

## WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Categorization Memorandum

<b>Project Title: GEF Danube River Basin Hydromorphology And River Restoration project (DYNA)</b>	<b>Date: 2/5/19</b>
<p><b>Project Location and salient physical characteristics relevant to the safeguard analysis:</b></p> <p><b>Botar River, Ukraine</b></p> <p>The Botar River belongs to the Danube River basin and is the left tributary of the Tisza River. Over the years, the Botar River was channelized mainly for irrigation purposes and strengthened with dykes dividing the river into two parts – Old Botar and New Botar. The source of the River comes from the south sidehill of the volcanic Avashsky Mountains. The plain in the interfluves is a former place of wetlands, floodplain forests and swamplands. There are small forests in plains and slopes of hills of the volcanic Avashsky Mountains which remain the main center of natural biodiversity concentration. There are 39 species of higher vascular plants included into the Red Book of Ukraine and 60 Species included into the Regional Red List of Zakarpattia, in the interfluves of the Tisza-Tur Rivers. Among them oak Burgudian, Selaginella Helvetica, Sagina subulate which is seldom found? in the region and cannot be found outside the area. There are 100 species of birds living in the interfluves of the Tisza-Tur area. Five of them (the black Stork, the Montagu’s harrier, the lesser spotted eagle, the great gray shrike, the Eurasian eagle-owl) are included in the Red Book of Ukraine. More than 20 species of mammals have been discovered in the area. Among them are brown bears, lynxes, wildcats, European polecats, and otters included in the Red Book of Ukraine.</p> <p><b>The Karas River, Serbia</b></p> <p>Karaš is an international river originating in the Anina Mountains in Romania. The total surface of the basin is 1447 km<sup>2</sup> of which ca. 12% is in Serbia and the rest is in Romania. The river length in Serbia is ca. 30 km. Karaš represents the last partially free flowing river in the Banat region in Serbia, with some stretches conserving their natural riverbed conditions. The river is partially trained and channelized, especially the lower part, which is directed into the Danube-Tisza-Danube canal, an important hydro-engineering system for flood control in the region. Due to river regulation works, the hydromorphology of the Karaš has been greatly altered. The river mouth has been moved ca. 14 km to the north, to be incorporated into the last part of the Danube-Tisza-Danube canal. Furthermore, there are two weirs and one barrage on the Serbian stretch of the river. The first weir is right next to the village of Jasenovo, the second weir is in the Straža locality, and the barrage is near the Vojvodinci village. The weirs were built in the beginning of the 20th century for diverting water into mills; these mills however are at present out of function.</p> <p><b>The Beleu Lake, Moldova</b></p> <p>The Beleu Lake, situated in the Lower Prut areas of Cahul District, is the core area of the Lower Prut Nature Reserve (Agency Moldsilva). Beleu Lake is comprised of a network of wetlands and flooded forests (mainly willow), which all form a unique ecosystem with globally protected species. The vegetation type is similar to the one in the Danube of neighboring Romania and Ukraine. The Beleu Lake area was recognized as a Ramsar site on June 20, 2000, and was recently included in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. The Beleu lake is surrounded by two communities/villages - Valeni and Slobozia Mare, which</p>	<p><b>Project Categorization (A,B,C):</b> <b>B</b></p>

## WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Categorization Memorandum

traditionally depend upon local resources provided by the wetlands (fish, wood/biomass, fodder, water). The area of the Lower Prut Nature Reserve protected area (wetland) is 1691 hectares and the size of the lake itself is about 500 – 1000 hectares (depending on the water level/flooding). Around the wetland are flooded forests consisting mainly of willow (which is invasive), the Russian Olive bushes and rare white poplar. Owing to flooding situation, the willow is conquering areas around the lake and making the lake's water shrink rapidly (over the last 12 years willow forests increased by 200 ha). The lake area is also an important area for nesting birds such as egrets, spoonbill or glossy ibis as well as providing habitat for a number of other species (white pelicans, swans, predator birds etc.). Within the reserve are found rare species of mammals such as Eurasian otter, European mink and over 30 species of fish – carp, crucian carp, bream, orfe rapacious, roach salmon and pike.

### Project Description:

The project aims to '*Strengthen integrated and harmonized approaches for river restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation in the Danube River Basin (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine)*' by assisting the five non-EU countries respond to the EU WFD expectations for monitoring and assessing hydromorphological pressures, and to identify measures to address these pressures. The project components include the following;

Component 1, the project will support a basin-wide approach for addressing and monitoring pressures from hydromorphological alterations.

Component 2 is focused on applying this regional approach (Water Framework Directive (WFD), Flood Directive (FD), Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP), Sava River Basin Management Plan (SRBMP)) at the national level.

Component 3 will involve the preparation of one transboundary pilot project across two non-EU Member States and preparation/implementation of one pilot per non-EU Member State, demonstrating hydromorphological pressure reduction and integrated approaches in river basin and flood risk management planning and implementation. The pilots will demonstrate good practices in river basin management with respect to addressing pressures from hydromorphological alterations and assist with increasing capacity on project design and preparation for financing.

Component 4 will support knowledge management and sharing across the whole Danube River Basin and specifically support the five target countries of this project enhance their capacity and knowledge on HYMO pressure reduction through an effective dissemination of good practices and experiences.

Safeguard Policies Triggered	Yes	No
<b>Environment and Social Risk Management</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Natural Habitats</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Pest Management</b>		<b>X</b>

## WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Categorization Memorandum

<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Involuntary Resettlement</b>	<b>X</b>	

### Summary of Key Safeguard Issues:

The third component of the project includes 3 pilot sites which will aim to demonstrate good practices in river basin management, including addressing pressures from hydromorphological alterations, rehabilitation of riverbeds, afforestation, erosion control, etc.

**Environment and Social Risk Management policy** - Overall, the environmental and social impacts of the project are expected to be positive. However, small scale, localized negative effects may arise during the implementation of some site-specific activities including during the construction of small infrastructure for erosion control, rehabilitation of riverbeds including excavation of the riverbed, channeling of the water to improve water flow. Therefore, the project has been classified as a Category B project. Since the precise locations for the activities proposed for the three pilots under Component 3 will only be known during project execution when feasibility studies have been conducted, three Environmental and Social Management Frameworks (ESMFs) will be developed by the lead Executing Agency International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The ESMFs will be prepared in a consultative and participatory manner and include a set of implementable mitigation measures to be used to develop situation specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) once locations are chosen and the viability of activities has been identified.

**Natural Habitat Policy** - As stated above, the overall environmental and social impacts of the proposed project are expected to be overwhelmingly positive and the project expected impacts on Natural Habitats are also expected to be significantly positive, through efforts to address impacts from hydromorphological alterations through river restoration, nature-based solutions. Nonetheless, potential minor small-scale impacts on Natural Habitats may occur during excavation of river beds and construction of small infrastructure for erosion control. Provisions will be made in the ESMFs to adequately address such possibilities. Any relevant sub-grant financed activity under the project will be screened for its potential to cause negative impacts to natural habitats under the ESMF procedures. If any such activity is likely to cause irreversible or significant damage to habitats it will be excluded from project grant funding.

**Indigenous Peoples' Policy** – There are no indigenous people in the project areas.

**Involuntary Resettlement** - The project is not expected to involve land acquisition leading to involuntary resettlement of project affected persons (PAPs). All project activities will be executed on government or community-owned lands. Project activities are also expected to positively affect local communities' access to livelihoods. However, some of the planned activities may have some minor effects on the livelihoods of local communities, such as temporarily restricting access to grazing or fishing areas and potentially limiting duck rearing activities. To mitigate any adverse impacts, all activities that may affect local communities' access livelihoods should be closely coordinated with community representatives and only carried out after consultations with all relevant stakeholders. If disturbance of access to livelihoods cannot be avoided, full and timely compensation shall be provided to all livelihood users, irrespective of their formal land ownership status or title. Full details regarding these measures will be provided in the ESMFs.

**Pest Management** – The project will not involve the procurement or the use of pesticides.

## WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Categorization Memorandum

**Describe any potential indirect and/or long term impacts due to anticipated future activities in the project area:**

There are no potential indirect and/or long-term impacts anticipated. The project is designed to foster subprojects in the intervention area that have favorable long-term socioeconomic and environmental impacts.

**Required actions:** (type of ESIA, ESMP, IPP, IPMP, RAP, consultations, disclosure)

Three ESMFs will be prepared activities to be implemented in Botar River, Karas River and Belevu Lake and these will be disclosed in country and on WWF's websites before project finalization.

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