carpathian Convention, which in 2020 adopted an international action plan for large carnivore conservation and connectivity in the Carpathians. Serbia's Djerdap National Park was a pilot area in the ConnectGREEN project, and the country is committed to implementing the Convention's protocols which include maintaining ecological corridors across borders. Such international frameworks provide both guidance and political impetus for national action (Carpathian Convention/ConnectGREEN reports).

From a restoration policy standpoint, Serbia has a Land Degradation Neutrality Action Plan (as part of UNCCD commitments) which sets targets for 2030 — for example, to restore a certain amount of degraded forest and pasture land. The government has also run programs on wetland restoration in some locales (e.g. small projects to reflood parts of drained marshes, or to restore peatlands in the Pešter plateau), though these have been modest (National LDN Report, 2020; Wetlands status report). The EU Green Deal and Biodiversity Strategy is influencing Serbia as well: even prior to accession, Serbia is aligning with EU goals like planting new trees, conserving pollinators, and designating strictly protected areas (10% strict protection goal). In policy documents, nature-based solutions and green infrastructure are increasingly mentioned as tools to address climate and environmental objectives. For instance, Serbia's draft Climate Change Strategy highlights ecosystem-based adaptation, such as restoring wetlands for flood control and creating green belts to counter heatwaves (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035). All these policies form a patchwork that is still being consolidated into a coherent approach. A remaining challenge is securing financing and cross-sector support. Biodiversity conservation in Serbia is underfunded — protected areas rely on limited state budgets, and restoration projects often depend on donor funding (GEF, EU IPA funds, etc.). Nonetheless, the recent establishment of the global Kunming

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Biodiversity Fund (KBF) — for which this project is proposed — illustrates new opportunities to leverage funding for connectivity and restoration. By aligning the project with national priorities (NBSAP, Spatial Plan) and international commitments (CBD's GBF targets, Carpathian Convention, EU acquis), it aims to fill implementation gaps (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023).

In summary, Serbia's policy framework is gradually shifting from a focus purely on protected area designation towards a broader landscape approach that includes connectivity and restoration. Strategies and plans acknowledge habitat fragmentation and call for ecological corridors, though on-the-ground realization is still in early stages. The institutional setup is evolving to encourage inter-sector collaboration — for example, the environment ministry working with infrastructure planners to mitigate barriers. The success of these frameworks will depend on concrete actions: updating laws to protect corridors, enforcing land-use controls in ecological network areas, restoring key sites, and engaging local communities and landowners in stewardship (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; Spatial Plan of RS 2021-2035). This Annex analysis underscores that the baseline situation in Serbia is one of high ecological value but significant degradation, and that strong policy support exists to reverse these trends. The proposed project can build on this by demonstrating effective restoration of forests, grasslands, and wetlands, and by piloting the establishment of ecological corridors (a "first" in Serbia's conservation practice). These actions directly support Serbia's obligations under the Global Biodiversity Framework as well as national plans, offering a timely opportunity to accelerate progress toward a more connected and resilient ecological network (NBSAP of Serbia, 2021-2023; National LDN Report, 2020).

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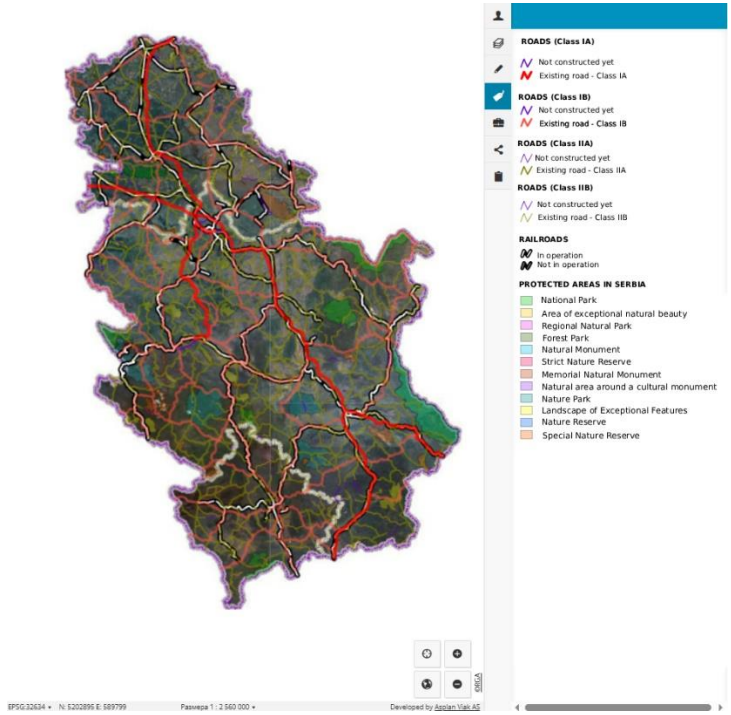
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Annex II. Relevant Maps of the project intervention area and/or relevant region/area (particularly for transboundary or multi-country proposals)

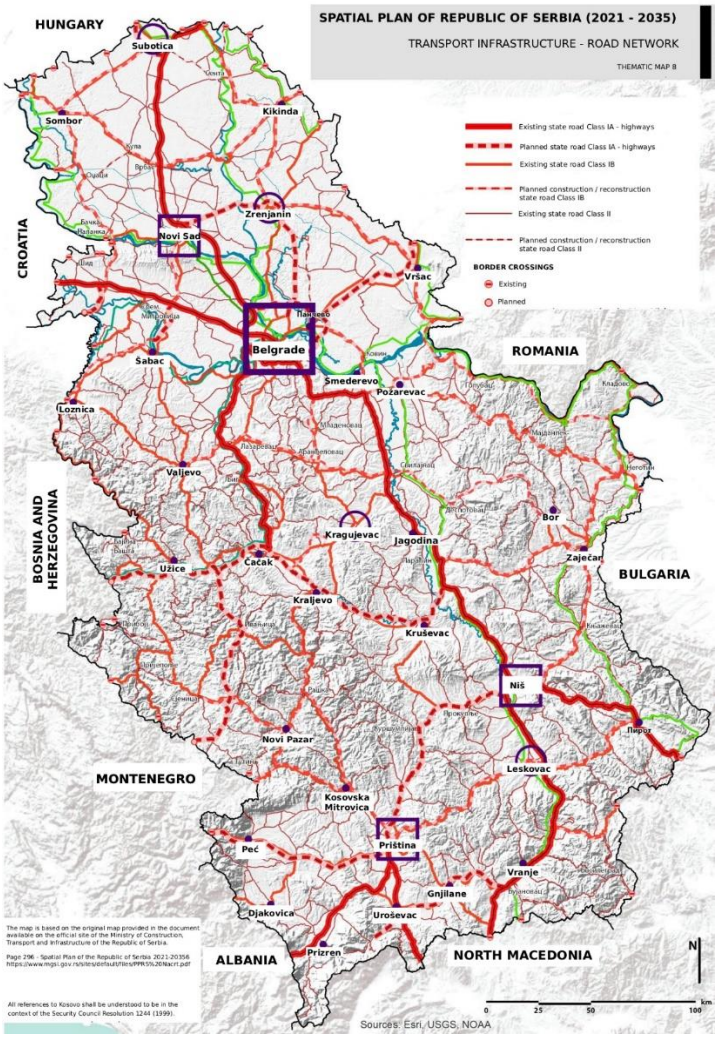
Geographic identification of potential pilot sites for restoration and ecological corridor management

Pilot sites for restoration and ecological corridor management will be selected through competitive processes/challenge calls. The selection criteria applied in these calls will be set based on initial assessment that will take into account status of vulnerable ecosystems and habitats, existing and planned transport infrastructure and other pressures. Assessment will use data available within Republic Geodetic Authority of Serbia (Map 1), Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (2021-2035) (Map 2), and Mapsoft database (Map 3, 3a-d).



Map 1: Digital representation of Protected area boundaries compared to existing road infrastructure
Source: Republic Geodetic Authority of Serbia

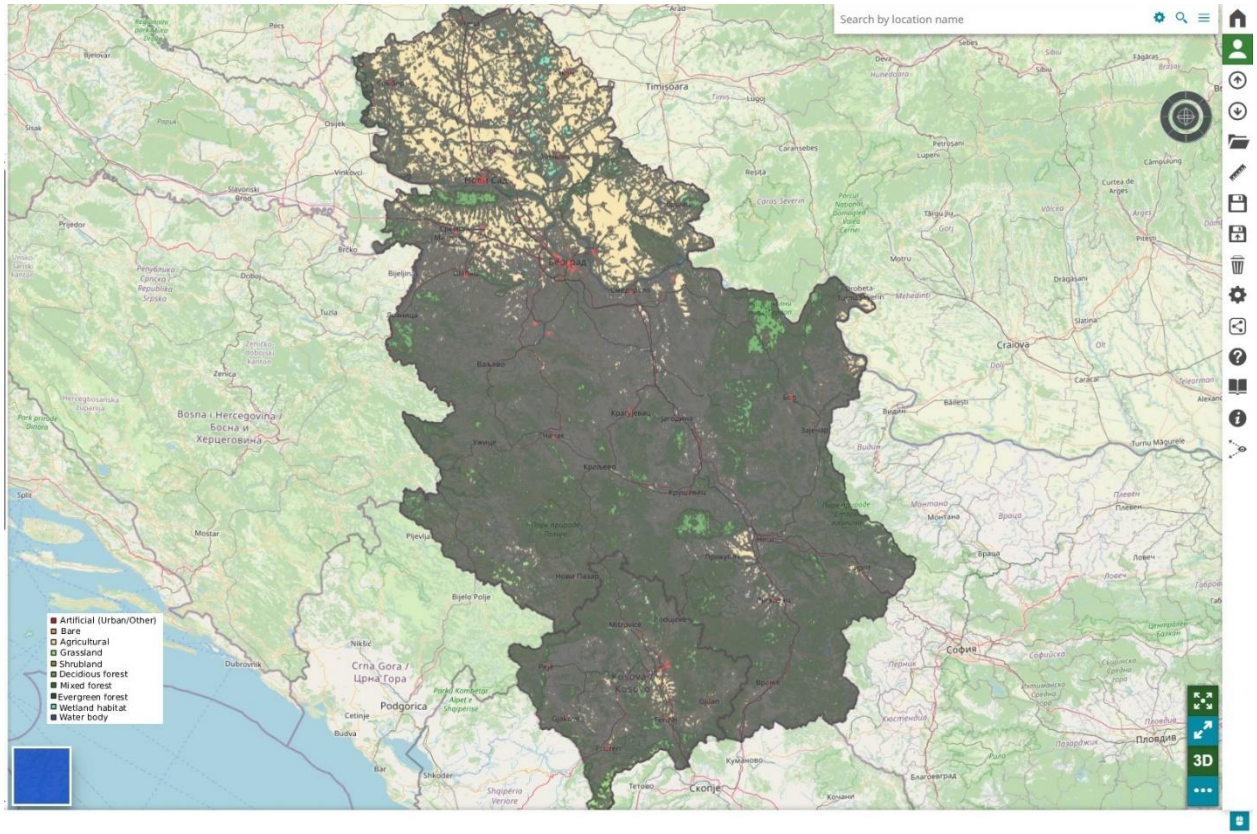
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Map 2: Planned road infrastructure in Serbia, presented as dotted line

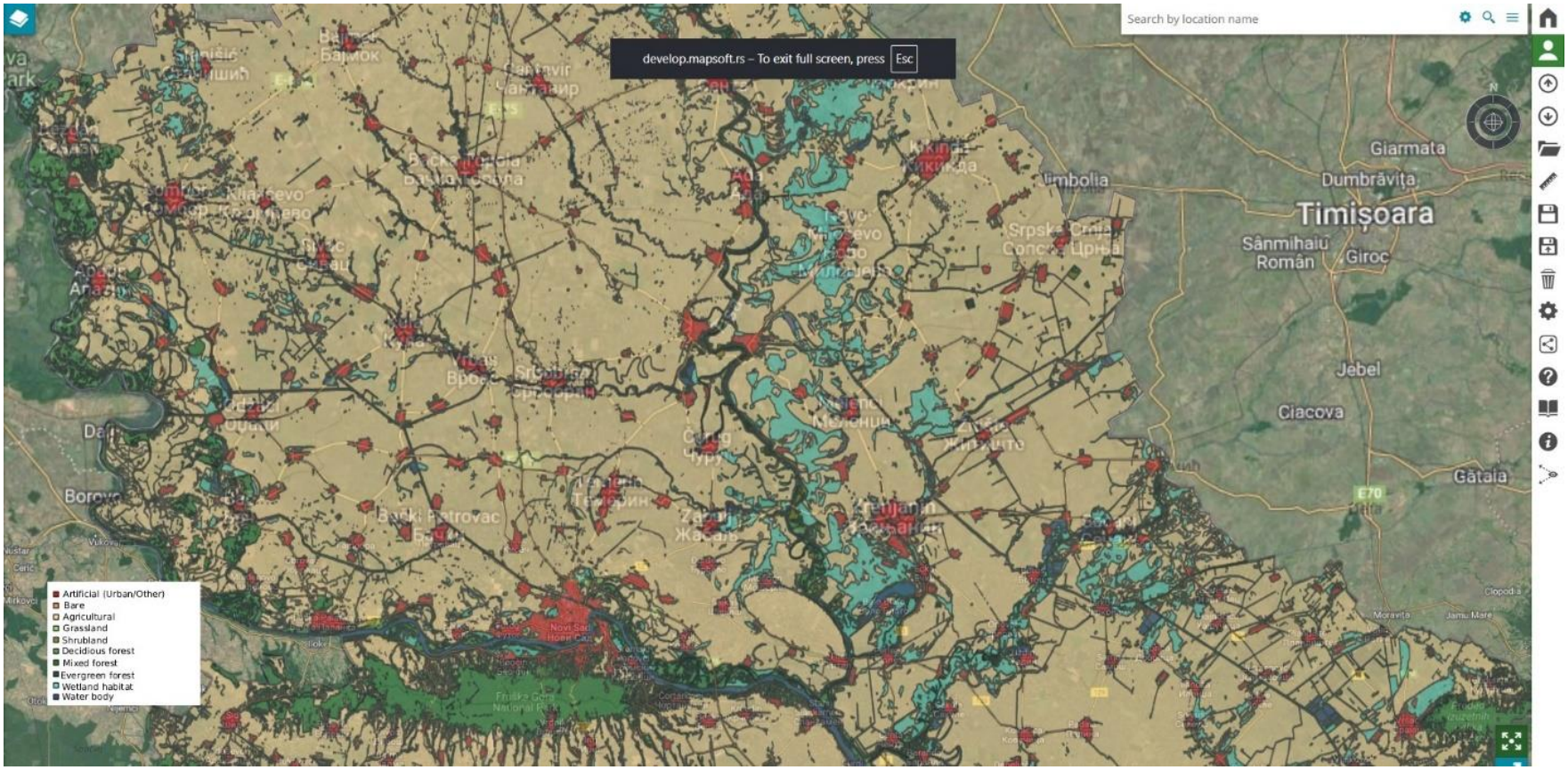
Source: Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia (2021-2035)

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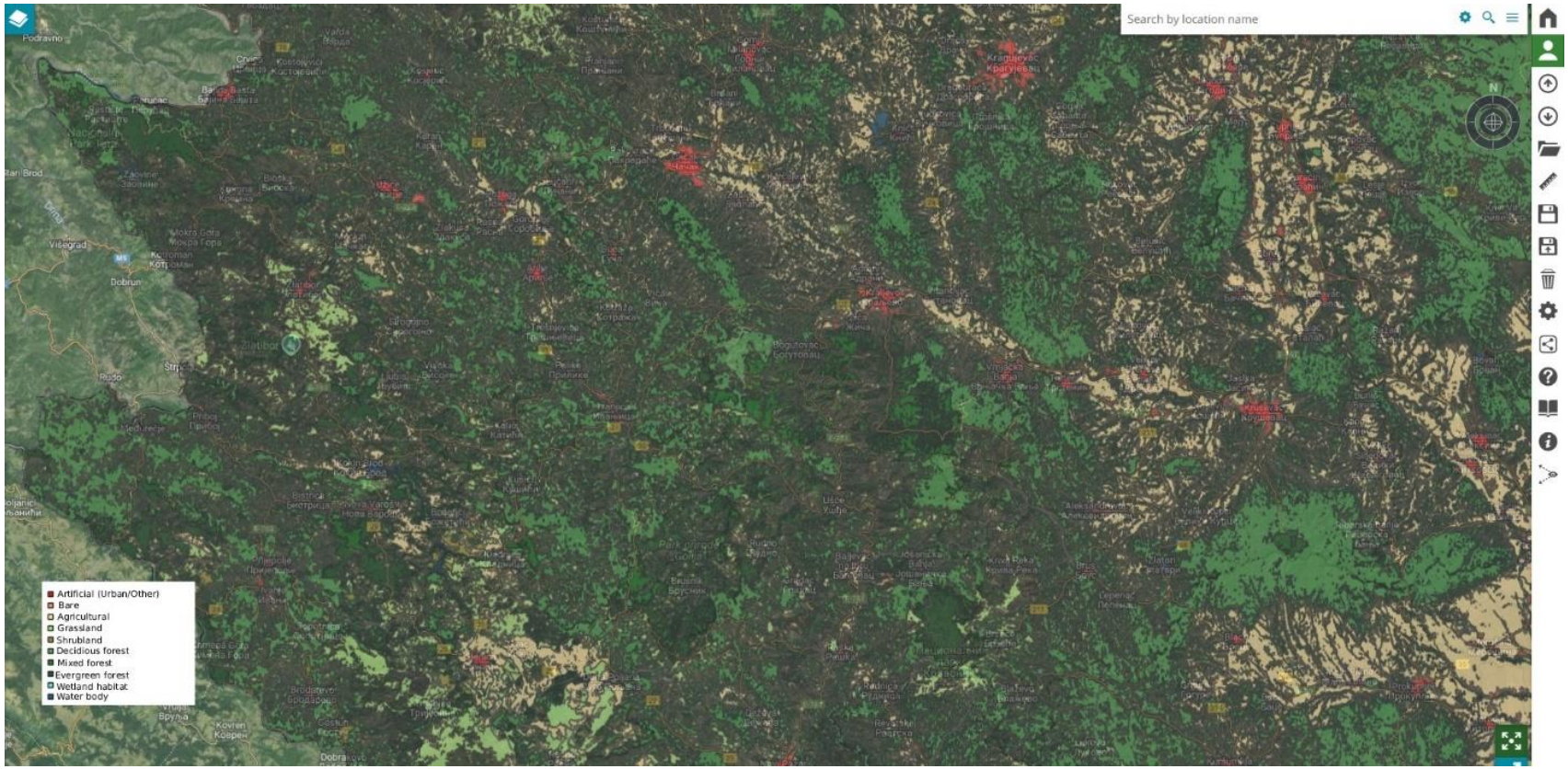
Map 3: Habitat types in Serbia, with focus on grasslands, old-grown forests and wetlands
Source: Mapsoft database

Docusign Envelope ID: 08B082F4-E97E-430D-8BAF-BB64BE089C19



Map 3a: Habitat types in northern Serbia, with focus on grasslands, old-grown forests and wetlands.
Source: Mapsoft database

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Map 3b: Habitat types in western Serbia, with focus on grasslands, old-grown forests and wetlands.
Source: Mapsoft database

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Map 3c: Habitat types in eastern Serbia, with focus on grasslands, old-grown forests and wetlands.
Source: Mapsoft database

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Map 3d: Habitat types in southern Serbia, with focus on grasslands, old-grown forests and wetlands.
Source: Mapsoft database

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Indicative maps for selection of potential target areas/habitats

Sites 1 & 2: Degraded moist mesotrophic/eutrophic pasture habitats in Vojvodina grasslands

Pasture habitats show the greatest potential for sustainable use in Vojvodina, considering their locations on floodplains or on soils that are moist to wet and mesotrophic to eutrophic. Moreover, these areas are typically flooded during winter and spring, indicating the need for more focus on wetlands in Vojvodina, not only in terms of conservation efforts but also in monitoring their status regularly.[1]

Pasture areas have continued to decline in Vojvodina over the past 25 years. Between 1948 and 2018, the area and total production of pastures in Vojvodina declined by 1412.2 hectares and 1669.4 tonnes, respectively.[2] Therefore, there is a need for restoration-focused interventions in these potential project sites.

Figure 1 shows a map snapshot of cultivated grasslands (> 40% probability), which are prominent in the North-Eastern region of Vojvodina, to the east of the Tisa River. Degraded pasturelands which are closer to the river here will likely present greater benefits for ecosystem services as well as endangered species conservation if restored.

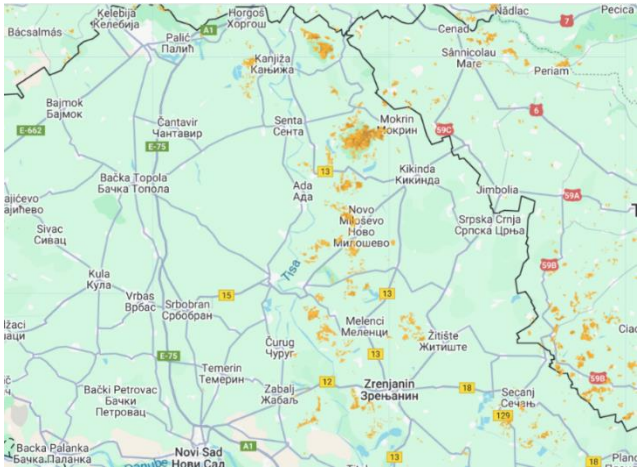


Figure 1: Cultivated grasslands in Northeastern Vojvodina, in bright orange (Parente et al., 2024)

Figure 2 shows a map of land degradation types in arable lands in the Vojvodina region. This snapshot suggests that the entire region suffers from vegetation and/or organic carbon decline.

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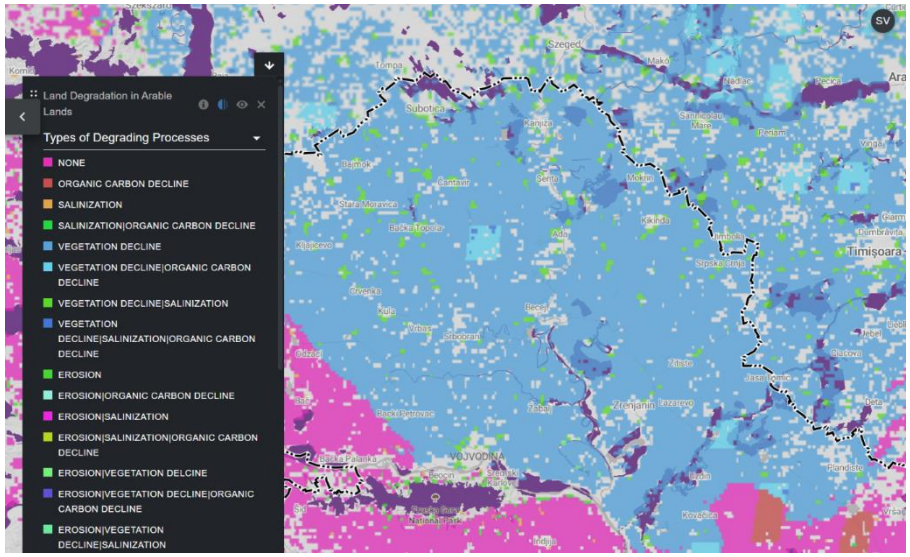


Figure 2: Diagnosed vegetation decline in Vojvodina (European Commission, 2021)

Figure 3 depicts a closer look at a potential restoration site near the town of Ostojicevo, to the east of the Tisa River. The potential restoration site is represented by extensive coverage of cultivated pasturelands (in orange) located within Protected Areas (green polygons). This is potential Site 1.

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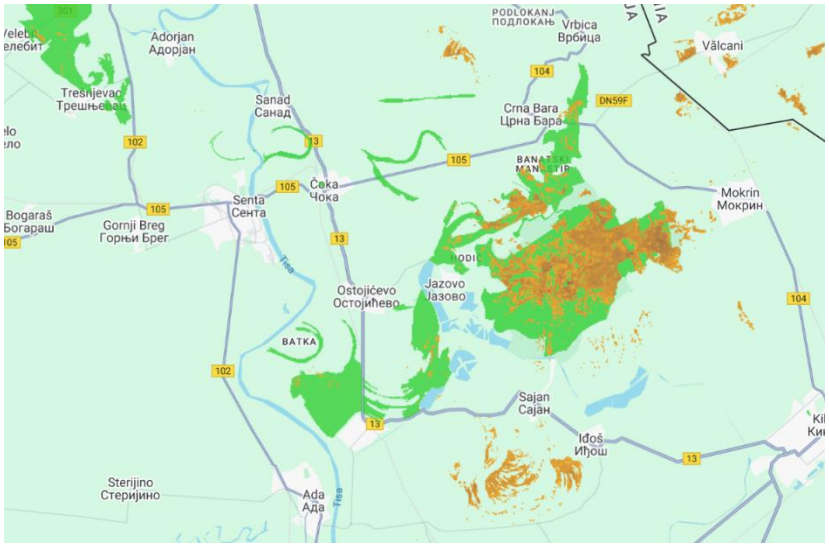


Figure 3: Site 1 contains extensive cultured grasslands within Protected Areas (Parente et al., 2024; UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2025).

Figure 4 depicts a second potential restoration site. This site is located several kilometers south of Site 1, under the town of Sajan. The site is not located within a Protected Area, but satellite overview imagery suggests considerable degradation processes taking place on arable pasturelands.

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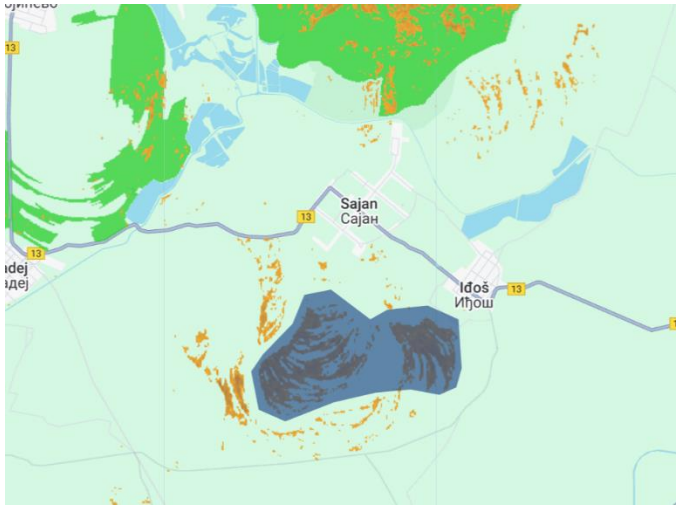


Figure 4: The blue polygon delineates potential Site 2, just under Site 1 (Parente et al., 2024; UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2025).

Figure 5 depicts a more detailed map with a legend showing potential sites 1 and 2, as well as WDPA polygons and cultivated grasslands overlayed over satellite imagery. The Protected Areas covered by Site 1 are “Pasnjaci Velike droplje” and “Slatine u dolini Zlatice”. See Tables 1 and 2 for a detailed diagnostic overview of potential project sites and Protected Area coverage.

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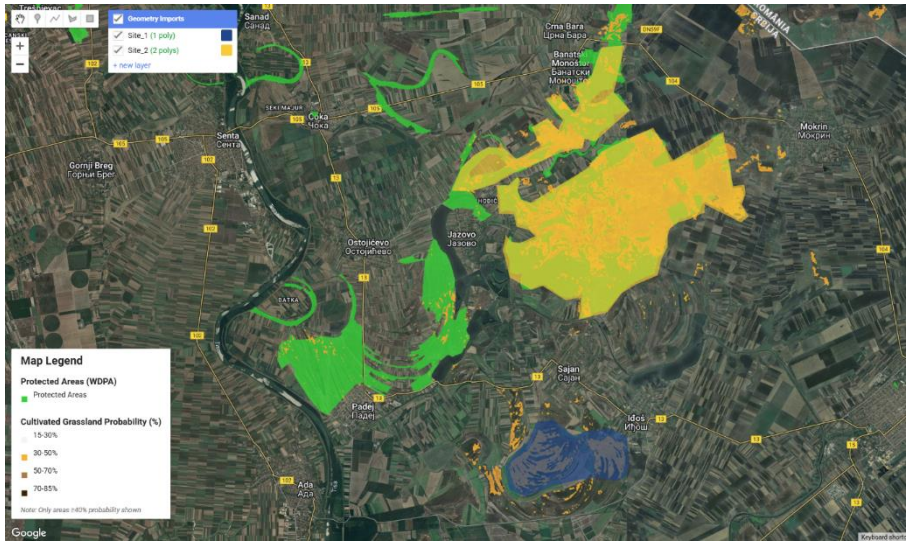


Figure 5: Potential project Sites 1 and 2. Site 1 delineated in orange, Site 2 delineated in blue (Parente et al., 2024; UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2025).

Sites 3 & 4: Old-growth Forests in Eastern Serbia and Vojvodina

Only 0.2% of Serbia's forest is classified as primary. Vinatovaca presents a primordial rainforest in Serbia, one of the last of its kind.[3]

Figure 6 below depicts potential project Site 3, delineated by a red rectangle. Considerable tree cover loss occurred here recently, just above the protected area "Deo podrucja u slivu reke Resave, Suvaje, Cemernice, Jelovog potoka i Beljanicke r." within which Vinatovaca is located. Pink pixels show tree cover loss between 2023 – 2024. Site 3 is within the boundaries of the considerably large "Kucajske Planine" protected area. Kucajske Planine is a protected area under a lower level state protection designation than the much smaller Deo Podrucja protected area which it surrounds, and which contains the Vinatovaca primordial rainforest. Satellite imagery shows extensive patches of sporadic forest cover among more interconnected areas of dense forest and grassland within this site. It therefore presents an opportunity for project intervention measures to restore forest habitats and enhance connectivity within protected areas (with additional potential to increase the level of officially designated state protection within Kucajske Planine through legislative strengthening measures).

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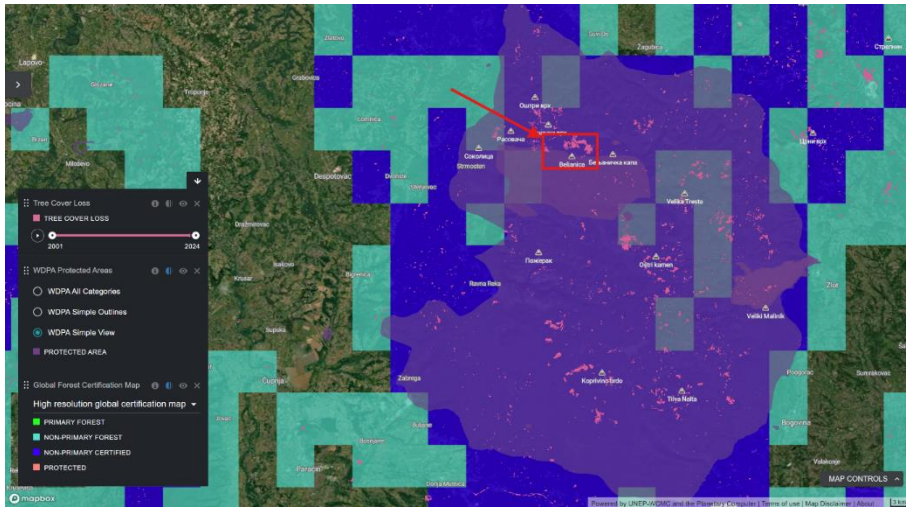


Figure 6: Site 3, located within two Protected Areas, experiencing recent tree cover loss in certified forest (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2025; Hansen et al., 2013; Kraxner et al., 2017).

Figure 7 depicts potential restoration Site 4. Within the boundaries of the “Specijalni rezervat prirode Koviljsko-petrovaradinski rit” protected area and located directly along the banks of the Danube, the tree cover loss map identifies extensive patches of deforested areas between 2023 and 2024. This forested area presents a habitat for rare bird species, and it is registered as an IBA Area.[4] It therefore presents another opportunity for restoring habitat which is critical for endangered species conservation.

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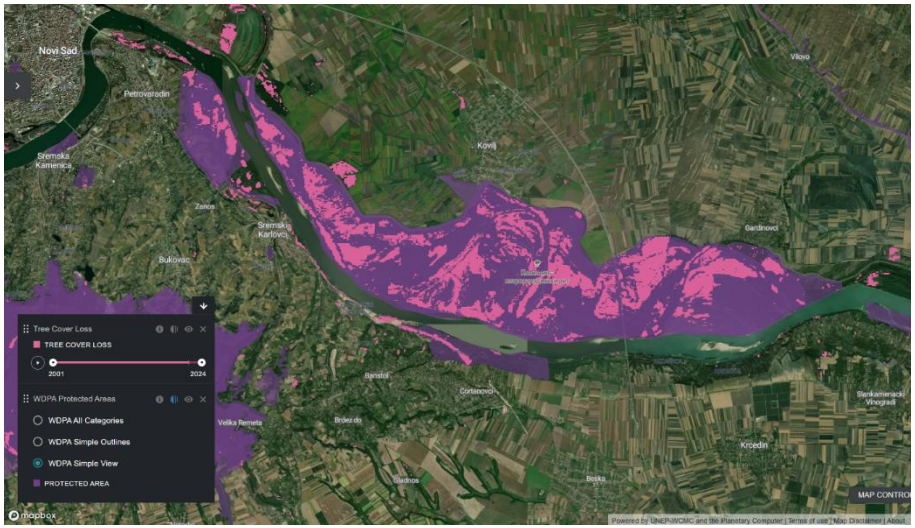


Figure 7: Potential project intervention Site 4 (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2025; Hansen et al., 2013).

Site 5: Wetland in Vojvodina

Prominent wetland areas are positioned adjacent to moist mesotrophic/eutrophic pasture habitats in Vojvodina (Figure 8).

Inland marshes covered 257 hectares of land within the territory of Vojvodina in 2018. While this represents a minimal land area, it could be worthwhile to consult on an ecosystem service-based methodology developed during the IDES project, tested in Serbia on wetlands within the “Specijalni rezervat prirode Koviljsko-petrovaradinski rit” Protected Area. This reserve is a hotspot for endangered bird species and represents a unique habitat consisting of a complex landscape of pond-marsh and forest ecosystems. Site 5 (identified in Figure 8) therefore emerges as a strong candidate for restoration-based activities under the project’s scope, as it suffers from recent deforestation activity as well as landscape degradation. Project-based intervention measures would address two critical habitat types at the same time: old-growth forest as well as wetlands.

Places where wetlands form an interconnected matrix with forest/grassland landscapes therefore present strong candidates for project intervention sites.

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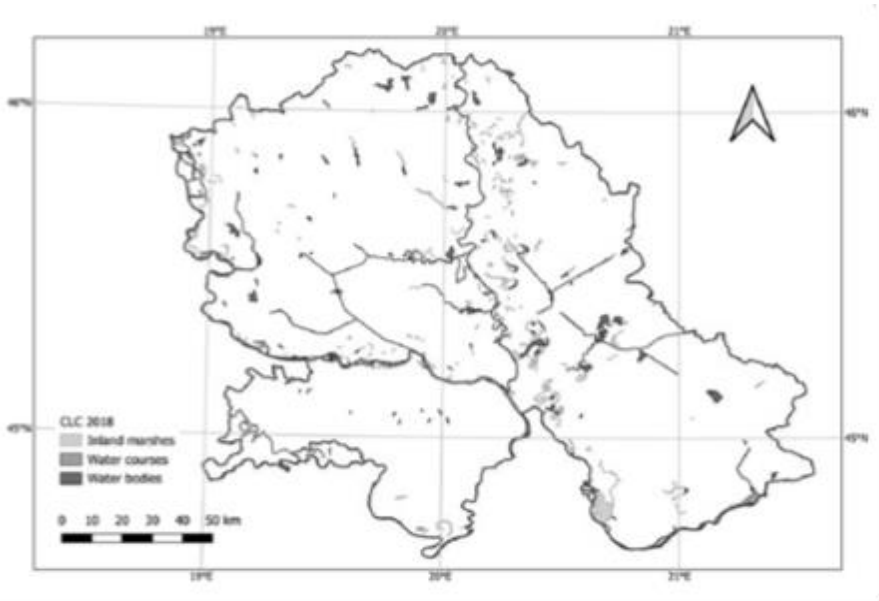


Figure 8. Grabic, Jasna. (2024). Wetlands in Serbia: Past, present and future. Columella : Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. 11. 19-28. 10.18380/SZIE.COLUM.2024.11.1.19.

Site 6: Ecological corridor pilot site in Carska bara Special Nature Reserve

As seen in Figure 9, there is a major road (#13) fragmenting the landscape between the Carska bara protected area and the Potamisje protected area, located South-East of Carska bara. Connecting these protected areas through an ecological corridor (or more than one ecological corridor) could be a feasible prospect. The length of an ecological corridor between the two protected areas would be 7-8 kilometers. The land-use within the pilot ecological corridors is cropland. Potential ecological corridors are delineated using red polygons in Figure 9. While there is existing agricultural land use in these areas which could not be fully repurposed for native ecosystems, functional corridors could be developed through incentive measures to promote micro-habitats within the agricultural landscape, such as hedgerows, tree rows, and small-scale wildlife crossings at linear infrastructure intersections.

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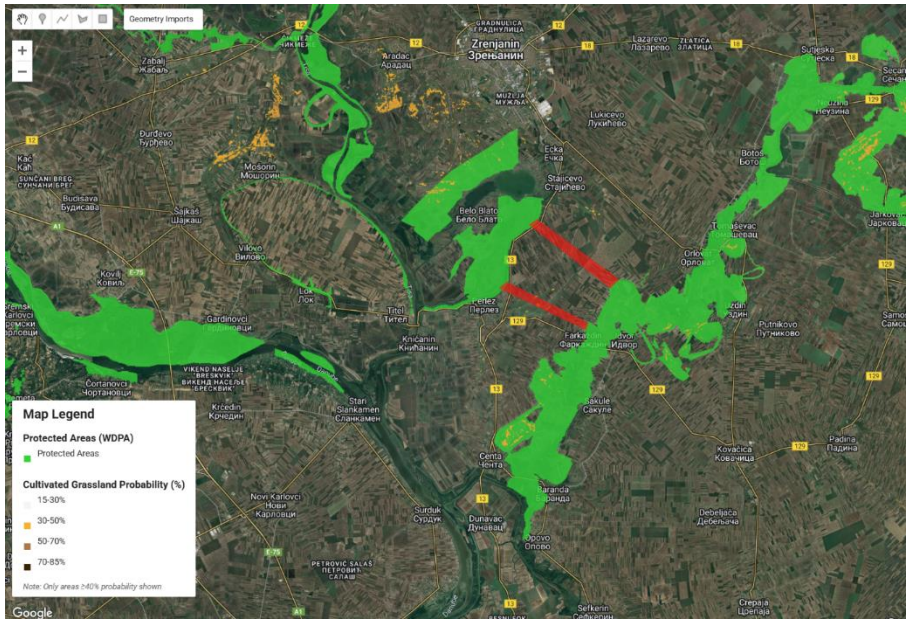


Figure 9: Site 6 represents potential pilot ecological corridors near Zrenjanin (UNEP-WCMC & IUCN, 2025).

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Diagnostic summary of pilot sites and protected area coverage

A detailed overview of all identified project intervention sites is given in Table 1. Table 2 presents key information pertaining to the protected areas within the influence of the project intervention sites.

Table 1. Overview of potential project sites for restoration and ecological corridor implementation

Site no.	Location	Protected Area(s) coverage	Habitat type	Area (ha)	Degradation level (provisional)
1	Specijalni rezervat prirode „Pašnjaci velike droplje" (45.898149, 20.303894)	• Pasnjaci Velike droplje • Slatine u dolini Zlatice	Pasture/grassland	6,800 (only one PA) – 10,200 (both PAs)	Medium
2	Southern Sajan region (45.820209, 20.262381)	N/A	Pasture/grassland	1,000-1,200	High
3	Proposed National Park Kucaj-Beljanica (44.110080, 21.698334)	• Deo podrucja u slivu reke Resave, Suvaje, Cemernice, Jelovog potoka i Beljanicke r. • Kucajske Planine	Old growth forest	690	Medium
4&5	Specijalni rezervat prirode „Koviljsko-petrovaradinski rit" (45.196940, 20.033492)	• Koviljsko-Petrovaradinski Rit	Forest-wetland complex	5,700 – 8,200	High
6	Between Carska bara and Potamisje protected areas (45.245667, 20.482158)	• Carska bara • Potamisje	Ecological corridor (grassland/wetland)	700 – 1,000	High

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Table 2. Overview of Protected Areas addressed through identified potential project sites

Protected Area	Site coverage	Area (ha)	IUCN category	Designation
Pasnjaci Velike droplje	1	6,800	IV	• Nature Reserve • IBA
Slatine u dolini Zlatice	1	3,600	V	• Nature Park
Deo podrucja u slivu reke Resave,Suvaje,Cemernice,Jelovog potoka i Beljanicke r.	3	6,600	Not Reported (probably V)	• Landscape of Outstanding Qualities
Kucajske Planine	3	103,100	Not Reported	• Emerald Network • IBA
Koviljsko-Petrovaradinski Rit	4	8,200	IV	• Ramsar Site • Wetland of International Importance • IBA • Emerald Network • Special Nature Reserve
Carska bara	5 (ecological corridor)	1,700	IV	• Ramsar Site • Wetland of International Importance • Special Nature Reserve
Potamisje	5 (ecological corridor)	22,900	V	• IBA • KBA • Landscape of Outstanding Qualities

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Map layer references

Table 3. Map layer references

Map layer	Source	Citation
WDPA (polygons)		UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2025), Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) On-line, August 2025, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN Available at: www.protectedplanet.net.
Annual Probability of Cultivated Grassland v1	Global Pasture Watch	Parente, L., Sloat, L., Mesquita, V., et al. (2024) Global Pasture Watch - Annual grassland class and extent maps at 30-m spatial resolution (2000—2022) (Version v1) [Data set]. Zenodo doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13890401 Parente, L., Sloat, L., Mesquita, V., et al. (2024). Annual 30-m maps of global grassland class and extent (2000–2022) based on spatiotemporal Machine Learning, Scientific Data. doi: http://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-024-04139-6
Land Degradation in Arable Lands	European Commission	European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC) (2021): Land degradation in global arable lands. European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC) [Dataset] PID: http://data.europa.eu/89h/jrc-esdac-130 Prăvălie, R., Patriche, C., Borrelli, P., Panagos, P., Roșca, B., Dumitraşcu, M., Nita, I.A., Săvulescu, I., Birsan, M.V. and Bandoc, G. 2021. Arable lands under the pressure of multiple land degradation processes. A global perspective. Environmental Research, 194, art no .110697.
Tree Cover Loss 2023-2024	Hansen/University of Maryland (UMD)/Google/USGS/NASA, accessed through Global Forest Watch	Hansen, M. C., P. V. Potapov, R. Moore, M. Hancher, S. A. Turubanova, A. Tyukavina, D. Thau, S. V. Stehman, S. J. Goetz, T. R. Loveland, A. Kommareddy, A. Egorov, L. Chini, C. O. Justice, and J. R. G. Townshend. 2013. "High-Resolution Global Maps of 21st-Century Forest Cover Change." Science 342 (15 November): 850–53. Data available on-line from: http://earthenginepartners.appspot.com/science-2013-global-forest. Accessed through Global Forest Watch on 2024/26/09. www.globalforestwatch.org
Global Forest Certification Map	International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Geo-Wiki	Florian Kraxner, Dmitry Schepaschenko, Sabine Fuss, Anders Lunnan, Georg Kindermann, Kentaro Aoki, Martina Dürauer, Anatoly Shvidenko, Linda See. Mapping certified forests for sustainable management - A global tool for information improvement through participatory and collaborative mapping. Forest Policy and Economics, Volume 83, 2017, Pages 10-18, ISSN 1389-9341. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2017.04.014.

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End Notes

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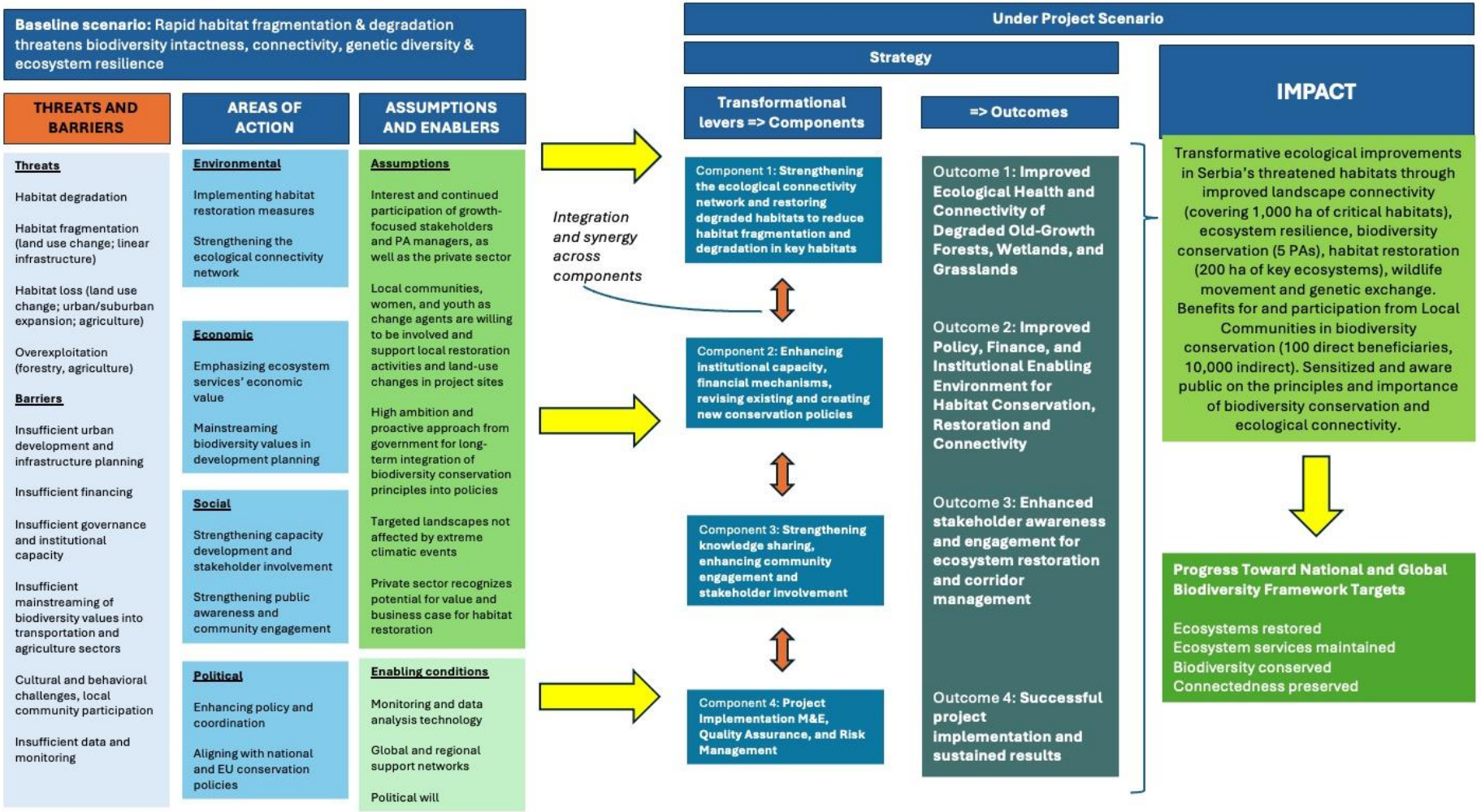
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Annex III. Full Theory of Change (ToC) Diagram including a description of the intervention logic



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Theory of Change Narrative – Intervention Logic

The Theory of Change (ToC) for the Serbia ecosystem restoration and connectivity project responds to the baseline challenge of rapid habitat fragmentation and degradation, which erodes biodiversity, ecosystem services, and resilience of forests, wetlands, and grasslands. The intervention logic addresses this by working across ecological, institutional, social, and economic dimensions in a sequenced and reinforcing way.

If the project restores priority habitats and establishes ecological corridors (**Component 1**) **then** ecosystems will regain functionality, species will be able to move and exchange genes, and landscape-level connectivity will be enhanced. This leads to **Outcome 1: improved ecological health and connectivity** of degraded old-growth forests, wetlands, and grasslands.

If the project strengthens biodiversity laws, policies, and financing mechanisms (**Component 2**) **then** restoration and connectivity will be embedded into Serbia's long-term development frameworks and adequately funded. This creates **Outcome 2: an improved policy, finance, and institutional environment** for habitat conservation, restoration, and connectivity.

If the project expands capacity, knowledge, and public awareness through training, campaigns, and participatory planning (**Component 3**) **then** stakeholders at all levels—from ministries and municipalities to local communities, women, and youth—will be equipped and motivated to actively support ecosystem restoration and corridor management. This enables **Outcome 3: enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement**, securing long-term stewardship.

If risk management, monitoring, and quality assurance systems are established (**Component 4**) **then** the project will remain adaptive and accountable, ensuring safeguards are applied, progress is tracked, and outputs are of high technical quality. This contributes to **Outcome 4: successful implementation and sustained results**.

These pathways together generate the project's **transformative impact**: healthier and connected ecosystems, improved resilience of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and inclusive social and economic benefits for communities. Restored habitats will buffer floods, improve soil fertility, and provide opportunities for sustainable tourism and green jobs. Connectivity will secure wildlife movement and genetic exchange, critical for species survival under climate change. Communities, particularly women and youth, will become recognized custodians of biodiversity, while the private sector will invest in restoration as part of its ESG commitments.

The ToC rests on **key assumptions**: government ambition for biodiversity integration remains high; local communities and land users are willing to engage; and private actors recognize the value of restoration. Enablers include regional cooperation under the Carpathian Convention, Serbia's EU accession alignment, and access to monitoring technologies.

By linking actions to outcomes through clear if–then logic, the project ensures that investments in restoration, policy, and engagement reinforce each other, delivering durable impact aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Kunming Biodiversity Fund's objectives.

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Annex IV. Detailed description of outcomes outputs and activities. For projects involving multiple partners include who is directly responsible for their implementation

Outcome 1: Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands

Output 1.1: Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats

Activity 1.1.1: Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, designing a competitive process / challenge call

This activity will identify and assess pilot sites particularly vulnerable to degradation and habitat loss, representing priority habitats—likely old-growth forest remnants, wetlands, or semi-natural grasslands. The assessment will combine ecological surveys (vegetation mapping, hydrological analysis, and soil assessments) with socioeconomic consultations to ensure compatibility with community land uses. Lessons from the 2024–25 Wetlands Challenge in Serbia will guide a transparent call for proposals from protected areas, ensuring sites with high biodiversity value and restoration feasibility are prioritized. Baseline data will be collected using GIS and field sampling to set measurable targets for species recovery, ecosystem functions (e.g., water retention, erosion control), and carbon benefits. Climate considerations will be key in restoration planning and assessment. Gender mainstreaming will be integrated by ensuring consultations actively include women and men, with particular attention to women's knowledge of local resource use and restoration priorities. Socioeconomic surveys will disaggregate data by gender, enabling identification of barriers to women's participation and opportunities for their leadership in restoration planning.
To ensure that restoration planning reflects both ecological needs and community priorities, the Activity will consult local stakeholders, landowners, and authorities. Site-specific reports will provide tailored recommendations on restoration measures, expected benefits, and feasibility considerations. Findings will serve as the foundation for planning cost-effective and sustainable interventions. In addition, the activity will build institutional and local capacity for ecological assessment and participatory restoration planning. Eventually, the activity will prepare more general guidelines to inform habitats restauration actions that will assist Serbia to further align with the goals set in draft Nature Protection Programme, draft Environmental Protection Strategy/Green Agenda, National Programme for the Adoption of EU Acquis and global restoration goals.

Activity 1.1.2: Implementation of Active Restoration Measures in at least 2 pilot sites selected through competitive process / challenge call

Findings of the assessment under 1.1.1 will inform the design of the Challenge Call for Active Restauration Measures inviting Protected Area Managers, Local self-governments, public companies and/or CSOs to apply with innovative proposals. This way targeted interventions at the pilot sites will be solicited through competitive process, and in direct coordination with the Government – Ministry for Environmental Protection. UNDP Innovation Challenge Call mechanism is an open and competitive process designed to identify and support the most promising, impactful, and scalable solutions to development challenges – in this case active restauration measures. The advantage of this mechanism is to enable wider group of potential stakeholders from public, private, R&D sector to come up with innovative, most cost-effective but impactful solutions that address the issue in a comprehensive and inclusive manner (e.g. synchronizing active measures with other social and economic priorities such as social inclusion, gender, employment, just transition, digital transformation etc.). The mechanism emphasizes transparency, inclusiveness, and co-creation, often combining financial support with capacity building, mentoring, and networking opportunities. At the same time, the approach provides opportunity for comprehensive ideas to be tested, validated, and scaled for larger impact across protected areas.

The criteria for selection of active restauration measures will include assessment results from activity 1.1.1 and priority habitats threats as defined by the Annex of the draft Decree on Ecological Networks in Serbia. Also, the criteria will promote the NbS measures that are adapted to local ecological conditions and may include reforestation with native species, removal of invasive alien plants, re-wetting of wetlands, and soil stabilization to reduce erosion. In addition, the criteria will prioritize gender sensitive measures and women engagement. Where relevant, biodiversity-friendly habitat structures will be installed to

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accelerate species recovery and enhance ecological connectivity. Restoration efforts will be designed to deliver multiple benefits: protecting biodiversity, strengthening ecosystem services, supporting carbon sequestration, and increasing climate resilience. Local communities will be engaged throughout, with opportunities for employment, skills development, and knowledge transfer, ensuring ownership and sustainability. Implementation will follow international best practice standards. The scaling potential will also be one of main criteria to showcase effective techniques to practitioners, policymakers and provide replicable models across Serbia. The activity will engage with community stakeholders from criteria setting to promotion of the Challenge Call in order to mobilize potential applicants and build long-term capacity.

Following the selection of active measures through the Challenge Call, tailored climate-resilient restoration measures will be implemented. In forests, this may include reforestation with native species, and soil stabilization. Grassland interventions will focus on restoring extensive grazing systems, reseeding with native flora, and controlling shrub encroachment. Wetland restoration may involve re-flooding drained areas, modifying water flow regimes, and improving riparian buffer zones. Works will be designed to address drivers of degradation identified in site assessments (e.g., hydrological alteration, overgrazing, or illegal logging). Throughout the active measures implementation, local communities will be engaged for labor and stewardship, linking restoration to green jobs and traditional land practices. Women will be prioritized in labor opportunities, training on native species management, and income-generating activities linked to restoration. Efforts will also ensure that women's access to restored resources—such as water, fuelwood, or grazing land—is enhanced equitably.
N.B. No economic displacements foreseen.

Activity 1.1.3: Monitoring and Evaluation of Restoration Activities

A participatory monitoring framework will be established to track ecological recovery at pilot sites. Indicators may include vegetation cover, species richness, water quality (for wetlands), and soil stability, benchmarked against pre-project baselines. Monitoring protocols will align with EU Natura 2000 and Emerald Network requirements, enabling data to feed into Serbia's national biodiversity monitoring system. Community rangers, university researchers, and PA staff will be trained to conduct regular field surveys, ensuring sustainability of monitoring beyond the project. Citizen science and digital tools (e.g., mobile apps for species observations; community-based water monitoring) will complement formal monitoring, enhancing transparency and stakeholder engagement. Monitoring participants will include both women and men, building capacities for female rangers, students, and community members to participate in data collection and citizen science. This will strengthen women's technical skills and visibility in ecosystem monitoring and management.

Output 1.2: Establishment of Ecological Corridors

Activity 1.2.1: Design at least 1 new ecological corridor that connects fragmented habitats (selected through competitive process/challenge call)

This activity will prepare the technical design for at least one new ecological corridor connecting fragmented habitats, drawing on Serbia's 2010 Ecological Network Regulation and regional experience from the Carpathian ConnectGREEN project. Target ecological corridor will be selected through competitive Innovation Challenge Call for connectivity in a priority habitat (approach as described under the Activity 1.1.2). The criteria for selection of a priority corridor will include vulnerability assessment based on critical habitats and species data of the databases of the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and Vojvodina Province, as well as following the Annex of the draft Decree on Ecological Networks. Also, the Activity will rely on the findings of the reports produced under previous activities concerning habitats vulnerability and prioritization for active measures implementation. The connectivity measures may include removal of physical barriers, creation of buffer zones, reforestation with native vegetation, etc. Specific design elements will target the movement requirements of endangered species, helping to secure genetic diversity and reduce population isolation. The pilot project will also integrate climate resilience measures to ensure long-term functionality of the corridor.

The criteria for the Challenge Call will be discussed and agreed in direct coordination with the Government – Ministry for Environmental Protection, and through dialogues (conducted under the Activity 1.2.2.) with competent authorities, local communities, protected areas managers, academia and CSOs. The design of

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the Challenge Call and its selection criteria will take into account ecological assessment, the database on vulnerable habitats and species (Institutes for Nature Conservation of Serbia and Province of Vojvodina) and spatial analyses using GIS focusing on areas where habitat fragmentation threatens biodiversity. Also, the criteria will prioritize gender sensitive measures and women engagement. This Activity will be implemented in direct consultations with main competent institutions: the Ministry for Environmental Protection, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure. The Activity will include at least three stakeholder consultations in three regions in Serbia (North, Central and South) to assess the ecological objectives with land use and development priorities, in particular construction of transportation corridors and road networks. The final corridor design will provide a blueprint for practical interventions and serve as a model for replication in other regions of Serbia.

Once formulated, the Challenge Call will be actively promoted among the stakeholders in order to mobilize interest of potential applicants. In this way the Activity will strengthen ownership and build technical capacity.

The design for the selected corridor will include mapping habitat patches, identifying movement bottlenecks, and modeling species dispersal routes (e.g., for large carnivores, reptiles and amphibians, steppe birds, or migratory fish). It will integrate national and municipal planners, PA authorities, and landowners to secure practical feasibility and policy uptake. Corridor design and planning will incorporate climate considerations. The design process will take into account the needs of endangered and migratory species, ensuring safe movement and genetic exchange. It will also incorporate maintenance of ecosystem services, such as water regulation and soil conservation, to maximize environmental benefits. It will propose spatial planning measures such as riparian buffer zones, wildlife crossings, and zoning restrictions, ensuring alignment with Serbia's Spatial Plan (2021–2035).
N.B. No economic displacements foreseen.

Activity 1.2.2: Community and stakeholder involvement in the corridor planning and implementation

The Activity will organize at least three (sub-regional) participatory mapping workshops (consultation forums) to engage with local stakeholders into corridor planning — including municipalities, farmers, foresters, hunters, and civil society, women-led groups. These sessions will identify traditional wildlife movement routes, potential livelihood impacts, and opportunities for co-benefits such as eco-tourism, NTFP harvesting, or agri-environment schemes. Lessons from Vojvodina's corridor mapping and EU LIFE projects will inform participatory approaches. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)-like mechanism will guide all consultations with local communities, ensuring ownership and reducing conflict over land-use changes. Women's associations and women farmers will be explicitly engaged in participatory mapping and corridor design discussions, ensuring that their priorities for safe access, resource use, and livelihood opportunities are reflected.

Activity 1.2.3: Implementation of at least 1 pilot corridor project priority habitat to facilitate movement for endangered species and genetic exchange

Upon selection and detailed design, the Activity will implement a pilot corridor to test and demonstrate connectivity solutions. Depending on site context, measures may include creating riparian forest strips, restoring hedgerows, establishing grassland "stepping stones", or installing wildlife crossings on priority roads. The Action will coordinate habitat works with infrastructure agencies to integrate biodiversity-friendly features into ongoing development. The pilot will serve as Serbia's first tangible ecological corridor intervention and demonstration site, generating lessons learned and best practices, offering a replicable model for scaling up under EU Natura 2000 obligations and the Carpathian Convention.
N.B. No economic displacements foreseen.

Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen Management Effectiveness of 5 PAs Anchoring Corridors

To ensure integration of ecological connectivity into management of protected sites and their effectiveness, the Activity will enhance management capacity in at least five protected areas. This will involve training PA staff on connectivity management, updating management plans to integrate corridor objectives, and providing basic equipment for monitoring and enforcement (e.g., GPS, drones, ranger kits). The protected areas will be selected on the basis of previously conducted assessments and activities, as

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well as based on the prioritization of the ecological and economic values of habitats and species, as well as exposure to infrastructure and other threats. All participating PAs will be required to complete METT assessments as a baseline, and then again at the end of project activities in order to assess progress. The Activity will organize capacity building trainings for the staff of selected protected areas, focusing on corridor management, biodiversity monitoring, and cross-boundary cooperation. Management plans will be updated to integrate corridor objectives and ensure alignment with national biodiversity strategies and EU directives. Infrastructure and equipment may be supported to improve enforcement, monitoring, and habitat management. Partnerships with local communities will also be reinforced to balance protection with sustainable use of resources. Also, the trainings will include gender sensitive approaches in PA management planning. By enhancing the resilience and management effectiveness of protected areas, this activity will secure the backbone of Serbia's ecological network of protected areas. By embedding connectivity measures into PA operations, the activity ensures that corridor functionality is maintained long-term, even as pressures from infrastructure or land-use intensify. Capacity building will target gender balance by encouraging women's participation in protected area staff roles, ranger teams, and decision-making processes.

Outcome 2: Improved Policy, Finance, and Institutional Enabling Environment for Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Connectivity

Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation

Activity 2.1.1: Review and update regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international standards

In order to sustain active restauration measures and ecological connectivity for priority vulnerable yet valuable habitats, Serbia needs significant improvements of regulatory framework in nature protection, spatial planning and infrastructure development. This activity will support the systematic review and updating of Serbia's regulatory framework related to spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration, and ecological connectivity. Current laws and by-laws will be assessed against EU directives (such as the Habitats and Birds Directives) and international conservation commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The review will identify gaps, inconsistencies, and areas where stronger alignment is required, particularly in integrating biodiversity considerations into land-use planning and development processes. This activity will review Serbia's Nature Protection Law, Spatial Plan (2021–2035), and Ecological Network Regulation to identify gaps in corridor protection, restoration mandates, and integration into land-use planning. Comparative analysis will draw on EU Natura 2000 directives, the EU Restoration Law, and experiences from neighboring accession countries (e.g., Croatia and Slovenia) that have embedded corridor protection into national legislation. The activity will draft amendments and technical guidelines in consultation with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Institute for Nature Conservation, and spatial planning authorities. The review will also integrate safeguards for climate resilience, ensuring that legal frameworks account for ecosystem-based adaptation in infrastructure and agricultural development. The legal review will also assess how current frameworks address gender equality, and propose amendments to strengthen women's rights in land use, access to natural resources, and participation in spatial planning processes.

Activity 2.1.2: Development of Guidelines and Regulations for Biodiversity Corridors in Infrastructure Investment

Building on Activity 2.1.1, this Activity will prepare technical guidelines to mainstream biodiversity corridors into infrastructure design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes. The guidelines will specify standards for wildlife crossings, riparian buffer zones, and "green infrastructure" elements, aligned with European best practice and Carpathian Convention protocols. Pilot guidance will be tested in collaboration with transport and energy ministries, ensuring that upcoming projects (such as highways crossing Vojvodina or the Morava Valley) incorporate connectivity features from the planning stage. Training modules for engineers, planners, and EIA consultants will be developed to operationalize the guidelines and ensure enforcement in practice. Guidelines will integrate gender sensitive measures,

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promote collection of gender disaggregated data and emphasize the role of women in active restauration measures and ecological connectivity.

Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding

Activity 2.2.1: Develop Private Sector Partnership Proposals and Business Cases to Support Habitat Restoration

This activity will mobilize co-financing by preparing partnership proposals and business cases that demonstrate how companies can align restoration with corporate sustainability and risk management. Using UNDP BioFIN methodology, the Activity will develop case studies to illustrate the economic value of restored habitats in providing services such as flood control, soil fertility, and pollination. Target sectors include water utilities, tourism, agriculture, and renewable energy. Each proposal will outline return-on-investment scenarios, ESG benefits, and potential branding opportunities (e.g., carbon or biodiversity credits, eco-certifications). Engagement will focus on companies with operations in or near project landscapes to maximize local relevance. Business cases will highlight women-led enterprises and female entrepreneurs as priority partners, showcasing opportunities to support women's green jobs and sustainable livelihoods through corporate co-financing.

Activity 2.2.2: Engagement with Companies Interested in Enhancing ESG Credentials

The Activity will develop a structured engagement program for companies seeking to strengthen their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. The Activity will arrange at least two general roundtables and a number of bilateral meetings with interested companies to showcase restoration opportunities and corridor benefits. The project will leverage regional examples of corporate engagement in conservation (e.g., hydropower companies funding fish passage in the Balkans, or tourism operators co-investing in habitat restoration) to demonstrate feasibility. Engagement will also explore innovative finance tools—green bonds, biodiversity offsets, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds—to diversify funding streams. A pipeline of potential corporate partners will be maintained, with at least 3–5 firms actively co-financing or piloting restoration-linked ESG initiatives by project end.

Outcome 3: Enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement for ecosystem restoration and corridor management

Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge

Activity 3.1.1: Capacity-building Workshops and Practical Training Sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures

The Activity will organize at least three trainings workshops targeting authorities at local and national levels, PA managers, municipalities, and sectors like energy and infrastructure that strongly influence land use. Sessions will be hands-on, covering ecological restoration techniques and planning (e.g., rewetting wetlands, native species planting, grazing management), connectivity planning, integration into municipal spatial plans, ecosystems vulnerability assessment (including sensitive habitats and species), ecological connectivity, spatial planning and infrastructure development; better integration of nature conservation into environmental impact assessments; and valuation of ecosystem services. Trainings will draw on case studies from Serbia and the wider region (e.g., corridor mapping in Vojvodina, Carpathian ConnectGREEN project). Participants will conduct applied exercises such as corridor mapping with GIS, designing small-scale restoration pilots, and developing monitoring indicators. By equipping practitioners with practical tools and shared methodologies, the workshops will help ensure consistent, cross-sectoral application of restoration and connectivity principles. Trainings will ensure gender balance in participation, with tailored outreach to women professionals, community leaders, and students. Content will include modules on promoting women's leadership in natural resource governance and equal access to technical knowledge.

Activity 3.1.2: Development and Dissemination of Training Materials on Habitat Restoration and Ecological Connectivity

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Complementing the workshops, the Activity will prepare a suite of training materials in Serbian and English, including technical manuals, policy briefs, case studies, and multimedia guides. Materials will highlight best practices from EU LIFE projects, Carpathian Convention protocols, and regional restoration pilots, ensuring Serbia is aligned with international standards. Content will be tailored to different audiences—technical guidelines for practitioners, simplified guides for municipal planners, and visual resources for community use. Dissemination will use online platforms, PA visitor centers, and universities to maximize reach. By leaving behind a durable knowledge base, this activity ensures ongoing capacity-building beyond the project timeline. Materials will integrate gender-sensitive case studies and examples, ensuring women's contributions to restoration and connectivity are highlighted and valued.

Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs

Activity 3.2.1: Design and implement habitat restoration and connectivity awareness campaigns.

This activity will design and deliver a multi-channel public awareness campaign to build support for restoration and ecological corridors. Campaigns will use national media, social media, and community events to share compelling stories from pilot sites—such as wetland restoration reducing flood risk, or forest recovery supporting eco-tourism. Professional visuals, infographics, and short videos will illustrate the benefits of biodiversity to climate resilience, health, and livelihoods. The campaign will target both urban and rural audiences, with tailored messages for youth, farmers, and policy makers. By making connectivity and restoration tangible, the campaign will foster a constituency for biodiversity-friendly development. Community engagement will follow national legislation that enables public participation in decision making. This activity will increase the awareness and knowledge of the general population to enable their participation in decision making on issues concerning nature conservation in the context of infrastructure development, including access to relevant data and information, legal procedures (e.g. Aarhus Convention, SEA, EIA), and public hearings or public reviews of relevant legal and planning documents.

Activity 3.2.2: Educational Programs for Local Communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts

The Activity will develop an Educational Programme, as integral part of the Awareness Campaign, to be implemented in project landscapes, particularly targeting schools, community associations, and rural households. Programs will include field trips to restoration sites, biodiversity days, and participatory monitoring where community members record species and habitat changes. The Programme will consist of interactive learning modules, adapted to different age groups and literacy levels, highlighting how local livelihoods—from farming to eco-tourism—depend on healthy, connected ecosystems. By empowering communities to see themselves as custodians of nature, this activity builds long-term stewardship and ensures local ownership of restoration and corridor initiatives. Educational initiatives will particularly engage girls and young women, building awareness of career opportunities in ecology, conservation, and sustainable land management. This will encourage future generations of female leaders in natural resource sectors.

Outcome 4: Successful project implementation and sustained results: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance

Output 4.1: Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated Risk management system for the project in line with UNDP and national policies

This will include stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, social and environmental standards and accountability to stakeholders.

Activity 4.1.1: Implementation and Monitoring of Safeguards Risk Framework

The project will apply UNDP's Social and Environmental Safeguards (SES) to all activities, tracking risks related to land use conflicts, gender equity, and community engagement. Regular reviews will ensure risks are identified early and mitigation measures are applied consistently. Gender-disaggregated indicators

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will be embedded into the safeguards framework, ensuring that women's participation, benefits, and leadership opportunities are systematically tracked and promoted.

Activity 4.1.2: Developing a Risk Management System for the Project

A tailored risk register and monitoring tool will be developed, aligned with UNDP and national standards. This system will guide adaptive management, ensuring risks from political shifts, climate events, or institutional gaps are promptly addressed.

Output 4.2: M&E and Quality Assurance Systems

Activity 4.2.1: Establishing an M&E System for the Project

A results-based monitoring framework will be set up, linking indicators to the Theory of Change. It will track ecological, social, and financial performance, feeding into national biodiversity reporting and GBF targets.

Activity 4.2.2: Providing Quality Assurance of Technical Outputs, Knowledge Products, M&E and SES Implementation

Independent experts and UNDP technical teams will review project outputs for accuracy and alignment with international standards, ensuring knowledge products and monitoring systems meet quality benchmarks.

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Annex V. Complementary Plans or documents might include a Comprehensive Safeguard Strategy (according to each institution's internal requirements and guidelines) IPLCs engagement plan Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Stakeholder Engagement plan.

Annex V.a UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) document,
Annex V.b Stakeholder Engagement Plan
Annex V.c Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan

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Annex V.a UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) document

UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (Offline Template)

This offline template assists teams to identify relevant social and environmental (S&E) risks and impacts associated with programming activities as well as appropriate treatment measures during design, budgeting, and implementation. The template facilitates working with development partners and stakeholders and may be particularly useful for projects requiring rigorous S&E risk management. ***The results of the offline screening must be entered into the Online SESP for identified S&E risks to be properly managed and for the project/portfolio MYWP (Multi-Year Work Plan) to be SESP compliant.***

Project Information

Information	
Title	**Restoration and connectivity of priority habitats for species conservation in Serbia**
Number	Quantum project ID
Location	Serbia
Project stage	Design
Date	20 September 2025

SES Questionnaire - Integrating Programming Principles to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability

What measures should be taken to further mainstream the UNDP Programing Principles into the project?
Mainstreaming the human rights-based approach
Human Rights is one of the core programming principles underpinning UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and the project strategy centres on mainstreaming human rights through building capacity of duty bearers and rightsholders.. By undertaking a thorough, gender-responsive stakeholder analysis (including vulnerability parameters) and developing a socially inclusive Stakeholder Engagement Plan, the project will address any barriers to inclusion faced by vulnerable and marginalized groups (who will be specifically identified), ensuring full participation by all stakeholders in decision-making that affects them, and that consultation processes are culturally appropriate. The project is aligned with Serbian national legal requirements, and international best practice to respect community priorities, decision-making structures, and self-governance. Community members will serve as custodians of restored habitats, supported through training, employment, and input to PA management with protected area authorities. The project will create opportunities for young people and vulnerable groups—including persons with disabilities and marginalized rural households—through targeted awareness programs, internships, and skills development in green jobs linked to ecosystem restoration and sustainable tourism. Serbia's population has a deep connection to their natural landscapes, but there is still a need for greater public awareness regarding the importance of preserving natural habitats and their connectivity.
Improving gender equality and women's empowerment
The project will develop a Gender Action Plan to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the project cycle, in line with UNDP's Gender Equality

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Strategy, and Serbia's legal frameworks on gender equality. Women will be actively involved in participatory planning, training programs, and decision-making bodies related to restoration and corridor establishment. Outreach and capacity-building activities will apply gender-sensitive methodologies, ensuring that women have equal access to technical knowledge, employment opportunities in restoration works, and leadership roles within community-based conservation initiatives. Special attention will be given to women in rural areas, where dependence on natural resources and vulnerability to impacts is high, to support their economic empowerment and enhance their agency in shaping biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.
Mainstreaming sustainability and resilience
The project will restore priority forests, wetlands, and grasslands in Serbia and establish ecological corridors to strengthen habitat connectivity. By reinforcing policy frameworks, mobilizing private sector finance, and engaging PAs alongside local communities, it will enhance biodiversity resilience, ecosystem services, and sustainable livelihoods in line with GBF targets. By integrating these social dimensions, the project ensures that ecological outcomes are matched by social gains, contributing to inclusive development and Serbia's commitments under the CBD, SDGs, and EU nature directives. This socially responsive design will foster ownership, equity, and resilience, making biodiversity restoration and connectivity a shared national and local priority.
Strengthening accountability to stakeholders
The project emphasizes local community engagement and ownership as a condition for long-term sustainability, and local stakeholders' engagement and input from related initiatives and procedures has been incorporated in the project design. Communities will continue to participate in restoration planning, corridor mapping, and monitoring. FPIC principles will be applied in all activities affecting local resource use. The Project Document contains the initial Stakeholder Analysis (in a simplified tabular format), which will be verified and followed by elaboration of a more comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement/Social Inclusion Framework during the early stage of project implementation. The project will set up an accessible Grievance Redress Mechanism and all stakeholders will have access to UNDP's Accountability Mechanism, which includes a Stakeholder Response Mechanism (led by UNDP Serbia Country Office) and Compliance Review under UNDP's Social and Environmental Compliance Unit, SECU).

Risk Screening: STEP 1 – mapping risks to project activities/outputs

***Note: The complete SESP Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist is attached.*

Question 1: What outputs/activities are proposed in the project	Question 2: What are the potential S&E risk events associated with the outputs/activities? (from SESP Checklist)	Risk Treatments
Output 1.1: Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats • Activity 1.1.1: Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, designing of the competitive process/challenge call • Activity 1.1.2: Implementation of Active Restoration Measures *(such as reforestation with native species, habitat restoration for endangered wildlife, water flow modification, soil erosion control, buffer zones for wetlands, and extensive grazing management for grasslands.)*	Risk that the assessment of pilot sites for habitat restoration and implementation of selected restoration measures (Act. 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) will not take into account potential restricted access of communities to resources or basic services; or even potential economic displacement (P1.6 and S5.2) Risk that potentially affected stakeholders are not adequately involved in pilot sites assessment and restoration measures selection, and in monitoring and evaluation, what may lead to concerns and grievances (P4.13 and P4.14) Risk that selected restoration measures may (Act. 1.1.2) have or lead to negative environmental and / or social impacts (P3.0), specifically, but not exclusively to:	To address the risk of restricted access to resources of and of potential economic displacement, the project shall: • conduct **activity-level screenings** to anticipate the potential adverse social and economic impacts from on land or resource use, • **consult the potentially affected stakeholders** (with specific attention to poor and marginalised groups) on measures that can be taken to avoid, or, when avoidance is not possible, minimize adverse effects of any access restrictions, and improve their living standards and the overall socioeconomic status.

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• Activity 1.1.3: Monitoring and Evaluation of restoration activities	• Impact on ecosystem and their services, including due to risks associated with land-use/ecosystem changes (S1.1 and S1.3) • Risk of unintentionally supporting or failing to prevent illegal wildlife trade (S1.5) • Risk to soil degradation, in relation to grazing (S1.7) • risks of suboptimal forestry approaches (S1.8), in case of reforestation (S1.9) • surface or ground water use risks (S.1.11), in case of water flow modification • Risk of inadequate waste management, in case waste generation during restoration measures' introduction (S8.2) • Risk associated with use of fertilizers, in case of grazing management of grasslands (S8.5) Risk that implementation and results of restoration measures are negatively affected by climate change and related extreme weather conditions (S1.2 and S2.2)	The project supported elaboration and will implement the **Stakeholders' Analysis and Engagement Plan**, which shall ensure that: • any proposal-affected groups (incl. vulnerable or disadvantaged groups), are identified, • they receive information on proposal, its impacts/risks and mitigation measures in an appropriate, timely and accessible manner, language and form, • where conditions for inclusive participation are unfavorable, the project shall undertake additional measures to allow the effective participation of any marginalized groups (e.g. women, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities, etc.), • the views obtained in the process of assessment and restoration measures selection are duly considered. The project shall establish an easy-to-access project-level **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)** to allow any stakeholders to communicate concerns or grievances. The GRM will be presented during the inception phase and be operational throughout the project implementation. It will be mentioned during the stakeholder consultations and dissemination of project notification through appropriate media and/or at publicly accessible sites (including the site of the works). (applicable to the whole project) To address potential SE impacts, of the proposed restoration measures, the project will: • **Conduct screening** of those measures against UNDP SESP risk checklist (see the pre-identified risks in the Question 2 Column). • Conduct **targeted impact assessments**, following the requirement of both national impact assessment, and other relevant legislation and of UNDP SES system, including corresponding **impact management measures**. To address the potential impact of CC, the project will:

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		The project shall: • review whether the proposed restoration measures are exposed and sensitive to the changing climatic conditions that can be reasonably anticipated and may occur during the project lifetime under the SSP3-7.0 or SSP5-8.5 scenario • enhance their resilience to the expected risk of extreme weather or slow onset events
Output 1.2: Establishment of Ecological Corridors • Activity 1.2.1: Design at least 1 new ecological corridor that connects fragmented habitats, selected through competitive process/challenge call • Activity 1.2.2: Community and stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of corridor projects • Activity 1.2.3: Implementation of 1 pilot corridor project priority habitat to facilitate unrestricted movement for endangered species and genetic exchange • Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen management effectiveness of 5 key protected areas anchoring corridors	Risk that the process of ecological corridors establishment (Output 1.1) does not adequately involves affected stakeholders, including women and marginalized groups, such as elderly and disabled), potentially leading to restricting the access to resources or basic services, affecting community-based property rights and to economic displacement. This may result in such groups' concerns and grievances. (P1.6, P4.13 and 4.14, S5.2 and S5.4) Risk that benefits (like tourism revenue) may not be fairly shared with local communities, causing tension. (P.1.5 and P1.14) Risk that the establishment of an ecological corridor, if not designed properly (Act. 1.2.1 and 1.2.3) have potential negative effect on the environment and communities. Such impacts may include: • Land use conflict and economic displacement (mentioned above), including due to men-wildlife conflicting interactions resulting for instance in crop damage, livestock predation, or danger to people. • Spread of invasive species or disease: Corridors can unintentionally enable pests, pathogens, or invasive species to expand. (S1.6) • Risk of unintentionally supporting or failing to prevent illegal wildlife trade (S1.5) • Increased exposure of corridor habitats to human disturbance, predators, or pollutants (S1.2) • Impact related to construction works (if applicable; S3.1) and inadequate waste management (S8.2)	To address the risk of restricted access to resources of and of potential economic displacement, the project shall: • conduct **activity-level screenings** to anticipate the potential adverse social and economic impacts from restrictions on land or resource use, • **consult the potentially affected stakeholders** (with specific attention to poor and marginalised groups) on measures that can be taken to avoid, or, when avoidance is not possible, minimize adverse effects of any access restrictions, and improve their living standard The project supported elaboration and will implement the **Stakeholders' Analysis and Engagement Plan** (see the Act. 1.2.2), which shall ensure that: • any proposal-affected groups (incl. vulnerable or disadvantaged groups), are identified, • they receive information on proposal, its impacts/risks and mitigation measures in an appropriate, timely and accessible manner, language and form, • where conditions for inclusive participation are unfavorable, the project shall undertake additional measures to allow the effective participation of any marginalized groups (e.g. women, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities, etc.), • the views obtained in the process of assessment and restoration measures selection are duly considered. To address potential SE impacts of the proposed ecological corridor, the project will:

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	• Impact in cultural heritage sites (if applicable; S4.1) Risk of conflict between security personnel – rangers and local communities, in relation to supported management of 5 PAs (Act. 1.2.4; S3.8) Risk that establishment and function of an ecological corridor is negatively affected by climate change and related extreme weather conditions (S1.2 and S2.2) Labor workers involved in ecological corridor establishment (if applicable) may be working under sub-standard labor and working, including health and safety, conditions (S7.1 and 7.6)	• **Conduct screening** of those measures against UNDP SESP risk checklist (see the pre-identified risks in the Question 2 Column). • Depending on risks and their significance, identify a need for, and **conduct adequate SE impact assessment,** following the requirement of <u>both national impact assessment, and other relevant legislation and of UNDP SES system</u>**.** • According to the Serbian legislation on EIA and SEA[16]: o If the establishment of an ecological corridor is part of spatial or ecological network planning, the project will be required to **conduct SEA.** o If the corridor establishment involves construction works, hydrological modifications, or land-use changes an **EIA screening decision** may be required from the competent authority, and EIA conducted, if needed. • If the local systems/processes used by the implementing partners cannot adequately address these UNDP SES requirements, the project will suggest practical options for enhancing these systems/processes with additional requirements that achieve the equivalence and acceptable implementation of the relevant UNDP SES requirements. To address the potential impact of CC, the project will: The project shall: • Review whether the proposed restoration measures are exposed and sensitive to the changing climatic conditions that can be reasonably anticipated and may occur during the project lifetime under the SSP3-7.0 or SSP5-8.5 scenario • enhance their resilience to the expected risk of extreme weather or slow onset events In case labor work is involved in the corridor establishment, the project will ensure that contractors

[16] Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (Official Gazette of RS No. 135/2004, 36/2009, 72/2009, 43/2011 – Decision of CC, and 14/2016); Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Official Gazette of RS No. 135/2004, 88/2010).

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		follow the national and international legal requirements for labor and working, including health and safety conditions. The project shall ensure when enhancing the PA management effectiveness (Act. 1.2.4) that: • potential risks posed by security arrangements, involving **PA rangers** - to those within and outside the project area are assessed, • any security arrangements are proportional and consistent with applicable national laws and good international industry practice, • security personnel are properly screened through reasonable inquiries to verify that potential security personnel have not been implicated in past abuses and allegations of unlawful or abusive acts, • security personnel is properly trained – including a dedicated training on prevention and response to GBV, • any allegations of security abuses are promptly investigated, and actions are taken to prevent recurrence and reprisals against individuals and communities.
Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation • Activity 2.1.1: Review and update regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international conservation standards. • Activity 2.1.2: Development of guidelines and regulations for designing biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment	Risk that proposed regulations and guidelines do not adequately recognize and address potential environmental and social impacts of spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity (P16) Risk that not all relevant stakeholders will be adequately involved in regulations and guidelines preparation (P4.13)	Even though the Serbian Law on SEA does not require SEA, the project shall ensure that: • Proposed regulations' updates are screened against UNDP SESP screening criteria • Potential SE impacts associated with risks are identified and taken into account • All relevant stakeholders are identified and adequately involved in regulations and guidelines preparation
Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding	Risk that business cases to support habitat restorations, if not designed properly, (Act. 2.2.1) may have or lead to negative environmental and / or social impacts (P3.0), specifically, but not exclusively to: • Impact on ecosystem and their services,	Project shall apply **private sector due diligence risk screening** to ensure that their policies and ratings that meet international and EU standards, or that they are at least consistent with UNDP SES, and that they have

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• Activity 2.2.1: Develop private sector partnership proposals and business cases to support habitat restoration • Activity 2.2.2: Engagement with companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials.	including due to risks associated with land-use/ecosystem changes (S1.1 and S1.3) • Risk of unintentionally supporting or failing to prevent illegal wildlife trade (S1.5) • Risk to soil degradation, in relation to grazing (S1.7) • risks of suboptimal forestry approaches (S1.8), in case of reforestation (S1.9) • surface or ground water use risks (S.1.11), in case of water flow modification • Risk of inadequate waste management, in case waste generation during restoration measures' introduction (S8.2) • Risk associated with use of fertilizers, in case of grazing management of grasslands (S8.5) Risk that the business cases mentioned above will not take into account potential restricted access of communities to resources or basic services; or even potential economic displacement (P1.6 and S5.2) Risk that potentially affected stakeholders are not adequately consulted during restoration business cases design, what may lead to concerns and grievances (P4.13 and P4.14)	appropriate Occupational Health and Safety and waste management systems in place. To address potential SE impacts, of the private sector partnership proposals and business cases, the project will: • **Conduct screening** of those proposals against UNDP SESP risk checklist (see the pre-identified risks in the Question 2 Column). • Conduct **targeted impact assessments**, following the requirement of both national impact assessment, and other relevant legislation and of UNDP SES system, including corresponding **impact management measures**. • **identify and consult the stakeholders concerned** with these proposals and their specific concerns and suggest an appropriate activity-level engagement of any potentially affected stakeholders and any required disclosure of the SES documentation per the UNDP SES disclosure policy. • Prescribe the need to make the parties concerned aware of the project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to ensure that any project-related SES complaints are heard and promptly addressed.
Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge • Activity 3.1.1: Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures. • Activity 3.1.2: Development and dissemination of training materials on	Women representatives of the target institutions may face barriers to participating fully CB activities (P2.10)	Project commits to: • Actively involve women in participatory planning, training programs, and decision-making bodies related to restoration and corridor establishment. • Outreach and capacity-building activities will apply gender-sensitive methodologies, ensuring that women have equal access to technical knowledge, employment opportunities in restoration works, and leadership roles within community-based conservation initiatives. • Special attention will be given to women in rural areas, where dependence on natural resources is high, to support their economic empowerment and enhance their agency in shaping biodiversity-friendly land-use practices.

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habitat restoration and ecological connectivity.		
Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs • Activity 3.2.1: Design and implement awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of habitat restoration and connectivity. • Activity 3.2.2: Educational programs for local communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts.	Risk that awareness campaigns and educational programmes do not reach and engage all stakeholder groups such as women, elderly, and disabled. (P4.13 and P2.10)	Project commits to "create opportunities for young people and vulnerable groups—including persons with disabilities and marginalized rural households—through targeted awareness programs, internships, and skills development in green jobs linked to ecosystem restoration and sustainable tourism." Project will specify relevant stakeholders and means of their involvement in the **Stakeholders' Engagement Plan and the Gender Analysis and Action Plan**.
Output 4.1 - Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated Risk management system for the project in line with UNDP and national policies (including stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, social and environmental standards and accountability to stakeholders) • Activity 4.1.1 Implementation and monitoring of safeguards risk framework • Activity 4.1.2 Developing a Risk Management system for the project	NA	
Output 4.2 – M&E and Quality Assurance Systems • Activity 4.2.1 Establishing an M&E system for the project • Activity 4.2.2: Providing quality assurance of technical outputs, knowledge products, M&E and SES implementation	NA	

(*) adapted for the level of available information

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STEP 2: Social and environmental risk identification and management –Consolidated Risk Table (risks mapped to the UNDP SES Principles and Standards) Note: this information will be used to populate the UNDP online SESP in Quantum+ before Prodoc signature

Question 4: Which SES Programing Principles and Standards are triggered by the project/portfolio MYWP?					
UNDP SES Principles and Standards – delete those that are not applicable	S&E Risk Events (from Part A, Question 2)	S&E Risk Causes (from Part A, Question 1) – i.e. link to project activities/outputs	Impacts	Risk Rating	Risk Treatments (Summary incorporating design elements, stakeholder processes, assessments and management measures)
Human Rights Principle	Stakeholders in vulnerable groups may be inequitably impacted by project activities, including in their access to resources (P5, P6)	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2, involving restoration measures and ecological corridor planning and implementation	Adverse impacts on community livelihoods, causing economic displacement (even if temporary)	Low L = 1 I = 4	. This risk has a low probability, since the project is aligned with Serbian national legal requirements, and international best practice to respect community priorities, decision-making structures, and self-governance. Community members will be empowered serve as custodians of restored habitats, supported through training, employment, and input to PA management with protected area authorities. Restoration planning and corridor mapping will be conducted through participatory processes in which communities will be able to contribute in a fully-informed way to decision making that affects them. The project further commits to create opportunities for young people and vulnerable groups—including persons with disabilities and marginalized rural households—through targeted awareness programs, internships, and skills development in green jobs linked to ecosystem restoration and sustainable tourism.
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Principle	P2.10 Differential impacts on women's ability to access, use, manage, protect or benefit from natural	Applies throughout the whole project	Women may not have equal opportunities to participate in project activities and to benefit from the project results	Moderate L=2 I=3	Gender equality is enshrined in Serbia's Constitution and other laws. However, the project will identify any barriers that may exist to women's full and equitable participation with specific measures for addressing them

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	resources (P10, P11)				built into the project's Gender Action/Mainstreaming Plan. Gender equality and women's empowerment will be mainstreamed throughout the project cycle, in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy and national policy frameworks. Additional details are provided in Table 1, above and in the Social Impact section of the KBF Proposal document.
Accountability Principle	P4.13 risks of potential exclusion of affected stakeholders from decision-making that affects them, leading to grievances (P13, P14)	Applies throughout the whole project	Project interventions may not be supported by stakeholder groups who feel excluded from project decision-making and opportunities. Complaints or grievances may arise, with adverse social impacts and possibly causing delays in project implementation	Moderate L = 1 I = 4	The project will, at the early stage of implementation, establish an easy-to-access **project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)** to allow any stakeholders to communicate concerns or grievances. The GRM will be presented during the inception phase and be operational throughout the project implementation. It will be mentioned during the stakeholder consultations and dissemination of project notification through appropriate media and/or at publicly accessible sites (including the site of the works). (applicable to the whole project). The project will also inform potentially affected stakeholders about - and provide their access to - UNDP Accountability Mechanism with two key components: o Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) grievance resolution procedures for addressing complaints and disputes related to the project's social and/or environmental impacts. Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) investigates alleged non-compliance with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards and screening procedure from affected stakeholders and recommends measures to address findings of non-compliance.

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					The Project Document contains the initial **Stakeholder Analysis** (in a simplified tabular format), which will be verified and followed by elaboration of a more comprehensive **Simplified Stakeholder Engagement/Social Inclusion Framework** during the early stage of project implementation. In the process above the shall ensure that • any proposal-affected groups (incl. vulnerable or disadvantaged groups), are identified, • they receive information on proposal, its impacts/risks and mitigation measures in an appropriate, timely and accessible manner, language and form, • where conditions for inclusive participation are unfavorable, the project shall undertake additional measures to allow the effective participation of any marginalized groups (e.g. women, disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities, etc.), the views obtained in the process of assessment and restoration measures selection are duly considered. Social inclusion will be further promoted by creating opportunities for young people and vulnerable groups—including persons with disabilities and marginalized rural households—through targeted awareness programs, internships, and skills development in green jobs linked to ecosystem restoration and sustainable tourism. Local stakeholders' engagement and input from related initiatives and procedures has been incorporated in the project design.

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					○
Sustainability and Resilience Principle	P3.0 generic sustainability and resilience risks	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1. and 2.2, involving restoration measures and ecological corridor regulation, planning and implementation	Through supported regulations, guidelines, plans, and restoration measures, the project may fall short in the following areas: • Identifying, assessing, and managing specific S&E risks and impacts in a manner proportionate to their significance • Monitoring mitigation measures in proportion to the level of risk and implementing corrective actions when necessary.	L = 3 I = 3 Moderate	The implementing agencies and responsible parties shall put in place a systematic activity-level screening process to: During implementation, the project shall: • Put in place **systematic activity-level screening,** applying screening criteria in the relevant Serbian legislation[17] and the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Checklist, to identify risks that may lead specifically, but not exclusively, to: ○ Impact on ecosystem and their services, including due to risks associated with land-use/ecosystem changes (S1.1 and S1.3) ○ Unintentionally supporting or failing to prevent illegal wildlife trade (S1.5) ○ Risk to soil degradation, in relation to grazing (S1.7) ○ Suboptimal forestry approaches (S1.8), in case of reforestation (S1.9) ○ Surface or ground water use risks (S.1.11), in case of water flow modification ○ Inadequate waste management, in case waste generation during restoration measures' introduction (S8.2) ○ Use of harmful fertilizers, in case of grazing management of grasslands (S8.5) • Select the relevant UNDP SES requirements necessary for **managing the identified risks** and determining whether Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIA), in case of on the ground measures, or Strategic

[17] Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (Official Gazette of RS No. 135/2004, 36/2009, 72/2009, 43/2011 – Decision of CC, and 14/2016); Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Official Gazette of RS No. 135/2004, 88/2010).

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					Environmental and Social Assessments (SESA), in case of support to regulations and plans' development, are needed to ensure compliance. • Evaluate whether the local systems and processes used by implementing partners (SEA and EIA provisions of relevant Serbian legislation) apply, and if so, whether it can sufficiently address these UNDP SES requirements. Where gaps are identified, propose practical enhancements to align with the SES and ensure their effective implementation. • Identify and engage stakeholders potentially affected by the interventions, assess their specific concerns, and recommend appropriate stakeholder engagement measures. This includes ensuring public disclosure of relevant SES documentation for a minimum of 30 days, in line with the UNDP SES disclosure policy. • Ensure that all relevant parties are informed about the project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), so that any SES-related concerns or complaints can be raised and addressed in a timely manner. The need for ESIA or simpler, targeted assessments for demonstration projects, and SEA / SESA for support to regulations' update and ecological corridor planning, will be determined based on the expected risks and their significance, in the early stage of project implementation. The project activities will be of a smaller scale, **therefore simple, scoped ESIA or SESA, or targeted assessments** addressing specific risks would be most probably applied. Project shall apply **private sector due diligence risk screening (in Output 2.2)**

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					to ensure that their policies and ratings that meet international and EU standards, or that they are at least consistent with UNDP SES. To implement the above the project shall ensure it involves **expert** with experience in impact assessment, within, or beyond the project implementation team.
1. Biodiversity Conservation and Sust. Nat. Resource Mgmt.	S1.1 risks for ecosystems and their services; S1.3 biodiversity risks associated with land-use/ecosystem changes; S1.6. risk of invasive alien species; S 1.5 Risk of unintentionally supporting or failing to prevent illegal wildlife trade; and S1.7 Risk to soil degradation, in relation to grazing	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2	Adverse impacts on ecosystems, their services, habitats, and natural resources due to unintentionally contributing to unsustainable conservation practices.	L = 2 I = 3 Moderate	System of activity-level screening, impact assessment and management, described above, to address the generic sustainability and resilience risks (P3.0) will be applied. Project will ensure that restoration measures and ecological corridor establishment process complies with relevant national legislation, UNDP SES requirements and applies best practice to avoid or minimize cumulative impact on biodiversity and natural resources.
2. Climate Change and Disaster Risks	Project activities and outcomes may be vulnerable to climate-related risks and impacts (S2.1, S2.2)	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2	Adverse impacts on the project's ability to deliver the planned environmental and social outcomes.	L = 3 I = 3	Mitigation measures are built into the design of the project, which seeks to restore habitats and to plan and design one new ecological corridor to reconnect fragmented habitats, facilitating species movement, genetic exchange, and resilience against the impacts of climate change. A rapid assessment of the vulnerability of restoration sites and methods will be carried out, by reference to existing data available in the NAP, National Communication and Biennial Transparency Reports to the UNFCC. Based on anticipated scenarios and trends, climate-smart measures will be applied to avoid, minimize, mitigate or adapt to the expected impact of climate change,

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					including – if appropriate – risk preparedness plans
3. Community Health, Safety and Security	S3.2- Physical hazards due to mechanical works during restoration	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2, involving restoration measures and ecological corridor planning and implementation	The project might not avoid, minimize or offset construction-related risks to communities and workers in accordance with national standards and best practices followed by international organizations in the region.	Low I=2 L=1	▪ T onimplement preventive/protective measures in line with environmental and safety standards and protocols to avoid/minimize d safety risks for the workers and participating communities
			▪		
7. Labour and Working Conditions	Occupational health and safety risks (S7.1, S7.6)	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2, involving restoration measures and ecological corridor implementation	Lack of adherence to OHS safety protocols and standards or provisions under national labour laws may pose risks to worker health and safety	Low I=3 L=1	The project will apply standard safety protocols and Occupational Health and Safety Standards, in compliance with relevant labour laws.
8. Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency	S8.2 risks of inadequate waste management	Activities of Outputs 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2, involving restoration measures and ecological corridor implementation	The project might not ensure environmentally sound disposal of waste what may lead to impacts on the environment or communities	Low L = 1 I = 3	Waste generated from on the ground activities of small scale will be treated, and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner that includes the appropriate control of emissions and residues.

Note: Online SESP requires identification of the UNDP Risk Owner, risk time frame (Risk Valid From/To), Risk Treatment fields (person, timeplan, effect)

STEP 3: Conclusions

Overall Risk Rating

QUESTION 5: What is the overall Social and Environmental risk categorization?		
S&E Risk rating	Check if applicable	Comments (optional)
Low Risk	☐	
Moderate Risk	X	Risk mitigation is mostly embedded in project activities

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Substantial Risk	☐	
High Risk	☐	

Triggered Requirements (under UNDP SES Policy):

QUESTION 6: Triggered Requirements: summary of assessment or management measures required under the UNDP SES to address the identified S&E risks and impacts? (applies only for Moderate, Substantial and High-Risk projects)		
Further assessment or management measures	Check if applicable	Comments (optional)
ESMF (Environmental and Social Management Framework)	☐	
Targeted assessment(s)	X	To be determined during implementation-phase risk screening, as per SESP
ESIA (Environmental and Social Impact Assessment)	☐	
SESA (Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment)	X	To be determined during detailed scoping under implementation, as per SESP – stand-alone SESA is unlikely, but strategic assessment approaches may ne needed during the corridor planning process.
ESMP (Environmental and Social Management Plan)	☐	
Targeted management plans	X	Stakeholder Engagement Plan Gender Action/Mainstreaming Plan
Other measures (please specify)		Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism

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SESP Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist

Checklist Potential Social and Environmental Risks		
INSTRUCTIONS: The risk screening checklist will assist in completing the Screening Template. Answers to the checklist questions help to identify potential risks related to programming activities. Identified risks require further review in the screening process. Refer to the SES toolkit, including Guidance Notes for various SES Standards, for further guidance on addressing screening questions.		
Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind **Human Rights**	**Risk Events**	**Y/N**
P.1 Have local communities or individuals raised human rights concerns regarding the portfolio MYWP/project (e.g. during the stakeholder engagement process, grievance processes, public statements)?	P1.1 Risk of human rights infringements	
P.2 Is there a risk that duty-bearers (e.g. government agencies) do not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the portfolio MYWP/project?	P1.2 Limited capacities of duty bearers to meet human rights obligations	
P.3 Is there a risk that rights-holders (e.g. persons affected by programming activities) do not have the capacity to claim their rights?	P1.3 Limited capacities of rights-holders to claim their rights	
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:		
P.4 adverse impacts on enjoyment of the human rights civil, political, economic, social or cultural) of the affected population and particularly of marginalized groups?	P1.4 Risk of adverse impacts on civil, political, economic, social or cultural rights	
P.5 inequitable impacts on affected populations, particularly people living in poverty or marginalized or excluded individuals or groups, including persons with disabilities? *Note: Prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, ethnicity, sex, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographical origin, property, birth or other status including as an indigenous person or as a member of a minority. References to "women and men" or similar is understood to include women and men, boys and girls, and other groups discriminated against based on their gender identities, such as transgender and transsexual people.*	P1.5 Risk of inequitable or discriminatory impacts on affected populations	Y

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P.6 restrictions in availability, quality of and/or access to resources or basic services, in particular to marginalized individuals or groups, including persons with disabilities?	P1.6 Risk of restricting access to resources or basic services	Y
P.7 exacerbation of conflicts among and/or the risk of violence to affected communities and individuals?	P1.7 Risk of exacerbating conflicts	
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment		
P.8 Have women's groups/leaders raised gender equality concerns regarding the portfolio MYWP/project, (e.g. during the stakeholder engagement process, grievance processes, public statements)?	P2.8 Gender equality concerns raised by women's groups/leaders	
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:		
P.9 adverse impacts on gender equality and/or the situation of women and girls?	P2.9 Risk of adverse impacts on gender equality	
P.10 reproducing discriminations against women based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities and benefits?	P2.10 Risk of discrimination against women	
P.11 limitations on women's ability to use, develop and protect natural resources, taking into account different roles and positions of women and men in accessing environmental goods and services? *For example, activities that could lead to natural resources degradation or depletion in communities who depend on these resources for their livelihoods and well being*	P2.11 Risk of limiting women's access to natural resources	Y
P.12 exacerbation of risks of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children? *For example, through the influx of workers to a community, changes in community and household power dynamics, increased exposure to unsafe public places and/or transport, etc*.	P2.12 Risk of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse	
Accountability		
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:		
P.13 exclusion of any potentially affected stakeholders, in particular marginalized groups and excluded individuals (including persons with disabilities), from fully participating in decisions that may affect them?	P3.13 Risks of potential exclusion of affected stakeholders	Y

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P.14	grievances or objections from potentially affected stakeholders?	P3.14 Risks of stakeholder grievances	Y
P.15	risks of retaliation or reprisals against stakeholders who express concerns or grievances, or who seek to participate in or to obtain information on the project/portfolio?	P3.15 Risks of retaliation or reprisals against stakeholders	
Sustainability and Resilience (Note: Screening questions regarding risks associated with sustainability and resilience are generally encompassed by the Standard-specific questions below. Where there is a high degree of uncertainty regarding potential risks of programming activities, the following question may assist with further risk identification)			
P.16	Does the portfolio MYWP/project include activities with unknown design parameters for which potential SES risks cannot yet be determined and will require further activity-level screening and potential assessment for risks associated with sustainability and resilience?	P4.16 Generic sustainability and resilience risks	Y
Standards			
Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:			
1.1	adverse impacts to habitats (e.g. modified, natural, and critical habitats) and/or ecosystems and ecosystem services? *For example, through habitat loss, conversion or degradation, fragmentation, hydrological changes*	S1.1 Risks to habitats and/or ecosystems and their services	Y
1.2	activities within or adjacent to critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, including (but not limited to) legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserve, national park), areas proposed for protection, or recognized as such by authoritative sources and/or indigenous peoples or local communities?	S1.2 Risks to critical habitats	Y
1.3	changes to the use of lands and resources that may have adverse impacts on habitats, ecosystems, and/or livelihoods? (Note: if restrictions and/or limitations of access to lands would apply, refer to Standard 5)	S1.3 Biodiversity risks associated with land-use/ecosystem changes	Y
1.4	risks to endangered species (e.g. reduction, encroachment on habitat)?	S1.4 Risks to endangered species	
1.5	exacerbation of illegal wildlife trade?	S1.5 Illegal wildlife trade risks	Y

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1.6	introduction of invasive alien species?	S1.6. Risks of introducing or spreading invasive alien species	Y
1.7	adverse impacts on soils?	S1.7 Risks of soil degradation	Y
1.8	harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, or reforestation?	S1.8 Forestry/plantation-related risks to biodiversity	Y
1.9	significant agricultural production?	S1.9 Agriculture-related risks to biodiversity	
1.10	animal husbandry or harvesting of fish populations or other aquatic species?	S1.10 Animal husbandry or fish harvesting risks to biodiversity	Y
1.11	significant extraction, diversion or containment of surface or ground water? *For example, construction of dams, reservoirs, river basin developments, groundwater extraction*	S1.11 Surface or ground water use risks	
1.12	handling or utilization of genetically modified organisms/living modified organisms? *Note: See the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.*	S1.12 Risks of release/spread of genetically modified organisms	
1.13	utilization of genetic resources? (e.g. collection and/or harvesting, commercial development)? *Note: See the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing from use of genetic resources*	S1.13 Genetic resources benefit sharing risks	
1.14	adverse transboundary or global environmental concerns?	S1.14 Transboundary environmental risks	
Standard 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks			
Would the project/portfolio MYWP potentially involve or lead to:			
2.1	areas subject to hazards such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, severe winds, storm surges, tsunami or volcanic eruptions?	S2.1 Hazard/disaster-related risks	Y
2.2	outputs and outcomes sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change or disasters? *For example, through increased precipitation, drought, temperature, salinity, extreme events, earthquakes*	S2.2 Risks due to sensitivity to climate change or disasters	Y

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2.3	increases in vulnerability to climate change impacts or disaster risks now or in the future (also known as maladaptive or negative coping practices)? *For example, changes to land use planning may encourage further development of floodplains, potentially increasing the population's vulnerability to climate change, specifically flooding*	S2.3 Maladaptation risks	
2.4	increases of greenhouse gas emissions, black carbon emissions or other drivers of climate change?	S2.4 Risks of increased GHG emissions	
Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:			
3.1	construction and/or infrastructure development (e.g. roads, buildings, dams)? (Note: the GEF does not finance programming activities that would involve the construction or rehabilitation of large or complex dams)	S3.1 Construction-related risks	
3.2	air pollution, noise, vibration, traffic, injuries, physical hazards, poor surface water quality due to runoff, erosion, sanitation?	S3.2 Emissions, noise, traffic, hazards and effluent risks	
3.3	harm or losses due to failure of structural elements of the programming activities (e.g. collapse of buildings or infrastructure)?	S3.3 Safety risks due to failure of project structural elements	
3.4	risks of water-borne or other vector-borne diseases (e.g. temporary breeding habitats), communicable and noncommunicable diseases, nutritional disorders, mental health?	S3.4 Risks of water/vector-borne diseases	
3.5	transport, storage, and use and/or disposal of hazardous or dangerous materials (e.g. explosives, fuel and other chemicals during construction and operation)?	S3.5 Risks associated with hazardous or dangerous materials	
3.6	adverse impacts on ecosystems and ecosystem services relevant to communities' health (e.g. food, surface water purification, natural buffers from flooding)?	S3.6 Health risks due to impacts on ecosystems/ecosystem services	
3.7	influx of portfolio MYWP/project workers to targeted areas?	S3.7 Risks associated with influx of project workers.	
3.8	engagement of security personnel to protect facilities and property or to support portfolio MYWP/project activities?	S3.8 Risks associated with engagement of security or enforcement personnel	Y

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Standard 4: Cultural Heritage			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:			
4.1	activities adjacent to or within a Cultural Heritage site?	S4.1 Risks to cultural heritage sites	
4.2	significant excavations, demolitions, movement of earth, flooding or other environmental changes?	S4.2. Risks of unknown archaeological heritage damage	
4.3	adverse impacts to sites, structures, or objects with historical, cultural, artistic, traditional or religious values or intangible forms of culture (e.g. knowledge, innovations, practices)? (Note: portfolio MYWPs/projects intended to protect and conserve Cultural Heritage may also have inadvertent adverse impacts)	S4.3 Risks to tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage	
4.4	alterations to landscapes and natural features with cultural significance?	S4.4 Risks to landscapes with cultural significance	
4.5	utilization of tangible and/or intangible forms (e.g. practices, traditional knowledge) of Cultural Heritage for commercial or other purposes?	S4.5 Risks of inappropriate utilization of intangible and tangible cultural heritage	
Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:			
5.1	temporary or permanent and full or partial physical displacement (including people without legally recognizable claims to land)?	S5.1 Physical displacement risks	
5.2	economic displacement (e.g. loss of assets or access to resources due to land acquisition or access restrictions – even in the absence of physical relocation)?	S5.2 Economic displacement risks	
5.3	risk of forced evictions? *Forced eviction is defined here as the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection. Forced evictions constitute gross violations of a range of internationally recognized human rights.*	S5.3 Risk of forced evictions	

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5.4	impacts on or changes to land tenure arrangements and/or community-based property rights/customary rights to land, territories and/or resources?	S5.4 Risks of impacts on community-based rights to land, territories or resources	
Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:			
6.1	areas where indigenous peoples are present (including project area of influence)?	S6.1 Risks associated with activities taking place where indigenous peoples are present	
6.2	activities located on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?	S6.2 Risks associated with activities taking place on lands, territories claimed by indigenous peoples	
6.3	impacts (positive or negative) to the human rights, lands, territories, natural resources and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples (regardless of whether indigenous peoples possess the legal titles to such areas, whether the programming activities are located within or outside of the lands and territories inhabited by the affected peoples, or whether the indigenous peoples are recognized as indigenous peoples by the country in question)? *If the answer to screening question 6.3 is "yes", then Standard 6 requirements apply, and the potential significance of risks related to impacts on indigenous peoples must be Moderate or above.*	S6.3 Risks to rights, lands, territories natural resources and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples	
6.4	the absence of culturally appropriate consultations carried out with the objective of achieving FPIC on matters that may affect the rights and interests, lands, resources, territories and traditional livelihoods of the indigenous peoples concerned?	S6.4 Risk that activities will take place without meaningful, effective informed participation of indigenous peoples	
6.5	the utilization and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?	S.6.5 Risk of utilizing/developing indigenous peoples resources without agreement and/or agreed benefit sharing	
6.6	forced eviction or the whole or partial physical or economic displacement of indigenous peoples, including through access restrictions to lands, territories, and resources? *Consider, and where appropriate ensure, consistency with the answers under Standard 5 above*	S6.6 Risk of forced eviction or physical/economic displacement of indigenous peoples	
6.7	adverse impacts on the development priorities of indigenous peoples as defined by them?	S6.7 Impacts on development priorities of indigenous peoples	

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6.8	risks to the physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples?	S6.8 Risks to physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples	
6.9	impacts on the Cultural Heritage of indigenous peoples, including through the commercialization or use of their traditional knowledge and practices? *Consider, and where appropriate ensure, consistency with the answers under Standard 4 above.*	S6.9 Risks of impacts on cultural heritage of indigenous peoples	
Standard 7: Labour and Working Conditions			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to: (note: applies to portfolio MYWP, project and contractor workers)			
7.1	working conditions that do not meet national labour laws and international commitments?	S7.1 Risks of substandard labour & working conditions	Y
7.2	working conditions that may deny freedom of association and collective bargaining?	S7.2 Risks to freedom of workers association and collective bargaining	
7.3	use of child labour?	S7.3 Child labour risks	
7.4	use of forced labour?	S7.4 Forced labour risks (incl. in supply chains)	
7.5	discriminatory working conditions and/or lack of equal opportunity?	S7.5 Risks of discriminatory working conditions	
7.6	occupational health and safety risks due to physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial hazards (including violence and harassment) throughout the portfolio MYWP/project life-cycle?	S7.6 Occupational health and safety risks	Y
Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency			
Would the portfolio MYWP/project potentially involve or lead to:			
8.1	the release of pollutants to the environment due to routine or non-routine circumstances with the potential for adverse local, regional, and/or transboundary impacts?	S8.1 Risks of pollutants release	Y

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8.2	the generation of waste (both hazardous and non-hazardous)?	S8.2 Risks of inadequate waste management	Y
8.3	the manufacture, trade, release, and/or use of hazardous materials and/or chemicals?	S8.2 Risks associated with handling of hazardous materials	
8.4	the use of chemicals or materials subject to international bans or phase-outs? *For example, DDT, PCBs and other chemicals listed in international conventions such as the Montreal Protocol, Minamata Convention, Basel Convention, Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention*	S8.4 Risks associated with materials subject to international bans or phase-outs	
8.5	the application of pesticides that may have a negative effect on the environment or human health	S8.5 Risks associated with pesticide use	
8.6	significant consumption of raw materials, energy, and/or water?	S8.6 Risks associated with consumption of raw materials, energy, and water	

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Annex V.b Stakeholder Engagment Plan

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Project title: Restoration and connectivity of priority habitats for species conservation in Serbia

Purpose of SEP

The purpose of this SEP is to set out a plan to engage relevant stakeholders in effective implementation of the activities proposed. This SEP has been developed to enable participation of both direct and interested stakeholders and ensure that project design, approaches and activities are being implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner, and in a way that minimizes potential environmental and social risks as well as enhance environmental and social sustainability of the project interventions.

1. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Purpose and timing of stakeholder engagement plan

The purpose of this SEP is to inform and involve all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Project and to ensure that they understand their role in general context of the main project. Relevant stakeholders will include both representatives at national level and in the project field sites, including local communities.

The project's broader stakeholder engagement will inform the project through consultations and participation during project implementation. The level and approach for stakeholder engagement will depend on how the project implementation may impact them, including potential environmental and social risks. Another important dimension for stakeholder engagement is to enhance project benefits by engaging local communities and promoting participatory and inclusive project implementation and responding to community needs. The engagement approach for each stakeholder entity or group is summarized below, for all components under this Project. The SEP will be implemented as early as possible at the planning stage to ensure that stakeholder participation and their early feedback are well incorporated to better inform planning of project implementation.

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Stakeholder engagement activities are part of the overall project implementation and hence, will take place throughout project implementation.

Proposed strategy for information disclosure

English and Serbian versions of this SEP will be prepared and disclosed on the project website prior to commencement of any project activities.

Information disclosure during implementation stage are embedded within the project activities, hence the schedule for the stakeholder engagement activities will follow the different phases of the project's implementation timeline.

*Table 1**: Strategy on information disclosure during project implementation***

Name of the entity	Envisaged role in project implementation	Timing of engagement and methods
Ministry of Environmental Protection	The Ministry of Environmental Protection plays a central role as a stakeholder in habitat restoration and connectivity, as it is responsible for setting national policies, legal frameworks, and strategic priorities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable land use. Its role extends to ensuring that restoration activities align with national and international commitments, such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, while also integrating ecosystem restoration into broader environmental and climate policies. The Ministry also facilitates cross-sectoral coordination with agriculture, forestry, water management, and infrastructure planning, and ensures compliance with environmental regulations and standards. In addition, it acts as a bridge between local project implementers and international partners, mobilizing resources, supporting monitoring and reporting systems, and promoting long-term sustainability of restoration measures through institutional capacity building and financing mechanisms. The Ministry provides no-objection to the selected active restauration and connectivity measures (solicited through Challenge Calls).	From the beginning of the project Meeting, email, phone, workshops
Managers of Protected Areas	Protected area managers in Serbia are crucial operational stakeholders in projects on habitat restoration and connectivity, as they are directly responsible for managing and safeguarding the natural values within their territories. Their role involves translating restoration and connectivity plans into on-the-ground actions, such as implementing habitat rehabilitation measures, preventing degradation, and maintaining ecological corridors that link protected sites with surrounding landscapes. They provide local knowledge on ecosystem conditions, species needs, and socio-economic pressures,	From the beginning of the project Meeting, email, phone, workshops

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	ensuring that interventions are both ecologically effective and socially acceptable. Managers also coordinate with local communities, landowners, and relevant sectors to foster cooperation and reduce conflicts, while monitoring the outcomes of restoration measures to inform adaptive management. In addition, as custodians of protected areas, they contribute to capacity building, awareness-raising, and sustainable financing mechanisms, helping to secure long-term continuity and success of restoration and connectivity initiatives.	
Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, and Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province	A key stakeholder that performs the expert assessment of planned interventions in/or affecting PAs, and issues "Conditions" that are the basis for obtaining permits (in central Serbia and in Northern Province of Vojvodina, respectively). The Institutes for Nature Protection serve as key expert institutions and stakeholder providing the scientific and technical foundation for planning, implementation, and monitoring of activities in habitat restoration and connectivity. Their role includes conducting baseline biodiversity assessments, mapping and evaluating habitats, and identifying priority areas for restoration and ecological corridors that enhance landscape connectivity. They contribute expertise in applying ecological standards, developing restoration methodologies, and ensuring measures are consistent with conservation objectives and protected area management requirements. The Institutes also play a critical part in monitoring the effectiveness of restoration interventions, advising on adaptive management, and supplying data and analyses that support evidence-based decision-making. Furthermore, they act as important links between state authorities, local stakeholders, and international conservation frameworks, ensuring that restoration and connectivity efforts contribute to the long-term protection of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem services.	From the beginning of the project Meeting, email, phone, workshops
Ministry of Construction, Transport, and Infrastructure	The Ministry of Construction, Transport, and Infrastructure in Serbia plays a pivotal role as a stakeholder by ensuring that spatial planning, infrastructure development, and transport policies are aligned with biodiversity conservation goals. Since large-scale construction, road, and railway projects often fragment habitats and disrupt ecological corridors, the ministry's involvement is essential in integrating ecological connectivity considerations into urban and spatial planning processes, environmental impact assessments, and infrastructure design. Its role includes harmonizing development plans with restoration objectives to minimize negative impacts on ecosystems. Through its regulatory and planning authority, it is a key partner in ensuring that habitat	From the beginning of the project Meeting, email, phone, workshops, press releases

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	restoration and connectivity measures are embedded into long-term development frameworks. The Ministry is responsible for the implementation of the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy and the Strategy for Fostering Investment in the Renovation of the Building Stock. Therefore, the Ministry is implementing LIID project, co-financed by the World bank and AFD, to promote sustainable urban development investments in Serbia and to improve the capacity of all 145 Serbian LSGs to develop and manage green, inclusive and climate resilient sustainable mobility infrastructures.	
Local Self-Governments	Local self-governments in Serbia are essential stakeholders, as they operate at the interface between national policies and community-level implementation. Their role includes integrating restoration and connectivity objectives into local development and spatial plans, ensuring that land use decisions, infrastructure projects, and municipal services support biodiversity conservation. They are responsible for facilitating cooperation with local communities, landowners, and businesses, raising awareness about the benefits of ecosystem restoration, and promoting participatory approaches to secure local ownership of interventions. Local governments also play a key role in mobilizing and allocating resources for restoration activities, supporting enforcement of environmental regulations at the municipal level, and ensuring the long-term maintenance of restored areas and ecological corridors. LSGs are potential applicants to Challenge Calls proposing active restauration/connectivity measures for the ecosystems that are on their territories.	From the beginning of the project Meeting, email, phone, workshops, trainings, press releases
Provincial Secretariat for Urbanism and Environmental Protection, and Provincial Secretariat for Energy, Construction and Transport	Support for the promotion of project results and engagement with stakeholders	As needed Meeting, email, phone, workshops, trainings, press releases
Local communities	Local communities are central to the success of habitat restoration and connectivity efforts, as they are the primary stewards and users of local ecosystems. Their role includes providing traditional knowledge of local landscapes and species, actively participating in the planning and implementation of restoration measures, and contributing to monitoring efforts to ensure that interventions are both effective and socially accepted. Communities help identify priority areas for restoration, contribute labor and co-management of restored sites, and support the long-term maintenance of ecological corridors through sustainable land use practices. By engaging	From the beginning of the project Regular meetings, focus group discussions, participatory workshops held in accessible and inclusive venues; household surveys, information boards in

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	directly in project activities, local communities build ownership, strengthen local livelihoods, and reduce potential conflicts, ensuring that restoration and connectivity measures are aligned with local needs and generate tangible socio-economic benefits.	local government centers; special attention will be given to ensuring the meaningful involvement of women and youth, and vulnerable groups.
Private sector	The private sector (including companies and industries) is recognized as one of the key beneficiaries of the project with significant potential for leveraged financing for green investment projects. The private sector will engage as the proposer of innovative solutions in challenge calls, as well as service and works provider for their implementation.	As needed Meeting, email, phone, workshops
Academia (Faculty of Biology, Institute for Biological Research of Serbia Sinisa Stankovic)	Academia in Serbia plays a vital role by providing scientific knowledge, research, and innovation that guide evidence-based decision-making. Universities and research institutes contribute through ecological studies, biodiversity assessments, and development of methodologies for habitat restoration, species monitoring, and landscape connectivity modeling. They also support the design of innovative solutions, such as nature-based approaches and climate-resilient restoration techniques, ensuring that interventions are grounded in the latest scientific advancements. Academia strengthens project capacity by training future professionals, facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration, disseminating results through scientific publications and public outreach, and linking national efforts with international research networks.	As needed Meeting, email, phone, workshops
Civil society	Civil society plays an important role in nature protection. Their engagement is multifold, in monitoring of the decision-making processes and policy implementation, supporting participatory planning and acting as mediators between the citizens and the institutions. The CSOs in the role of PA managers are also potential beneficiaries of the challenge calls. Possible co-operation to be clarified further with civil society such as: • Young Researchers of Serbia • Association for protection and studying of birds • National Convent on the EU • Belgrade Open School • IUCN • WWF • Fisherman Association Deliblatsko jezero	As needed Meeting, email, phone, workshops

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Targeted stakeholders will be primarily engaged through bilateral discussions as well as by organizing at least one or two larger consultative knowledge management workshops, where the project intermediate results and further implementation can be presented for and discussed with a broader audience.

Additionally, the Ministry of Environmental Protection, as main government partner, will establish a Project Working Group comprised of representatives of other important stakeholders, including the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Provincial Secretariat for Spatial Planning and Environmental Protection, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province, representatives of other interested LSGs and others. The Working Group will serve as a forum for addressing policy and investment issues of local concern and will provide strategic input across all three project components. Furthermore, the Working Group will be providing technical guidance and advisory support to other local self-governments in Serbia interested to in replicating project actions and initiatives.

For learning from corresponding initiatives in other countries and for ensuring that the latest global knowledge, best practices and measures can be considered in further development and implementation of project activities, the project shall link up with global platforms under CBD and UNFCCC. The core project team will also be supported by a coaching team composed of a network of international research institutes and professionals, who may provide technical backstopping and share knowledge on the latest international developments in their particular field e.g. as invited speakers or other contributors to the events organized by the project.

The project team will also monitor and prepare specific progress reports for each supported pilot initiative, while also preparing visual materials such as videos to document different stages of their development and implementation.

The active nature/habitat restauration and ecological connectivityy measures sourced through competitive public calls, will be further elaborated with stakeholders such as the institutes for nature conservation, managers of protected sites, institutions competent for spatial planning, infrastructure development and CSOs, so that they can continue to identify and disseminate innovative approaches to nature restauration and ecological connectivity even upon the completion of the project. It is expected that this will boost the interest and engagement of protected areas managers and other relevant stakeholders involved in nature protection, spatial planning and infrastructure development. Participation of the research institutions is equally relevant as they will ensure access to scientific and research data, promotion and testing of new approaches, based on their research work and collaboration with other research institutions globally.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection will support engagement with the network of protected areas managers, institutes for nature conservation and facilitating the application of appropriate innovative solutions at the level of protected sites. The Ministry will also include dissemination of lessons learned, knowledge and examples of good practices, sourced through the project, among interested protected areas managers.

The knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with the stakeholders will include, among others, the following:

- Guidelines for and examples of active nature restauration measures and ecological corridors, based on concrete pilot sites.
- Specific matchmaking and training events to facilitate face-to-face contacts and discussions together with associated training materials stored and published also online
- The progress, monitoring and evaluation reports of the pilot initiatives supported by the project as well as the overall project final report and terminal evaluation
- Videos and other visual presentation materials of the pilot initiatives

For all knowledge products, the support of a gender expert will also be used to incorporate gender specific considerations into them at a required level.

The project will support the implementation of open monitoring, information and knowledge management as well as broad community engagement and participation in the preparation and updating of key policy documents under Outcome 1. This will be done by a highly participatory approach, thereby seeking to improve the transparency and

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accountability of local governance, opportunities for public participation in decision making and development of people's living environment. In this way, the project will make sure that all findings and good results obtained during the acceleration and implementation phase are captured and used to inform the policy creation/amendments.

The Implementing Partner will also make sure that all successful results arising from the acceleration and implementation phases, as well as examples of good practice, are captured and used to feed policies and decision making. For this purpose, the MoEP as Implementing Partner will form an inter-ministerial Working Group comprised of all relevant national, provincial and local authorities. These working groups will closely follow the implementation of the project and use the results for informed decision making and policy creation/amendments.

Engagement with vulnerable groups

The participants are encouraged and expected to bring up their views on the main barriers to effective promotion of active restauration and ecological connectivity measures, relations between the nature conservation and ecological connectivity and spatial planning and infrastructure development, on their possible role in removing those barriers as well as on possible negative impacts and consequences. As an example, the roles and potential impacts on local communities adjacent to protected sites whose livelihood depends on natural values, in particular rural poor, will be explored and mitigated. The interest of such vulnerable groups will be taken into account during further project preparation and implementation. For this purpose, the project will establish active collaboration with organizations dealing with rural development, community engagement and poverty prevention. Also, women-led households will be particularly mapped and assessed prior to any project intervention in a given protected area.

The proposed project will support the processes of mainstreaming human rights issues through its design and activities by a clearly defined human-rights based approach. It will support the implementation of open monitoring, information and knowledge management as well as broad community engagement and participation in the preparation of regulatory, policy and planning documentation. This will be done by a highly participatory approach, thereby seeking to improve the transparency and accountability of local governance, opportunities for public participation in decision making and development of people's living environment. In this way the project will support the right to information and will aim to reflect the views of various stakeholders, including minorities and marginalized groups in the project design and operation. Improved management of natural resources is expected to contribute to the further improvement of quality of life and the advancement of equal human rights to safe and clean environment. Throughout the project implementation, specific emphasis will also be placed on gender related aspects and equal rights of men and women.

Other means for engaging stakeholders and facilitating public participation will be the workshops and training activities organized during the projects as its final report and terminal evaluation, which will also be published online.

2. Timetable

Timing is addressed in Annex 4 of the Project Document.

3. Resources and responsibilities

The project Implementing Partner and the project management assigned by it has the overall responsibility for implementing the Stakeholder Engagement Plan with UNDP providing oversight. The project management may also assign certain tasks for implementing the plan for other parties subject to a written agreement. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the plan at the adequate level also in this case, however, remains with the project Implementing Partner.

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4. Grievance Mechanism

The objective of the feedback and grievance redress mechanism is to ensure that all views/complaints/ grievances from individuals or groups involved or affected by the Project will be heard, accepted and handled in a timely manner. The Project provides a feedback and grievance redress mechanism for stakeholders who want to express their grievances/complaints during project implementation, including complaints related to environmental and social aspects.
Ministry of Environmental Protection will be the focal point that coordinates the GRM with agencies at the national level in line with national regulations and procedures. In addition, cities have also established grievance mechanism for projects they implement.

In addition to any project-level mechanism, all UNDP projects, including this one, fall under corporate grievance mechanisms.

In order to assure that the affected groups are aware of the project activities and the possibility to submit complaints, a specific mechanism will be introduced for redress of grievances from vulnerable and marginalized groups involved in protected areas management. The mechanism includes the participation of the CSOs and association of protected areas managers.

5. Monitoring and Reporting

UNDP will monitor all stakeholder engagement activities to be conducted under the Project to ensure achievement of the intended purpose of the stakeholder engagement process for the purpose of the Project.

In the project's M&E framework, there are gender specific indicators measuring, for instance, the number of participants in project's training activities, recording the visitors at the project website well as indicators for checking and monitoring that project activities contributing in one way or another to stakeholder engagement such as workshops, project monitoring and evaluation reports have been completed on time and published online.

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Annex V.c Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan

“Restoration and connectivity of priority habitats for species conservation in Serbia”

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1. Introduction

The overview of gender equality in this Annex, together with the Gender Equality Action Plan, is part of the project proposal **“Restoration and connectivity of priority habitats for species conservation in Serbia".** The purpose of this Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan is to identify possible gender differences, gender-differentiated impacts and risks, and opportunities, as well as to address them and promote the empowerment of women within the proposed project activities. The Gender Overview reflects the gender mainstreaming perspectives and it aims to:

- Provide an overview of gender equality in areas relevant to the project and describe the baseline situation,
- Inform part of the project’s Social and Environmental Screening procedure,
- Integrate gender considerations into the project design,
- Develop a Gender Action Plan with outputs and activities that will respond to gender risks, differences, gaps and opportunities, and
- Support the formulation of indicators that will be incorporated into the project’s result framework.

The analysis includes an overview of the relevant institutional and policy framework for gender equality in Serbia, along with the demographic, social, and economic context, as well as the social and cultural norms related to gender equality that shape the behaviors of stakeholders and gender relations in the country and in the areas relevant to the project. Based on this, opportunities and entry points to ensure equal participation and benefits for women and men are identified to inform the project design. The Gender Equality Action Plan is developed and presented in the last section of the Annex.

2. Institutional and policy framework for gender equality and empowerment of women

The Republic of Serbia's legislative framework for gender equality is guided by the states' obligations under key international legal instruments, such as the UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953); the International Covenant Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) (articles 20 and 26); the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966) (article 2); and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979). Serbia has also committed to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and UN Resolution 1325 'Women, Peace, and Security' (2000).

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Serbia is a signatory to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Conventions for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Social Charter, the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Human Trafficking (as of 2009), as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

Serbia is also committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and its nine targets, as well as gender-related targets in the other SDGs.

The Republic of Serbia has ratified the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002, the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) in 2001, and since then, it is investing efforts to establish legal, institutional and policy frameworks aimed at fulfilling the commitments resulting from the Conventions and the related protocols and agreements. Serbia's aspirations to become EU member is an important driver for nature & biodiversity conservation, climate change related actions, particularly through negotiations chapter 27 and compliance with Sofia Declaration on Green Agenda for the western Balkans (incl *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans*.[1]). The implementation of the Green Agenda will be supported also through the *Investment and Economic Plan for the Western Balkans*.

At the national level, gender equality is embodied in the Republic of Serbia's Constitution. The Serbian Constitution (2006) establishes gender equality as a fundamental constitutional right and establishes the legal basis for its regulation. According to Article 15 of the Constitution, the state must ensure gender equality and implement equal opportunities policies. The Constitution also prohibits discrimination, including, but not limited to, gender discrimination.

The Law on Gender Equality was passed by Parliament on May 20, 2021[2]. The law strengthens the institutional framework and creates conditions for the implementation of equal-opportunities policies for men and women.

The Law prescribes duties of public bodies, employers and other physical and legal persons regarding gender equality. It also envisages measures against gender discrimination and for the realization and improvement of gender equality, which is one of the basic international standards in ensuring human rights.

The Law on Gender Equality (Article 42) regulates the application of equal opportunity policies in the field of environmental protection and mandates the integration of a gender perspective in this area.

The Law on Gender Equality also envisages gender-responsive budgeting as an obligation for state bodies (Article 5), in accordance with the law governing the budget system and the principle of gender equality in the budget procedure. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) was introduced as mandatory in the Republic of Serbia in December 2015, with the amendments to the Budget System Law (BSL) and has been incrementally implemented since the 2016 Budget, and by 2024, it should be fully implemented in the entire budget at the national, provincial and local levels.

The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination (2009) makes any form of discrimination illegal, specifies discrimination forms and cases, including multiple forms of discrimination, and establishes procedures for discrimination protection. Other relevant laws that contribute to gender equality include the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention, the Law on the Protection of National Minority Rights and Freedoms, and the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities.

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The Serbian Government adopted **the Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2021 to 2030** in 2021. The Strategy's goal is to close the gender gap and achieve gender equality as a precondition for societal development and the improvement of women and men's, girls', and boys' daily lives.

The Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2021-2030 highlights the importance of integrating gender equality and promoting women's participation, especially in new development directions that include the green and circular economy. These areas will bring changes in the functioning of the economy, as well as opportunities for new jobs, entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship.

The Strategy also emphasizes the significant changes expected as a result of ongoing economic decarbonization processes in Europe, which affect nearly all sectors, including those where women are less represented, such as energy and environmental protection—for example, in waste and wastewater management, and natural resource management.

The Strategy states that it is of great importance to ensure the equal inclusion of women and men from the outset, providing equal access to knowledge, information, and resources to ensure equal opportunities in the changing economy. Strategic documents prepared in this field should include a gender equality perspective. Increasing employment and self-employment opportunities requires the inclusion of women, particularly women from vulnerable groups, in the digital economy, green economy, circular economy, and the application of new technologies, such as in waste recycling and wastewater treatment.

At the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina government, gender equality is mandated to the Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality. The Government of Vojvodina has also established a Coordination Body for Gender Equality, chaired by the Provincial Prime Minister. This body coordinates the activities of the provincial administration and other provincial organizations and services to effectively create, implement, and monitor policies aimed at achieving gender equality in AP Vojvodina. There is also a Committee for Gender Equality in the Parliament of AP Vojvodina and a person responsible for gender equality within the Provincial Ombudsman office.

According to the World Bank's Index - Women, Business and the Law 2024 the overall score for Serbia (93.8 out of 100) is higher than the regional average observed across Europe and Central Asia (85.8). Serbia scores perfectly on various gender equality measures, including laws on women's freedom of movement, work decisions, pay, marriage-related constraints, post-childbirth employment, business ownership, and property and inheritance rights. However, it falls short on laws affecting women's pension sizes.[3]

Despite the existence of a normative framework that largely recognizes, regulates, and promotes equality, structural inequalities persist, and the data indicates that progress is slowing down. Rarely are concrete programs, targeted actions, and adequate resources developed and allocated to effectively address the challenges women face.

Based on the current rate of progress, the projections for achieving full equality in various domains are as follows:

- **Domain of Work**: It is estimated that it will take approximately 58 years to achieve full equality in this domain at the current rate of change.
- **Domain of Money**: The projection for achieving full equality in terms of financial resources is quite discouraging, with an estimated timeframe of 269 years at the current rate of change.

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- **Domain of Knowledge**: Unfortunately, the projection for achieving equality in this domain is negative. It implies that equality seems unattainable with the current course of change.
- **Domain of Time**: Progress in achieving equality in terms of time allocation appears to be stagnant. It suggests that an infinite amount of time would be necessary to achieve full equality at the current rate of change.
- **Domain of Health**: The projection for achieving full equality in terms of health outcomes is approximately 93 years at the current rate of change.
- **Domain of Power**: Encouragingly, the projection for achieving full equality in terms of power dynamics is relatively short. It is estimated that it would take around 2.5 years at the current rate of change.[4]

These projections highlight the significant disparities that still exist across various domains, emphasizing the need for increased efforts and initiatives to accelerate progress towards achieving equality.

3. Gender Equality Context in Serbia

Serbia is the first country outside the European Union to introduce the Gender Equality Index as early as 2016. The Gender Equality Index is a tool to measure the progress of gender equality in the EU, developed by European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). It gives more visibility to areas that need improvement and ultimately supports policy makers to design more effective gender equality measures.

In Serbia Gender equality index was calculated both in 2018 and in 2021, when it equaled 55.8 points, i.e. 58.0 points, respectively, which was a progress regarding the year 2015, when it equaled 52.4% points. When observing the EU average value for 2021 the index equaled 68.0 points, and for 2022 — 68.6 points. One of the main axes of inequality recorded by the Gender Equality Index of the Republic of Serbia is the one stemming from gender-based segregation during education, continuing later into the labor market. Inequalities are evident in the domain of money, as women have lower incomes compared to men, while some groups of women are at a higher risk of poverty. Inequalities in the domain of time show the amount of time and work women invest in care for the household and the family and in performing unpaid housework.

The World Bank's Gender Data Portal provides information on the gender landscape in Serbia based on key indicators that can be used to monitor gender equality and design effective policy interventions.

15 of every 1,000 girls ages 15-19 gave birth in Serbia in 2021 - In Serbia, the rate of adolescent fertility has decreased since 2010. The rate in 2021 was lower than the average rate in its income group.

94.2% of girls and 93.5% of boys complete lower secondary school in Serbia as of 2022 data - The female rate in Serbia is higher than both Europe & Central Asia and the upper middle income group. Lower secondary education completion rate measures how many children have completed the last grade of lower secondary education regardless of age completed.

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Adult literacy in Serbia is nearly the same among women and men (2019) - In Serbia, both women and men have very high literacy rates. Adult literacy rate is the percentage of people ages 15 and above who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement about their everyday life.

In Serbia, the **labor force participation rate among females is 50.9% and among males is 67.9% for 2023**. Compared with labor force participation in the upper middle-income group, the gap between men and women is similar in Serbia.

The rate of vulnerable employment is higher for men and women in Serbia compared to the average rate in Europe & Central Asia - Workers in vulnerable employment are the least likely to have formal work arrangements, social protection, and safety nets to guard against economic shocks; thus they are more likely to fall into poverty. Vulnerable employment among women is 21.4% and among men is 25.8% in Serbia for 2022.

In Serbia, women spend 2.2 times as much time on unpaid domestic and care work than men

In 2021, 89.8% of women and 89% of men in Serbia had an account - The female rate in Serbia is nearly the same as Europe & Central Asia but higher than the upper middle-income group. [5]

More men than women used a mobile phone or the internet to pay bills in 2021 - The gap in internet usage between men and women in Serbia, 10.7, is larger than the gap of the Europe & Central Asia aggregate, 5.2. Internet usage denotes the percentage of respondents who report using a mobile phone or the internet to pay bills in the past 12 months.

More men than women owned a business in 2022.

Women represented 39.5% of those employed in senior and middle management in 2022.

Education

Women in Serbia generally attain higher education levels than men, with 24.0% of women aged 15 and over having completed high or higher education compared to 20.7% of men. The 2022 Census shows that less than 38,000 people aged 10 and over are illiterate, with women comprising 71% of this group, especially those aged 65 and over. More boys than girls graduate from three-year vocational secondary schools, while girls dominate in textile, personal services, and health fields. In secondary education, 60% of graduates are girls, while the gender ratio is almost equal in four-year vocational schools. Women also lead in tertiary education enrollment and graduation, making up 59% and 61% of students respectively. Women constituted over half of graduates in many fields, but men predominated in ICT and engineering. More women (59%) than men (41%) earned PhDs in 2022, with women dominating academic fields such as Education (89%), Social sciences, journalism and information (68%), Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (67%) etc. PhDs men are more represented in Business, administration and law (62%), Services (54%) and Agriculture, forestry, fishing and veterinary medicine (51%) However, men are predominant in the Serbian Academy of Science and Art, with over 90% male members in 2023. The largest participation of women is in the Department of Chemical and Biological Sciences and the Department of Historical Sciences.[6]

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Segregation in education becomes prominent at high school level, where girls enroll in secondary schools specialized in fields traditionally considered "more suitable for women."

Number of students who completed regular secondary school by fields of work and gender

FIELD OF EDUCATION	TOTAL	MEN	WOMEN	MEN%	WOMEN%
Gymnasium	15582	6407	9175	41%	59%
Agriculture, production, and food processing	2775	1483	1292	53%	47%
Forestry and wood processing	480	282	198	59%	41%
Geology, mining, and metallurgy	242	174	68	72%	28%
Mechanical engineering and metal processing	5432	4837	595	89%	11%
Electrical engineering	7413	6666	747	90%	10%
Chemistry, non-metals, and graphic arts	1919	618	1301	32%	68%
Textiles and leatherwork	720	151	569	21%	79%
Geodesy and construction	1510	868	642	57%	43%
Traffic	3253	2183	1070	67%	33%
Trade, catering, and tourism	4905	2230	2675	45%	55%
Economy, law, and administration	6897	2150	4747	31%	69%
Hydrometeorology	41	14	27	34%	66%
Culture, arts, and public information	1378	410	968	30%	70%
Health and social care	5685	1280	4405	23%	77%
Other (personal services)	896	178	718	20%	80%
TOTAL:	59128	29931	29197	51%	49%

In higher education, more women enroll and successfully complete their studies, with 59% of enrolled students and 61% of graduates. Women make up the majority of graduates in the fields of education, health and social protection, arts and humanities, social sciences, journalism, and information, while men dominate in the fields of information and communication technologies (66%) and engineering, manufacturing, and construction (55%).

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In 2022, the Labor Force Survey revealed that the percentage of women aged 18-24 who left school early was lower than that of their male counterparts (4.1% compared to 5.9%). Additionally, the participation rate in formal and informal education and training was higher among women in both age categories (15-24 and 25-64). Specifically, 73.2% of young women participated in some form of education or training in the previous four weks, compared to 61.9% of young men.

Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 4 weeks, by age and sex, 2022. (%) - Source: Labor Force Survey, SORS.

Participation of adults (25–69 years old) in lifelong learning, by sex, 2022 (%) - Source: Adult Education Survey, SORS.

Digital skills, Informational and Communicational Technologies

Data show that women and men in Serbia have the same level of digital skill development, but it is lower than the European Union average. A digital gender gap is present in the category of older and low-educated Internet users, while it is almost non-existent in younger generations. The difference compared to the EU average is particularly marked in solving problems with the help of digital technologies, where 34% of women and 42% of men in Serbia, compared to 54% of women and 60% of men in the EU-27 have digital skills beyond basic ones.

Mobile phone use recorded a slight, constant growth from 2016 to 2023, with women and men using mobile phones at approximately the same rate in 2023 (95.4% for women and 96.0% for men). Among mobile phone users by age and sex, the proportions are similar across all age categories, except in the 55-74 age group, where the percentage of men using mobile phones is 1.5 percentage points higher than that of women. In the 16-24 and 55-74 age categories, the percentage of men using computers is higher than that of women by 3.4 and 5.2 percentage points, respectively, while in the 25-54 age category, the usage rates are nearly equal. For those with less than secondary education, men use computers at a higher rate than women (57.7% vs. 42.8%), whereas in other age groups, the usage rates are similar. Among internet users aged 55-74, a higher percentage of men (64.4%) use the internet compared to women (61.1%), while in other age categories, the usage rates are nearly the same. In the workforce category "Other unincorporated" (including pensioners and military personnel), a higher percentage of women use the internet (64.0% vs. 61.3%), while in other categories, the rates are nearly equal. In 2023, the share of men and women who made online purchases/orders in the last three months was equal.[7]

Employment

Women make up 45% of employed persons in Serbia and less than 10% of those with the highest salaries, despite having higher levels of education. Segregation in education and expectations based on traditional gender roles affect labor market participation. Women have lower activity rates (48.6%) and employment rates (43.8%) compared to men (activity rate 62.7%, employment rate 57%). [8]

Gender differences in labor market participation are present across all age groups, with the most pronounced differences between young women and men aged 20 to 35 and men and women aged 55 to 59. "Caring for children or dependent household members" is the main reason women cite for not participating in the labor market (93.7%). Among entrepreneurs, there are twice as many men as women. [9]

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Lesser participation in the labor market, with more frequent unemployment among women, indicates a gender gap and the existence of gender inequities, thus, paid work is more often perceived as the primary responsibility of men, while household duties and childcare are seen as the primary responsibility of women. Regardless of their employment status, women spend twice as much time as men on domestic chores, while spending half as much time on paid work. For employed women, domestic work effectively represents a second full work shift. [10] Less activity in the labor market, with more frequent unemployment among women, indicates a gender gap and persistence of gender spheres divisions, so that formal, paid work is more often perceived as the primary responsibility of men, and domestic duties and childcare as the primary responsibility of women[11].

The gender pay gap in Serbia is 8.8% placing it among the countries with the lowest gender pay gap in Europe. However, when examining earnings according to educational attainment or occupations, the difference in earnings between women and men is significantly higher than the average gender pay gap, most often in favor of men.

The segregation established during education is continued on the labor market. As it can be observed from the following table, in the sectors that are of the most relevance to the project and more generally, for the transformation towards circular economy, such as electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply, water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities, manufacturing, construction, transportation and storage, there are significant gender gaps with women being much less employed in these industries in comparison to men.[12]

Employed Persons (15-64) by Sector of Activity, Gender, SORS, 2023[13]

Employed Persons (15-64) by Sector of Activity, Gender, 2023	Total	Thousands		Percentage	
		M	W	M	W
Working age (15–64 years)	**2710.9**	**1475.3**	**1235.5**		
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	287.1	171.6	115.5	60%	40%
Mining	36.8	32.1	4.7	87%	13%
Manufacturing Industry	544.6	317.3	227.3	58%	42%
Supply of Electricity, Gas, and Steam	40.0	30.2	9.8	76%	25%
Water Supply and Wastewater Management	40.1	29.2	10.9	73%	27%
Construction	163.1	147.1	16.0	90%	10%
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles	376.0	170.0	206.0	45%	55%
Transport and Storage	151.2	118.4	32.8	78%	22%
Accommodation and Food Services	97.2	50.0	47.2	51%	49%
Information and Communication	121.4	77.4	44.1	64%	36%
Financial Activities and Insurance	50.6	20.0	30.6	40%	60%
Real Estate Activities	6.2	3.0	3.2	48%	52%
Professional, Scientific, Innovative, and Technical Activities	111.1	50.8	60.3	46%	54%

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Administrative and Support Service Activities	69.0	38.6	30.4	56%	44%
Public Administration, Defense, and Compulsory Social Security	155.4	84.4	71.0	54%	46%
Education	172.9	43.3	129.5	25%	75%
Health and Social Protection	169.4	35.2	134.1	21%	79%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	57.9	31.0	26.9	54%	46%
Other Service Activities	49.8	22.7	27.1	46%	54%
Household Activities as Employers	9.6	2.2	7.5	23%	78%
Activities of Extraterritorial Organizations and Bodies	1.5	/	/		

Self-employment is almost three times higher for men than for women, with 76.6% of men and 23.4% of women aged 15–64 being self-employed. Among informally employed young people aged 15–24, 31.8% of self-employed individuals and 30.0% of employed workers are women. Additionally, the rate of women outside the labor force is 15.7 percentage points higher than that of men, with 52.1% of women and 36.4% of men not participating in the labor force. This gender gap is most pronounced in the age group 55 and older, where 78.9% of women and 64.1% of men are outside the labor force.

Employed by sector of activity, ownership and sex, 2022 (in thousands and %)						
	Women		**Men**		**Structure by sex**	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Women**	**Men**
Employees	**1055.9**	**100.0**	**1186.1**	**100.0**	**47.1**	**52.9**
Sector of activity						
Agriculture	16.5	1.6	38.8	3.3	29.8	70.2
Industry	250.6	23.7	399.5	33.7	38.5	61.5
Construction	11.6	1.1	113.6	9.6	9.2	90.8
Services	777.2	73.6	634.1	53.5	55.1	44.9
Ownership						
Private ownership	667.1	63.2	838.8	70.7	44.3	55.7
State ownership	381.5	36.1	337.9	28.5	53.0	47.0
Other	7.3	0.7	9.3	0.8	43.8	56.2
Self-employed	**107.3**	**100.0**	**371.7**	**100.0**	**22.4**	**77.6**
Sector of activity						
Agriculture	28.4	26.4	168.9	45.4	14.4	85.6

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Industry	8.7	8.1	36.2	9.7	19.4	80.6
Construction	1.5	1.4	45.3	12.2	3.2	96.8
Services	68.7	64.1	121.4	32.7	36.2	63.8
Ownership						
Private ownership	104.4	97.3	361.5	97.3	22.4	77.6
State ownership	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	2.9	2.7	10.2	2.7	22.0	78.0
Source: Labour Force Survey, SORS.						

Women’s entrepreneurship

According to surveys on women’s entrepreneurship, the share of women among entrepreneurs is low compared to men. Women-owned businesses account for 31.2% of total entrepreneurship. The sectoral structure of women's entrepreneurship still significantly differs from that of men's, but noticeable changes have become evident over the last decade. Most women's businesses are in trade (24.2%), the manufacturing industry (14.2%), and the services sector (11.7%). In recent years, there has been an increase in the share of businesses in the sectors of professional, scientific, innovative, and technical activities (14.8%).

Women's entrepreneurship shows greater dynamism, with higher rates of both business establishment and closure. In the vast majority of cases, these are micro-businesses concentrated in urban areas. More than half of women entrepreneurs belong to the age category of the so-called "older workforce," aged 45-64. There is a very small proportion of young women entrepreneurs (aged 19-29). Most are women with higher education.[14]

Based on the research on female entrepreneurs and climate change, female entrepreneurs are aware of the importance of taking action against climate change. However, they lack specific knowledge on how climate change impacts their businesses and how they can improve their practices to reduce harmful environmental effects or better adapt to climate change.

In addition to knowing, monitoring, and adhering to basic environmental regulations, a small proportion of female entrepreneurs apply green business practices. These practices mostly involve waste reduction, energy savings or increased energy efficiency, use of eco-friendly packaging, or green procurement. Very few are engaged in true green businesses, which produce eco-friendly products or provide ecological services.

The main reason for the limited adoption of green practices is the insufficient knowledge about how these practices can facilitate a transition to green business and contribute to the development of a low-carbon economy.

In most cases, female entrepreneurs are open to acquiring new knowledge and embracing change.[15]

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The transition to a low-carbon economy is expected to significantly impact large enterprises in sectors that predominantly employ male labor, such as mining, industrial production, energy, gas and steam supply, construction, water supply and waste management, and transportation and storage. Despite the low representation of women in these sectors, which limits their chances to contribute to reducing harmful climate impacts, there is substantial potential for the development of small businesses and female entrepreneurship in renewable energy and the circular economy. This transition presents also a valuable opportunity for women to build capacities, engage more deeply in green jobs, and become agents of change in their communities.

Access to land and property

The access to land, property, financial markets and ICT is lower among women than men. According to the National Geodetic Authority, in 2019 women were owners of real estates (land and housing) in only 25% of cases, while they appear as co-owners in 36% of property which is owned by more than one owner. The gender ratio in the field of mortgaged property is an important indicator of credit standing as this type of property is used as collateral for buying real estate or investing in business ventures. Data of the National Geodetic Authority reveal a significantly higher share of men who own mortgaged property (65%), relative to the share of women (35%).[16]

Rural women

Women in rural areas have inadequate access to various resources crucial for their economic activity and quality of life. Only a small proportion of women own land and property, which means they have a weak asset base for accessing financial markets and economic activities. When it comes to agricultural land, the situation is particularly challenging for women. As they do not own the land, they are more often in the role of unpaid workers in family farms rather than managers or supervisors.

The lack of access to transportation also disadvantages women: they are less likely to obtain a driver's license or own a car, and thus rely more on public transportation, which is often of poor quality due to underdeveloped bus networks (limited bus frequency, no schedules), weak connections to nearby towns, and greater distances between bus stops. Women in rural areas use information and communication technologies less and have poorer access to financial services (primarily using credit cards and opportunities for obtaining loans, such as housing or consumer loans).

The educational structure of the rural population is less favorable compared to the urban population (higher proportion of individuals with lower qualifications and lower proportion with tertiary education), with a higher proportion of individuals without education or with lower levels of education among rural women compared to rural men. The highest illiteracy rate is found among women in rural areas (compared to rural men and urban women), reflecting the education characteristics of older generations.

In terms of access to education, there is no significant gender inequality in preschool programs. However, there is a noticeable difference in participation rates between urban and rural children, especially with lower participation rates among rural children in preschool education. Additionally, the participation rate of Roma children in preschool programs is significantly lower than that of children in the general population, particularly in rural areas. Access to primary education in Serbia is practically universal, with no significant differences based on residence or gender. However, among particularly vulnerable groups of children (such as Roma children and children with disabilities), participation in primary education is significantly lower than in the general population. Significant gender disparities are evident in secondary school and higher education attendance. The proportion of women enrolling in and completing secondary and higher education is higher than that of men, but due to pronounced gender segregation in subjects, women tend to focus more

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on social sciences, humanities, and health and social care services (where employment and earnings opportunities are lower). Only a small number of women choose to study rapidly growing fields such as engineering, technology, information, and communication technologies.

The rural population is at the highest risk of poverty and social exclusion, with older women from these areas representing one of the most vulnerable social groups in this regard. Gender inequality, evident in the labor market and agricultural sectors, also affects the status of the older population. The proportion of rural women receiving agricultural pensions is higher than that of rural men, due to lower employment rates of rural women in non-agricultural sectors throughout their working lives. Additionally, pension amounts for women are on average lower than those paid to men, increasing the risk of poverty in old age. Rural populations face difficulties accessing various social benefits due to qualification criteria established for such benefits. Criteria related to land ownership and methods for calculating cadastral income particularly disadvantage rural families in accessing benefits like financial social assistance, child allowances, and similar entitlements. Social protection services are less available in rural areas due to underdeveloped services and lack of adequate public transportation, which women often rely on to reach institutions where they can exercise their right to social protection. Consequently, women bear the burden of caring for elderly, sick family members, and other dependents, taking on greater responsibility for addressing family issues.

Women in rural areas have poorer health compared to women in urban areas and men in rural areas. Rural women are disproportionately affected by chronic illnesses, poor health conditions, and disabilities compared to urban women and men in both urban and rural areas. Rural women also report the poorest self-rated health. They face difficulties accessing healthcare services due to the inaccessibility of primary healthcare services and inadequate public transportation required to reach healthcare facilities. Rural women are also less likely to attend childbirth preparation courses, primarily due to the lack of such programs in rural Serbia.

Family relationships, household obligations, and leisure time are other areas where rural women face gender inequalities and deficiencies. On average, rural women spend significantly more time performing unpaid activities and caring for family members compared to women and men in urban areas, and the least time on rest, which plays a significant role in improving well-being.

The proportion of women who are household heads is higher in physically and economically smaller households, and these women are older compared to their male counterparts. As the size of the household increases, the proportion of women household heads decreases. Women are key decision-makers in 15.3% of households (which is less than the overall proportion of women household heads, which is 19.4%). This reflects their lesser economic power and influence in decision-making processes. Women members of family households make up the largest share of employment with full-time equivalents among women (75.2% of the total annual work units of the female workforce), primarily in smaller households.

Women have lower resilience and often reduced capacity to adapt to climate change and related emergencies, such as floods or other extreme weather conditions. Due to their poorer preparedness for emergency situations, lack of information, lack of relevant resources, and weaker economic and financial capacities, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. At the same time, measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and environmental pollution may have a more significant impact on women in rural areas compared to men. This is because women are more often part of groups particularly sensitive to these processes: for example, women are more likely to be heads of smaller households or businesses; on average, women heads of households are older; women are often at greater risk of poverty; and they are also more exposed to weather risks due to their work in agriculture. [17]

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Agricultural holdings managed by women are typically characterized by lower average physical and economic size, as well as lower mechanization of work processes. Additionally, the age and education structure of women managing agricultural holdings is generally less favorable. A large number of women-led farms (many of which are elderly, single-person, or semi-sustainable holdings) are unable to apply modern agro-technical practices that contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (such as a higher prevalence of organic production, reduced tillage, cover cropping, mulching, grassing, proper manure management, etc.). The implementation of these practices would place an additional burden on female labor, particularly involving heavy physical tasks. Furthermore, although women are generally involved in all aspects of agricultural production (while men are primarily engaged in mechanized activities), they often face obstacles in accessing resources (e.g., loans, information, etc.).

According to data from the Republic Geodetic Authority, women are the sole owners of 24.2% of all land parcels. In Serbia, women typically own farms of smaller physical and economic size, and their share among farm owners decreases as the size of the farm increases. Data from the Survey on the Structure of Agricultural Holdings indicates that the share of women as farm owners is higher for the smallest farms (both in terms of land size and economic value measured in EUR) and decreases as farm size increases. Farms registered to women account for a smaller share of total arable land (10.8%) and livestock numbers (9.9%) compared to their overall share of farm ownership.

Nearly 40% of farm managers are aged 65 and over, but the age structure of male and female managers differs significantly. Among women farm managers, over half are aged 65 and above, while only 6.9% of women managers are under 35.

Women's farms and women employed in agriculture face greater barriers in accessing resources and services. Many climate change policies, including market-based sectoral policies, do not account for gender differences. In sub-sector policies, such as agricultural policy, women are often treated solely as vulnerable beneficiaries, while their roles and potential contributions to sustainable climate adaptation are inadequately recognized. On the other hand, farms managed by women, as well as those with a vital female labor force active in agriculture, tend to diversify primary agricultural production more (introducing additional crops like flowers, seedling production, organic farming, greenhouse production, etc.), thus contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Gender disparities in access to knowledge about climate change and new agricultural technologies are particularly pronounced. Women more frequently face barriers to accessing new knowledge, information, and digital technologies and services. These factors result in lower adaptive capacities for women's farms, while simultaneously reducing rural women's opportunities to contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change through innovative practices. Barriers faced by women include household workload, division of roles within the farm, availability of educational modules tailored to the needs of women's farms, access to mobile services (linked to women's digital literacy), and more.

Poverty

In recent years, Serbia has recorded a positive trend in reducing the poverty rate. In 2021, the at-risk-of-poverty rate was 21.2%. The downward trend in poverty that continued after 2020 is primarily the result of pandemic-related measures which, although not targeted at vulnerable groups, generally contributed to mitigating the crisis. Nevertheless, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in Serbia remains high and is among the highest in Europe. Specifically, Serbia ranks sixth in terms of the at-risk-of-poverty rate among European countries where this indicator is measured according to the European Union's methodology, specifically through the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC).

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When it comes to income inequality, Serbia ranks among the countries with the highest inequalities in Europe. In 2021, the quintile ratio was 5.95, meaning that the richest 20% of the population had almost six times the total income of the poorest 20% of the population in Serbia. According to the Gini coefficient, which stands at 33.3%, Serbia is among the countries with the highest income inequalities in Europe. The cause of such significant income inequality lies in the entire complex of rules for collecting public revenues and distributing public expenditures. Compared to the general population, Roma face increased risks of poverty and social exclusion, primarily due to low mobility within the formal education system (poor school attendance and low educational achievements), high unemployment rates, inadequate housing, limited access to health services, and generally low living standards. The lack of adequate educational qualifications makes it difficult for working-age Roma men and women to access the labor market. Only a third of Roma (33.33%) have completed primary education, 11.54% have finished secondary school, and about 1% have completed higher education. Therefore, the lack of necessary education is one reason why Roma have much higher levels of unemployment and informal employment compared to the general population. A large portion of Roma work in the informal economy, mainly in seasonal agricultural jobs and informal recycling, meaning they are not registered in the official employment scheme and lose entitlements to social benefits (e.g., health insurance, pension funds, etc.). Although precise official statistics on Roma incomes are not available, it is estimated that the number of Roma living in absolute poverty is increasing. Despite the high rate of social benefits coverage for the Roma population, poverty rates remain high, indicating that social benefits are insufficient and that specific measures need to be created for the Roma population to enable better social inclusion.[18]

The role of women in Serbia in nature protection and management of protected sites

Women in Serbia are increasingly active in nature protection, with organizations and initiatives empowering them to take a more significant role in environmental decision-making and management. While often disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental degradation, women's unique knowledge of natural resources and proactive attitudes contribute significantly to environmental protection. Through efforts like the ECO-SYSTEM programme and civil society organizations, women's participation is being promoted in policies and management, aiming to integrate a gender perspective into environmental strategies for more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Key Roles and Contributions

- **Active Participation:**

Women's initiatives are actively defending protected areas, such as the White Heron's defense of the Reva Pond from illegal waste dumping, demonstrating their ability to mobilize and confront environmental threats.

- **Environmental Knowledge:**

Women possess extensive knowledge of natural resources, including water, forests, and land, which is vital for their sustainable management.

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- **Proactive Attitudes:**

Research shows women generally have a more positive and proactive stance on environmental protection and climate change mitigation.

- **Decision-Making Power:**

Efforts are underway to incorporate women into decision-making processes at both local and national levels, ensuring their voices are heard in policy formulation and environmental management.

Empowerment and Policy Integration

- **ECO-SYSTEM Programme:**

This program specifically focuses on building the capacity of women in the environmental sector and promoting gender-sensitive planning for environmental policies in Serbia.

- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):**

The ECO-SYSTEM program also works with CSOs to develop gender-mainstreaming policies and tools to empower women within environmental networks.

- **EU Accession Process:**

Integrating gender perspectives into environmental policy is a key aspect of Serbia's EU accession process, particularly within Chapter 27, which focuses on environmental protection.

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Disproportionate Impact:**

Women often bear the brunt of the effects of climate change and environmental disasters, making their engagement crucial for effective solutions.

- **Diverse Strategies:**

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Different roles and priorities of men and women in society can lead to varied strategies and solutions for environmental problems, presenting an opportunity for a more comprehensive approach to protection.

- **Need for Stronger Institutions:**

The success of these efforts relies on developing strong environmental institutions and fostering collaboration with decision-makers to drive legislative changes and promote sustainable practices.

4. Gender equality in stakeholder engagement

The project will support pilot policy and regulatory improvements as well as interventions for the realization of nature/habitat restauration active measures and interventions related to ecological connectivity. These interventions are expected to provide valuable experience by promoting a polycentric approach and developing tailored solutions also for vulnerable and particularly valuable protected areas/natural habitats.

Integrating gender into protected areas management is crucial for creating resilient network of protected areas in harmony with communities and people. Gender integration ensures that the diverse needs and perspectives of all community members, including women, are considered, leading to more inclusive and equitable urban planning decisions. Since women and men often experience nature differently, integrating gender perspectives can help identify and address specific safety and inclusivity concerns, making natural habitats more resilient and better managed for the benefits of communities and overall society in Serbia. Understanding the different ways men and women perceive and utilize natural assets can lead to more efficient and targeted use of those resources, enhancing the sustainability and functionality of natural environments. Gender-sensitive management of protected areas can foster social cohesion by promoting inclusive and diverse communities where everyone feels valued and respected. Women often play a key role in managing rural household resources and can be strong advocates for sustainable practices. Integrating their perspectives can enhance the effectiveness of environmental initiatives and policies. Furthermore, integrating gender perspectives ensures compliance with international conventions, national legislation, and strategic frameworks relevant to gender equality and nature protection planning and management.

The project activities are designed in such a manner that gender-specific issues can be considered in the policy and regulatory amendments, when applicable. The gender-specific dimensions will be also mainstreamed into the planning of the knowledge management activities. The project will facilitate and closely monitor that equal training opportunities are provided for both men and women. Awareness-raising activities will involve the participation and cooperation of women associations and women NGOs to support mainstreaming of gender considerations in related awareness-raising and information materials. All contractors shall be requested to provide non-discriminate participation of men and women during the implementation phase of respective tasks. Female innovators, entrepreneurs and experts will be specifically encouraged to participate in the project implementation. The project will ensure gender balance among stakeholders and beneficiaries, by defining gender sensitive criteria, ensuring gender balance within the project selection committees and providing gender expertise to the projects.

5. Project response to Gender Equality Standards

The project has been designed in line with key gender equality standards:

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3) Gender responsiveness: the efforts to mainstream gender and promote gender equality will be pursued in the project actions focused on the improvement of legislative and policy framework, in capacity building and awareness-raising activities, promotion of active nature restauration and ecological connectivity measures, in a selection of projects for co-financing. The project interventions will be aligned with relevant humans' rights, gender equality and women's empowerment international and national commitments of Serbia. The project also supports the empowerment issue starting from the assumption that women and men are active agents of change that will lead to the transformation towards the sustainable management of protected areas.
3) Inclusiveness: the variety of stakeholders important for bringing gender-sensitive perspective in the project will be taken on board, including national gender equality mechanisms, gender equality experts, women's civil society organizations and platforms, and women from the world of business and work. The project inclusiveness will be particularly beneficial for targeting women from the most vulnerable social groups engaged in the activities relevant to the nature conservation, particularly women from Roma marginalized communities. The roles, potentials, needs of women will be considered during concrete active measures implementation and different forms of support provided to project beneficiaries.
3) Equal opportunities: the project will be implemented in a way that ensures equal opportunities for women and men, particularly in outcome 2. Engaging with women's CSOs, networks, associations will increase the outreach to women that could be interested in formulation and implementation of active restauration and ecological connectivity measures .

6. Gender Action Plan

Project outcome 1. Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1 Output 1.1: Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats • Activity 1.1.1: Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, designing of the competitive process / challenge call • Activity 1.1.2: Implementation of Active Restoration Measures in at least 2 pilot sites selected through competitive process / challenge call • Activity 1.1.3: Monitoring and Evaluation of restoration activities Output 1.2: Establishment of Ecological Corridors • Activity 1.2.1: Design at least 1 new ecological corridor that connects fragmented habitats (selected through competitive process/challenge call) • Activity 1.2.2: Community and stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of corridor projects • Activity 1.2.3: Implementation of at least 1 pilot corridor project priority habitat to facilitate unrestricted movement for endangered species and genetic exchange • Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen management effectiveness of 5 key protected areas anchoring corridors

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Activities for gender responsiveness	Indicators	Responsible stakeholders
1. Organize a workshop on inclusive and gender-sensitive habitat vulnerability assessments, natural habitats restauration and connectivity. 2. Conduct gender-specific impact assessments in all relevant areas to inform documents and plans, such as management plans for protected areas, spatial and urban plans, documents for constructing local infrastructure (transport, energy etc.). 3. Involve women groups into co-design workshop with protected areas managers, planners, Government and LSG representatives, R&D sectors to generate ideas, suggestions, and recommendations to improve protected areas management through restauration measures and ecological connectivity. Assess the vulnerable sites from a "woman's perspective" through practical exercises, and the development of ideas to make management of protected sites more inclusive for women and girls, but also of other groups such as persons with disabilities and elderly. 3. integrate gender into guidelines on sustainable management of protected sites, with particular focus on active restauration measures and ecological connectivity.	- Number of workshops organized - Number of plans and documents that integrate ideas and recommendations from the co-design workshops. - Guidelines on inclusive and gender sensitive sustainable management of protected sites in place.	Managers of Protected Sites, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Provincial Secretariat Environment, Provincial Secretariat for Urbanism and Environmental Protection, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province.
Project Outcome: 2. Enabling Policy, Finance, and Institutional Environment		
Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation		

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- Activity 2.1.1: Review and update regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international conservation standards.
- Activity 2.1.2: Development of guidelines and regulations for design biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment

Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding

- Activity 2.2.1: Develop private sector partnership proposals and business cases to support habitat restoration
- Activity 2.2.2: Engagement with companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials.

Activities for gender responsiveness	**Indicators**	**Responsible stakeholders**
1. Assess gender aspects of existing regulatory and policy framework of relevance to habitats and nature conservation, spatial planning, infrastructure development. 2. Tailored training, workshops to strengthen the role of women in development of regulation and policies for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international conservation standards. 3. Integratef gender aspects into regulation, policies and investment plans for spatial development investments, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international conservation standards.	Percentage of women involved into regulatory and policy development Percentage of gender sensitive measures and actions in relevant regulatory, policy and investment planning documents.	UNDP, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Provincial Secretariat Environment, Provincial Secretariat for Urbanism and Environmental Protection, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province.

Project Outcome 3. Public Awareness and Community Engagement

Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge

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- Activity 3.1.1: Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures.
- Activity 3.1.2: Development and dissemination of training materials on habitat restoration and ecological connectivity.

Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs

- Activity 3.2.1: Design and implement habitat restoration and connectivity awareness campaigns.
- Activity 3.2.2: Educational programs for local communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts.

Activities for gender responsiveness	**Indicators**	**Responsible stakeholders**
1. Gender sensitive active measures for habitats/nature restauration and ecological connectivity featured through social media (including videos, social media, TV, papers, and websites) to inspire broader female participation 2. Involve women and vulnerable groups into stakeholder dialogues to promote the role of women and gender sensitive approach in maximizing the impacts of active restauration and ecological connectivity measures. 3. Arrange site visits that specifically include female planners, policymakers, and practitioners to exchange experiences and best practices related to gender-sensitive protected areas management.	Number of success women's stories Number of Gender-Sensitive Content Pieces Created Number of events or sessions including the discussion on women's roles and experiences in protected areas management Number of Women Involved in Site Visits Number of case studies and reports on successful gender integration in protected areas management	UNDP, Managers of protected sites, Ministry of Environmental Protection, Provincial Secretariat Environment, Provincial Secretariat for Urbanism and Environmental Protection, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/green_agenda_for_the_western_balkans_en.pdf

[2] The Constitutional Court initiated proceedings in June 2024 to assess the law's constitutionality, leading to the suspension of actions based on its provisions.

[3] https://wbl.worldbank.org/content/dam/documents/wbl/2024/snapshots/Serbia.pdf

[4] Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia, 2020, available at: https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2021/PdfE/G20216001.pdf

[5] Account ownership denotes the percentage of respondents who report having an account (by themselves or together with someone else) at a bank or another type of financial institution or report personally using a mobile money service in the past 12 months.

[6] Women and Men in the Republic of Serbia, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2023, https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2024/Pdf/G20246004.pdf

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[8] Labour Force Survey, 2023, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2024, https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2024/Pdf/G20245707.pdf

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[15] Klimatske promene i ženskog preduzetništvo, UN Women, SeCons, 2023, https://secons.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/UN-Women-Preduzetnice-i-klimatske-promene-SRB-web.pdf

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Annex VI. Project alignment with and contribution to NBSAP, SDGs, and KMGBF Goals and Targets

Project Contributions to NBSAP, SDGs and GBF Goals and Targets

Explain how the KBF investment will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and GBF goals and targets.

The project builds on priorities from the 2021-2023 NBSAP:

- Need to increase protected area coverage and management effectiveness
- Establish a functional ecological network
- Identifying, valuing, and protecting different landscape types
- Integration of nature protection in other sectors (transportation, construction, energy, etc.)
- Development of measures for habitat restoration

KBF Alignment with SDGs and KMGBF: The project supports the 2050 vision of "Living in harmony with nature" and aligns with the Global Biodiversity Framework's four long-term goals:

- Goal A (Ecosystem Condition): Improve ecosystem health and species abundance through restoration and connectivity.
- Goal B (Sustainable Use): Promote sustainable land use practices.
- Goal C (Benefit-sharing): Ensure equitable benefit-sharing from biodiversity.
- Goal D (Implementation): Strengthen legal frameworks, build capacity, and enhance collaboration.

Additionally, the project supports the GBF's 23 action-oriented targets by 2030, including protecting and restoring ecosystems, ensuring sustainable agriculture, enhancing financial resources, and increasing public awareness.

Supporting the CBD's objectives, the project will conserve biodiversity through habitat restoration, promote sustainable use, and ensure fair and equitable benefit-sharing by involving communities and providing alternative livelihoods.

The table below summarizes the project contributions to SDGs and KMGBF Goals and Targets.

Sustainable Development Goals	Relevant Project Outputs	Project Contributions
SDG 5: Gender Equality **Target 5.5:** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for	All.	• The project applies UNDP's GEM-2 gender marker, ensuring that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout all project activities. • Women are actively engaged in training, restoration work, and decision-making roles at community and institutional levels.

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leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life **Indicator 5.5.2:** Proportion of women in managerial positions		• Gender-sensitive outreach and capacity-building promote women's leadership in conservation and ecological corridor management. <u>Indicator 5.5.2:</u> • While not reporting quantitative data directly, the project explicitly commits to increasing women's participation in protected area management, restoration leadership, and local conservation governance structures. • By providing equal access to managerial training, the initiative supports progress toward a higher share of women in leadership roles within biodiversity management institutions.
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure **Target 9.a:** Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States **Indicator 9.a.1:** Total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure	Output 1.2 Output 2.1 Output 2.2	<u>Target 9.a:</u> • The project introduces ecological corridors as legal spatial categories, integrating biodiversity safeguards into Serbia's infrastructure planning and investment frameworks. • New guidelines and regulations ensure that road, energy, and spatial planning projects incorporate biodiversity connectivity considerations. • International technical support (through UNDP, KBF, EU programs) underpins sustainable infrastructure models that balance development and biodiversity needs. <u>Indicator 9.a.1:</u> • The project mobilizes up to $1.00 million for biodiversity-aligned infrastructure and ecological connectivity • It also seeks additional private sector engagement (e.g., ESG partnerships, green bonds), strengthening international support flows toward nature-positive infrastructure.
SDG 13: Climate Action	Output 1.1 Output 2.1 Output 3.2	• The project employs climate-proof restoration approaches, selecting native species and adaptive methods to withstand extreme weather events • Community awareness and educational programs emphasize the link between ecosystem health and climate resilience, supporting Serbia's broader adaptation strategies. • By embedding biodiversity and connectivity into national frameworks, the project advances systemic climate adaptation capacity across sectors.
SDG 15: Life on Land	Output 1.1	<u>Target 15.1: Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems</u>

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(multiple sub-targets, including 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, and 15.5)	Output 1.2	• Active restoration of forests, wetlands, and grasslands directly contributes to conservation and sustainable management. • Improved protected area management ensures these ecosystems are integrated into long-term spatial and ecological planning. <u>Target 15.2: Promote sustainable forest management and halt deforestation</u> • Restoration actions include reforestation with native species and protection of old-growth forests, which are under severe pressure from logging and land conversion. • Strengthening regulatory frameworks aligns forestry practices with biodiversity and climate objectives. <u>Target 15.3: Combat desertification and restore degraded land</u> • Grassland restoration and sustainable grazing practices address land degradation risks, especially in vulnerable Vojvodina. • Soil erosion control and buffer zones around wetlands enhance land productivity and resilience. <u>Target 15.5: Halt biodiversity loss and prevent species extinction</u> • Establishing ecological corridors facilitates species movement, protects genetic diversity, and reduces extinction risk. • Endangered species benefit from habitat-specific restoration (e.g., hydrological adjustments in wetlands, grassland bird habitat recovery).

GBF Goals and Targets	**Relevant Project Outputs**	**Project Contributions**
Goal A: Protect and Restore	All.	•Project restores 200 ha of degraded old-growth forests, wetlands, and grasslands through reforestation, invasive species removal, wetland hydrology management, and grazing plans. •Establishes new ecological corridors (covering 1,000 ha) to reconnect fragmented habitats, improving ecosystem integrity and resilience. •Strengthens management effectiveness in protected areas to safeguard species abundance and ecosystem services.
Goal B: Prosper with Nature	All.	•Promotes sustainable land use practices in agriculture and forestry by integrating biodiversity-friendly management (e.g., extensive grazing, buffer zones, wildfire prevention). •Enhances nature-based solutions for climate resilience and water regulation, directly supporting sustainable human well-being.

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		•Develops business cases and partnerships for green financing, linking biodiversity with economic opportunities.
Goal C: Share Benefits Fairly	Output 1.1 Output 1.2 Output 2.2 Output 3.1	•Ensures communities are directly engaged in restoration, monitoring, and corridor planning, building ownership and livelihood benefits (e.g., eco-tourism, non-timber forest products). •Provides equitable access to training and decision-making for women, youth, and vulnerable groups. •Aligns with CBD benefit-sharing objectives by strengthening local stewardship and fair distribution of ecosystem service benefits.
Goal D: Invest and Collaborate	Output 2.1 Output 2.2	•Mobilizes at least $0,5 M and seeks private sector ESG-linked investments for biodiversity. •Embeds biodiversity into national regulatory frameworks, securing long-term institutional and policy support. •Builds partnerships with UNDP, Serbian authorities, EU initiatives, and local stakeholders for sustained collaboration.
Target 1: Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Loss	Output 1.2 Output 2.1	• Incorporates ecological corridors into Serbia's spatial planning framework, a pioneering approach. • Updates regulations and management plans to integrate biodiversity into land use and infrastructure projects.
Target 2: Restore 30% of all Degraded Ecosystems	Output 1.1	• Implements active restoration of two pilot sites (forest, wetland, or grassland) covering 200 ha of priority habitats. • Introduces adaptive restoration methods using native species and climate-resilient practices.
Target 3: Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas	Output 1.2	• Enhances protection and management effectiveness in five protected areas covering 2,000 ha, anchoring 1,000 ha of ecological corridors. • Contributes to national ecological network expansion, supporting EU Natura 2000 alignment.
Target 4: Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts	All.	• Facilitates species movement and genetic exchange via restored corridors. • Implements habitat measures for endangered species, reducing extinction risk.
Target 10: Enhance Biodiversity and Sustainability in Agriculture, Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Forestry	Output 1.1 Output 1.2	• Promotes extensive grazing systems to maintain grassland biodiversity. • Integrates biodiversity safeguards into forestry and land use planning to reduce degradation.
Target 11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People	Output 1.1 Output 3.2	• Restored wetlands enhance water purification, flood control, and local climate regulation. • Outreach campaigns raise awareness of biodiversity's role in human well-being and livelihoods.

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Target 14: Integrate Biodiversity in Decision-Making at Every Level	Output 2.1 Output 3.1	• Embeds restoration and connectivity into legislation, spatial planning, and infrastructure guidelines. • Provides training for local/national authorities and municipalities on biodiversity-inclusive planning.
Target 19: Mobilize $200 Billion per Year for Biodiversity From all Sources, Including $30 Billion Through International Finance	Output 2.2	• Develops private sector partnership proposals to leverage financing of at least $1 M. • Explores green bonds, CSR contributions, and integration into Serbia's BioFin initiative.
Target 20: Strengthen Capacity-Building, Technology Transfer, and Scientific and Technical Cooperation for Biodiversity	Output 1.1 Output 3.2	•Provides trainings, workshops, and educational materials for authorities, scientists, and civil society. •Establishes monitoring, evaluation, and digital tools for adaptive biodiversity management.
Target 22: Ensure Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice and Information Related to Biodiversity for all	Output 1.2 Output 3.2	• Ensures inclusive community participation in corridor planning and restoration activities. • Delivers public awareness campaigns and educational programs in Serbian and English for broad access.
Target 23: Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action	All.	• Ensures gender equality is consistently mainstreamed in biodiversity conservation planning and management. • Promotes women's leadership in conservation decision-making, capacity building, and employment.

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6. Budget

Outcome	Output	Activities	Expenditure category	Description of expenditure	Estimated amount	PSC	% of Funding
Outcome 1 - Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands	*Output 1.1 - Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats*	*Activity 1.1.1 - Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, Designing the Call*	*4. Contractual services*	Engagement of experts performing the assessment, designing the call for active restoration measures, and mentoring/accelerating the proposals	**$30,000.00**	$2,100.00	0.030
		Activity 1.1.2 - Implementation of Active Restoration Measures	*6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts*	Contracting the responsible parties through competitive process, for the implementation of active measures	**$250,000.00**	$17,500.00	0.250
		Activity 1.1.3 - Monitoring and Evaluation of restoration activities	*7. General Operating and Other Direct Costs*	CO Operations support (Procurement, Finance, Connectivity and admin related services) and Programme support of the implementation of active restauration measures	**$10,000.00**	$700.00	0.010
			1. Staff and other personnel	Design and support implementation of active restoration measures; Technical advisory support by CTA	**$30,305.00**	$2,121.35	0.030
	Output 1.2 - Establishment of Ecological Corridors	*Activity 1.2.1 - Corridor Planning and Design and Community and Stakeholder Involvement*	*4. Contractual services*	Corridor Planning and Design + Organization of trainings for stakeholders (venue, training materials, accommodation etc.)	**$14,000.00**	$980.00	0.014
			1. Staff and other personnel	Preparation of needs assessments for Habitat Connectivity and Corridor Planning	**$25,000.00**	$1,750.00	0.025
			7. General Operating and Other Direct Costs	CO Operations support (Procurement, Finance, Connectivity and admin related services)	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
		Activity 1.2.2: Community and stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of corridor projects	*4. Contractual services*	Workshops and meetings, community engagement. Engagement of experts designing the call for pilot corridor projects, and mentoring/accelerating the proposals	**$30,000.00**	$2,100.00	0.030
			7. General Operating and Other Direct Costs	Includes all general operating costs for running an office (telecommunication, connectivity, office rent and supplies, finance charges and other costs)	**$5,359.44**	$375.16	0.005
		Activity 1.2.3: Implementation of pilot corridor projects priority habitat to facilitate unrestricted movement for endangered species and genetic exchange	*6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts*	Contracting the responsible parties through competitive process, for the establishment of corridors	**$205,000.00**	$14,350.00	0.205
			1. Staff and other personnel	Technical advisory support by CTA	**$5,305.00**	$371.35	0.005
		Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen management effectiveness of selected protected areas anchoring corridors	*3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (incl. depreciation)*	Purchasing of equipment and materials to enhance management effectiveness of protected areas, including enforcement, monitoring, etc.	**$10,000.00**	$700.00	0.010

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Outcome 2 - Improved Policy, Finance, and Institutional Enabling Environment for Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Connectivity	*Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation*	*Activity 2.1.1: Review and Update Regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international conservation standards.*	*4. Contractual services*	Engagement of experts performing review and update of regulations	**$15,000.00**	$1,050.00	0.015
		Activity 2.1.2: Development of guidelines and regulations for design biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment	*4. Contractual services*	Engagement of experts developing guidance and draft regulations for biodiversity friendly infrastructure development based on global best practices	**$40,000.00**	$2,800.00	0.040
			7. General Operating and Other Direct Costs	CO Operations support (Procurement, Finance, Connectivity and admin related services) for design biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
	Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding	*Activity 2.2.1: Develop private sector partnership proposals and business cases to support habitat restoration*	*4. Contractual services*	Engagement of experts to develop detailed proposals and business cases that demonstrate the benefits of supporting habitat restoration projects to potential private sector partners.	**$15,000.00**	$1,050.00	0.015
		Activity 2.2.2: Engagement with companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials.	*4. Contractual services*	Meetings and roundtables with financing institutions and companies (venue, catering, equipment…)	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
			7. General Operating and Other Direct Costs	CO Operations support (Procurement, Finance, Connectivity and admin related services) for engagement with companies to secure private sector funding	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
			1. Staff and other personnel	Technical engagement and consultations with financing institutions and companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials	**$20,000.00**	$1,400.00	0.020
Outcome 3: Enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement for ecosystem restoration and corridor management	*Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge*	*Activity 3.1.1: Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures.*	*4. Contractual services*	Trainings for stakeholders (venue, training materials, accommodation etc)	**$10,000.00**	$700.00	0.010
			7. General Operating and Other Direct Costs	CO Operations support (Procurement, Finance, Connectivity and admin related services) for engagement with companies to secure private sector funding	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
		Activity 3.1.2: Development and dissemination of training materials on habitat restoration and ecological connectivity	*4. Contractual services*	Engagement of experts for the development of training materials for trainings on Habitat Restoration and Connectivity	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
	Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs	*Activity 3.2.1: Design and implement awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of habitat restoration and connectivity*	*4. Contractual services*	Engagement of experts for the design and implementation of awareness campaign	**$10,000.00**	$700.00	0.010

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		Activity 3.2.2: Educational programs for local communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts	*1. Staff and other personnel*	implementation of community engagement, awareness raising and capacity development at local level	**$15,000.00**	$1,050.00	0.015
			4. Contractual services	Organization of trainings for local communities (venue, training materials, accommodation etc.)	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
Outcome 4 - Successful project implementation and sustained results: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance	Output 4.1 - Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated Risk management system for the project in line with UNDP and national policies (including stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, social and environmental standards and accountability to stakeholders)	*Activity 4.1.1 Implementation and monitoring of safeguards risk framework*	*1. Staff and other personnel*	In line with UNDP's SES Policy and applicable national requirements, UNDP CO Programme team will prepare and oversee implementation of appropriate management response measures in selected sites. At a minimum, this will include development and implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan and other frameworks or plans as indicated in the SESP. Following the assessment, UNDP CO Programme team will prepare FPICs as appropriate, in case where project affected IP&LC are present in the targeted landscapes.	**$20,000.00**	$1,400.00	0.020
		Activity 4.1.2 Developing a Risk Management system for the project	*4. Contractual services*	To implement, monitor and maintain the project Risk Management Matrix and related mitigation measures. Annual audit/spot checks (as required per HACT policy).	**$10,000.00**	$700.00	0.010
	Output 4.2 - Monitoring & Evaluation and Quality Assurance Systems	*Activity 4.2.1 Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation system for the project*	*1. Staff and other personnel*	Development of M&E framework	**$5,000.00**	$350.00	0.005
		Activity 4.2.2: Providing quality assurance of technical outputs, knowledge products, M&E and SES implementation	*1. Staff and other personnel*	Quality assurance of results, knowledge sharing, compliance support, reporting support and backstopping	**$24,610.00**	$1,722.70	0.025
Project management			***1. Staff and other personnel***	Staff cost	**$85,000.00**	$5,950.00	0.085
			5. Travel	Travel	**$15,000.00**	$1,050.00	0.015
Programme support cost (7%)						$65,420.56	7%
Project Total					$1,000,000.00		100%

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Budget distribution among participating organizations

Outcome	Output	Activities	Total	Leading organization - UNDP	Participating organization 2 - to be selected	Participating organization 3 - to be selected	Participating organization 4 - to be selected	Participating organization 5 - to be selected
Outcome 1 - Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands	*Output 1.1 - Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats*	*Activity 1.1.1 - Assessment of Pilot Sites for Habitat Restoration, Designing the Call*	$30,000.00	$30,000.00				
		Activity 1.1.2 - Implementation of Active Restoration Measures	$250,000.00		$125,000.00	$125,000.00		
		Activity 1.1.3 - Monitoring and Evaluation of restoration activities	$40,305.00	$40,305.00				
	Output 1.2 - Establishment of Ecological Corridors	*Activity 1.2.1 - Corridor Planning and Design and Community and Stakeholder Involvement*	$44,000.00	$44,000.00				
		Activity 1.2.2: Community and stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of corridor projects	$35,359.44	$35,359.44				
		Activity 1.2.3: Implementation of pilot corridor projects priority habitat to facilitate unrestricted movement for endangered species and genetic exchange	$210,305.00				$102,500.00	$102,500.00
				$5,305.00				
		Activity 1.2.4: Strengthen management effectiveness of selected protected areas anchoring corridors	$10,000.00	$10,000.00				
Outcome 2 - Improved Policy, Finance, and Institutional Enabling Environment for Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Connectivity	*Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation*	*Activity 2.1.1: Review and Update Regulations for spatial planning, habitat conservation, restoration and connectivity in line with EU and international conservation standards.*	$15,000.00	$15,000.00				
		Activity 2.1.2: Development of guidelines and regulations for design biodiversity corridors in infrastructure investment	$45,000.00	$45,000.00				
	Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding	*Activity 2.2.1: Develop private sector partnership proposals and business cases to support habitat restoration*	$15,000.00	$15,000.00				
		Activity 2.2.2: Engagement with companies interested in enhancing ESG credentials.	$30,000.00	$30,000.00				

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Outcome 3: Enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement for ecosystem restoration and corridor management	*Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge*	*Activity 3.1.1: Capacity-building workshops and practical training sessions for local/national authorities, infrastructure and energy sectors, PA managers, and municipalities on planning and executing habitat restoration and connectivity measures.*	$15,000.00	$15,000.00				
		Activity 3.1.2: Development and dissemination of training materials on habitat restoration and ecological connectivity	$5,000.00	$5,000.00				
	Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs	*Activity 3.2.1: Design and implement awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of habitat restoration and connectivity*	$10,000.00	$10,000.00				
		Activity 3.2.2: Educational programs for local communities on the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits, and encouraging community involvement in conservation efforts	$20,000.00	$20,000.00				
Outcome 4 - Successful project implementation and sustained results: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance	Output 4.1 - Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated Risk management system for the project in line with UNDP and national policies (including stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, social and environmental standards and accountability to stakeholders)	*Activity 4.1.1 Implementation and monitoring of safeguards risk framework*	$20,000.00	$20,000.00				
		Activity 4.1.2 Developing a Risk Management system for the project	$10,000.00	$10,000.00				
	Output 4.2 - Monitoring & Evaluation and Quality Assurance Systems	*Activity 4.2.1 Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation system for the project*	$5,000.00	$5,000.00				
		Activity 4.2.2: Providing quality assurance of technical outputs, knowledge products, M&E and SES implementation	$24,610.00	$24,610.00				
Project management		***1. Staff and other personnel***	$85,000.00	$85,000.00				
		5. Travel	$15,000.00	$15,000.00				
Programme support cost (7%)		***Programme support cost (7%)***	$65,420.56	$65,420.56				
Project Total			$1,000,000.00	$545,000.00	$125,000.00	$125,000.00	$102,500.00	$102,500.00

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Alignment with KBF Outcomes			
Project's Outcome & Outputs		**KBF's Outcome**	**Budget**
Outcome 1 - Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands	*Output 1.1 - Restoration of Degraded Priority Habitats*	*Outcome 1: Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services*	*$ 320,305.00*
Outcome 1 - Improved Ecological Health and Connectivity of Degraded Old-Growth Forests, Wetlands, and Grasslands	*Output 1.2 - Establishment of Ecological Corridors*	*Outcome 1: Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services*	*$ 299,664.44*
Outcome 2 - Improved Policy, Finance, and Institutional Enabling Environment for Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Connectivity	*Output 2.1: Strengthened Frameworks for Biodiversity Conservation*	*Outcome 2: Biodiversity effectively mainstreamed into policies, regulations, planning and strategies*	*$ 60,000.00*
Outcome 2 - Improved Policy, Finance, and Institutional Enabling Environment for Habitat Conservation, Restoration and Connectivity	*Output 2.2: Secured Private Sector Funding*	*Outcome 7: Strengthened resource mobilization for biodiversity conservation.*	*$ 45,000.00*
Outcome 3: Enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement for ecosystem restoration and corridor management	*Output 3.1: Enhanced Stakeholder Knowledge*	*Outcome 2: Biodiversity effectively mainstreamed into policies, regulations, planning and strategies*	*$ 20,000.00*
Outcome 3: Enhanced stakeholder awareness and engagement for ecosystem restoration and corridor management	*Output 3.2: Awareness Campaigns and Educational Programs*	*Outcome 4: Biodiversity mainstreamed among businesses and consumers to drive positive behaviors.*	*$ 30,000.00*
Outcome 4 - Successful project implementation and sustained results: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance	Output 4.1 - Prepare, implement and monitor an integrated Risk management system for the project in line with UNDP and national policies (including stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, social and environmental standards and accountability to stakeholders)	*Outcome 1: Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services*	*$ 30,000.00*
Outcome 4 - Successful project implementation and sustained results: Risk Management, M&E and Quality Assurance	Output 4.2 - Monitoring & Evaluation and Quality Assurance Systems	*Outcome 1: Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services*	*$ 29,610.00*
Project Management	*Staff and personnel*	*Outcome 1: Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services*	*$ 85,000.00*
	Travel	*Outcome 1: Restored and protected ecosystems to improve biodiversity and ecosystem services*	*$ 15,000.00*
		PSC	*$ 65,420.56*
		Project Total Cost	*$ 1,000,000.00*