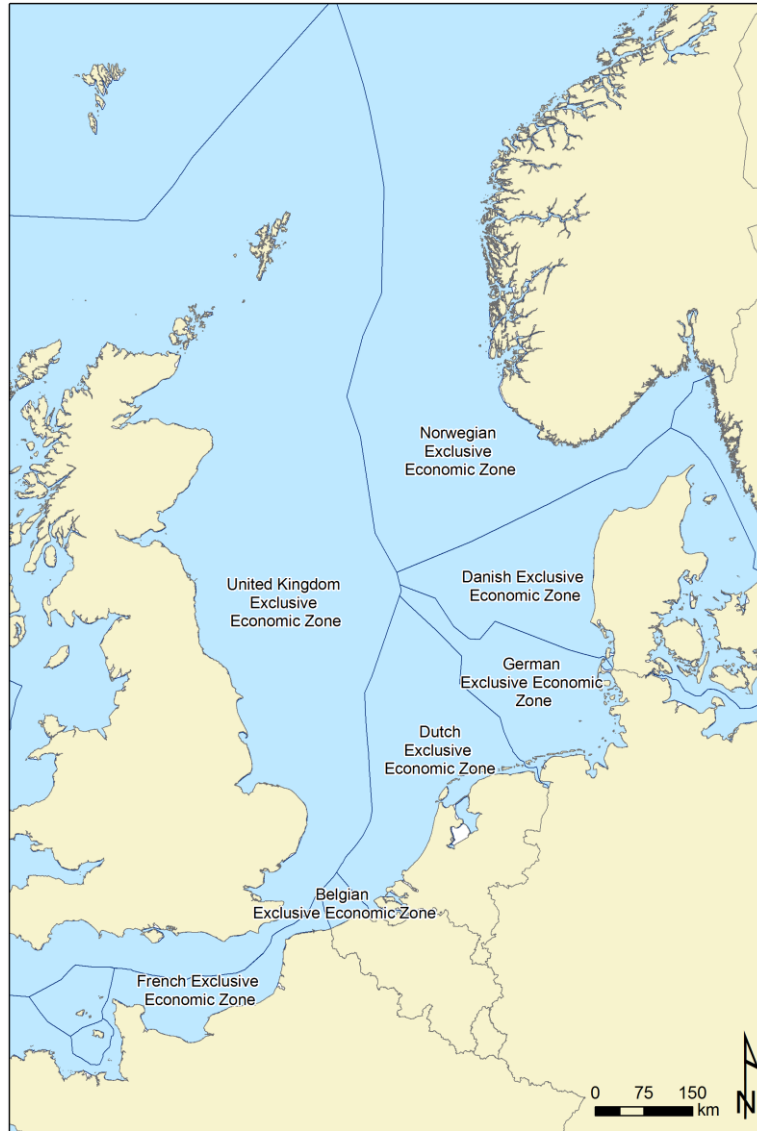

Marine Protected Areas in Belgium: status, challenges, and case studies

Gizem Poffyn

Marine Environment department

Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety, Environment



The BPNS

- $\pm 3500 \text{ km}^2$
- 65 km coastline
- Shallow (average 20 m – max 45)
- Area with high productivity and biodiversity



©VLIZ (Haemerlynck)

OVERVIEW MAP

FISHING ALLOWED EVERYWHERE WITH EXCEPTION OF THE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS



ZONES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY



SHIPPING ROUTES



EXTRACTION AREAS



MARINE PROTECTED AREA 'VLAAMSE BANKEN'



MARINE PROTECTED AREA 'VLAKTE VAN DE RAAN'



ZONES FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES



BIRD PROTECTION AREAS



TEST ZONE FOR COASTAL DEFENSE



DREDGING DUMPS



PORT Zeebrugge

'PAARDENMARKT'



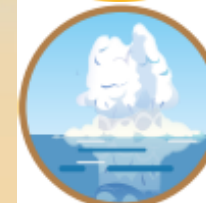
PORT Ostend

Nieuwpoort

France

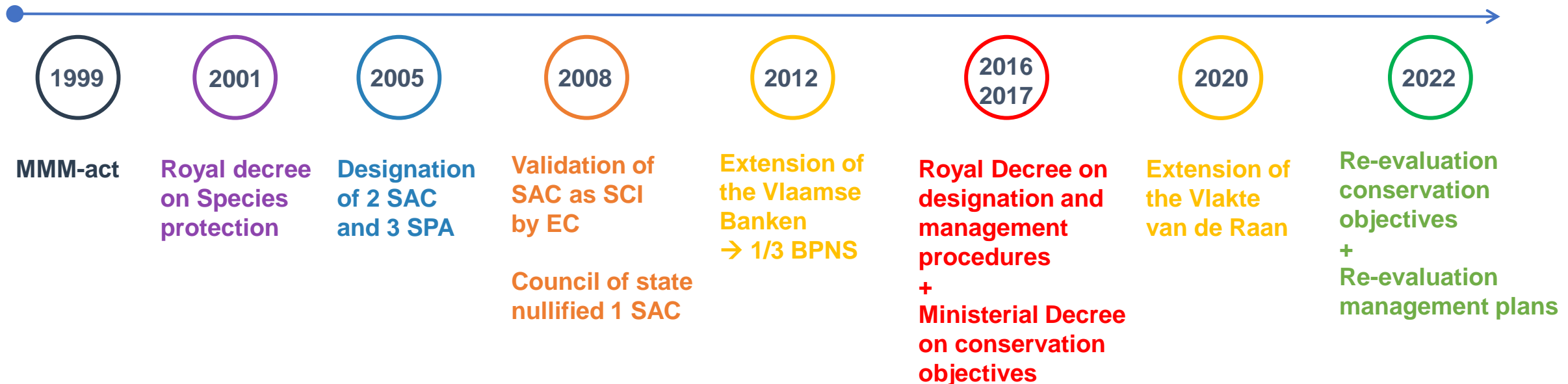
Belgium

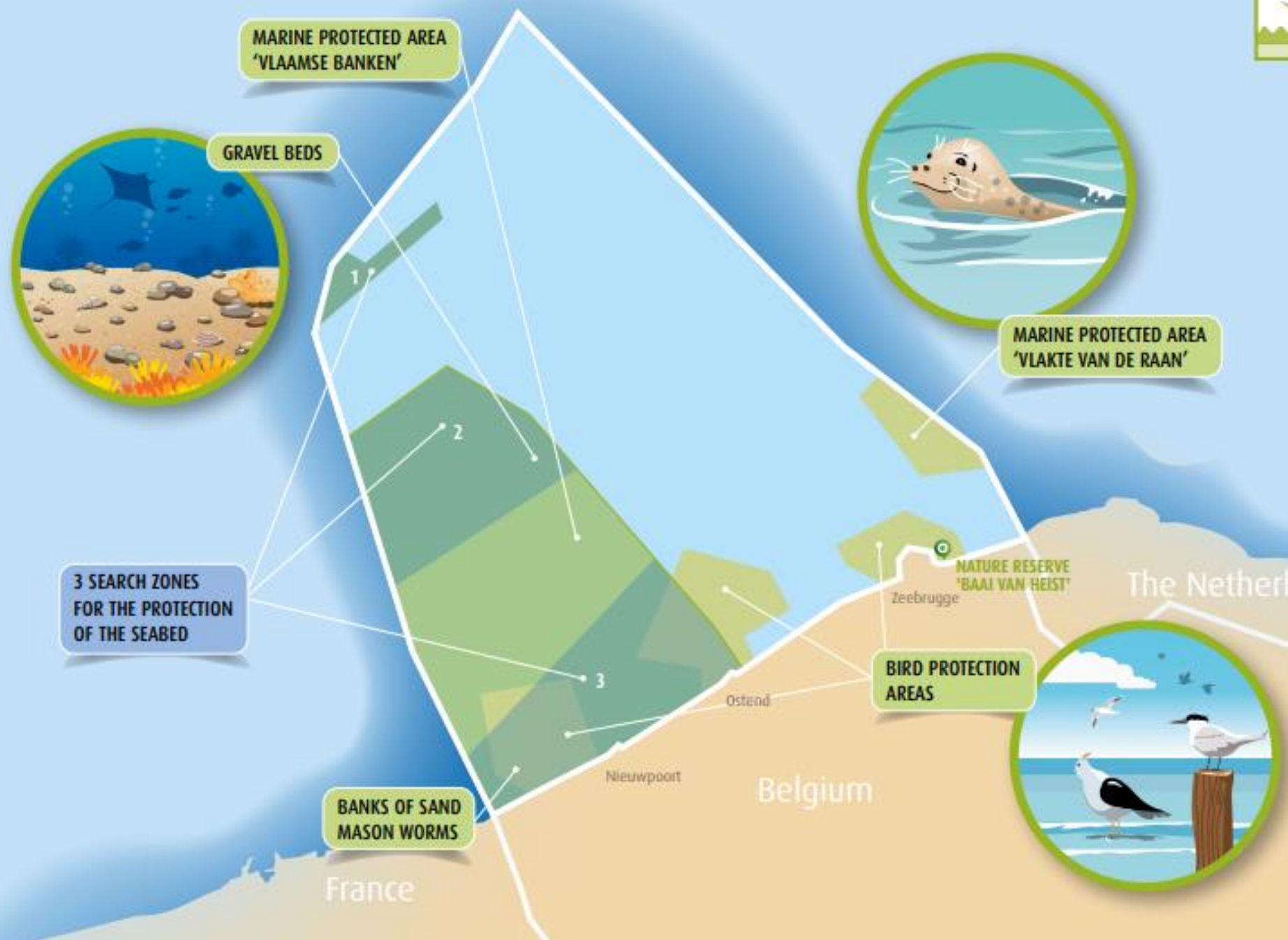
The Netherlands





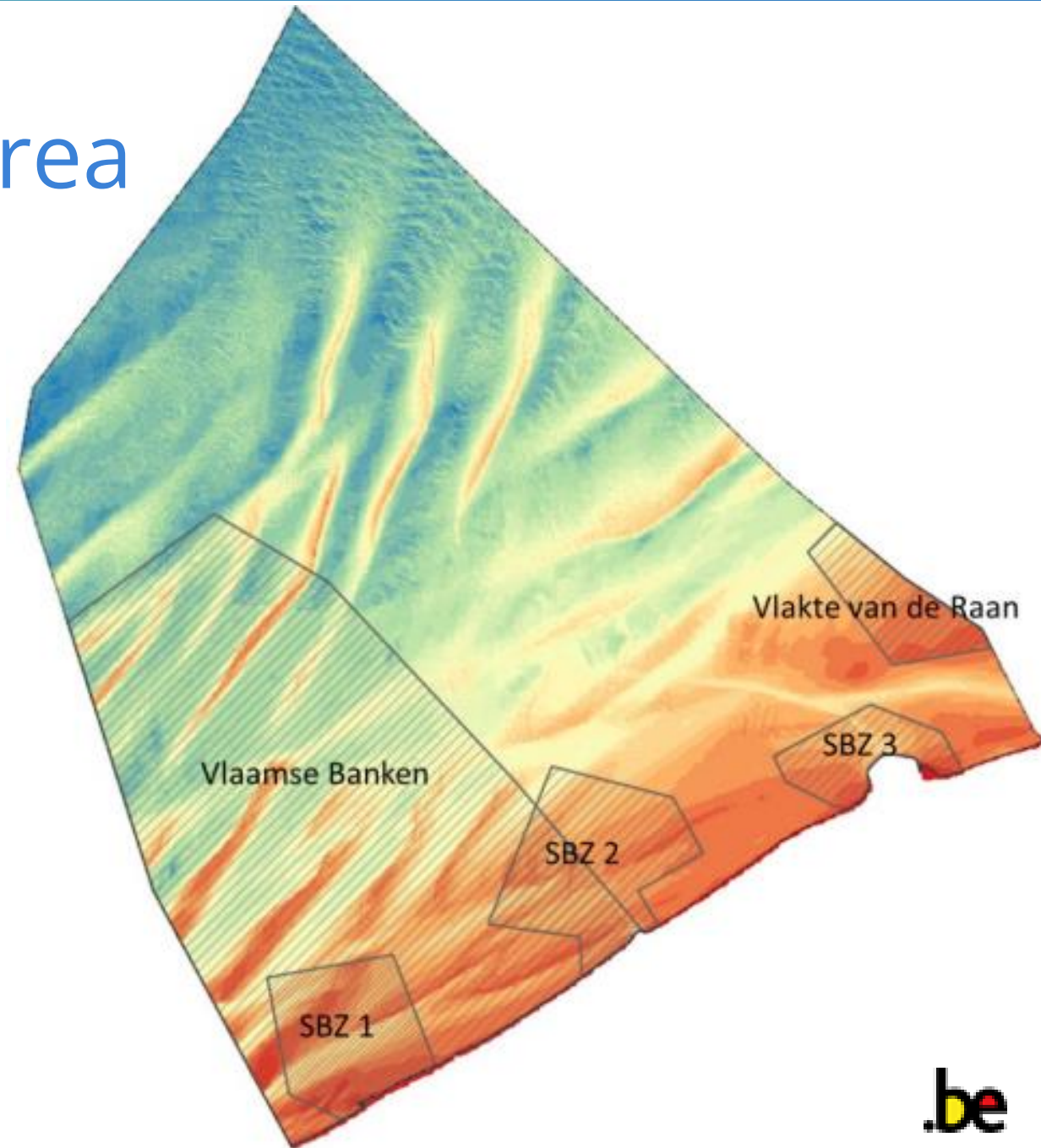
Timeline Natura 2000





Special Conservation Area 'Vlaamse Banken'

- Habitat directive
- Since 2012 (2020)
- 1099,39 km²
- Connected to the French 'Bancs de Flandres'



Permanently submerged sandbanks (code 1110)



www.mer-littoral.org © Jean-Michel Grouzet



© Misjel decler

Biogenic reefs (code 1170)



Aggregates of the
sand mason worm
(*Lanice conchilega*)



Marijn Rabaut

Geogenic gravel beds

(code 1170)





OVERVIEW MAP

FISHING ALLOWED EVERYWHERE WITH EXCEPTION OF THE OFFSHORE WIND FARMS



ZONES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY



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ZONES FOR COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES



PORT Zeebrugge

The Netherlands

'PAARDENMARKT'



BIRD PROTECTION AREAS



PORT Ostend

DREDGING DUMPS



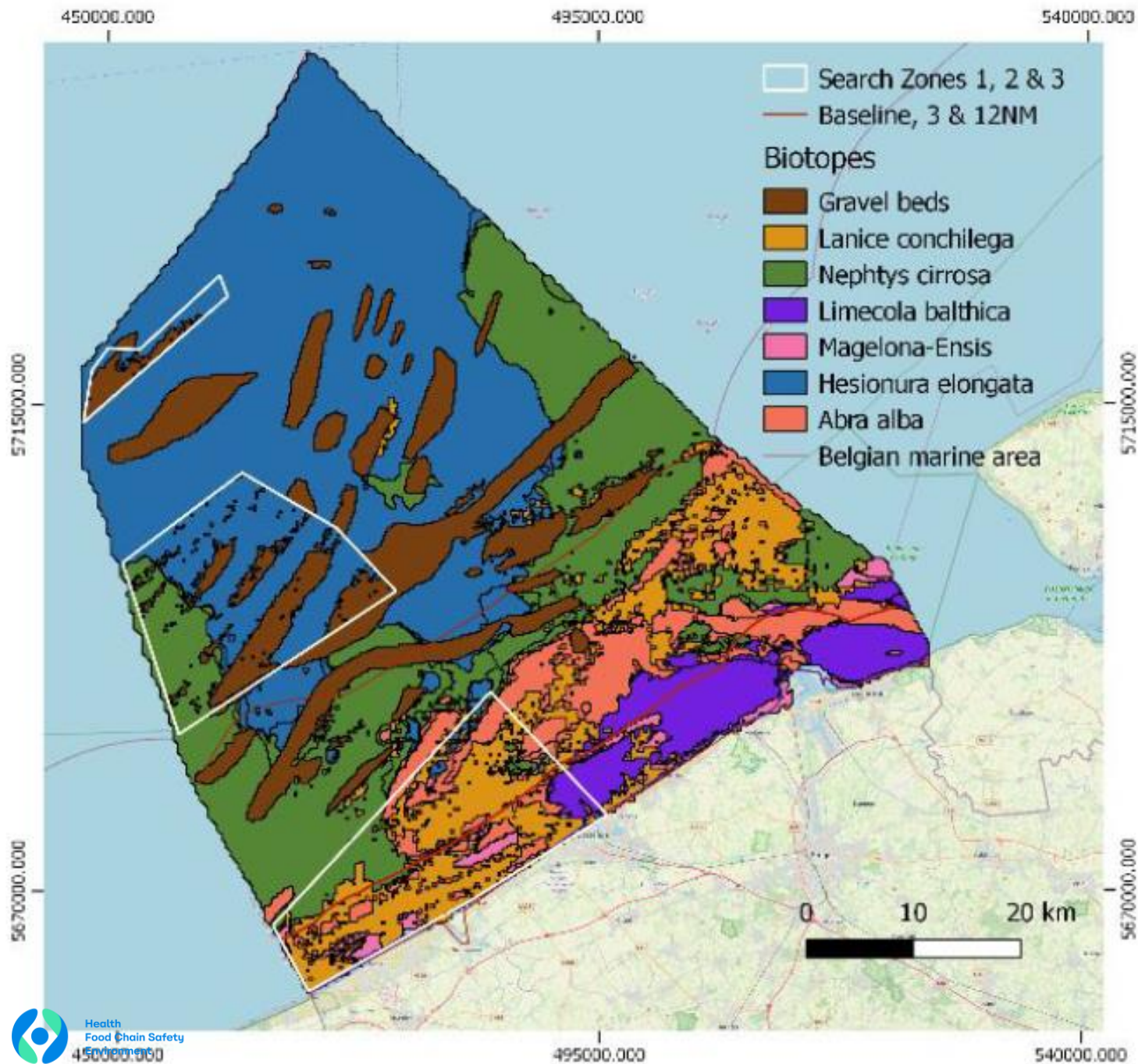
TEST ZONE FOR COASTAL DEFENSE



Nieuwpoort

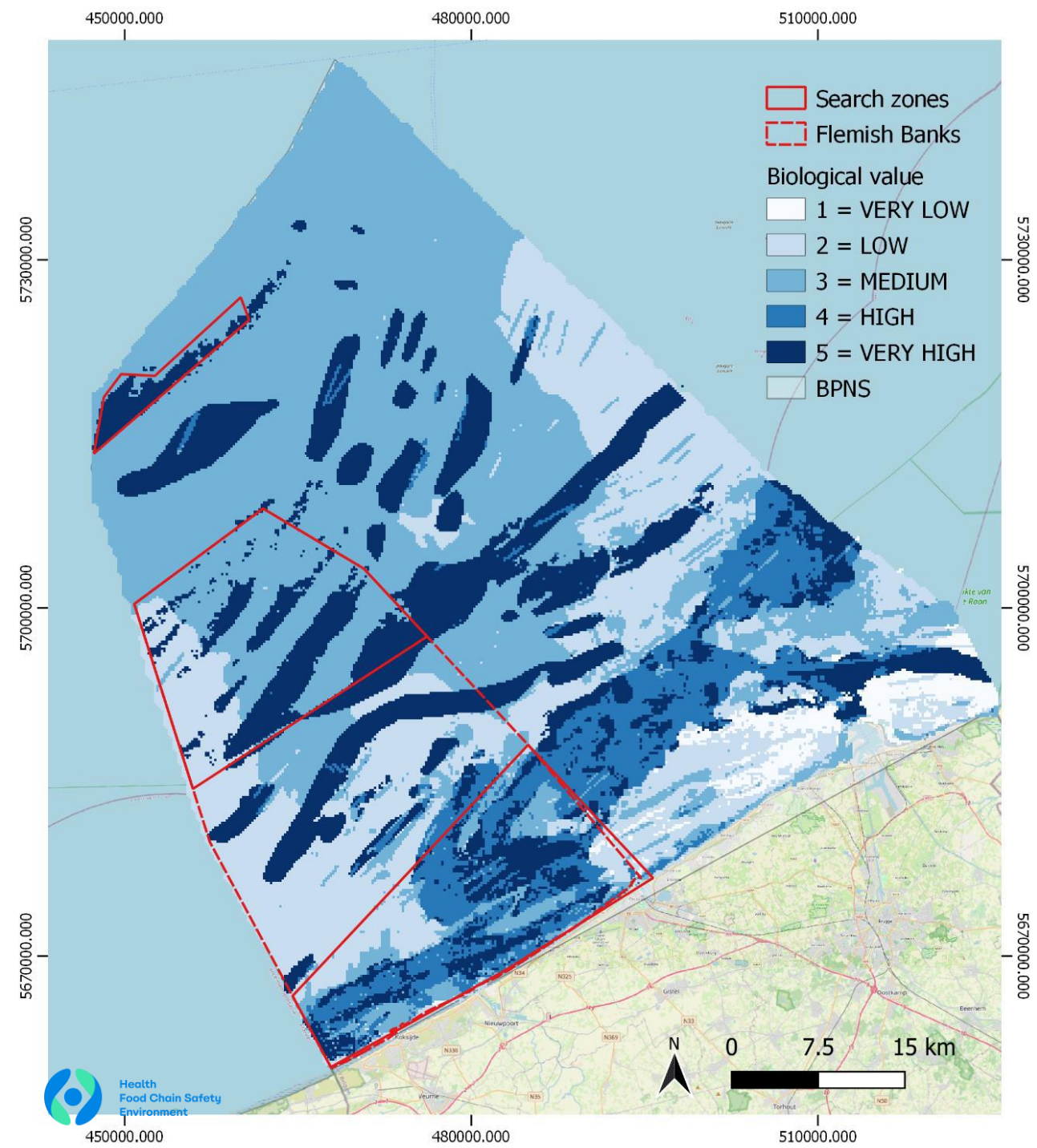
Belgium

France



Establishing strict protection

- Diverse biological communities
- Inside and outside existing MPAs



Establishing strict protection

- Identifying biologically most valuable areas
- Identifying areas with least socio-economical impact

Establishing strict protection






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0 7,5 15 km

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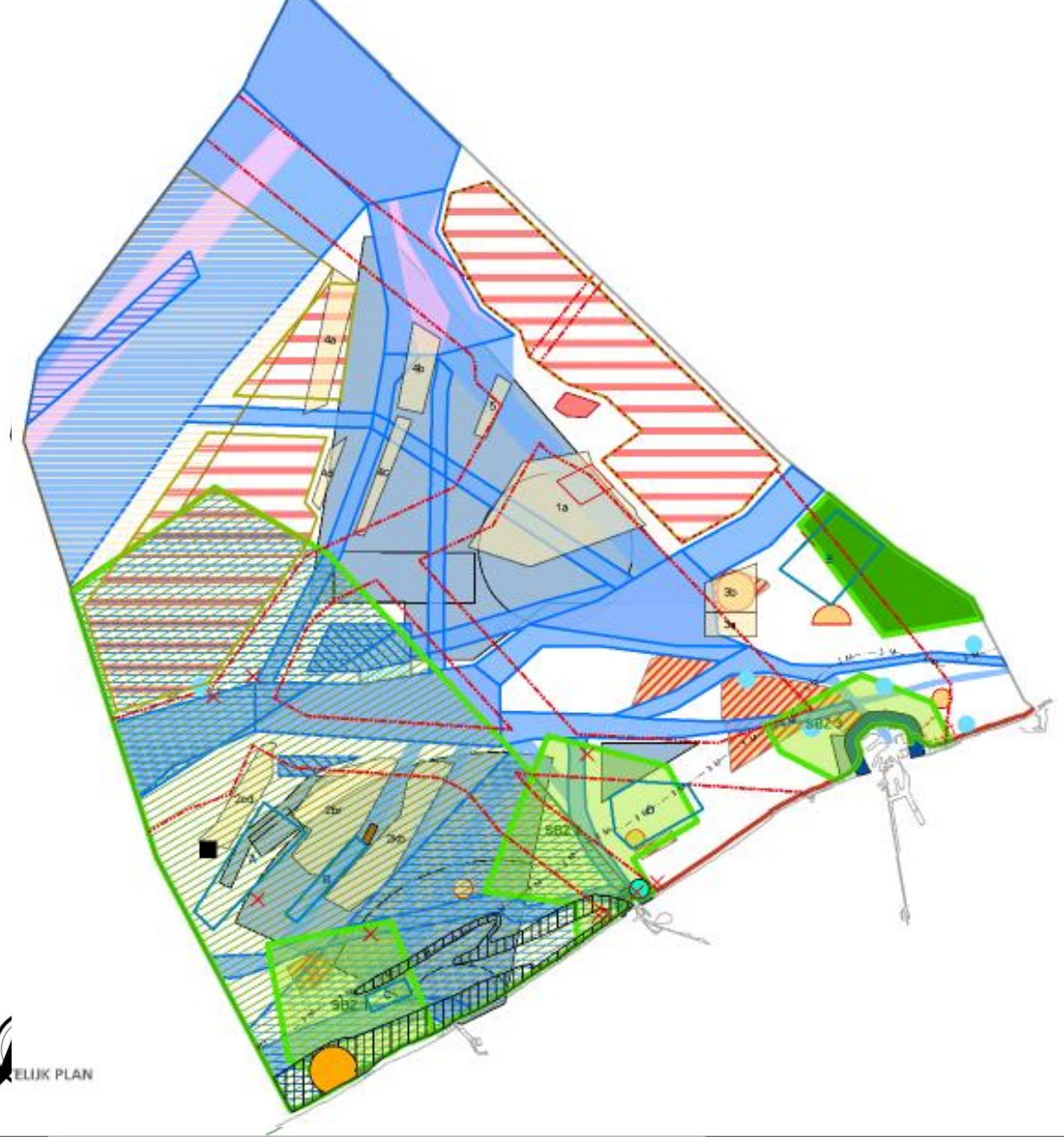
-  Belgian part of the North Sea
-  SAC Vlaamse Banken
-  Proposed management areas
-  Gravel
-  Lanice conchilega habitat

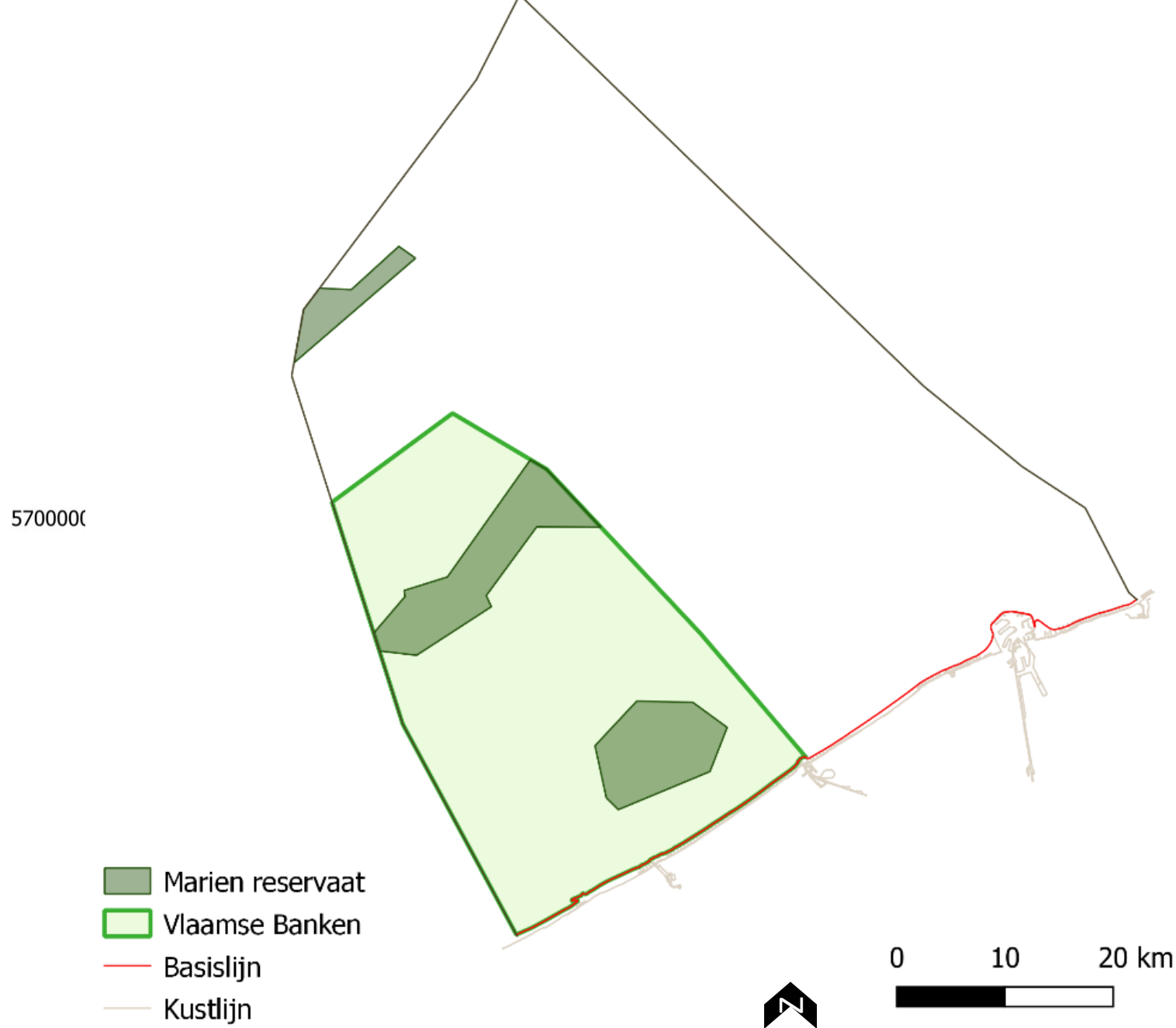
Establishing strict protection

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Establishing strict protection

- Exclude or reduce **all** disturbing activities
- Find compromises
- Marine Reserves in the MSP of 2026-2034

Barriers

- Complex competence distribution
- Limitations of procedures (e.g. Art 11 of CFP)
- Lack of financial and human capital
- Lack of information available to communicate benefits of MPAs to stakeholders
- Lack of ownership
- Small surface but big economic importance of BPNS

Needs

- Robust monitoring and data collection
- Strengthened enforcement capacity
- Enhanced stakeholder engagement
- International support
- Increased financial and human capital



Restoration

- Clear overview (MSP)
- Stakeholder engagement
- Case specific measures and management
- **Strict protection**

→ **passive and active restoration**



Thank you