



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA NARAVNE VIRE IN PROSTOR

Opportunities for Natura 2000 and Nature Restoration: Framework and Key Challenges

dr. Katarina Groznik Zeiler, Andrej Bibič
Nature Directorate



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND SPATIAL PLANNING

Biodiversity conservation in Slovenia



Biodiversity
hotspot

Close to
nature,
sustainable
and multiple
objective
forest
management

Natura 2000
Management
Plan & PA
management
plans

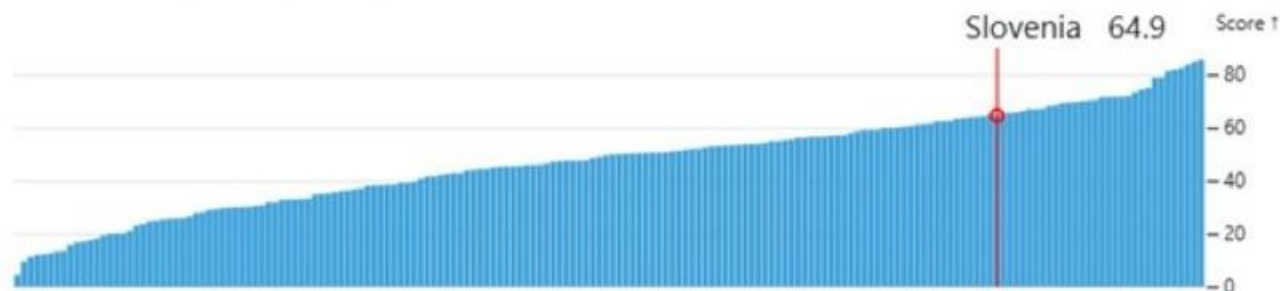
58% forest
cover

Strategic plan
for
environmental
protection

International
commitments

Biodiversity & Habitat

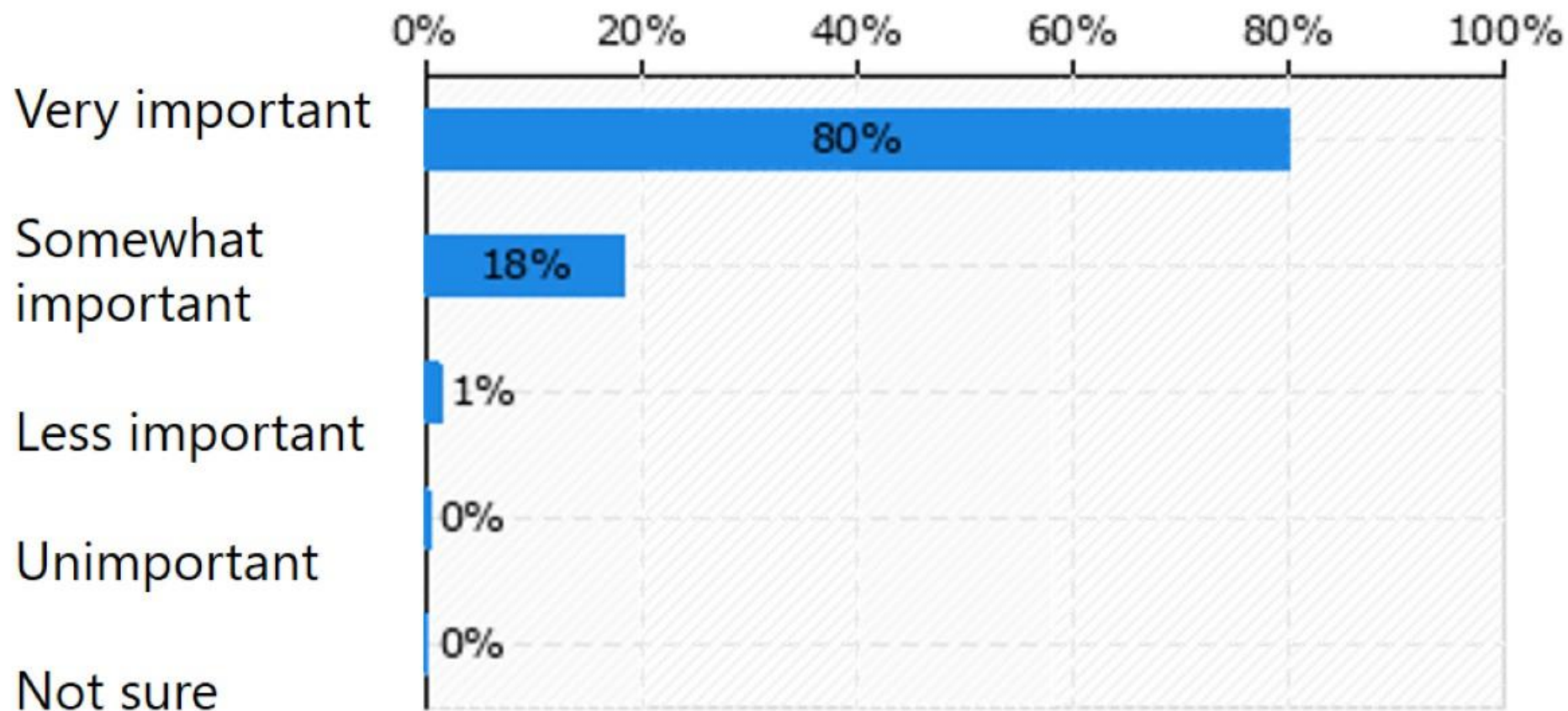
Score by Country



Yale School of the Environment, 2024



How important are nature conservation & restoration for you?





I think that nature restoration is important, because...

... conserved nature provides clean water & air

... healthy & resilient ecosystems the source of our survival

... the coming generations will have better chances for a good life if nature is conserved

... conserved nature supports provisioning healthy food

... biodiversity is important to me & I am worried about biodiversity loss

... my residence is more livable because of more greenery

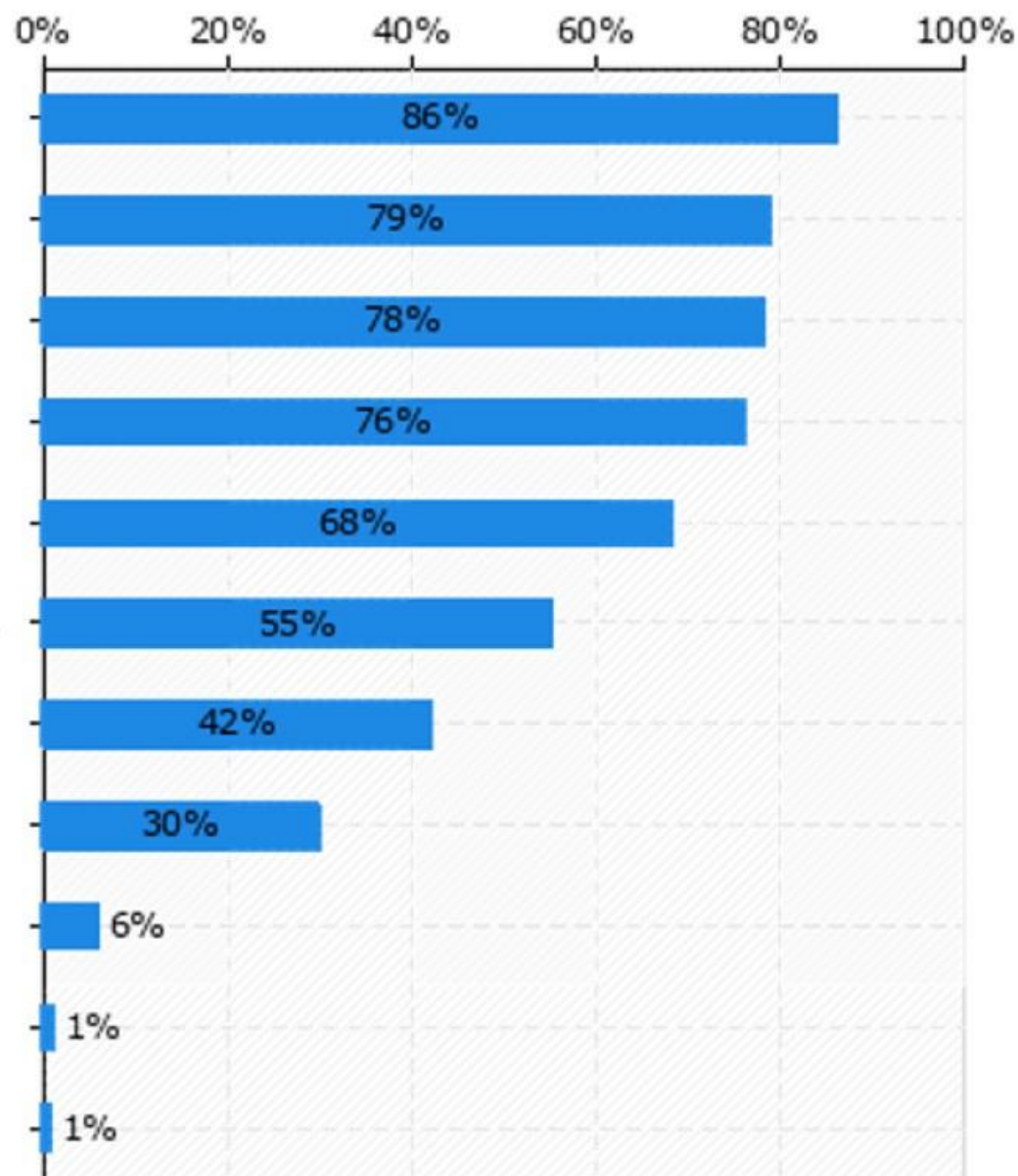
... it will provide beautiful landscapes and nature for recreation

... conserved nature improves social interactions

Other

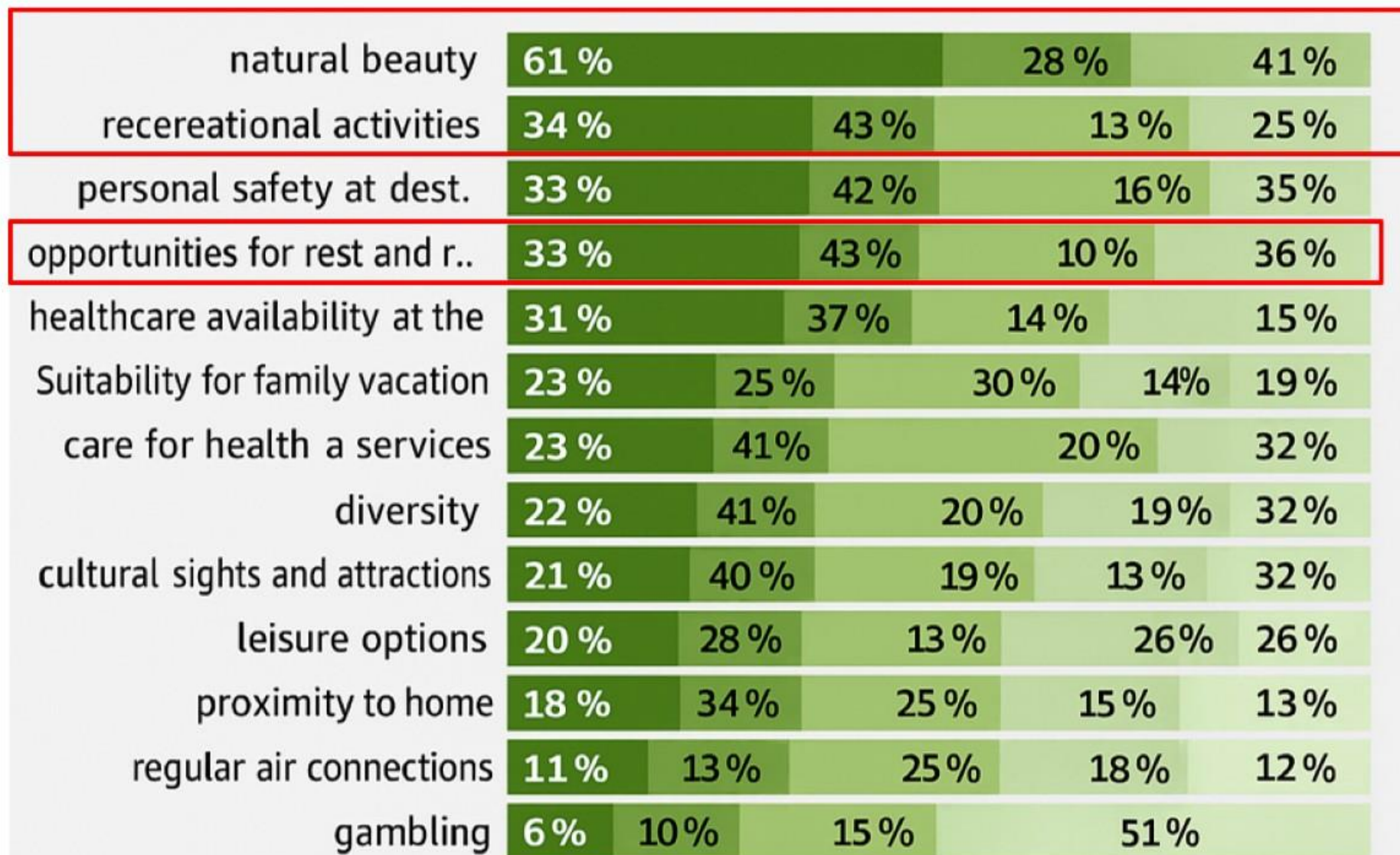
I think nature restoration is not important

Unsure





Importance of reasons to visit Slovenia





Protected area networks

Percentage of land covered by protected areas (source BISE)

Spain



Slovenia



Croatia

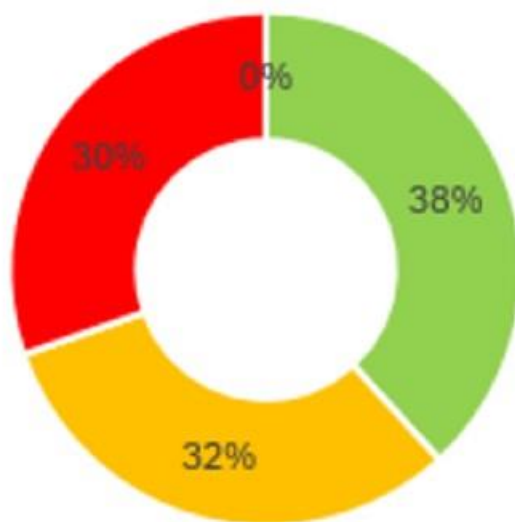




Status of Natura 2000 network

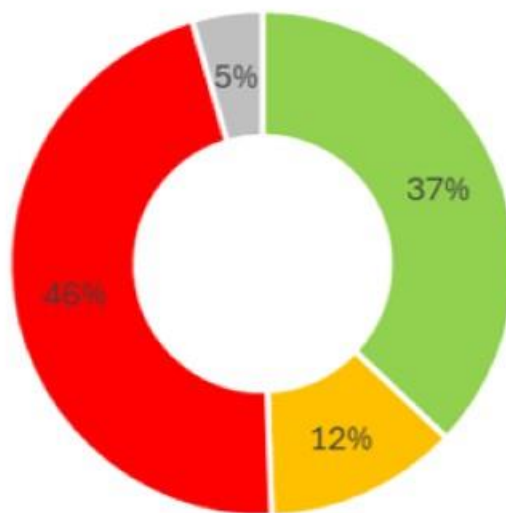
Conservation status of habitat types, Habitats Directive - Art 17 report

Slovenia 2013-18



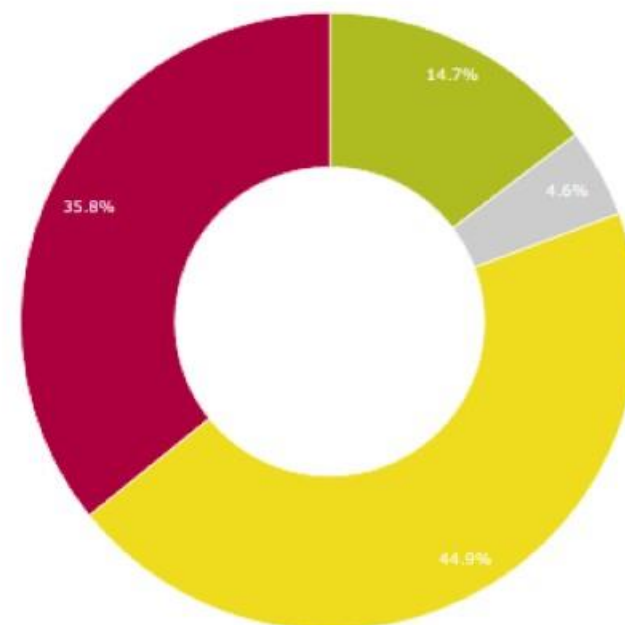
■ FV ■ U1 ■ U2 ■ XX

Slovenia 2019-24



■ FV ■ U1 ■ U2 ■ XX

EU 2013-18



● Good ● Unknown ● Poor ● Bad



Natura 2000 management in Slovenia

Natura 2000 Management Programme (each for period of ± 7 years = EU MFF):

- **sets detailed conservation objectives** (to reach favourable conservation status at biogeographical level + site-specific conservation objectives for each species and habitat type at each Natura 2000 site)
- **measures** to achieve these objectives
- defines appropriate existing **management plans and programmes**
- defines **priority restoration projects**
- defines funding (incl. possible funding)
- establishes monitoring of conservation status and of implementation of measures





Lessons learnt from Natura 2000 for nature restoration

Using management approach of Natura 2000 network

- Relying on established nature conservation structures, legal system, financing
- Integration in sectoral instruments
 - Legal
 - Financial
 - Their Public services



Lessons learned & existing synergies

Already, the Natura 2000 management plan provides opportunities and synergies with other sectoral policies

- Agriculture (Strategic Plan for CAP)
- Management of state-owned land (only cca. 20% of land is state-owned)
- Forestry (Forest Management Plans)
- Water (WFD Programme of Measures, MSFD Programme of Measures, and the MSP)



These synergies are capitalised upon & expanded in the process of preparing Nature Restoration Plan



Resource mobilisation in Slovenia

Major programmes for drawing EU funds for financing Natura 2000 measures:

- CAP Strategic Plan
- Operational programme for implementation of EU cohesion policy (Cohesion fund, ERDF, ESF)
- Cross-border Cooperation programmes
- Operational programme for implementation of European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
- Horizon Europe

National funds:

- Integral national budget
- Co-funding of EU programmes
- Climate and forest fund
- Donor funds (Norwegian and EEA)



Cohesion and strategic LIFE funds are complementing (doubling) available resources



Backbone of Natura 2000 management - public administration

Permanent tasks (national funding):

- appropriate assessment of plans and projects

Institutions involved

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning
- Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation
- Administrative units
- Some ministries

- implementation of recurring Natura 2000 measures in protected areas

Institutions involved

- protected area administrations
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning





Achievements

Implementing priority projects

- 11 Natura 2000 priority ERDF projects + 1 LIFE IP project
 - Cca 53 million EUR
 - 40 Natura 2000 sites, 65 Natura 2000 species and 24 habitat types
 - >1500 ha restored



Current activities (2024-2029)

New Natura 2000 priority ERDF projects

- 5 projects approved → cca. 37 million EUR
- 6 projects still in preparation → cca. 35 million EUR
- Addressing 23 targetted habitat types and 47 species (priorities from Natura 2000 management plan)
- >2700 ha to be restored

LIFE SNAP in preparation

- 16,6 million EUR
- Targeting 52 species and habitat types



New cross sectoral measures for NRR under development



Key challenges



Resources for nature conservation

- 1/3 of all staff is project-based
- 2/3 of EU obligations are covered by staff paid from the national budget
- Need stable dedicated financing for nature conservation & restoration is crucial

High share of private land ownership

- >80% of land cover is privately owned
- Resolving through voluntary measures and compensations, as well as expansion of the area for preemption rights (new Law on Nature Conservation)
- More proactive approach on state owned land



New Multiannual Financial Framework

- Key will be direct and indirect allocations of sufficient resources
 - Particularly for Member States with large Natura 2000 networks



Challenges - nature restoration

Slovenia remains committed to the goals of nature restoration & the preparation of the NRP

However:

- Challenge of implementing it with the existing staff and financial resources (additional tasks)
- Demanding implementation procedures, extensive cross-sectoral collaborations, and short deadlines
- Large proportion of Natura 2000 – needing a flexible and pragmatic approach
- Focussing on priorities
 - Also due to unclear & potentially insufficient funding streams
- Gaps in knowledge (esp. pollinators, marine ecosystems)





REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND SPATIAL PLANNING



Thank you for your attention!