Case study #06: Hutovo Blato Peatlands of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Case study cluster: peatlands and wetlands

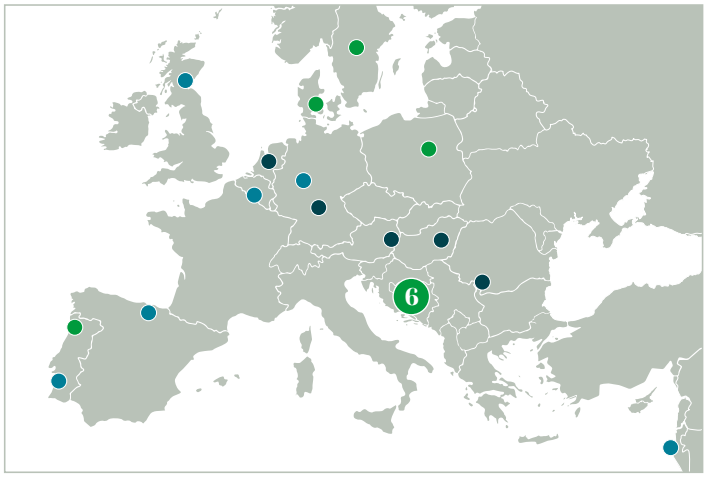
Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Scientific partner: WWF Adria

Implementation partner: WWF Adria

Twinning case study: planned: max.moor (Switzerland); protecting the climate through peatland conservation

Website: www.wwfadria.org



Demonstration

- **Type of restoration:** restoration of peatlands
- **Size:** immediate catchment area of Hutovo Blato: 2,128 km^2
- **Location(s):** Hutovo Blato peatlands
- **Value of the case:** channel restoration, restoration of habitats and biodiversity, enhancement, rewetting
- **Stakeholders involved:** Nature Park (cat. IV of IUCN, Ramsar site), governmental and local authorities (Ministry of Environment, Canton, Municipality), local communities
- **Sectors involved:** hydropower, tourism
- **Innovations being applied:** (expected) implementation of carbon-crediting project(s) for sustainable restoration and conservation (rewetting)

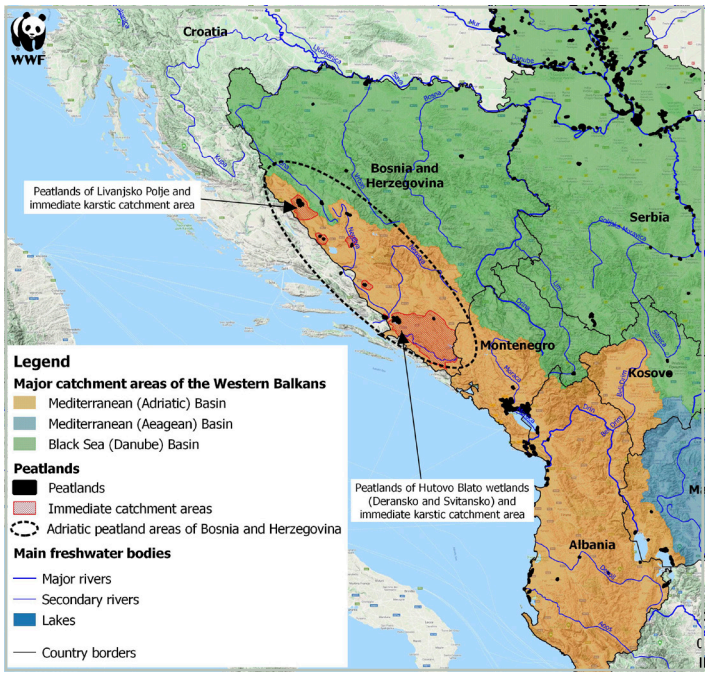
Implemented within MERLIN

- **Restoration measures**: clearing of channels, banks, riverbed and partially the reeds to improve connectivity with flooded meadows and restore habitats for fish and birds
- **Size**: 1488 ha restored land, 2 km restored stream length
- **Scope**: regional
- **Vicinity**: rural/peri-urban
- **Stakeholders involved**: national and municipal public institutions, environmental NGOs, hydropower plant operators, tourism
- **Estimated costs**: 345,000€ (including planning, monitoring and construction costs)

Lessons learnt

- Successful restoration requires a skilled, multidisciplinary team covering planning, stakeholder engagement, implementation and monitoring

The MERLIN project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101036337.



Additional information

Due to the complex hydrological system (karst) and the type of pressure (series of large hydropower infrastructures), the catchment size can be determined by the (a) the River Basin size limited to the peatland area – not including the downstream area – and (b) immediate catchment areas of the peatlands, as follows:

→ **Neretva-Trebisnjica:** 406,087 ha (includes Montenegro)

→ **Hutovo Blato:** 212,817 ha

It is important to note that the hydropower complex system integrates 3 public energy companies in 3 different administrative entities in Republika Srpska and Federation of BiH, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Croatia (HPP Dubrovnik). Moreover, this complex hydropower system is currently being extended, with additional hydrological impact, which is expecting to drain directly wetlands/peatlands upstream but also further affect Hutovo Blato wetlands.

The biggest challenge of our case study is therefore to involve the energy companies, through legal/policy levers and potentially by finding additional incentives (financial mechanisms).

Strengths
- Multiple Green Deal benefits
- Biodiversity hotspot
- Flood retention
- Strong stakeholder support

Weaknesses
- Limited capacity and funding
- Limited monitoring expertise
- Weak government support

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Opportunities
- EU funding
- Ecotourism and education
- Better management

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Threats
- Hydropower
- Weak conservation support
- Pollution

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