



LIFE RESTORE
FOR MDD

PROJECT MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK



PROJECT MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Document History

Revisions

Version	Status	Date	By
1.0	Draft I	12.12.2023	WWF AT
1.1	Draft II	30.01.2024	VSUME STMK GO BFNPI
2.0	Final Draft - uploaded to F&T Portal	31.01.2024	WWF AT

[Be aware that the information within this Project Management Handbook is subject to change and based on the information provided by CINEA during the process of reporting.]

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Introduction	7
1.1. Why a Project Management Handbook?	7
1.2. Document structure	7
1.3. Project Vision	8
1.4. Project Goals and Objectives	9
1.5. Project Results & Outputs	10
1.5.1. Project Results	10
1.5.2. Project Outputs	10
2. Project organisation	11
2.1. Project roles and responsibilities	11
2.1.1. Project Consortium	11
2.1.2. Project Steering Committee	11
2.1.3. The Coordinator	11
2.1.4. Project Managers	11
2.1.5. Project Communication Experts	12
2.1.6. Project Financial experts	12
2.1.7. Work Package and Task Leader	12
2.1.8. National Coordinators	13
2.2. Work plan: The GANTT chart	13
2.3. Work packages, Tasks and Sub-Tasks	14
2.4. Working Groups	14
2.4.1. Purpose of the Working Groups	14
2.4.2. General Approach	15
2.4.3. Conceptual Overview of the Working Groups	15
2.5. Meetings	18
2.6. Helpdesk	19
3. Project Communication, Replication and Dissemination	21
3.1. Internal Project Communication	21
3.1.1. Data Management	21
3.1.2. Internal Webpage	21
3.1.3. Meetings and Workshops	22
3.1.4. Templates	22
3.2. External project Communication	23
3.2.1. Corporate Design	23
3.2.2. External Website	24

3.2.3. Press	24
3.3. Replication and Dissemination of Project results	25
3.3.1. Layman’s report.....	25
3.3.2. After LIFE Plan	25
4. Project Monitoring.....	27
4.1. Project Impacts.....	27
4.2. GANTT chart	28
4.3. Financial Monitoring	29
4.4. Communication Monitoring	29
4.5. Key Project Indicators.....	30
4.6. Risk Assessment.....	30
4.6.1. Foreseen Risks	30
4.6.2. Unforeseen Risks	31
4.6.3. Reporting Risks	32
5. Reporting	33
5.1. General reporting requirements	33
5.2. Dates and Deadlines	33
5.3. Narrative Reporting.....	35
5.4. Continuous Reporting on Milestones and Deliverables.....	35
5.5. Financial Reporting	35
5.6. Reporting Data Exchange.....	36
5.7. Quality check	36
6. Contractual Documents	37
6.1. Grant Agreement.....	37
6.2. Consortium Agreement.....	37
6.3. Memorandum of Understandings.....	37
6.4. Amendments	37
6.4.1. Technical Amendments to the GA CA PMH.....	37
6.4.2. Financial Amendments.....	37
6.4.3. Amendment procedure	38
6.5. Data security (GDPR).....	39
7. Annex.....	40
7.1. Internal Project Webpage	40
7.2. Narrative Reporting Template.....	40
7.3. Financial Reporting Template	40
7.4. Communication Reporting Template	40

7.5. Meeting and Event Template	40
Figure 1: Document and regulation hierarchy (Source: Own figure)	8
Figure 2: Project Consortium Structure (Source: GA)	11
Figure 3: Work package structure (Source: GA).....	14
Figure 4: Structure of the MWG (Source: WWF HU).....	18
Figure 5: Internal Project Webpage - Homepage (Source: liferestore.eu)	21
Figure 6: Project Impact Table Screenshot (Source: GA)	27
Figure 7: GANTT chart (Source: Own table).....	29
Figure 8: Financial monitoring and reporting template (Source: Own table).....	36

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Advisory Board (TBR MDD SC)
AGA	Annotated Grant Agreement
BEN	Beneficiary
CA	Consortium Agreement
CD/CI	Corporate Design / Corporate Identity
CEWG	Communication and Education Working Group
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
COO BEN	Coordinating Beneficiary
CWG	Communication Working Group
DoA	Description of the Action
EC	European Commission
EWG	Education Working Group
F&A	Finance and administration
FRWG	Forest Restoration Working Group
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPO	General Project Objectives
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
KPI	Key Project Indicators
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWG	Monitoring Working Group
NC	National Coordinator
PC	Project Consortium
PMH	Project Management Handbook
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSCM	Project Steering Committee Meetings
RRWG	River Restoration Working Group
SPO	Specific Project Objectives
S.-T.	Sub-Task
T	Task
TBR MDD	Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube
TBR MDD SC	Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube Steering Committee (Advisory Board)
WG	Working Group
WP	Work Package

Project partners (alphabetical):

BfNPI	BALATON-FELVIDÉKI NEMZETI PARK IGAZGATÓSÁG (DIRECTORATE)
DDNPI	DUNA-DRÁVA NEMZETI PARK IGAZGATÓSÁG (DIRECTORATE)
FAZOS	SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU, FAKULTET AGROBIOTEHNIČKIH ZNANOSTI OSIJEK
GO	UDRUGA ZA ZAŠTITU PRIRODE I OKOLIŠA ZELENI OSIJEK
HV	HRVATSKE VODE PRAVNA OSOBA ZA UPRAVLJANJE VODAMA
IRSNC	ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE ZA VARSTVO NARAVE
JU KKZ	JAVNA USTANOVA ZA UPRAVLJANJE ZAŠTIĆENIM DIJELOVIMA PRIRODE NA PODRUČJU KOPRIVNIČKO KRIŽEVAČKE ŽUPANIJE
JU MP	MEDIMURSKA PRIRODA - JAVNA USTANOVA ZA ZAŠTITU PRIRODE
JU VP	JAVNA USTANOVA ZA UPRAVLJANJE ZAŠTIĆENIM DIJELOVIMA PRIRODE I EKOLOŠKOM MREZOM VIROVITIČKO-PODRAVSKE ŽUPANIJE
JU ZDP VZ	JAVNA USTANOVA ZA UPRAVLJANJE ZAŠTIĆENIM DIJELOVIMA PRIRODE VARAŽDINSKE ŽUPANIJE
RMSO	REGIONALMANAGEMENT SÜDOSTSTEIERMARK STEIRISCHES VULKANLAND GMBH
SiDG	SLOVENSKI DRŽAVNI GOZDOVI, D. O. O.
STMK	AMT DER STEIERMARK LANDESREGIERUNG
SWA	DIREKCIJA REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE ZA VODE
VSUME	JAVNO PREDUZAĆE VOJVODINAŠUME, PETROVARADIN
WWF AT	WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE, AUSTRIA
WWF HU	WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE, HUNGARY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHY A PROJECT MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK?

The “Project Management Handbook” (PMH) is a structured reference document that delineates the policies, procedures, guidelines, and essential information pertaining to the management and execution of the Project.

The comprehensive delineation of planning the activities within the Project Consortium (PC) concerning internal management is documented in the PMH, based on the Consortium Plan written in the project proposal. Said handbook is disseminated by the coordinating Beneficiary alias the Coordinator and harmonized with all Beneficiaries or their duly designated representatives.

The PMH serves as a centralized resource to facilitate consistent decision-making, coordination, and communication among Beneficiaries (BENs), the Advisory Board (AB), supporters and project stakeholders. It includes details regarding project objectives, roles and responsibilities, project planning, scheduling, risk management, quality assurance, reporting mechanism, and any other pertinent information necessary for the successful planning, execution, monitoring, and completion of the Project.

1.2. DOCUMENT STRUCTURE

The PMH is based as an integral on the following documents; which are binding for all Beneficiaries:

- [Grant Agreement](#)¹ (GA) and its Annexes (Associated with document Ref. Areas (2023) 4374019 – 23/06/2023) signed between European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), under the power delegated by the European Commission (EC)
- [Annotated Grant Agreement EU](#)² (AGA; actual version) – Additional project regulations, rules and suggestions.
- [Consortium Agreement](#)³ (CA)
- Call documents, e.g., Guidelines.

Furthermore, the PMH is linked whenever reasonable to the [Internal Project Webpage](#)⁴ – liferestore.eu, where you find actual Project relevant information, links and templates. The hierarchy of the document can be seen in Figure 1.

¹ Grant Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CZ4QoPAjF3YdKnJVdA4WwyCcJyDOg4_- /view?usp=drive_link]

² Annotated Grant Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/13Cu0gQQn4p-rZ9u7UWFejp2KtOz6wwyc/view?usp=drive_link]

³ Consortium Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UI6JudptB7i9w7AUMuXGxPHWvL6Jlby5/view?usp=drive_link]

⁴ Internal project webpage [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/home?authuser=0>]

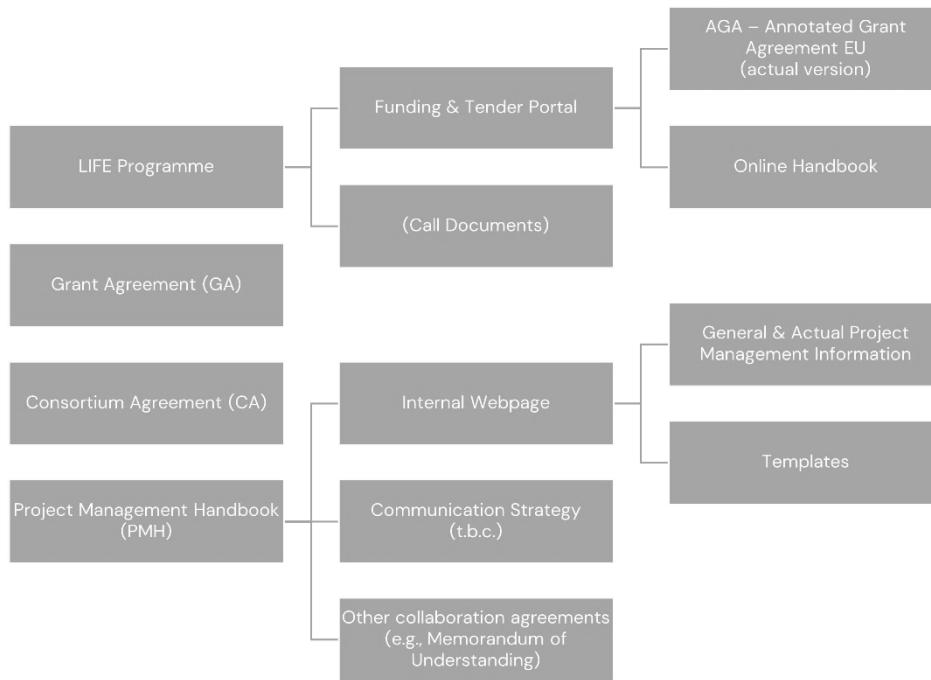


Figure 1: Document and regulation hierarchy (Source: Own figure)

Further documents to follow are the Communication Strategy as well as Collaboration agreements (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding [MoU]) with UNESCO Five-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD) Steering Committee alias AB and/or individual BENs' partners. If provisions of this PMH are in conflict with the GA and its Annexes the provisions of the GA and its Annexes shall prevail. The conflicting provisions of the PMH shall not have any legal effect towards the Beneficiaries and EC/CINEA.

The PMH is divided in different chapters. In chapter one the reader learns about the Projects' organisation, the roles and responsibilities of BENs as well as the Work packages, Tasks referring Sub-Tasks, the Working Groups (WG) and the Helpdesk communication. Chapter 2 focuses on the Project Communication and Dissemination as well as the Replicability of our results. The monitoring of the project as an implicit part of the Project and assures the quality of the results. Chapter 3 will focus on monitoring templates and relevant Project impacts that need to be measured. In Chapter 4 readers may learn about the Reporting procedures and deadlines within the LIFE RESTORE for MDD project as well as about the data exchange and relevant templates. Chapter 6 focuses on the contractual relations within the projects and highlights further obligations for the BENs and in general the PC.

1.3. PROJECT VISION

The vision of the Project is to create a coherent floodplain and corresponding floodplain forest system by improving the priority habitat HT 91E0 and HT 91F0 within the project area, the UNESCO Five-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube.*

1.4. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Grant Agreement – ANNEX 1: Description of the action (DoA) Part B, p. 7ff (GAP-101113557, p. 157ff)

The following General Project Objectives (GPO) counteract the threats mentioned in the Proposal as well as the GA. Specific Project Objectives (SPO) were developed in addition to the GPOs:

GPO A. Restoration of natural hydro-morphodynamic processes for sediment mobilisation and pioneer habitat creation.

SPO A.1 Removing of artificial embankments and widening of the riverbed.

SPO A.2 Mobilising of gravel and sand by side erosion.

GPO B. improvement of lateral connectivity and water level dynamics between river and floodplains.

SPO B.1 Opening and improving the connection of side channels with the river.

SPO B.2: Extending of side channels and creeks in floodplain forests.

GPO C. Restoration and preservation of floodplain forest structures and functions.

SPO C.1 Converting poplar plantations into native floodplain forests.

SPO C.2 Creating genetically varied and autochthonous plant availability for long-term restoration actions.

SPO C.3 Putting ecologically key floodplain forest sites out of use.

SPO C.4 Removing of IAS in floodplain forests

GPO D. Improvement of key habitat structures in floodplain forests.

SPO D.1 Restoring oxbows, wet meadows and creating amphibian ponds.

GPO E. Ensuring sustainability, replication and exploitation of the project results by establishing an intersectoral and transboundary large-scale restoration plan.

SPO E.1 Capacity building and training in state-of-the-art-river restoration.

SPO E.2 Developing and adopting large-scale pilot river restoration plans.

GPO F. Increasing awareness and knowledge of importance of Natura 2000 sites.

SPO F.1 Disseminating, promoting and communicating project activities and results.

SPO F.2 Networking with other LIFE projects and restoration experts.

SPO F.3 Implementing educational tasks.

GPO G. Monitoring of the project impacts.

SPO G.1 Biotic monitoring.

SPO G.2 Abiotic monitoring.

SPO G.3 Socio-economic monitoring

SPO G.4 Project monitoring and audit.

Each Work package (WP), their tasks and sub-tasks refer to a specific GPO and their corresponding SPOs.

1.5. PROJECT RESULTS & OUTPUTS

1.5.1. PROJECT RESULTS

The main result expected to be achieved by the Project Consortium is the smooth, efficient, timely and sound management and implementation of the project, accomplishing its objectives according to the [GA](#)⁵ and the defined budget.

1.5.2. PROJECT OUTPUTS

The Project documents show a significant list of different implementation tasks, respective milestones and specific [deliverables](#)⁶. The detailed lists can be found in the GA and the Funding & Tender Portal as well as on the [Internal Project Webpage](#)⁷.

⁵ Grant Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CZ4QoPAjF3YdKnJVdA4WwyCcJyDOg4_-/_view?usp=drive_link]

⁶ List of deliverables [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_9JOVQADVOK6JOPvqWpUS-XGofTHov3V/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

⁷ Internal project webpage [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/home?authuser=0>]

2. PROJECT ORGANISATION

2.1. PROJECT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The complexity of the project team asks for a precise structure and defined project roles. Each BEN has responsibilities and needs to fulfil obligations in the Project. Each BEN is responsible for their internal project management and – as a team member – assures the best possible expertise and results.

The detailed description of the Project roles and further responsibilities can be found in the CA, Chapter 3. The following sub-Chapters only refer to additional information.

2.1.1. PROJECT CONSORTIUM

The Project Consortium (PC) is the overall project team consisting of all Project members. It consists of the Coordinator (WWF AT), the single BENs and the AB (TBR MDD SC), as shown in Figure 2. The Project managers and their teams, of the Coordinator and of each BEN, form the key implementation body of the PC. The PC will meet twice a year to update each other on the Project implementation. Once online and another time within the frame of the TBR MDD SC meeting.

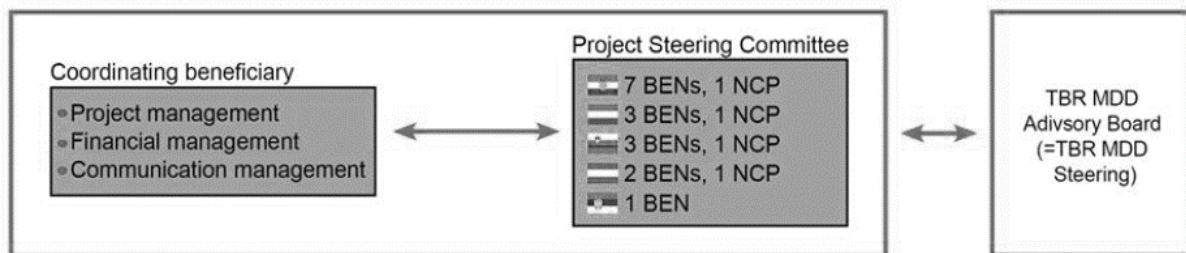


Figure 2: Project Consortium Structure (Source: GA)

2.1.2. PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

The Project Steering Committee composed of representatives from all Beneficiaries (director level or nominated substitutes), will oversee the technical implementation of the Project. The PSC will meet once per Project year online.

2.1.3. THE COORDINATOR

The detailed description of the role and further responsibilities of the Coordinator can be found in the [CA](#)⁸, Chapter 3.2, p. 9f.

2.1.4. PROJECT MANAGERS

The Project managers – the leaders of each BEN's project team – play a multifaceted role, serving as the leader of the project team of each BEN. They are the main contact person for the Coordinator and are responsible for the reporting. Additionally, the Project manager is tasked with coordinating, preparing, and monitoring the project's timeframe, milestones, and deliverables, as well as managing the BEN's project budget and reports. They ensure compliance with the GA and its Annexes, the CA and all other relevant Project documents. The Project manager is responsible for the conflict resolution, represent the project to

⁸ Consortium Agreement

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UI6JudptB7i9w7AUMuXGxPHWvL6Jlby5/view?usp=drive_link]

stakeholders from politics, media and administration, and monitor and adapt KPI tables if necessary.

The detailed description of the role and further responsibilities of the Project manager of a BEN can be found in the CA, Chapter 3.2.2, p. 13.

2.1.5. PROJECT COMMUNICATION EXPERTS

The role of the communications experts is to lead the communications team members of the BENs. They are part of the Communication Working Group (CWG) and the Education Working Group (EWG) or other WG referring to WP7, and participate actively in meetings. The communication experts oversee public relations, media activities, events and audio-visual content creation. They are the point of contact for ensuring compliance with the project's visibility guidelines and external communication requirements, and plan and manage communication activities. They will also monitor the communication and education impact, communication deliverables and tasks. They are the main point of contact for the Coordinator in this regard.

2.1.6. PROJECT FINANCIAL EXPERTS

The Financial experts' role involves leading the BENs finances and controlling issues. They oversee the project budget, documenting project spending and expenses, and coordinating procurements as well as budget amendments. They are the point of contact for ensuring compliance with the project's financial obligations as settled in the GA and LIFE Programme as well as reporting requirements.

They provide the inputs for the yearly cumulative reporting, the reporting on the Funding & Tenders Portal and the financial expenditure verification process within the Project's external auditors, ensuring adherence to EC/CINEA finance and procurement rules.

2.1.7. WORK PACKAGE AND TASK LEADER

The WP and/or Task leader is responsible for overseeing a specific portion of a project known as a "work package." Their duties typically include:

- **Planning:** They participate in the project planning process, collaborating with project managers to define the scope, objectives, and deliverables of their assigned work package/task.
- **Organizing:** They organize resources, including human resources, materials, and equipment, necessary to accomplish the tasks within their work package.
- **Assigning Tasks:** They assign tasks to team members within their work package/task, ensuring that each task is clearly defined, with assigned responsibilities and deadlines.
- **Monitoring Progress:** They monitor the progress of tasks and sub-tasks within their work package/task, tracking milestones, deliverables and ensuring that the project stays on schedule.
- **Problem-solving:** They address any issues or obstacles that arise within their work package, working with team members to find solutions and keep the project moving forward.
- **Communication:** They communicate regularly with project managers, updating them on the status of their work package/task and any relevant issues or concerns.
- **Quality Control:** They ensure that the work completed within their work package meets the project's quality standards and requirements (GA, CA, PMH).

- **Risk Management:** They identify and manage risks associated with their work package, proactively addressing potential problems to minimize their impact on the project.
- **Documentation:** They maintain accurate documentation related to their work package, including task assignments, progress reports, and any changes or deviations from the original plan.
- **Closure:** They contribute to the closure of their work package, ensuring that all deliverables have been completed satisfactorily and that any lessons learned are documented for future projects.

Overall, the work package leader plays a crucial role in the successful execution of the project by effectively managing a specific portion of the work and ensuring that it aligns with the project's overall goals and objectives.

2.1.8. NATIONAL COORDINATORS

The role of a National Coordinator within a project involves multifaceted responsibilities aimed at ensuring effective collaboration and synchronization among national partners. Primarily, the National Coordinator is tasked with coordinating the activities of national partners, aligning their tasks with the overall project objectives, and facilitating communication and cooperation among the various entities involved. This includes the preparation and documentation of national meetings, where the National Coordinator plays a pivotal role in orchestrating discussions and ensuring that all partners are well-informed and engaged. Moreover, the National Coordinator supports the project coordinator by aiding in the preparation of reports, collecting essential data, and maintaining accurate records of national-level activities. In addition, the National Coordinator serves as a crucial liaison in addressing and resolving national issues that may impact the project's progress, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances the efficiency and success of the overall project.

2.2. WORK PLAN: THE GANTT CHART

The key success factor for deadline management is realistic planning as set out in the GANTT chart and adapted yearly. Deadline management needs adequate planning of the Tasks and processes, including deliverables, milestones and the consideration of adequate time buffers. Therefore, a work plan template ([GANTT chart](#)⁹), based on the Consortium Plan in the Proposal (GA), was provided by the Coordinator. The Coordinator asks each BEN to update the GANTT chart according to their internal project management and planning. This must be completed annually and is a mandatory requirement from every BEN.

The Coordinator shall, based on that, prepare an annual overall GANTT chart, which will be approved by the Project Steering Committee/Project Consortium and is binding for all Beneficiaries.

⁹ GANTT chart

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iYPO5wMbs_4olaKb34JyXqojp9HN_Tvh/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

2.3. WORK PACKAGES, TASKS AND SUB-TASKS

The Work packages, Tasks and their Sub-Tasks are delineated in the GA. Each WP/T/S.-T. is connected to a leading BEN.

WP2 is lead by IRSNC, WP 8 by WWF HU and all other WPs are lead by WWF AT.

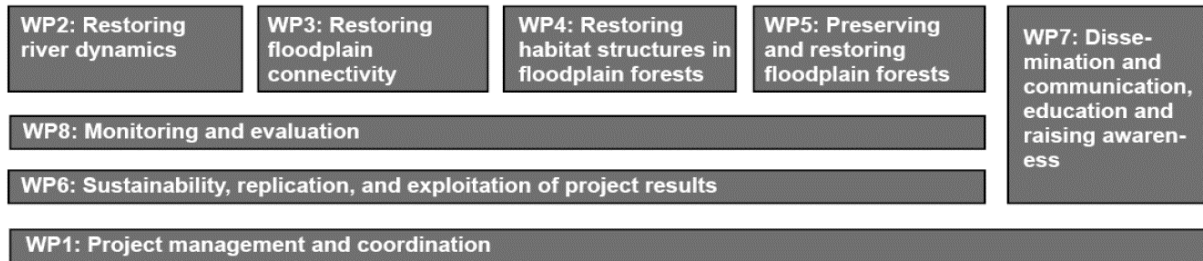


Figure 3: Work package structure (Source: GA)

2.4. WORKING GROUPS

2.4.1. PURPOSE OF THE WORKING GROUPS

The purpose of the Projects' Working Groups within the Project Consortium is to focus specifically on the restoration and conservation of river and forest ecosystems, especially our project related habitats (HT 91EO* and HT 91FO) within the context of the larger project consortium's goals. Here are some key purposes of Working Group stated in the GA:

- **Specialized Focus:** While the project consortium may have broader goals spanning various areas, the Working Group provides a specialized focus on the implementation of the tasks in the specific WPs (for RRWG – WP2 and 3 and for FRWG – WP4 and 5, CWG and EWG – WP7 and MWG – WP8 [based and coordinated with the RRWG and the FRWG]). Its purpose is to address issues related to river health, habitat restoration, habitat improvement, IAS, monitoring and biodiversity conservation within the scope of the larger project.
- **Expertise and Collaboration:** The WG brings together BENs with external experts (on demand) with specific knowledge in the habitats. Since the PC consists also of experts and BENs with long expertise in the implementation of specific tasks BENs get the opportunity to learn with and from each other on a transboundary and cross-border level.
- **Coordination and Synergy:** By working within the PC, the Working Groups should coordinate its activities with other relevant initiatives and workstreams. This synergy allows for more efficient use of resources, avoids duplication of efforts, and maximizes the impact of Project and its sustainability.
- **Data and Knowledge Sharing:** The working group facilitates the sharing of data, information, and best practices related to river and forest restoration among consortium members. This exchange of knowledge helps inform decision-making, improve project outcomes, and build collective expertise in river conservation.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The working group – especially the MWG – is responsible for monitoring the progress (referring to the impact table and KPIs) and evaluating the effectiveness of restoration efforts within the project consortium.

2.4.2. GENERAL APPROACH

Based on the information provided in the GA and the discussion during the 1st PCM in Sombor November 2023, the Working Groups (River Restoration Working Group, Forest Restoration Working Group and Communication and Education Working Group) operate as follows:

1. Budget Alignment:

- Not all Beneficiary Entities (BENs) have budget allocations for specific tasks (2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1).
- However, alignment with other BENs and tasks (2.2 and following, 3.2f, 4.2f, 5.2f) within the project implementation is mandatory, as outlined in the General Agreement (GA).

2. Working Group Structure:

- The structure of the Working Groups will be adjusted in terms of topics to be discussed and the quantity of discussions.

3. Meeting Frequency:

- The River Restoration Working Group (RRWG) and the Forest Restoration Working Group (FRWG) will meet regularly, initially every 3–4 months in 2024 and later semi-annually (online and/or on-site).

4. Excursions:

- Excursions are considered important for the Working Groups; these are planned and not mandatory.

5. Restructuring of RRWG and FRWG:

- RRWG and FRWG will undergo restructuring because their tasks extend beyond river and forest-related topics.
- The focus will be on specific topics that refer to strict Work Package (WP) distinctions.

6. Communication Focus:

- The Communication Working Group will focus on habitats HT 91EO* and HT91FO) in the Project.
- BENs have agreed to align communication and education messaging.

2.4.3. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF THE WORKING GROUPS

RIVER RESTORATION WORKING GROUP (RRWG)

Leadership: IRSNC will lead the River Restoration Working Group (RRWG) with support from WWF AT and the respective BENs in the Work package.

Members (BENs involved in WP2 and 3): at least one representative from IRSNC, WWF AT, DDNPI, WWF HU, SWA, HV, (FAZOS), STMK, JU VP, VSUME, JU KKZ, JU MP, BFNPI

Meeting Frequency: Initially, meetings will occur every 3–4 months in 2024 (max. 3 hours per meeting), transitioning to semi-annual meetings later. Therefore, the Coordinator will plan meetings combined with other physical meetings, to minimize time and travel resources.

Duration of the meetings: Meetings are expected to last for a half day or a full day, depending on the agenda.

Topics to Be Discussed:

- River restoration and task implementation progress updates.
- Challenges faced by BENs in the river-related implementation of the tasks.
- Sharing of best practices and lessons learned.
- Alignment with other BENs and tasks within the project.
- Planning and coordination of excursions.
- Other topics: tbc

FOREST RESTORATION WORKING GROUP (FRWG)

Leadership: WWF AT will lead the Forest Restoration Working Group (FRWG) with support from an external expert service.

Members (BENs involved in WP 4 and 5): at least one representative from IRSNC, WWF AT, WWF HU, HV, (FAZOS), VSUME, SiDG, JU KKZ, JU MP, BFNPI

Meeting Frequency: Regular meetings every 3–4 months initially (max. 3 hours per meeting), shifting to semi-annual meetings later. One physical meeting per year is mandatory. Therefore, the Coordinator will plan meetings combined with other physical meetings, to minimize time and travel resources.

Duration of Meetings: Meetings may extend for a half-day or full day, depending on the agenda.

Topics to Be Discussed:

- Progress updates on forest and task implementation as well as restoration initiatives.
- Challenges faced by BENs in forest-related implementation of the tasks.
- Exchange of successful strategies and challenges.
- Alignment with other BENs and tasks within the project.
- Planning and coordination of excursions.
- Other topics: tbc

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION WORKING GROUP (CEWG)

Division: Due to the broad communication and education tasks, it was decided by the whole project consortium that the CEWG will be separated into the Communication Working Group (CWG) and Education Working Group (EWG).

Leadership: A Communication Working Group (CWG) led by WWF AT, focusing on tasks in WP7 and general project communication. The Education Working Group (EWG) led by GO will also be established. The Coordinator and BENs will plan meetings combined with other physical meetings and or optional hybrid sessions, to minimize time and travel resources.

Members: All BENs will have at least one representative inside the CWG. Members of the EWG will be defined during the next EWG meeting on 5th March 2024.

Meeting Frequency: Regular meetings based on project milestones and communication needs.

Duration of Meetings: Meetings may vary in duration, with shorter sessions for CWG and longer sessions for EWG if necessary.

The Communication Working Group will focus on habitats in the project. BENs have agreed to align communication and education messaging. Therefore, also the Educational Working group will focus on their discussion on the Projects' habitat types.

Topics to Be Discussed (CWG):

- Development of the joint Project Communication Strategy.
- Progress on communication tasks outlined in WP7.
- Coordination of general project communication.
- Alignment of communication messaging among BENs.

Topics to Be Discussed (EWG):

- Educational initiatives and their progress.
- Coordination of education-related tasks.
- Alignment of education messaging among BENs.
- Other topics: tbc

MONITORING WORKING GROUP (MWG)

The two Working Groups for River Restoration and for Forest Restoration (RRWG and FRWG) jointly make up the Monitoring Working Group.

Leadership: WWF HU will lead the Monitoring Working Group (MWG) with support from the respective BENs in the Work package.

Advisory Group: The MWG will be accompanied by an external Expert Advisory Board that will be coordinated by the WWF HU. It consists of experts that reflect the outcomes of the RRWG, FRWG, WP and Tasks outputs for WP2, 3, 4 and 5.

Members (BENs involved in WP2 and 3): all BENs involved in RRWG and FRWG

Meeting Frequency: A set of at least three monitoring workshops (online or live – jointly with the periodic working groups meetings) will take place throughout the project duration, to align monitoring, indicators and methods and discuss process and results. The first monitoring meeting shall take place in November/December 2023, shortly after the start of the project, to allow for a first discussion and alignment on the definition of main indicators to be monitored in the base-line monitoring that will start in spring 2024.

Duration of Meetings: t.b.c.

Topics to Be Discussed:

- Biotic monitoring
- Abiotic monitoring
- Socio-economic Monitoring
- Other topics: t.b.c.

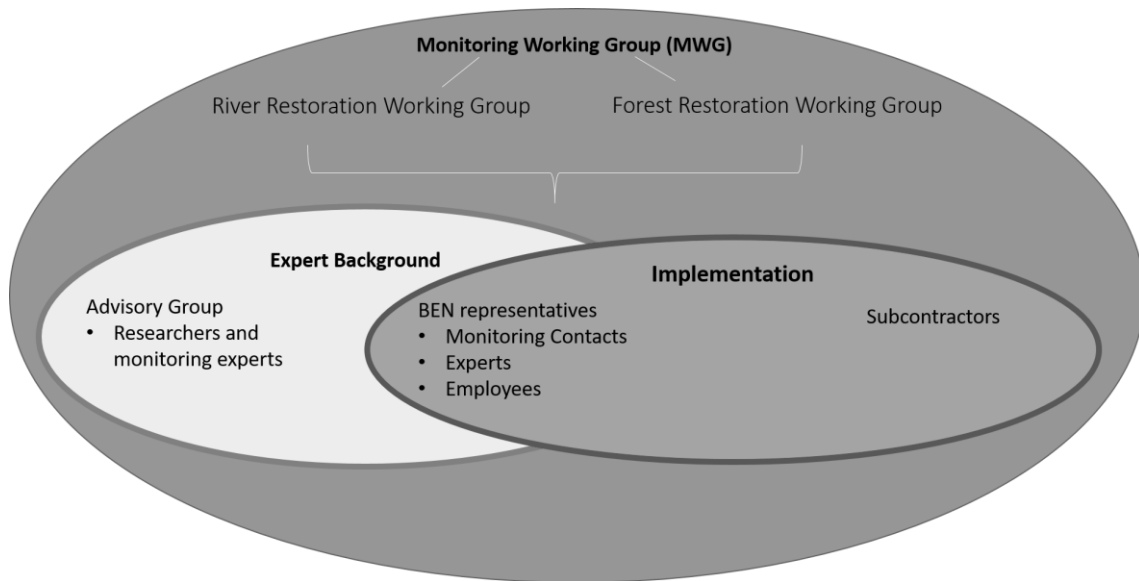


Figure 4: Structure of the MWG (Source: WWF HU)

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Working group members of LIFE RESTORE for MDD					
BEN Nr.	Abbreviation	RRWG	FRWG	CEWG	MWG
1	WWF AT	x	x	x	x
2	IRSNC	x	x	x	x
3	DDNPI	x	x	x	x
4	WWF HU	x	x	x	x
5	SWA	x		x	x
6	GO			x	x
7	HV	x	x	x	x
8	FAZOS	(x)	(x)	x	x
9	STMK	x		x	x
10	JU VP	x		x	x
11	VSUME	x	x	x	x
12	SiDG		x	x	x
13	RMSO			x	
14	JU KKZ	x	x	x	x
15	JU ZDP VZ	x	x	x	x
16	JU MP	x	x	x	x
17	BfNPI	x	x	x	x

2.5. MEETINGS

Within the Project different meetings need to be hosted by BENs. The following list provides an overview of the definition of Project Meetings:

- **Project Steering Committee Meeting (PSC):** The PSC will meet once per project year online to oversee and guide the project's strategic direction and progress.

- **Project Consortium Meeting (PC):** The PC will meet twice a year, once online and once within the TBR MDD SC meeting, to update each other on project implementation and coordinate collaborative efforts.
- **TBR MDD SC and/or Advisory Board Meeting:** These meetings bring together the strategic board for the TBR MDD and/or the Advisory Board to review progress, provide guidance, and make strategic decisions regarding Project activities.
- **Work Package Coordination Meeting:** These meetings are held to coordinate activities within specific work packages, ensuring alignment with project objectives and timelines. Meetings will be organised by the Project Lead and/or the Coordinator.
- **Working Group Meetings:** Working group meetings gather members to focus on specific tasks or topics within the project, fostering collaboration and progress in specialized areas. The WG will meet online and on-site (once per year incl. an Excursion).
- **Trainings:** These sessions provide participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to Project activities.
- **Excursions:** Excursions offer participants the opportunity to visit relevant sites or locations to gain first-hand experience or information related to project objectives.
- **Bilateral Beneficiary Meetings:** These meetings involve direct discussions between BENs to address specific issues, foster collaboration, or coordinate activities.
- **Workshops:** Workshops are interactive sessions designed to explore specific topics, address challenges, or develop solutions through collaboration and discussion.
- **Events:** Events encompass various activities such as conferences, seminars, or exhibitions related to Project objectives or outcomes.
- **Others:** This category includes any additional meeting types or activities not covered by the above categories but relevant to project implementation or coordination.

All meetings need to be documented and tracked via the Meeting Template. The Coordinator provides [templates](#)¹⁰ and supports with online trainings in advance to reporting Deadlines, in order to assure the quality standards.

2.6. HELPDESK

The Helpdesk is the main communication tool regarding Questions about the Project. Only two contacts per project may have access to the LIFE monitoring helpdesk. The first contact person is always the project contact person and cannot be replaced by someone else. You may ask to change the second contact person with another project colleague when / if needed in the course of the project.

Main contact person	Lisa Wolf, Project Manager LIFE RESTORE for MDD
2nd contact person	Hajnalka Rezner, Project Coordinator LIFE RESTORE for MDD

¹⁰ Narrative reporting templates
[\[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link\]](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link)

Questions may concern the following categories:

- Financial issues;
- Administrative questions;
- Contractual and project implementation issues.

3. PROJECT COMMUNICATION, REPLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

3.1. INTERNAL PROJECT COMMUNICATION

3.1.1. DATA MANAGEMENT

Data security and management plays an important role within the project. Due to the large Project Consortium and many people involved specific GDPR contracts will be signed by the BENs. Single contracts for single documents and or data may be prepared by the respective party (BEN).

WWF Austria and all BENs will work together to decide how they will use and manage information for the LIFE22-NAT-AT-LIFE RESTORE for MDD project. This means they share responsibility for handling information.

BENs will mainly handle informing people about how their information is used, while also making sure people's rights regarding their information are respected.

Picture rights will be shared with BENs if needed, in written form/confirmation.

The COO BEN hosts the internal webpage. Further secure clouds will be used to share confidential data between BENs.

3.1.2. INTERNAL WEBPAGE

Due to the large number of BENs and stakeholders involved in the project, an internal online webpage in combination with Google Drive was chosen to facilitate seamless internal communication. The webpage is facilitated by the COO BEN.

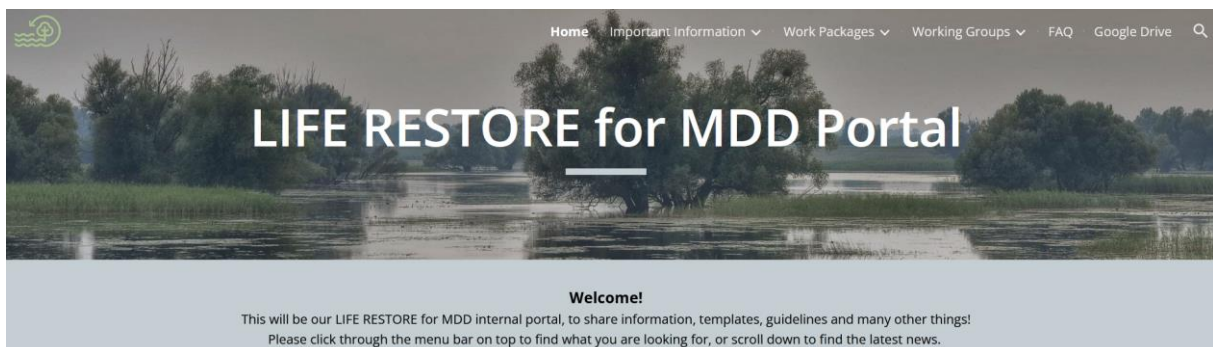


Figure 5: Internal Project Webpage – Homepage (Source: liferestore.eu)

The structure of the internal webpage, [liferestore.eu](https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/home?authuser=0)¹¹ and its landing page, is outlined as following (all of the following pages listed are accessible directly from the main landing page).

- **Latest News and Team Calendar:** The main landing page features the latest news from the consortium and the project team calendar, with meetings, planned events and project deadlines.
- **Menu Bar:** Located at the top of the landing page, the menu bar displays the websites sub-pages:
 - Important Information:

¹¹ Internal project webpage [https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/home?authuser=0]

- Project Management: Guidelines, key documents, meeting minutes, agendas, BEN contact list.
- Communication: Guidelines, CI/templates (including the project's CI download centre, colour codes, etc.), background templates, logos, and the shared photo library.
- Finance & Controlling: Training & presentations, reporting templates, key dates.
- Events Calendar: A comprehensive calendar showcasing public holidays, meetings, public events, and project deadlines.
- **Work Packages:** This section contains information on all eight work packages, including the respective GANTT charts and deliverables.
- **Working Groups:** This contains information and minutes from all Working Group meetings. As well as concept sheets and other information on all four working groups.
- **FAQ**¹²: A selection of frequently asked questions and their corresponding answers.
- **Google Drive**¹³: Direct access to the project's Google Drive to browse and download files.

The webpage was developed and disseminated among the entire project consortium within the initial months of the project, with restricted access from the public. Additionally, for documentation purposes, the webpage will remain online for five years following the conclusion of the project.

3.1.3. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

Meetings and Workshops must be documented within the frame of the narrative reporting and during the referring reporting period. All meetings need to be documented through at least a picture, **minutes**¹⁴ and/or **participant list**¹⁵.

3.1.4. TEMPLATES

All presentations (PPT file) and documents (Word file) within the frame of the LIFE RESTORE for MDD Project will be included in the **corporate design**¹⁶ of the project. Also, additional templates, like e.g. **minutes**¹⁴ and/or **participant list**¹⁵, among others, will in the project CD.

¹² FAQ Section [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/faq?authuser=0>]

¹³ Project Google Drive

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10BISs7hcyO7tSEqHC27PUyqmqkV3l2eF?usp=drive_link]

¹⁴ Meeting minutes template

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Uj4mBM_M23kAw4KiMZOWDbNmh4_6uoya/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

¹⁵ Participant list template

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ddjxDtRD3x64gSBoVK6BqWQnXcRKbWtk/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

¹⁶ Corporate design landing page [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/important-information/communication/ci-templates?authuser=0>]

3.2. EXTERNAL PROJECT COMMUNICATION

3.2.1. CORPORATE DESIGN

To increase the impact and efficiency of project communications, a distinctive **visual identity**¹⁷ is established from the start of the project. This identity will include specific fonts, colour codes and a unique design element. The Bebas Neue font will be used for headlines, while DM Sans will be used for text.

Headlines	Bebas
Text	DM Sans
Example:	<p>1. HEADLINE 1</p> <p>1.1. HEADLINE 2</p> <p>1.1.1. HEADLINE 3</p> <p>Sub-headline</p> <p>Text: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean conr eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturie nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium Nulla consequat massa quis enim. Donec pede justo, fringilla vel, aliquet nec eget, arcu. In enim justo, rhoncus ut, imperdiet a, venenatis vitae, justo.¹</p>

The visual identity is further defined by a palette of four colours inspired by elements of the project area: "forest", "water", "earth" and "sand".



Forest – R 156 | G 190 | B 138

Water – R 125 | G 170 | B 175


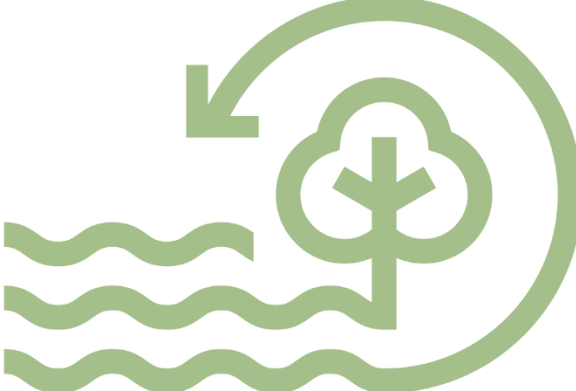
Earth – R 150 | G 125 | B 106

Sand – R 252 | G 239 | B 221

Black – R 0 | G 0 | B 0

¹⁷ Corporate design landing page [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/important-information/communication/ci-templates?authuser=0>]

In addition, a specific design element has been chosen to accompany all communication activities. This element symbolises key factors of the project, including "the three rivers – Mura, Drava, Danube", "the floodplain forests" and "restoration". In particular, this design element, together with the "LIFE" and "Natura 2000" logos, should be used consistently in all communications relating to the project.

Project Design Element with Project name:	Single Design Element:
	

This visual identity is an integral part of both internal and external project communication, contributing to a broader public understanding. While the beneficiaries, as organisations, have the flexibility to use their own visual identity, the usage of the project's visual identity is strongly encouraged. It should be prominently featured in presentations, websites, banners, flags, project materials, printed matter (such as leaflets, fact sheets, the Laymen's Report, etc.). Detailed guidelines for the project's visual identity can be found in the Communication Strategy and are available on the Internal Project Webpage liferestore.eu¹⁸. Furthermore, all specific rules for communicational activities that have been defined in ANNEX 5 ARTICLE 16 & 17 of the [GA](#)¹⁹ are applicable throughout the project.

3.2.2. EXTERNAL WEBSITE

The "LIFE RESTORE for MDD" project website will be set up as a sub-site of the "amazon-of-europe.com" website and will have its own URL under "liferestoreformdd.eu". This website will be set up during the first year of the project and will contain all relevant project information, a project map, a news section and an events calendar. In addition, each BEN will describe the project on its own website and link to the main project website. A common short description of the project will be included in the communication strategy. For the purpose of the project the Internal Webpage will be linked to the overall TBR MDD "Amazon of Europe" Webpage.

3.2.3. PRESS

Continuous communication and active engagement with the press and public will be maintained throughout the project. A series of ten press events will be held throughout the project area, complemented by at least 25 press releases distributed in all five countries over the course of five years.

¹⁸ Internal project webpage [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/home?authuser=0>]

¹⁹ Grant Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CZ4QoPAjF3YdKnJVdA4WwyCcJyDOg4_-/_view?usp=drive_link]

At project level, at least two joint press releases will be issued – one at the start of the project and one at the end. These releases will be drafted in English by the lead communication manager and then translated and disseminated by the national contact points in their respective local languages. The designated national coordinators are IRSNC for Slovenia, GO for Croatia, DDNPI for Hungary and VSUME for Serbia.

At both national and local level, a minimum of five press releases will be issued throughout the project, specifically highlighting the restoration and conservation activities. Each press release will include a project map and visual material from the project area to enhance its dissemination value.

3.3. REPLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF PROJECT RESULTS

3.3.1. LAYMAN'S REPORT

At the end of the project, an adequate report (Layman's report) should be produced summarising the work and results of the project as well as its long-term environmental benefits.

The report should be written for a general audience, in English and will be translated into all five project languages, and should avoid using jargon and complicated sentences. The report should include all relevant information: name and project number, duration, total cost, EU contribution and contact details. Powerful images and different voices (i.e. quotes from various stakeholders, partners or volunteers) help to visualise and maximise the impact of the report.

The report must be published on the project website and be available in electronic format.

3.3.2. AFTER LIFE PLAN

The After LIFE Plan will be a stand-alone document which shows what has to be done in the future, who will be responsible and why, where financing will come from and what sources of knowledge are available and should be used for future management. IRSNC is responsible for the implementation with the cooperation of each project partner between 01.01.2028 and the project end date (30.9.2028). It includes the documentation in the RiverWiki – updated during the project duration (WWF AT) to ensure dissemination amongst an interested public, support replication and to facilitate an exchange with other related projects.

LIFE projects funded from 2014 onwards (including preparatory, integrated, capacity building and climate action projects, but excluding technical assistance projects), must produce an After-LIFE Plan as a separate chapter of the final report. For best practice projects, the After-LIFE Plan shall set out how the actions initiated in the LIFE project will be continued and developed in the years that follow the end of the project, and how the longer-term management of the site(s)/habitats/species will be assured.

For all projects, the After-LIFE Plan should:

- present an overview of the project and an assessment of the situation at the end of the project;
- define the after-LIFE objectives and methodology;
- identify funding needs and sources of funds;
- meet the contractual requirements of this task.

The After-LIFE plan will provide an analysis of the project's impacts and how the results can be applied beyond the scope of the project: in addition, it will set out how the results

will continue to be disseminated and communicated following the project's conclusion. The plan will also indicate future models, recommended further actions, including those that will be submitted either as new project proposals or potential partner arrangements. This is central to ensuring the sustainability of the project, to identify the long-term mechanisms that may need to be put in place and to specify which actions and resources will be required for future development.

4. PROJECT MONITORING

4.1. PROJECT IMPACTS

The project tasks and measures will improve either directly the targeted habitats or improve the ecological conditions for these priority habitats on a total area of at least 2,472 ha. The table below describes the main intended impacts. Further details are included in GA, DoA, Part B, p. 21f. BENs need to refer to these within their reporting.

Action no	Location	responsible BEN	Improved water body (m)	Improved water body (ha)	Improved morphology (ha)	sediment mobilisation (m3)	Improved hydrology (ha)	Improved forest (ha)
T.2.2	Suizbach-Mouth riverbed widening (AT)	STMK			1.0	30,000	4	
T.2.3	Konjšće 2 riverbed widening (SI)	SWA			13.4	402,000	30	
T.2.4	Mele riverbed widening (SI)	SWA			15.9	477,000	21	
T.2.5	Hrastje Mota 2 riverbed widening (SI)	SWA			1.9	57,000	5	
T.3.2	Mühbach – side channel optimization (AT)	STMK	29,000	15			317	
T.3.3	Drauchenbach – alluvial creek extension (AT)	STMK	1,700	1			29	
T.3.4	Benica side channel reconnection (SI)	SWA	1,900	4			44	
T.3.5	Orlovo selište side channel reconnection (HR)	HV	1,900	4			33	
T.3.6	Drávatamási side channel reconnection (HU)	DDNPI	950	2			11	
T.3.7	Tótújfalú side channel reconnection (HU)	DDNPI	980	2			10	
T.3.8	Monoštorski rit side channel extension and optimization (RS)	VSUME	12,300	7			950	
T.4.2	Preservation and reproduction HT 91E0*, HT 91F0 (SI)	SIDG						
T.4.3	Restoration of HT 91E0* (SI)	SIDG						10
T.4.4	Restoration of HT 91F0 (SI)	SIDG						10
T.4.5	Purchase of land with most valuable habitats (SI)	IRSNC						20
T.4.6	Proposal for establishment of protected areas (SI)	IRSNC						80
T.4.7	Hlapičina forest IAS removal (HR)	JU MP						37
T.4.8	Purchase of land with most valuable habitats (HR)	JU MP						20
T.4.9	Drava forest park IAS removal (HR)	JU VŽ						85
T.4.10	Drava-Mura mouth IAS removal (HR)	JU KZZ						20
T.4.11	Monoštor forest restoration (RS)	VSUME						26.5
T.5.2	Gradišće oxbow lake restoration (SI)	SWA		1.5				13
T.5.3	Bodzás oxbow lake restoration (HU)	BINPD		3			28	
T.5.4	Dorje Medimurje floodplain meadow restoration (HR)	JU MP						4
T.5.5	Hosszúvíz oxbow lake restoration (HU)	BINPI		8			54	
T.5.6	Tótszerdahely oxbow lake restoration (HU)	BINPI		12			15	
T.5.7	Drávaszentés complex habitat restoration (HU)	DDNPI		3				10
T.5.8	Bjelobrdska oxbow lake restoration (HR)	HV	5,500	65			193	
T.5.9	Báta oxbow lake restoration (HU)	DDNPI		60			175	
SUM			54,230	186	32	966,000	1,918	336

Total area restored and improved (ha) (incl. Forest, water body, morphology, hydrology)	2,472
Length of waterbodies restored and improved (m)	54,230
Amount of sediments mobilized (m3)	966,000

Figure 6: Project Impact Table Screenshot (Source: GA)

The anticipated impacts concerning communication, dissemination, and educational metrics are outlined in the project's Grant Agreement and presented comprehensively in the table below. The "LIFE RESTORE for MDD" team aims to engage 1,055,810 individuals through diverse channels and initiatives, with a strong emphasis on web presence, including the project's website, and press-related activities.

Overview of Impacts: Work Package 7			
Task N°	Activity	Reach (Persons)	Participants (or Visitors)
T7.3	Web Presence and digital evidence	439,940	-
T7.4	Press-related activities (press releases, interviews, articles, press trips, etc.)	500,000	-
T7.5	Project public events	12,000	19,625
T7.6	Project publications	24,400	-
T7.7	Networking an awareness raising	6,335	25
T7.8	Awareness raising for protected areas, LIFE and project activities within local communities	40,000	510
T7.9	Educational activities within the Mura-Drava-Danube area	10,600	2,375
		Reach (persons)	Participants (or visitors)
		1,033,275	22,535
	TOTAL REACH	1,055,810	

4.2. GANTT CHART

The **GANTT chart**²⁰ visually represents the project schedule that shows the Project's Tasks and Sub-Tasks over time. It provides an information on the Project's schedule and timeline. Dependencies between Tasks are indicated and managers allocate resources effectively. It's allowing real-time tracking of the Project's advancement against planned schedule. It helps the Coordinator to track the BENs progress in the Project. Further Information can be found in Chapter 2.2.

The GANTT chart will be updated by each BEN quarterly, latest with every reporting. The updates will be aligned within the Project Consortium and the respective Work Package Lead. The GANTT Chart is the baseline and reference for the Narrative Reporting. Therefore the reference frame for the quality check of the Coordinator.

The Coordinator provides **templates**²¹ and supports with online trainings in advance to reporting Deadlines and during WP coordination meetings, in order to assure the quality standards.

²⁰ GANTT chart

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/liYPO5wMbs_4olaKb34JyXqojp9HN_Tvh/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

²¹ Narrative reporting templates

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link]

LIFE RESTORE FOR MDD - Preserving and restoring floodplain forest habitats along the Mura-Drava-Danube rivers																	
Acronym	LIFE22-NAT-AT-LIFE RESTORE for MDD																
Project nr:	101113557																
Project start/end date:	01.10.2023 - 30.09.2024																
Work packages / Tasks	Milestones	Means of verification	Nr. of deliverables	Deliverables	Assigned to	Start	End	Due month	2023			2024					
									Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
WP1 Project management	Milestones	Means of verification	Nr. of deliverables	Deliverables	WWF AT	01.10.2023	30.09.2028	60	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	
Task 1.1 - General project management	1. Project management	Project management handbook	D1 / D1.1	Project management handbook	WWF AT	01.10.2023	30.09.2028	60									
		Project Steering Committee established & meetings			WWF AT	01.10.2023	31.01.2024	2									
		F&A introduction workshops, preparation meetings before reporting			WWF AT	01.11.2023	30.09.2028	60									
	2. Project kick-off	meeting minutes				WWF AT	01.10.2023	30.09.2028	60								
						WWF AT	01.11.2023	30.11.2023	2								
						WWF AT			60								
						WWF AT			12								
Task 1.2 - General financial project management					WWF AT			36									
					WWF AT	01.10.2023	30.09.2028	60									
					WWF AT	01.10.2023	30.09.2028	60									
					WWF AT	01.10.2023	30.09.2028	60									

Figure 7: GANTT chart (Source: Own table)

4.3. FINANCIAL MONITORING

The financial monitoring is essential to ensure the progress of the project. All expenses must be documented monthly according to the prescribed EC/CINEA standards and national legislations (for example, concerning tax payments and the like). The expenses are sent to the coordinator during the reporting phases. This is done using the template provided by the coordinator. Each Beneficiary is responsible for their own budget and the eligibility of costs.

The Coordinator provides [templates](#)²² and supports with online trainings in advance to reporting Deadlines, in order to assure the quality standards.

4.4. COMMUNICATION MONITORING

The monitoring of communication activities within the project is approached through various methods:

- The leading communication manager has distributed an [impact reporting template](#)²³ to all communication officers in the project consortium. This template, to be completed quarterly, should be submitted to the lead beneficiary, WWF Austria. It encompasses details such as the date of communication, the responsible beneficiary, the corresponding task in work package 7, the medium/channel (e.g., website name), the social media account name (if applicable), medium category (e.g., newspaper print, website), action/headline description, indication of earned, paid, or owned activity, overall reach (in persons), event participants (if applicable), social media reactions, a link to online coverage, and information about documentation (PDF copy or screenshot).
- In addition to the quarterly updates, national coordinators are required to fill out the template one month after significant press releases to ensure prompt coverage of all measurable activities and effects of the press release.
- Furthermore, all beneficiaries must document their communication activities by completing and keeping event attendance sheets (participants list) whenever

²² Finance & Controlling landing page [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/important-information/finance-controlling?authuser=0>]

²³ Impact reporting template [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/151OzGXJ2025RVhsxqXby5OqM3qljUJ9Y/edit?usp=drive_link&oui=d=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

possible. For those under 18, a responsible adult, such as a parent or teacher, is sufficient. It is essential that a legal statement is included on all participation sheets, giving the project team the right to take and distribute images of the participants.

Moreover, for documentation purposes, all communication activities, including press releases and social media posts, should be saved as screenshots or PDFs and shared with the leading beneficiary together with the monitoring template quarterly.

4.5. KEY PROJECT INDICATORS

The main criteria for project success are the Key Project Indicators (KPI). These are as following:

- **„Area/Length of habitat where loss of biodiversity is being halted and reversed due to your project (due to existing habitat restored and/or newly created/developed habitat)”** [HT 91EO* and HAT 91FO]
- **“Invasive alien species** [Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifer*; Indigo bush *Amorpha fruticosa*; Japanese knotweed *Ryegrass japonica*; Giant goldenrod *Solidago gigantea*] will be removed on a total area of 142 ha (1.42 km²). The starting value has been chosen at the target value, since studies on the actual status and the area spread of invasive species are planned in the frame of the project. The project-end value is therefore 0, assuming, that the IAS removal will be successful. The value at 3/5 years after project end reflects the assumption that the removal will be successful.”

Once a project is funded, the coordinating beneficiary must record the project results through the KPI webtool (only accessible to LIFE funded projects) by the Coordinator. This should be done minimum twice during the project’s lifetime. The first time (First Snapshot) should be during the initial stages of the project (within the first nine months of the project’s implementation) and the second time (Final Snapshot) should be at final report stage. The European Commission then verifies the data and evaluates the project’s progress and success.

4.6. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.6.1. FORESEEN RISKS

The following table lists the risks identified in Annex 1. The risk information is read only and it is provided as a reference for the state of play information.

Risk No	Description	WP No	Likelihood	Risk Mitigation Measure
1	Large consortium	All WPs	low	Stable project management and clear tasks as well as responsibilities (see chapter 1.5 and 4.1, 4.2); BENs are known to each other (see chapter 1.5)
2	Failures in the implementation of restoration measures	All WPs	low	Experienced BENs and a careful planning
3	Dependence on subcontractors	All WPs	low	Clear invitations to tender and awarding of contracts to only highly qualified experts

4	Low acceptance for the project restoration measures	All WPs	medium	Clear and inclusive communication with all stakeholders (see WP 7)
5	Delayed implementation due to higher force (e.g. unpredictable weather conditions, pandemic)	All WPs	medium	A realistic project frame of 5 years is foreseen; careful planning (already during the application process); buffer time is planned (see chapter 3.1 and 3.2 Timetable).
6	Overall rise of prices	All WPs	high	Careful financial planning (already during the application process; see Annex A7_001)
7	Overspending/-using of Resources	All WPs	medium	Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for actions and communication (see chapter 4 and Annex A7_001)
8	Schedule	All WPs	low	Project lead with extensive experience with similar projects; adequate assignment of resources for project management and coordination; clear structures (e.g. working plan, communication plan, meeting plan)
9	Lack of success in IAS eradication	WP 4/5	medium	Careful method selection in planning, integration into long-term (forest restoration & IAS management) plans (see WP4); involvement of forest management authorities to ensure implementation beyond project; Monitoring of IAS to adapt methods (WP8)
10	Lack of success in establishing new forest with fungal disease-resistant trees	WP 4	low	Integrated element of the project design (see T 4.2): Planting material of autochthonous tree species is produced in accordance with the Law on Reproductive Material of Forest Trees, which implies production control and health inspection. Only healthy seedlings can be used for afforestation requiring a phyto –sanitary certificate. If necessary, in the first years and no alternative given, preventive treatment with fungicides will take place at a very limited scope, closely monitored and only with fully EU-approved fungicides.

4.6.2. UNFORESEEN RISKS

There are no unforeseen critical risks. Unforeseen risks can be added whenever identified via the Funding & Tender Platform.

4.6.3. REPORTING RISKS

At the end of each period (see Chapter 5.2.) BENs should give the state of play of every risk identified in Annex 1 and necessary give new mitigation measures. This happens via the [Narrative Report/Technical](#)²⁴ and the Funding & Tender Portal.

²⁴ Narrative reporting templates

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link]

5. REPORTING

5.1. GENERAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In general, all BENs must refer to the General Conditions in and annexed to our GA for the contractual requirements. The reporting is in English. The reporting must include the following obligatory elements.

- The Narrative Report according the template provided by the Coordinator, with all sections filled in, in English.
- Index of actual deliverables with short description annexed, in English.
- Deliverables due in the reporting period annexed. Deliverables in language(s) other than English include a summary in English.
- The Financial Report according the correct latest template of the respective reporting period, with all sections filled in.
- A consolidated financial statement and financial statement of each individual BEN.
- Certificates for durable goods and/or deprivation of goods.
- Envisaged progress until next report.

Reporting is an essential task of project management in which the whole partnership is highly involved. It allows the programme to monitor project progress and, in particular, to verify the compliance of project implementation with the approved proposal (GA) as well as with the rules governing the LIFE fund.

At the time of writing this handbook, the details of the Platform and how reporting works could only be estimated on the basis of the LIFE Welcome Days (Oct 2023) and the [Online Manual](#)²⁵.

5.2. DATES AND DEADLINES

The monitoring and reporting schedule is as follows:

Reporting periods			Type	Beneficiaries send to the Coordinator		The Coordinator sends to the European Commission
RP No	Month from	Month to		Narrative Report + Copies of supporting documents	Financial Report + Copies of supporting documents	
			Pre-financing	-	-	-
O	1	6	Pre-Reporting Review (Project progress, impact data sets, financial reports)	20 days after end of reporting period	20 days after end of reporting period	
PR1	1	12	1 st Progress Report	20 days after end of reporting period		60 days after end of reporting period
Y1	1	15	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 days after end of reporting period	As mentioned in the Deliverables list. (updated)
R1	1	24	Additional prefinancing report	20 days after end of reporting period	20 days after end of reporting period	60 days after end of reporting period

²⁵ Online Manual [<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Online+Manual>]

Y2	16	27	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 days after end of reporting period	As mentioned in the Deliverables list. (updated)
PR2	13	36	2 nd Progress Report	20 days after end of reporting period		60 days after end of reporting period
Y3	28	39	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 days after end of reporting period	As mentioned in the Deliverables list. (updated)
R2	25	48	Additional prefinancing report	20 days after end of reporting period	20 days after end of reporting period	60 days after end of reporting period
Y4	40	51	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 days after end of reporting period	As mentioned in the Deliverables list. (updated)
Y5	52	60	Yearly cumulative expenditures		tbc	tbc
R3	49	60	Periodic report (Final report)	tbc	tbc	tbc

All BENs therefore stick to the following dates:

Reporting periods			Type	Beneficiaries send to the Coordinator		The Coordinator sends to the European Commission
RP No	Month from	Month to		Narrative Report + Copies of supporting documents	Financial Report + Copies of supporting documents	
			Pre-financing	-	-	-
O	1	6	Pre-Reporting Review (Project progress, impact data sets, financial reports)	20 April 2024	20 April 2024	
PR1	1	12	1 st Progress Report	20 October 2024		30 November 2024
Y1	1	15	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 January 2025	28 February 2025
R1	1	24	Additional prefinancing report	20 October 2025	20 October 2025	30 November 2025
Y2	16	27	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 January 2026	28 February 2026
PR2	13	36	2 nd Progress Report	20 October 2026		30 November 2026
Y3	28	39	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 January 2027	28 February 2027
R2	25	48	Additional prefinancing report	20 October 2027	20 October 2027	30 November 2027
Y4	40	51	Yearly cumulative expenditures		20 January 2028	28 February 2028
Y5	52	60	Yearly cumulative expenditures		tbc	tbc
R3	49	60	Periodic report (Final report)	tbc	tbc	tbc

5.3. NARRATIVE REPORTING

In order to receive payments, the consortium must submit periodic reports (following the schedule set out in the Grant Agreement). When these are due, they must be submitted directly in the Periodic Reporting Module of the Funding & Tenders Portal.

The Coordinator provides [templates](#)²⁶ and supports with online trainings in advance to reporting Deadlines, in order to assure the quality standards.

5.4. CONTINUOUS REPORTING ON MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

Milestones and deliverables should be submitted by each BEN for their work. You should report on milestones and deliverables in accordance with the schedule set out for them. All this information is automatically compiled to create part A of the periodic Technical Report. The Coordinator provides [templates](#)²⁶ and supports with online trainings in advance to reporting deadlines, in order to assure the quality standards.

5.5. FINANCIAL REPORTING

In order to receive payments, the consortium must submit periodic reports (following the schedule set out in the Grant Agreement). When these are due, they must be submitted directly in the Periodic Reporting Module of the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Reporting to EC/CINEA:

- BENs are responsible for uploading their numbers in the Funding & Tenders Portal.
- WWF AT as Coordinator is responsible for the formal submission of these numbers to the Funding & Tender Portal. Therefore, the Coordinator is responsible for the Quality Control of the uploaded reports.

Reporting to WWF AT as Coordinator:

- The Coordinator runs consolidated project wide internal financial reporting at regular intervals (first one will be after 6 months). This first reporting will be primarily used as a pilot for ensuring that salaries are being accurately recorded.
- The Coordinator will provide a financial template for BENs to complete so that we can keep track on actual costs vs budget – for the cumulative yearly reports as well as for the and the additional prefinancing reports.
- The Coordinator will not check every single cost as it is the BENs responsibility to produce accurate reporting that is fully backed up with good documentation. And therefore, BENs are responsible for the eligibility of their own costs.
- WWF AT has ultimate responsibility to the EC, so spot checks, documentation reviews and process checks should be expected by BENs.

The Yearly Cumulative Reporting will be submitted as a Deliverable by the Coordinator. The Coordinator provides [templates](#)²⁷ and supports with online trainings in advance to reporting Deadlines, in order to assure the quality standards.

²⁶ Narrative reporting templates

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link]

²⁷ Finance & Controlling landing page [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/important-information/finance-controlling?authuser=0>]


		FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL BENEFICIARY					
PROJECT reference :	Project 101113557 — LIFE22-NAT-AT-LIFE RESTORE for MDD	PERIOD (FROM) :					
COUNTRY CODE :		PERIOD (TO) :					
NAME OF BENEFICIARY :							
Local currency applied?		<-- select currency					
Statement of EXPENDITURES	Total ELIGIBLE costs with non-recoverable VAT (in €)	Statement of INCOME (to cover the total cost)	€	% of eligible costs			
A) PERSONNEL	0,00	Requested Union contribution	0,00				
A.1) Personnel_Employees	0,00	Beneficiary's own contribution	0,00				
A.2) Personnel_Non_Employees	0,00	Co-financer's contribution	0,00				
B) SUBCONTRACTING	0,00	Direct income of the project	0,00				
C.1) TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE	0,00						
C.2) EQUIPMENT	0,00						
Equipment Full Amount	0,00						
Equipment Depreciated Amount	0,00						
C.3) OTHER GOODS, WORKS & SERVICES	0,00						
D.1) LAND PURCHASE	0,00						
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	0,00						
OVERHEADS	0,00						
TOTAL	0,00				TOTAL	0,00	

Figure 8: Financial monitoring and reporting template (Source: Own table)

5.6. REPORTING DATA EXCHANGE

For the Reporting and the exchange of Data an extra Cloud due to GDPR regulations will be installed by the Coordinator. The Coordinator will provide training in advance to reporting periods.

5.7. QUALITY CHECK

Each BEN asserts the finalization of their templates and reporting in accordance with the Contractual Documents and, overall, the Grant Agreement (GA). The Coordinators meticulously check that the documents and reports align with the specifications of the Funding & Tenders Portal, ensuring that all requisite supporting documents are appropriately appended. It is imperative to note that partners are obligated to utilize the provided templates, as stipulated in the project guidelines, to maintain consistency and facilitate streamlined assessment and evaluation processes. Adhering to these standardized templates ensures uniformity in reporting practices across all BENs, promoting transparency and efficiency in the project's documentation and assessment procedures.

6. CONTRACTUAL DOCUMENTS

6.1. GRANT AGREEMENT

The Grant Agreement, i.e. our approved Project application including all annexes, is decisive. There you find all the relevant information.

- Preamble
- Terms and Conditions (including Data Sheet)
- Annex 1 Description of the action
- Annex 2 Estimated budget for the action
- Annex 2a Additional information on unit costs and contributions (if applicable)
- Annex 3 Accession forms (if applicable)
- Annex 3a Declaration on joint and several liability of affiliated entities (if applicable)
- Annex 4 Model for the financial statements
- Annex 5 Specific rules (if applicable)

The [GA](#)²⁸ is a legal binding document that all BENs signed.

6.2. CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

The Consortium Agreement [[CA](#)²⁹] is an addition to the GA and is signed and binding to all BENs.

6.3. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDINGS

Memorandum of Understandings [[MoU](#)³⁰] may be signed by the Coordinator and/or BEN with other Projects in and around the project area/Danube Basin/TBR MDD.

6.4. AMENDMENTS

6.4.1. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE GA | CA | PMH

The GA | CA | PMH may be amended, unless the amendment entails changes which would call into question the decision of awarding the grant or breach the principle of equal treatment of applicants. All BENs may request an amendment only in conjunction and communication with the Coordinator. The Coordinator submits and receives [requests for amendments](#)³¹ on behalf of the BENs. Any requests for amendment must include the reasons why and appropriate supporting documents.

6.4.2. FINANCIAL AMENDMENTS

Neither the total amount of the budget nor the total EC/CINEA contribution can be amended and in general the budget as set out in the GA must be respected. The budget

²⁸ Grant Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CZ4QoPAjF3YdKnJVdA4WwyCcJyDOg4_- /view?usp=drive_link]

²⁹ Consortium Agreement [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UI6JudptB7i9w7AUMuXGxPHWvL6Jlby5/view?usp=drive_link]

³⁰ MoU [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IAit3jbVAJeKqyfBVwJPZwaZDkGWFB04?usp=drive_link]

³¹ Online manual, amendments section [<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/display/OM/Amendments>]

for all BENs however may be adjusted (without an official amendment) as long as this does not imply any substantive or important change to the description of the action and follows the guidelines as stipulated in the above-mentioned GA chapter. In case of doubt, BENs contact the Coordinator, who will furthermore forward the request to the Helpdesk if necessary.

The Coordinator will coordinate the budget amendment process at regular intervals throughout the project to ensure that all BENs are given the opportunity to amend at the same time. This collaborative approach will ensure that the budget is optimized on a consolidated level and ensure that the Project does not increase or decrease the total budget overall. The Coordinator will provide a template and instructions relating to the budget amendment process upon the first iteration of such a process.

6.4.3. AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

If there are any changes to the Grant Agreement (e.g. data or options specific to that agreement) or its annexes, they must be done through a formal amendment directly in the Funding & Tenders Portal (electronic signature).

Amendments are normally NOT necessary for:

- budget transfers covered by the budget flexibility
- name or address changes of a participant — done directly in the Participant Register
- universal takeovers (merger/acquisition) of a participant — done directly in the Participant Register
- changes of the banking details — done directly in the Participant Register.

Amendments can be prepared by the consortium participants together, but only the Coordinator can launch, sign and submit them. Amendments might occur parallel to the adaptation of the GANTT chart once per year.

Amendment process: Get ready > Launch amendment > Amendment preparation > Consult Commission > Sign & Submit > Assessment > Countersign

Amendment request

The amendment request consists of:

- updated structured information on the Grant Management System screens
- amendment request letter: the letter with the request and reasons for the amendment
- amendment core (including new version of GA Annexes 1 and 2, if needed): the legal document with the list of amendment clauses
- supporting documents: documents uploaded by the consortium, consolidated Grant Agreement, etc.

Be aware that the signed amendment is the legal document containing the changes to the Grant Agreement. It is legally binding and will be incorporated into the Agreement. The consolidated version is only for information.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Check that the updated information Grant Management System screens is correct.
- Quality check: Check that the Amendment documents are correct and all supporting documents attached.

6.5. DATA SECURITY (GDPR)

As of 25th May 2018, anyone who collects or in any way uses for professional purposes personal data of individuals must comply with the [General Data Protection Regulation](#)³² (GDPR).

The BENs make clear that these regulations and the use of personal data is respected throughout the Projects' duration. The BENs signed a contract „Joint Controllers“ under Art 26 GDPR and filled in the TECHNICAL-ORGANIZATIONAL MEASURES to ensure sharing contact details.

³² Internal project webpage, GDPR [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/important-information/project-management?authuser=0>]

7. ANNEX

7.1. INTERNAL PROJECT WEBPAGE

liferestore.eu³³

7.2. NARRATIVE REPORTING TEMPLATE

[Narrative Reporting Template](#)³⁴

7.3. FINANCIAL REPORTING TEMPLATE

[Finance and Controlling](#)³⁵ [Will be provided by the Financial Expert of the Coordinator.]

7.4. COMMUNICATION REPORTING TEMPLATE

[Impact reporting template](#)³⁶

7.5. MEETING AND EVENT TEMPLATE

[Meeting and Event Template](#)³⁷

³³ Internal project webpage [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/home?authuser=0>]

³⁴ Narrative reporting templates
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link]

³⁵ Finance & Controlling landing page [<https://sites.google.com/wwf.panda.org/lr4mdd/important-information/finance-controlling?authuser=0>]

³⁶ Impact reporting template
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/151OzGXJ2025RVhsxqXby5OqM3qljUJ9Y/edit?usp=drive_link&oui=105640073056720385813&rtpof=true&sd=true]

³⁷ Narrative reporting templates
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1EonPEXOHMnsCa2aRWwXSegLEYRu6Dmx-?usp=drive_link]

IMPRESSUM

Project number: 101113557

Project name: Preserving and restoring floodplain forest habitats along the Mura–Drava–Danube rivers

Project acronym: LIFE22-NAT-AT-LIFE RESTORE for MDD

Call: LIFE-2022-SAP-NAT

Topic of action: LIFE Project Grants

Granting authority: European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)

Implementation period: 5 years (October 2023 – September 2028)

Project Location: Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia

EC Funding Line: Standard Action Project (SAP) LIFE-2021-„Nature and Biodiversity“

Authors: Lisa Wolf, Hajnalka Rezner, Jasmin Maier, Stewart Page, Ivana Vasić, Cornelia Jöbstl, Jasmin Sadiković, Hajnalka Kovács, Zoltán Barina

Work package: 1

Deliverable: D1.1 (D1)

Institution: WWF Austria

Date: December 2023

PARTNERS:

