1

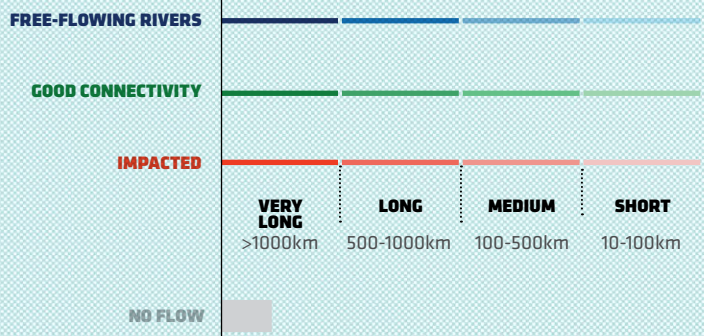
SLOVENIA
MURA RIVER
Called the "Amazon of Europe," the Mura River provides critical habitat for endangered and rare species such as otters, Danube salmon, and black stork. After urging from WWF and others, in February 2019, the Slovenian government signed an agreement to stop all hydropower plant development that would devastate the Mura.

PLOT POINTS

Water, **Uninterrupted**

Free-flowing rivers are vanishing. Around the world, rivers are becoming increasingly fragmented by dams and other development—such as roads or dikes—endangering freshwater ecosystems and the people and wildlife that rely on them. Free-flowing rivers transport water, nutrients, and species that sustain biodiversity and benefit millions of people. To help countries and communities better protect their freshwater resources, WWF and partners came up with a technical definition of a free-flowing river and then created a first-of-its-kind, scientifically backed map—a comprehensive inventory of the world's last free-flowing rivers.

RIVER STATUS



2

MEXICO
USUMACINTA RIVER
In June 2018, guided by WWF and partners, Mexico established water reserves across nearly 300 river basins, guaranteeing water supplies for 45 million people for the next 50 years. Ninety-three percent of the water in the Usumacinta—the longest, most biodiverse river in Central America and one of Mexico's last remaining free-flowing rivers—is now federally protected.

3

COLOMBIA
BITA RIVER
The Colombian government named the Bita River basin a Ramsar site—a wetland of international importance—in June 2018, thanks in large part to the work of WWF and partners. Covering 825,000 hectares, it's the largest of the country's 11 Ramsar sites and one of the few in the world to encompass an entire free-flowing river watershed.

MAPPING HYDROPOWER

Dams provide safe drinking water and electricity to millions of people. But when built in the wrong place—for instance, a river's main stem—they can impede a river's flow, causing drastic declines in biodiversity and affecting fish migration, agriculture, and livelihoods. Today there are more than 60,000 major dams around the world—a number that's increasing to meet demand for hydropower. WWF is helping national governments, industries, and developers consider the long-term impacts on local people and habitats before building dams, and helping them identify the best opportunities for river restoration projects.

4

BRAZIL
PARAGUAY BASIN

More than 100 dams planned for the Upper Paraguay Basin could hurt water supplies, biodiversity, and local communities. After tremendous efforts from a coalition including WWF, Brazil's National Water Agency suspended new dam development there until May 2020. But the suspension only applies to rivers under federal jurisdiction—so just 20 of the 100 dams will be suspended.

5

ZAMBIA
LUANGWA RIVER

Luangwa is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the Zambezi basin. But a proposed dam at Nvedu Gorge threatens this wild waterway, which shelters abundant wildlife and human populations. In Zambia, WWF is advocating on behalf of people and nature, pushing the government to reconsider its energy plans and ensuring that local people maintain their rights to natural resources.

6

MYANMAR
IRRAWADDY AND SALWEEN RIVERS

In Myanmar, an in-depth Strategic Environmental Assessment recommended that the main stems of the Irrawaddy and Salween rivers—two of the last long free-flowing rivers in southeast Asia—should remain free of dams. But there is still risk, making alternative energy such as solar and wind power even more important for people, rivers, and the country's economy.