Mid term evaluation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons

SECOND MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR STURGEONS

10-11 June 2024, Strasbourg

Jörn Gessner, Beate Striebel-Greiter

Based on contributions from
Leonardo Congiu, Emilia Miloiu Cristina Munteanu, Ralf Reinartz, Eric Rochard, Meelis Tambets

Scope of Service Contract covers …

… 8 species:

- European sturgeon
- Baltic sturgeon
- Adriatic sturgeon
- Sterlet
- Stellate sturgeon
- Beluga
- Russian sturgeon
- Ship sturgeon

… in 11 Rivers in 18 countries

- Gironde (**France**)
- Rhine (**Netherlands**)
- Elbe (**Germany**)
- Narva (**Estonia**)
- Gauja (**Latvia**)
- Nemunas (**Lithuania**)
- Oder (DE/PL)
- Vistula (**Poland**)
- Po (**Italy**)
- Upper-Middle Danube (DE/**AT/HU/SK/SL/HR**/RS)
- Lower Danube (**RS/BG/RO/UA**)
- Rioni (**Georgia**)

… in 5 regions:

North - East Atlantic

Baltic Region

Adriatic Region

Upper-Middle Danube

Black Sea

TASK 1 of service contract

Assessing the implementation of the PANEUAP on country level

1) **provide an overview on the state of implementation at country level**

- 18 country information sheets

2) **assess the coherence between countries in the five regions**

- 5 regional reports

  are in the process of being finalised

Methodology

- Questionnaire with 85 questions covering 9 objectives of the PANEAUP
- Minimum 3 respondents per country including
  1 sturgeon expert, 1 water management authority, 1 biodiversity authority
- In case of deviating answers – expert judgment was decisive
- Country assessments were compared within regions in the regional reports

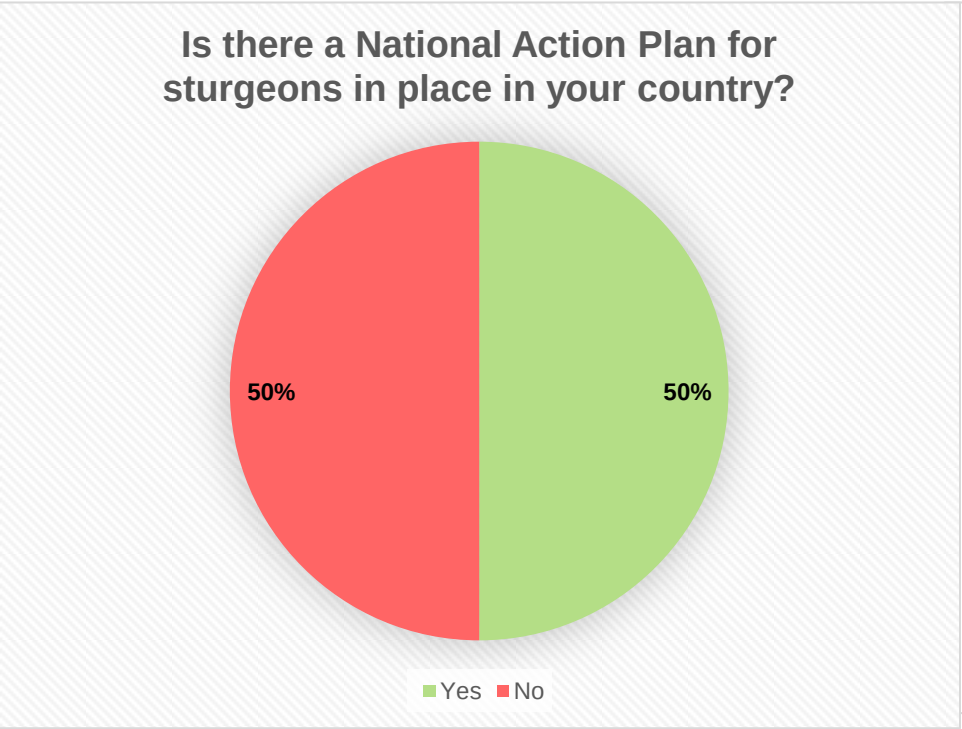
Today presentation of overall picture across 18 countries

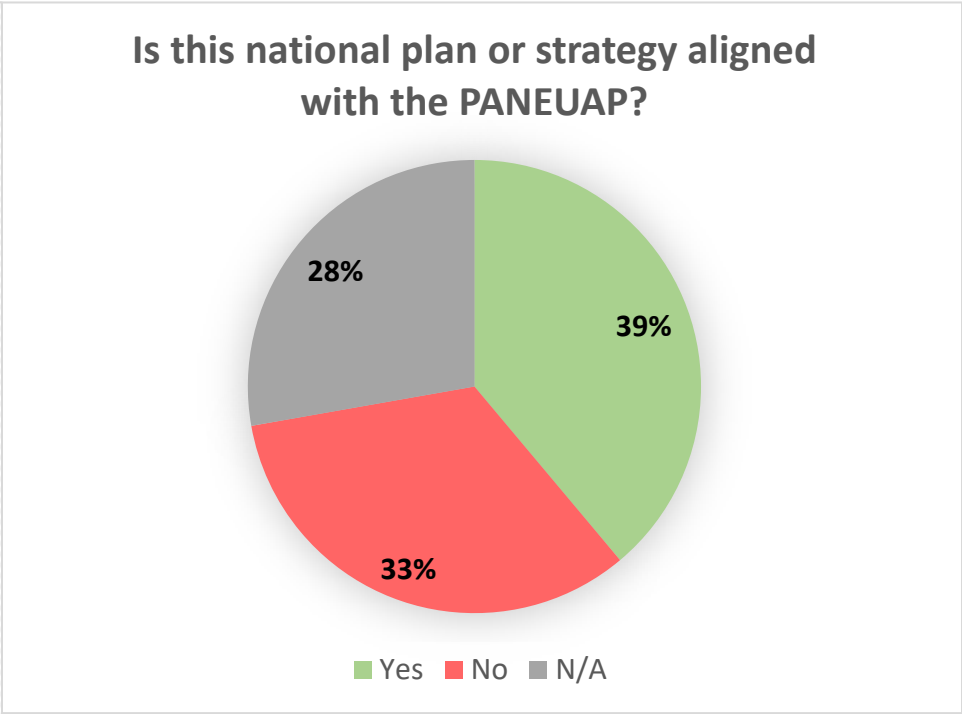
- Exception: Germany was assessed in 3 regions (Atlantic – Baltic – Upper Danube) → for this exercise we used the answers of the Atlantic region only
- Selection of priority questions for PPT
- Objective 6 on illegal trade is excluded today, due to limited information available

Example of results

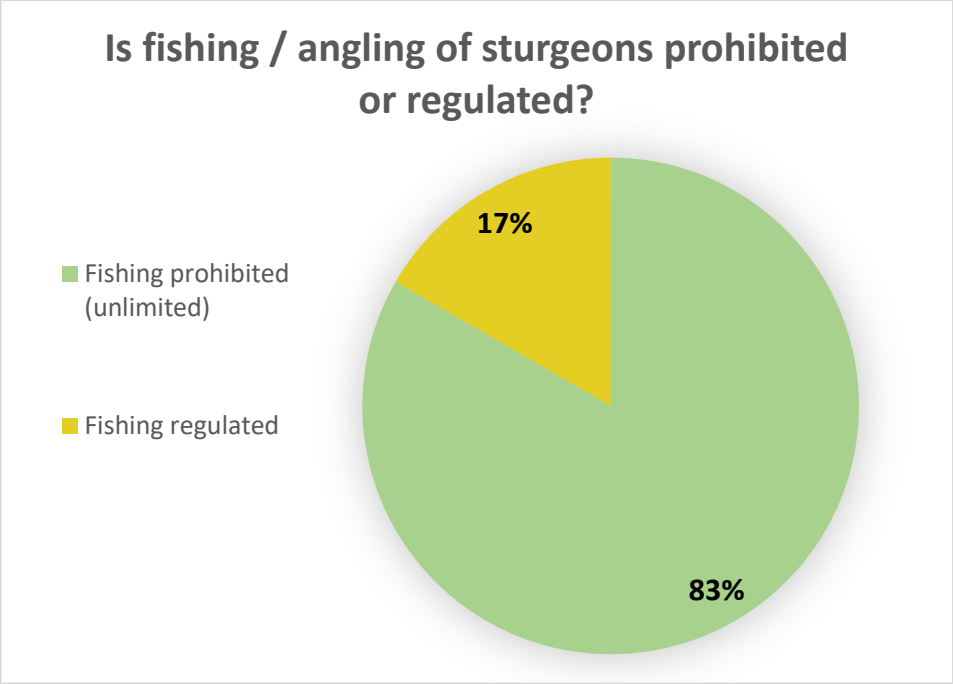
Question	Austria	Croatia	Hungary	Germany - Danube	Serbia	Slovakia	Slovenia
OBJECTIVE 1 - REMAINING WILD POPULATIONS ARE PROTECTED FROM ACCIDENTAL AND DIRECTED REMOVAL OF INDIVIDUALS							
RESULT 1.1 - Directed removal of individuals is eliminated							
ACTION 1.1.1							
9. Is fishing / angling of sturgeons prohibited or regulated in your country?	Fishing regulated	Fishing regulated	Fishing prohibited (unlimited)	Fishing prohibited (unlimited)	Fishing prohibited (unlimited)	Fishing regulated	Fishing prohibited (unlimited)
ACTION 1.1.2							
10. Is there a clear procedure in place for providing catch allowances (for scientific purposes) and monitoring them?	Procedure partly in place	Procedure is in place and responsible authority designated	Procedure is in place and responsible authority designated	Procedure is in place and responsible authority designated	Procedure is in place and responsible authority designated	Procedure is in place and responsible authority designated	Procedure is in place and responsible authority designated
ACTION 1.1.2 / 1.1.3							
11. Are the existing fishing regulations sufficiently enforced?	Enforcement in place and working	Enforcement partly working	Enforcement in place and working	Enforcement in place and working	Enforcement partly working	Enforcement in place and working	Enforcement lacking
12. Is Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (of sturgeons) an issue in your country?	Can be neglected	IUU is under sufficient control	IUU is under sufficient control	Can be neglected	IUU is an issue	IUU is under sufficient control	Can be neglected
13. Are seizures and cases of IUU recorded?	Seizures not recorded	Seizures are recorded	Seizures are recorded	Seizures not recorded	Seizures partly recorded	Seizures partly recorded	Seizures are recorded
ACTION 1.1.4							
14. Do you consider the resources and the capacity building opportunities for enforcement authorities overall adequate? (drop-down menu)	Sufficient resources and capacities for the enforcement are in place	There is a distinct lack of resources and capacities	Resources and capacities for the enforcement are partly in place	Sufficient resources and capacities for the enforcement are in place	There is a distinct lack of resources and capacities	There is a distinct lack of resources and capacities	Resources and capacities for the enforcement are partly in place
ACTION 1.1.5							
15. Is the involvement of fishers / anglers / communities in the planning and implementation of conservation actions a practice in your country?	Practice established	Practice established	Practice partially in place	Practice established	Practice partially in place	Practice established	Practice established
16.a. Are affected fishing communities in	No	Yes	No	No	No information available	No	No

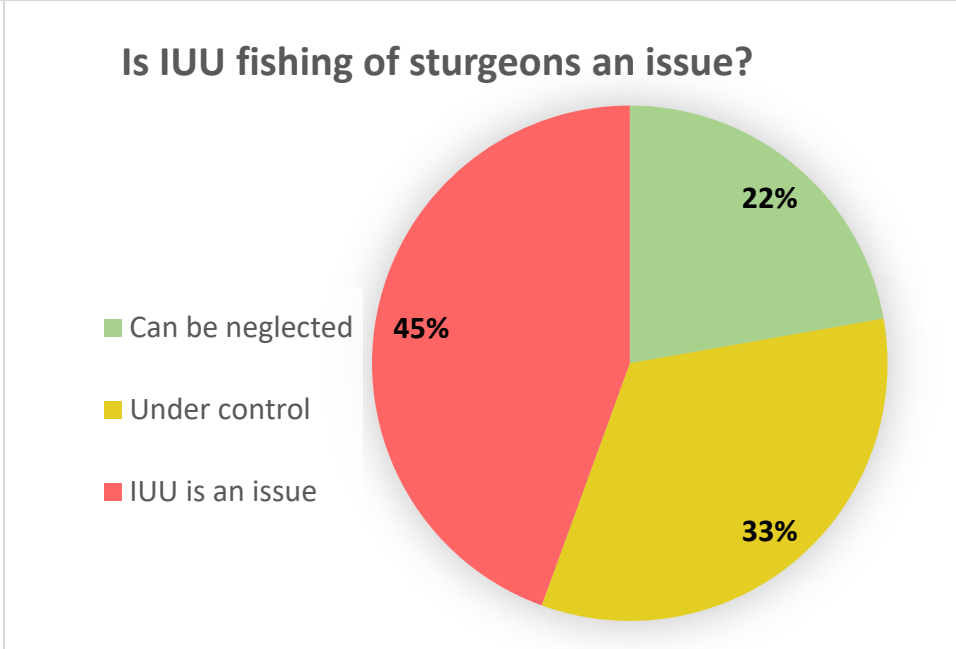
Country Level Action Plans or Strategies?



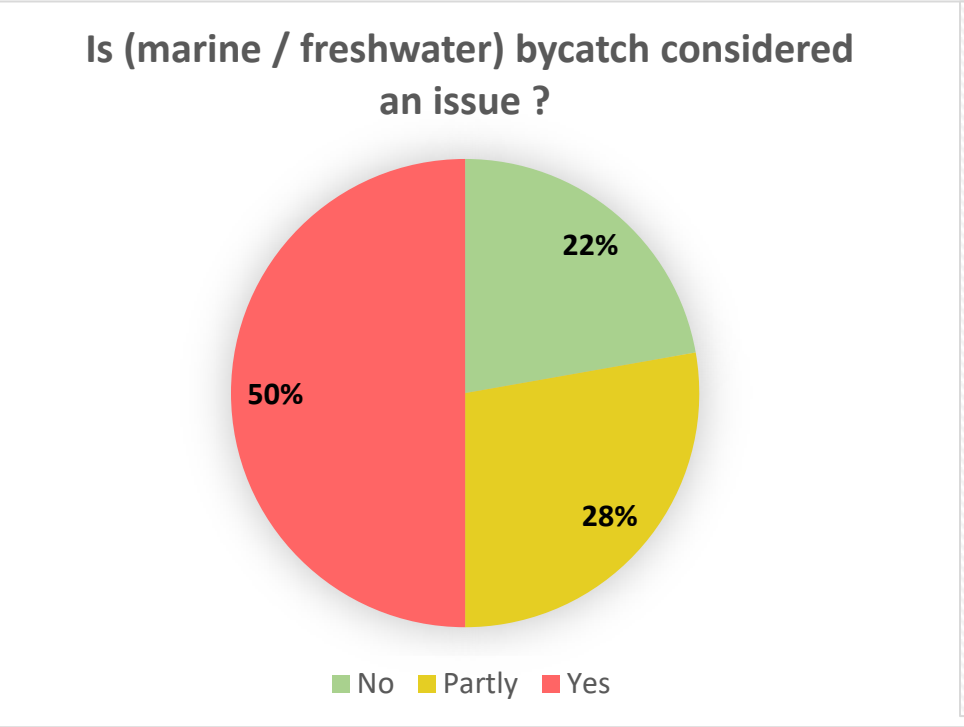


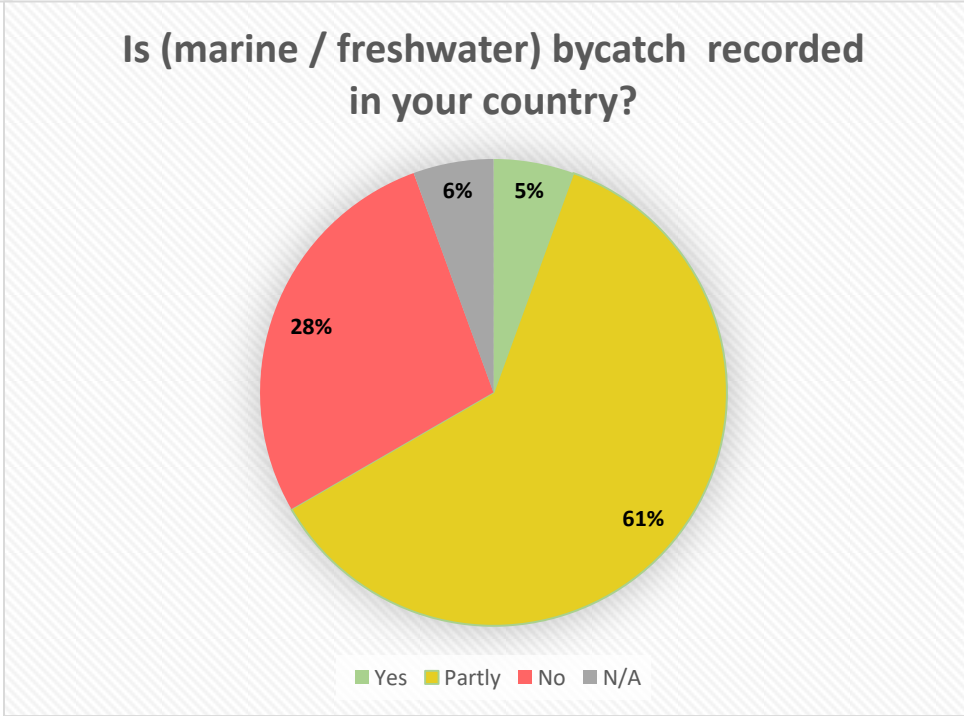
Obj 1 Wild populations are protected - removal from the wild is prohibited



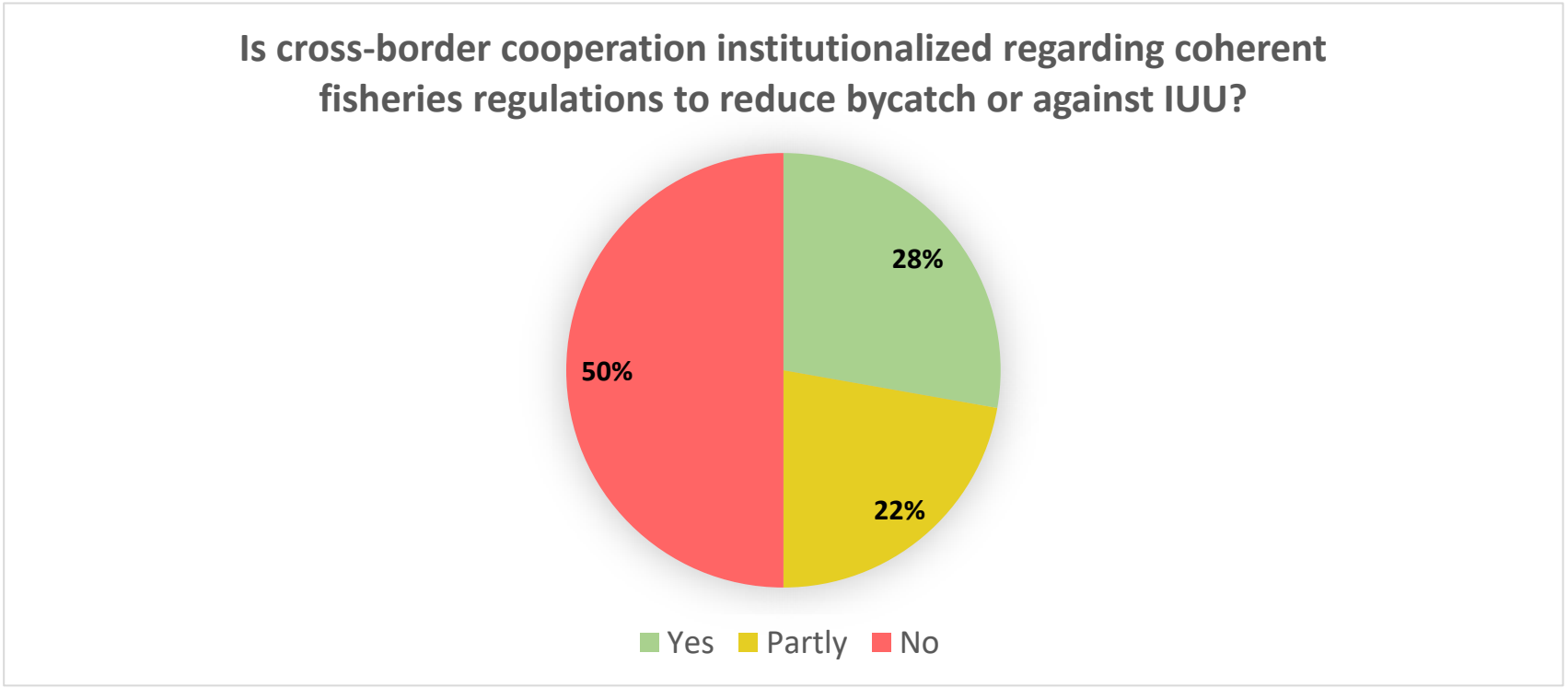


Obj 1 Wild populations are protected – reduce bycatch



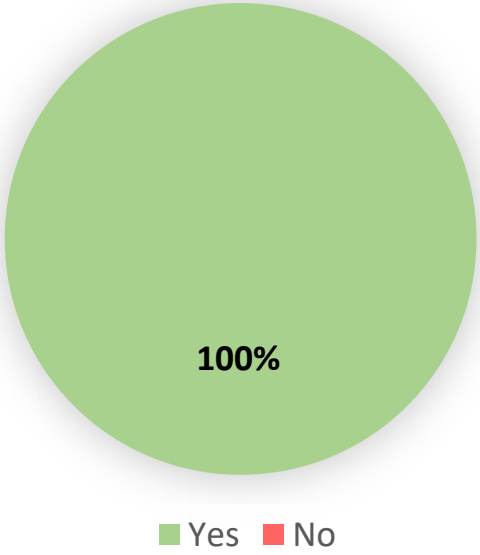


Obj 1 Wild populations are protected – regional coherence and basin wide approach

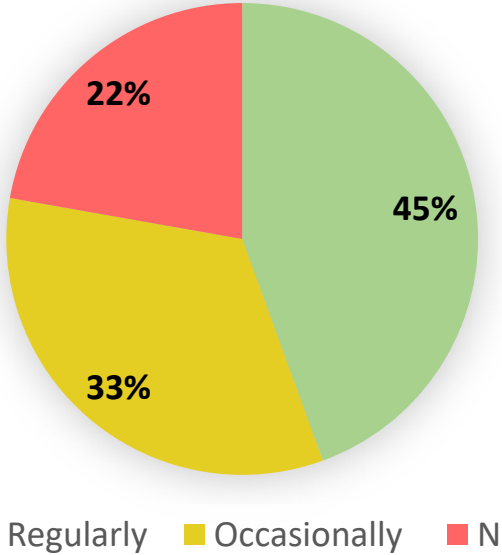


Obj 2 Populations are actively supported

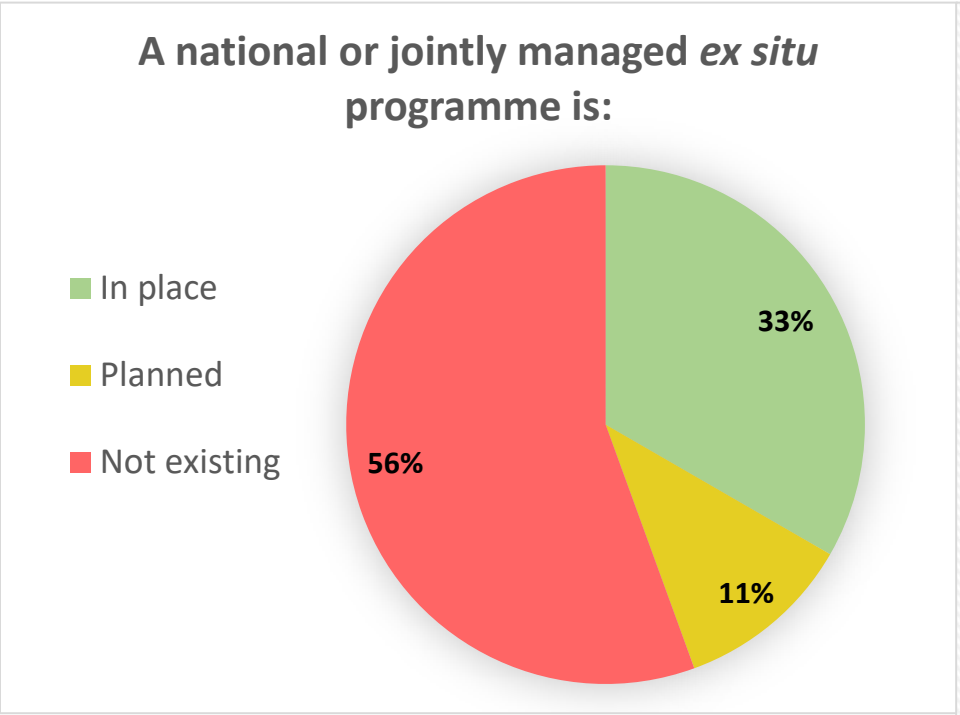
Is a release program considered necessary?

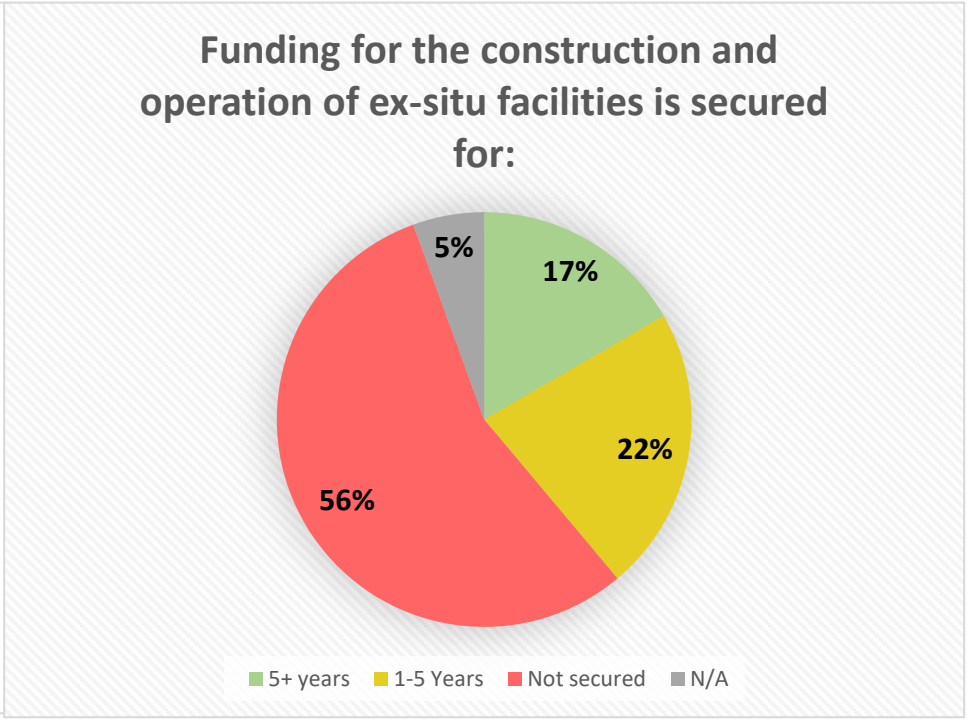


Are releases taking place from *ex situ* programs?

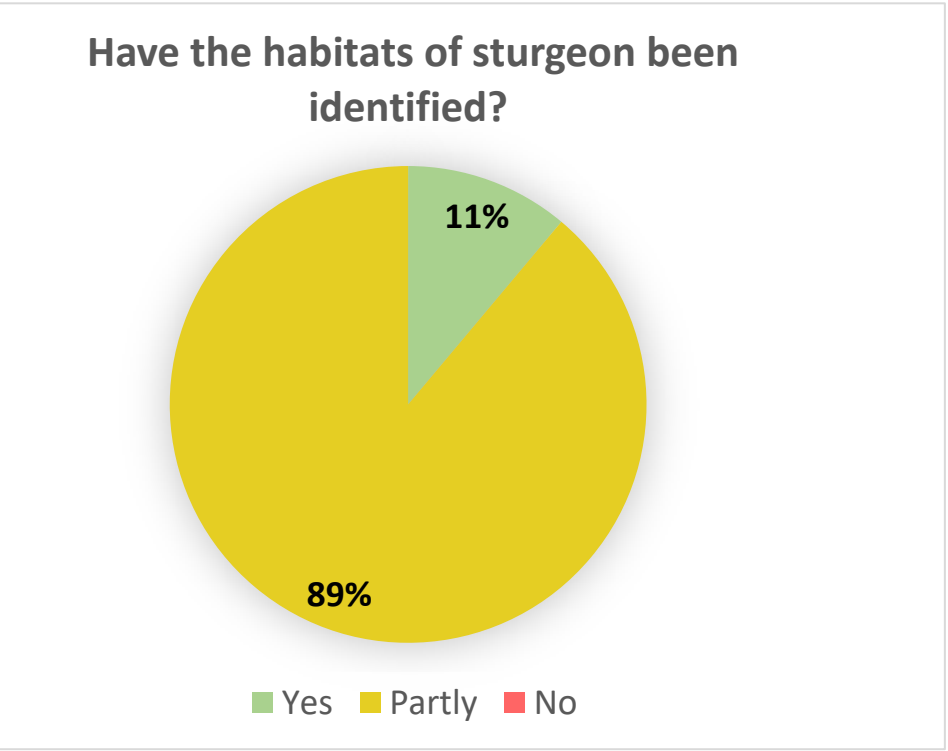


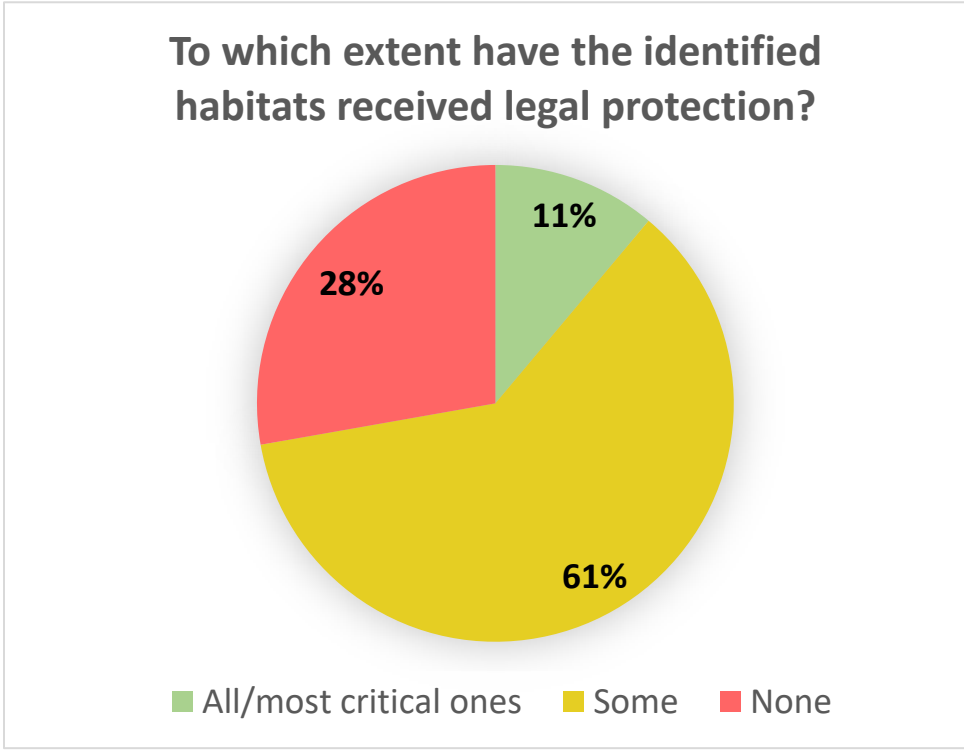
Obj 2 Populations are actively supported



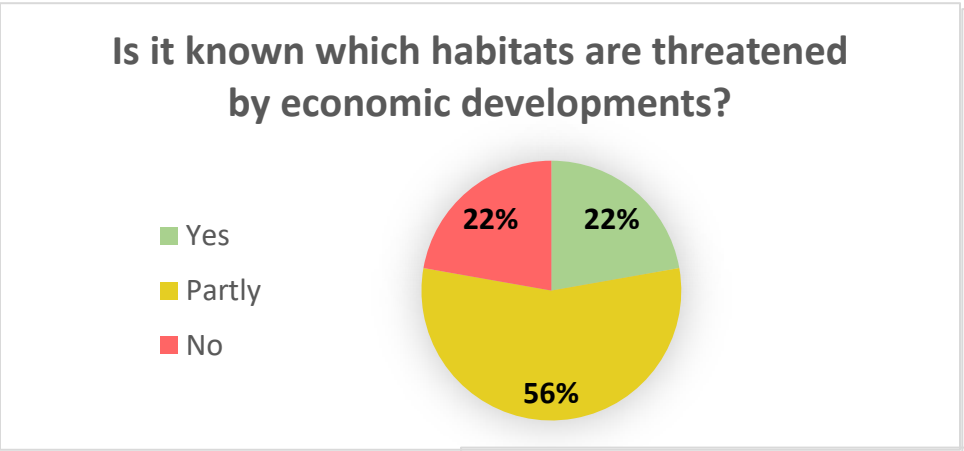


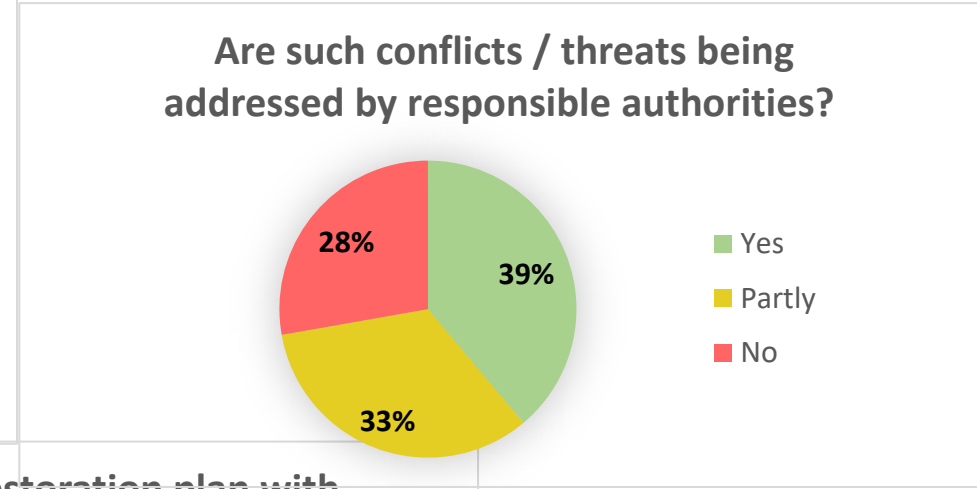
Obj 3 Habitats are protected and restored

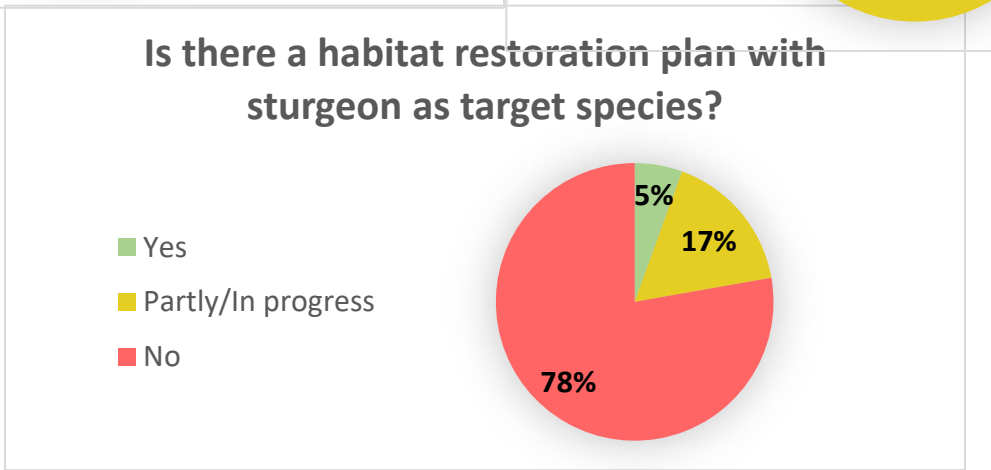




Obj 3 Habitats are protected and restored

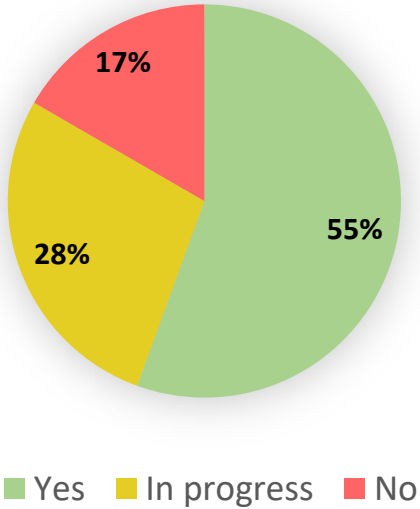




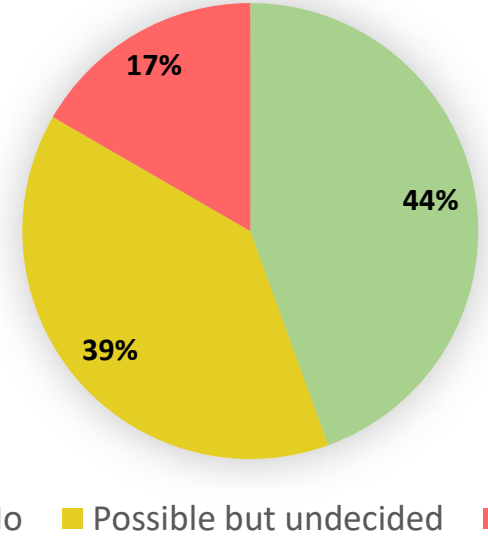


Obj 4 Migration is secured or facilitated

Has the identification of relevant obstacles on migration routes been achieved?

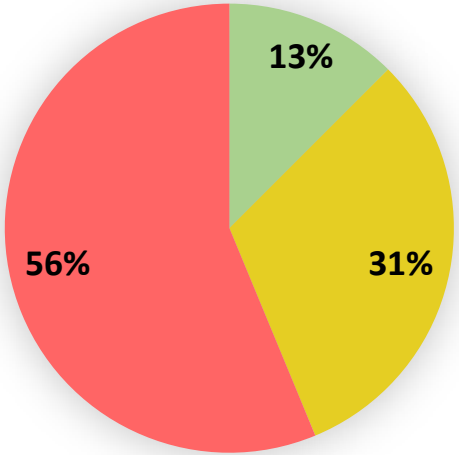


Are there plans for building new migration obstacles in key sturgeon rivers?

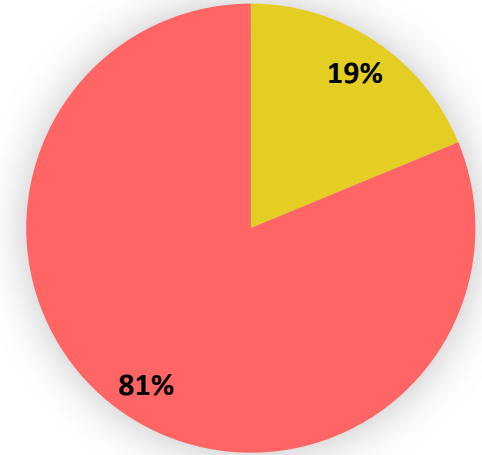


Obj 4 Migration is secured or facilitated

Have funds been allocated for feasibility studies as well as mitigation measures?

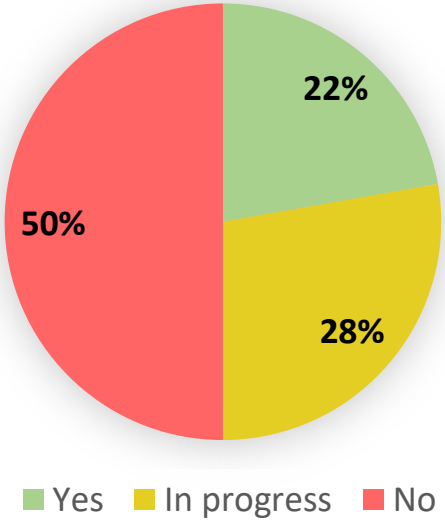


Have functional passage solutions for sturgeons been implemented?

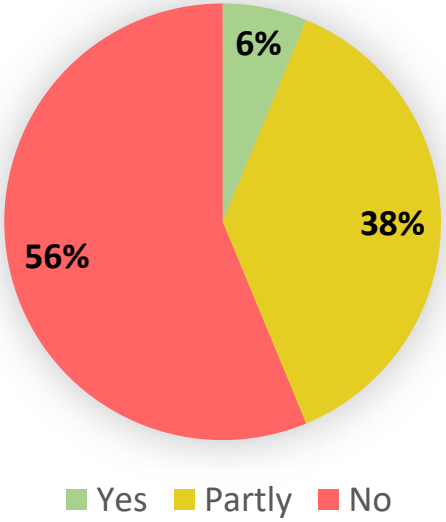


Obj 5 Population monitoring is designed and implemented

Is there a monitoring programme designed for sturgeon population(s)?

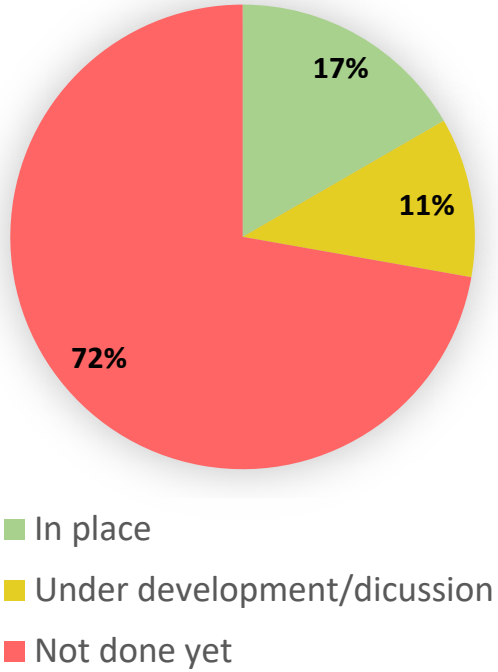


Is monitoring coordinated with other countries for shared populations?

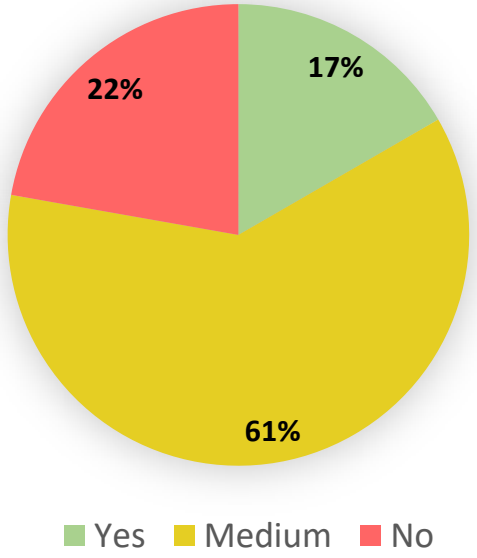


Obj 7 Enabling Conditions – Funding & Awareness

Is there a coordinated funding plan for Action Plan implemention?

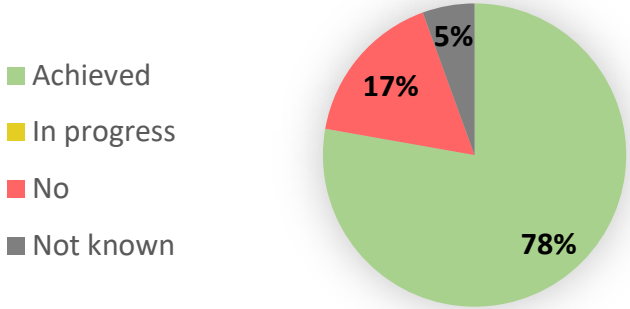


Is the awareness of main stakeholders and authorities considered high enough?



Obj 9 Monitor and evaluate national implementation of PANEUAP

Has a national sturgeon focal point been appointed?



Does the focal point have a mandate to coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan?

Is there any reporting or evaluation mechanism of the implementation on national level?

Summary and Conclusions

- **50% of countries have a national strategy**
- Legal protection – largely achieved but 8 countries say **poaching remains an issue**
- **Bycatch** is a problem for a majority of countries
- All 18 countries say **release programs are necessary!** Yet in 10 countries an *ex situ* program is lacking!
- **Habitat identification** is **partly done** but **protection** of habitats is largely **lacking** and restoration basically not happening.
- Obstacles to migration are mostly identified but **passage solutions are lacking** almost everywhere!
- **Monitoring programs** are in place in 4 countries but in progress for other 5
- **Coordination** of monitoring between countries is lacking
- 17 of 18 countries have **national focal points!** Their mandate is often not clarified

Developed under EC service contract No 09.0201/2022/885601/SER/D.3 'Supporting conservation and protection actions to implement the Pan-European Sturgeon Action Plan'

Thank you for your attention!

in support of Recommendation No. 199(2018) of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on the Pan-European Action Plan for the conservation of the sturgeon

Funded by the European Union

WWF

IGB Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries

INRAE science for people, life & earth

Eesti Loodushoiu Keskus

800 1222·2022 ANNI

Università degli Studi di Padova

BOKU

Subcontractors:

PhD. Ralf Reinartz