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World Heritage Site

EVAPORITIC KARST AND CAVES OF NORTHERN APENNINES



Regione Emilia-Romagna



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE E
DELLA SICUREZZA ENERGETICA

**IMPLEMENTATION
OF WHC
RECOMMENDATIONS
(DECISION 45 COM 8B.32)**

**PROGRESS REPORT
AS AT 01/12/2024**



EKCNA



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- (cover)
Stream bend in
the resurgence of
Rio Basino cave.
Vena del Gesso
Romagnola ©
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- Gypsum crystals
in the Grotta
deiWW gradoni
Cave. Vena del
Gesso Romagnola
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concept **A²studio**

Property	Evaporitic Karst and Caves on Northern Apennines
ID N°	1692
State Party	Italy
Criteria	(viii)
web-ref	https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1692/

IMPLEMENTATION OF WHC RECOMMENDATIONS

(DECISION 45 COM 8B.32)

PROGRESS REPORT AS 01/12/2024

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FOREWORD

On 19 September 2023, during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, the serial site 'Karst and Caves in the Evaporites of the Northern Apennines' (EKCNA) was inscribed on the World Heritage List subject to specific requirements:

- submission of a boundary modification proposal to extend two components located in the Alta Valle Secchia and in the Vena del Gesso Romagnola;
- development of a unified protection system for the various components of the serial property;
- alignment of the zoning of the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano Biosphere Reserve with the protection and management regime required for the property;
- full definition of the management structure envisaged in the property's nomination phase;
- formulation of a visitor management plan to address areas with anticipated high tourist pressure.

This report outlines the progress made on these activities as of 1 December 2024, as required.

To initiate the technical and administrative procedures necessary for compliance with these requirements, the Regione Emilia-Romagna (RER), as the managing authority for the EKCNA World Heritage Site, has established a series of measures utilizing various legal instruments.

- Through Regional Council Resolution (GR Dlb. No. 1524 of 8 July 2024), RER defined the content and implementation methods for a coordinated management system for the serial property, including official cartography and agreements to engage all entities involved in its management.
- Within its mandate for managing protected areas and overseeing territorial and landscape planning, RER initiated procedures to ensure consistency in the protection and management of the site's protected areas.
- Through a specific agreement with the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park, RER began aligning the zoning of areas recognised under the two UNESCO programmes.

Key measures adopted by RER are summarised as follows:

- Adoption of official cartography: the perimeter of the Evaporitic Karst and Caves of the Northern Apennines serial site, as previously sent to the World Heritage Centre in Paris, has been integrated into the minERva Portal (the Data Catalogue of Regione Emilia-Romagna) both in digital and paper formats. The perimeters are the base also for the definition of the required modifications shown in Annex A.
- Establishment of the 'WH EKCNA focal point': this reference structure, housed within RER - Settore Aree Protette, Foreste e Sviluppo delle Zone Montane (RER - Protected Areas, Forests and Mountain Areas Development Sector), is responsible for managing the EKCNA World Heritage Site. It is equipped with financial resources, administrative competencies, and specialised staff (see GR Dlb. No. 1524 of 8 July 2024).
- Approval of an Agreement with the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park: this ensures the alignment of zoning within the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano Biosphere Reserve with the World Heritage Site (see Annex B).
- Revision of the Memorandum of Understanding with Territorial Authorities: this document supports activities related to the inscription of EKCNA on the UNESCO World Heritage List, specifying the management structure's composition, organization, and functions.

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- *Establishment of the Scientific Committee: the body provides technical and scientific advice on the management and conservation of the property.*

To ensure a coherent and unified management system across all components of the serial property, RER has enhanced the legal protections for two of its components to homogenise management measures.

The implementation of these measures is supported by financial resources allocated in the 2024–2026 budget and by human resources from RER internal staff.

The General Directorate for Territorial and Environmental Care oversees these activities and ensures their completion.

The Directorate is specifically tasked with:

- *Signing the agreement with the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park and the Memorandum of Understanding with territorial authorities;*
- *Appointing members of the Scientific Committee;*
- *Preparing and submitting by 1 December 2024 the implementation report of the WHC recommendations.*

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a) boundaries modification to include additional attributes

Description of activities

The potential inclusion of additional attributes—mainly epigean elements—within the property boundaries was evaluated for each component of the serial site to give it a greater completeness and representativeness of the phenomenon of evaporitic karst. Beyond the two components identified by IUCN during the inscription process (c.s. 1 Alta Valle Secchia and c.s.5 Vena del Gesso Romagnola – Monte Mauro), other epigean features located near the boundaries have been identified as suitable for inclusion in the EKCNA World Heritage Site.

Attributes considered for inclusion were evaluated based on the following conditions:

- External factors affecting the property;
- Relevance and consistency with EKCNA geological phenomena already inscribed on the WHL;
- Clear physical and geographical identifiability on the ground;
- Existing regulatory protection within established boundaries;
- Agreement of local land management authorities;
- Compatibility with the planning frameworks of institutions responsible for protecting and promoting the property's values.

Buffer zones were defined considering:

- External factors affecting the property;
- Morphological characteristics of the area and relevant land use plans;
- Opportunities for sustainable development and the promotion of EKCNA.

A summary of the proposed boundary modifications is provided in the table below:

ID	Component Part Name	WH (ha)	buffer zone (ha)	WHC request	note	WH (ha)	buffer zone (ha)
c.s.1	Alta Valle Secchia	1596	1294	YES WHC request	the extension of the component part was verified and shared between the Region and the National Park Authority (Communication PNATE prot. 0004333/24 dated. 06/11/2024). The consent of the municipal administration concerned was given on 12/11/2024 (prot. Prot-0007291/24) (cartography - cf. Annex A)	1796	1337
c.s.2	Bassa Collina Reggiana	274	1385	NO	no modification	274	1385
c.s.3	Gessi di Zola Predosa	57	128	NO	modest changes undergoing final verification [cartography - cf. Annex A]	56	106
c.s.4	Gessi Bolognesi	237	325	NO	no modification	237	325
c.s.5a	Vena del Gesso Romagnola - M.te Penzola	70	4775	NO	no modification	70	4775
c.s.5b	Vena del Gesso Romagnola - M.te del Casino	281		NO	no modification	281	

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ID	Component Part Name	WH (ha)	buffer zone (ha)	WHC request	note	WH (ha)	buffer zone (ha)
c.s.5c	Vena del Gesso Romagnola - M.te Mauro	962		YES WHC request	An initial check has shown that the request for surface extension of the WH perimeter relates to a minority branch of an underground karst cave (<i>Tana della volpe</i> cave), the entrance to which is already within the WH boundary. The direct relationship between the underground portion of this cave and the surface is not significant for the conservation of the attribute and the WH site. The underground portion of the attribute corresponds to the habitat of community interest 8310 'Caves not yet exploited for tourism purposes' included in the site of community interest IT 40700011 'Vena del Gesso Romagnola' and is subject to the Regional Law 10 July 2006, n. 9: <i>Norms for the conservation and valorisation of the geodiversity of Emilia-Romagna and related activities</i> . Moreover, the surface area underlying the karst cave is largely public property and is already subject to forms of protection that guarantee its conservation and protection. In the process of final verification.	962	
c.s.6	Evaporiti di San Leo	119	165	NO	no modification	119	165
c.s.7	Gessi di Onferno	84	276	NO	no modification	84	276
		3 680	8 348			3 879	8 369

Current Progress on EKCNA Management

- The identification of attributes to be included in the property has been completed.
- The delineation of boundary extensions for each component part has been finalized.
- The process of consultation with the local administrations involved in the boundary modifications has commenced, pursuant to Regional Council Resolution No. 1524 of 8 July 2024. The ratification of the new boundaries by all relevant administrations is expected to be completed within six months.
- Regarding the extension of Component Site 1 (c.s. 1), the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park (PNATE) provided its approval on 6 November 2024 (protocol no. 0004333/24), and the municipal administration of Villa Minozzo provided its approval on 12 November 2024 (protocol no. Prot-0007291/24).

Planned Activities after 01/12/2024

- The boundary modification is classified as a minor boundary modification in accordance with Operational Guidelines (OG paragraphs 163–164, Annex 11). Consequently, the required documentation will be prepared in compliance with the guidelines.
- Submission of the complete documentation to the World Heritage Centre in Paris is scheduled for 1 February 2026.

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b) unified protection system for the different component parts of the serial property

Description of activity

The current legal and regulatory protection frameworks in place in Italy and the Emilia-Romagna Region (RER) identify, catalogue, and regulate specific locations, individual elements, or isolated phenomena, often not addressing these aspects as a whole.

At present, the protection of the EKCNA serial nature site rests on two pillars.

The **first pillar** consists of the direct protection of attributes: it focuses on preserving individual elements of value *in situ*; it is composed by all geological, hydrogeological, naturalistic, and environmental protection laws acting within the core zone of the property.

The **second pillar** consists of a widespread protection, acting mainly on the surroundings, i.e. on the buffer zones, by maintaining the interrelationships that define its landscape, naturalistic, and geological significance.

Given that most component parts already benefit from robust protection within national or regional protected areas, the Emilia-Romagna Region **has initiated the establishment of two new regional nature reserves** corresponding to c.s. 3 (Gessi di Zola Predosa) and c.s. 6 (Evaporiti di San Leo). This initiative aims to increase and standardize the level of naturalistic protection across all components and to implement a unified management system applicable to the entire World Heritage Site (WHS).

The management of these two new nature reserves will be entrusted to the Eastern Emilia and Romagna Management Authorities, which are already integrated into the EKCNA management structure (see section d)).

Current Progress on EKCNA Management

- The municipal administrations of c.s. 3 (Municipality of Zola Predosa, as per Municipal Council Resolution No. 89 dated 13 November 2024, and Municipality of Sasso Marconi, as per Municipal Council Resolution No. 83 dated 13 November 2024) and c.s.6 (Municipality of San Leo, as per Municipal Council Resolution No. 75 dated 7 November 2024) have formally requested the establishment of nature reserves that encompass the WH and its buffer zones in their entirety.
- Note: Progress within the Legislative Assembly has been temporarily delayed due to local elections held on 17–18 November 2024.

Activities after 01/12/2024

- The technical details required for the establishment of the two nature reserves will be finalized, including their perimeters, safeguard measures, management objectives, and stakeholder consultations.
- Following the post-election resumption of activities by the Regional Legislative Assembly, the governing body responsible for the establishment of nature reserves, the Regional Council will submit the proposal for their formal creation.
- The official establishment of the nature reserves is expected by 31 December 2025.

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c) **Alignment of Biosphere Reserve zoning with World Heritage boundaries**

Description of activity

This activity aims to identify and implement the necessary adjustments to align the three zones of the *Appennino Tosco-Emiliano Biosphere Reserve* (BR-ATE) with the boundaries of the cs. 1 and cs 2 of the World Heritage, thereby facilitating management and harmonizing planned actions.

Currently, the designated World Heritage component sites lie entirely within the BR-ATE. However, a significant portion of the c.s. is located in the buffer and transition zones, which are primarily intended to support sustainable social and economic development and provide only indirect protection for natural heritage.

Recognizing that the core areas of a Biosphere Reserve are designated to offer the highest level of protection to areas of significant natural value, it was proposed to revise the BR-ATE zoning to identify two new core areas corresponding to the World Heritage property's core zones. The buffer zones of the Biosphere Reserve and the World Heritage Site largely overlap, meaning only minor adjustments are needed to maintain perimeter continuity.

The process for modifying Biosphere Reserve zoning, including the creation of new core areas, mirrors the procedures required for establishing a new Reserve. As no simplified process exists, this involves an extensive timeline of approximately two years. The steps include local consultations, preparation of a revised dossier outlining the proposed changes, and an evaluation by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which typically takes 6–9 months. At the national level, coordination is overseen by the Italian Commission for UNESCO, while at the local level, the process is managed by the RB coordinating body, the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park.

Current Progress on EKCNA Management

A preliminary proposal for a revised zoning of the Biosphere Reserve has been developed, aligning the two UNESCO designations and facilitating their integrated management by designating consistent protection areas (core and buffer zones). Relevant maps are included in the Annex B.

The National Park has initiated consultations with the Ministry of the Environment and Local Authorities to evaluate possible approaches, determine the appropriate procedures, and establish the most efficient timeline for implementing the required zoning changes in accordance with national and international guidelines.

Planned Activities After 1 December 2024

A final proposal for the revised Biosphere Reserve zoning will be developed, incorporating the extension of the boundaries for Component Site 1 and 2 (refer to Section a)).

The finalised documentation will facilitate allow the initiation of the procedure requiredr by the National Commission, following the schedule provided in the Technical Guidelines for Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO, 2022, Section 1.5).

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d) establishment of the management structure of the serial property

Description of activity

To effectively manage and coordinate the site Evaporitic Karst and Caves of the Northern Apennines (EKCNA), the Emilia-Romagna Region has undertaken the following actions (as outlined in the introduction):

- The establishment of a reference structure - named '**WH EKCNA focal point**' - This reference structure is integrated into the Protected Areas, Forests and Mountain Areas Development Department and is tasked with managing the EKCNA UNESCO World Heritage Site (as per Dlb. GR n.2319 of 22/12/2023). The ER Region has allocated financial resources, administrative support, and key personnel to this focal point, which serves as the operational hub for the site.
- The creation of the Institutional Board to support the management of the property, through the preparation of two agreements:
 - a) *a memorandum of understanding between the same Authorities that signed the previous memoranda of understanding, updating their contents with respect to the tasks to be carried out in the following steps;*
 - b) *the drafting of an agreement between the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park (PNATE) in order to regulate the relationships between the two entities, Region - Park Authority, for the coordinated management of the World Heritage property and for the alignment of the perimeters between the World Heritage Site (WHS) and the Biosphere Reserve (MaB).*
- the setting up of a Scientific Committee with technical-scientific advisory functions on issues and problems concerning the management and conservation of the property, made up of 7 members chosen by the Emilia-Romagna Region, after consulting the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park, among employees of the Emilia-Romagna Region (2), of the National Park (1), among representatives of the FSRER (1), of the Ministry of Culture (1), of the regional Universities (2), to which other members may be added by agreement between the Region and the National Park.

The organisation chart and the functions assigned to the bodies making up the management structure are as follows:

The *WH EKCNA focal point* is the light operational structure, corresponding to the role of *site manager* (contact person for the management of a World Heritage site), which coordinates conservation and enhancement activities oriented towards World Heritage through regulations on in a direct form with the regional park authorities and PNATE; for geological aspects, dissemination and popularization activities it collaborates also with the Settore Difesa del Territorio (Land Protection Department).

Key responsibilities of the **WH EKCNA focal point** are (non-exhaustive list):

- developing the Overall Management Strategy (OMS) with a focus on geo-conservation and geo-valorization;
- creating a management plan for visitor experience oriented towards the development of a conscious and sustainable fruition of the nine component sites of the property;
- creating a communication plan of the universal and associated values of the property;
- coordinating management, conservation and enhancement efforts proposed by the management bodies of the protected areas (PNATE, Management Authorities for Parks and Biodiversity - Emilia Centrale, Emilia Orientale and Romagna) oriented towards the world heritage;

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- coordinating management efforts across protected areas and promoting sustainable property use.
- to develop further management objectives for the enhancement of the associated values (environmental, ecological and cultural);
- preparing the three-year programme of conservation, management and enhancement activities and related implementation measures;
- convening the Scientific Committee and leveraging its expertise;
- coordinating the methods and the activities required to monitor the state of conservation of the property;
- managing communications with the Italian Ministry (MASE) and the World Heritage Centre (WH Centre) and/or IUCN;
- preparing the periodical reports on the state of conservation of the property required by the World Heritage Centre;
- engaging advisory groups of external stakeholders/supporters to contribute to actions for the conservation/enhancement of the property;
- constituting a reference point for various actors/bodies to coordinate the implementation of the OMS.

Institutional Board

Established by a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all the territorial actors (RER, PNATE, 3 Provinces, 1 Metropolitan City, 9 Territorial Unions, 19 Municipalities and 3 Management Authorities for Parks & Biodiversity), the Institutional Board is the reference political body with a consultative and propositional role. Its functions include:

- to express an opinion on the criteria and guidelines of the Overall Management Strategy (OMS);
- to formulate proposals on the activities, programmes and objectives set by the OMS;
- to verify and approve the status of implementation of the OMS;
- give opinions on the three-year planning for the implementation of conservation, management and valorisation activities;
- provide guidance and proposals on support activities and the formation of advisory groups of external stakeholders/supporters (i.e. thematic groups supporting the property such as UNESCO clubs, speleological, mountaineering and nature organisations, social volunteering or cultural associations, etc.).

Scientific Committee

Established on the basis of a cooperation agreement signed by the RER and PNATE, this expert panel advises on the OMS, research initiatives, and conservation strategies. with a consultative and propositional role. The panel include scholars and experts in geological/speleological heritage and in environmental, ecological and cultural values related to the conservation, management and enhancement of the property.

The Scientific Committee shall be composed of **at least no. 7 members**, chosen respectively among:

- employees of the Emilia-Romagna Region (2 members);*
- employees of the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park (1 member);*
- members of the Universities of the Region (2 members);*
- members of the Speleological Federation of Emilia-Romagna (1 member);*
- employees of the Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio (1 member).*

Other members may be added to the Scientific Committee by agreement between the Region and the National Park.

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The specific tasks of the Scientific Committee are the following (non-exhaustive list):

- to express an opinion on the OMS, on the management plan of the visit experience, and on the communication plan of the values of the property;
- to provide criteria and guidelines for scientific research activities, for in-depth study of the associated values (environmental, ecological and cultural) and for scientific dissemination activities;
- to provide technical-scientific advice on matters and issues concerning the management and conservation of the property;
- giving advice when requested by WH EKCNA focal point and by the Institutional Board on relevant issues;
- provide advice about how to effectively monitor the activities and the state of conservation of the property.

The functions attributed to the institutional actors involved in coordinated management are as follows:

RER - General Directorate for Land and Environment Care

The RER - General Directorate for Land and Environment Care oversees the coordination and management of the EKCNA World Heritage Site by working through its departments for Protected Areas, Forests, and Mountain Areas Development and Land Protection. It evaluates the implications of UNESCO designation on its competencies, such as water resource planning, environmental assessments, geo-thematic information system, environmental thematic mapping, the Regional Territorial Plan and urban/landscape planning. Primary responsibilities:

- **Resource Allocation:** Programmes funds from the regional budget for institutional activities related to EKCNA management.
- **Operational Oversight:** Organises and manages the **WH EKCNA focal point**, the operational structure for property management.
- **Scientific Committee:** Establishes the committee in cooperation with the **PNATE** (Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park).
- **Approvals and Submissions:** Submits key documents to the Regional Council for approval, including:
 - a) *Overall Management Strategy (OMS);*
 - b) *Visitor Experience Management Plan;*
 - c) *Coordinated Communication Plan;*
 - d) *Three-year activity plans for the implementation of conservation, management and enhancement activities;*
 - e) *Periodic reports on the conservation state of the property for the World Heritage Centre.*
- **Stakeholder Relations:** Maintains connections with the **Institutional Board**, focusing on collaboration with the PNATE.
- **Planning Integration:** Ensures the alignment of the OMS's objectives with various types of planning and the Directorate's areas of responsibility.

Protected Areas, Forests and Mountain Areas Development Department

The Protected Areas, Forests, and Mountain Areas Development Department is responsible for managing and enhancing the EKCNA World Heritage Site. It integrates the WH EKCNA focal point into its organizational framework and supports its operation using the department's internal resources.

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Land Protection Department

The Land Protection Department oversees geological survey activities for managing the EKCNA World Heritage Site and supports the dissemination and popularisation of UNESCO designation information. It collaborates with the Protected Areas, Forests, and Mountain Areas Development Department and the Scientific Committee. Key roles include:

- Managing, conserving, and enhancing geo-heritage.
- Monitoring conservation status.
- Identifying geological phenomena linked to Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) and geosites subject to UNESCO designation.
- Developing geo-cartographic systems and thematic property maps.
- Preparing periodic conservation reports for the World Heritage Centre.

PNATE - Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park

The National Park actively supports the management of the EKCNA World Heritage Site, overseeing the Alta Valle del Secchia component site (cs.1) and managing the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano Biosphere Reserve. Its governance role is defined by the Memorandum of Understanding and the cooperation agreement with the Emilia-Romagna Region (RER).

Key responsibilities:

- Oversee the alignment of the Biosphere Reserve zoning with the World Heritage boundary.
- Support the operational coordination structure (**WH EKCNA focal point**) by designating a contact person.
- Nominate a representative to the **Scientific Committee** as per the agreement with the RER.
- Collaborate with the RER on three-year planning for conservation, management, and enhancement activities.

Current Progress on EKCNA Management

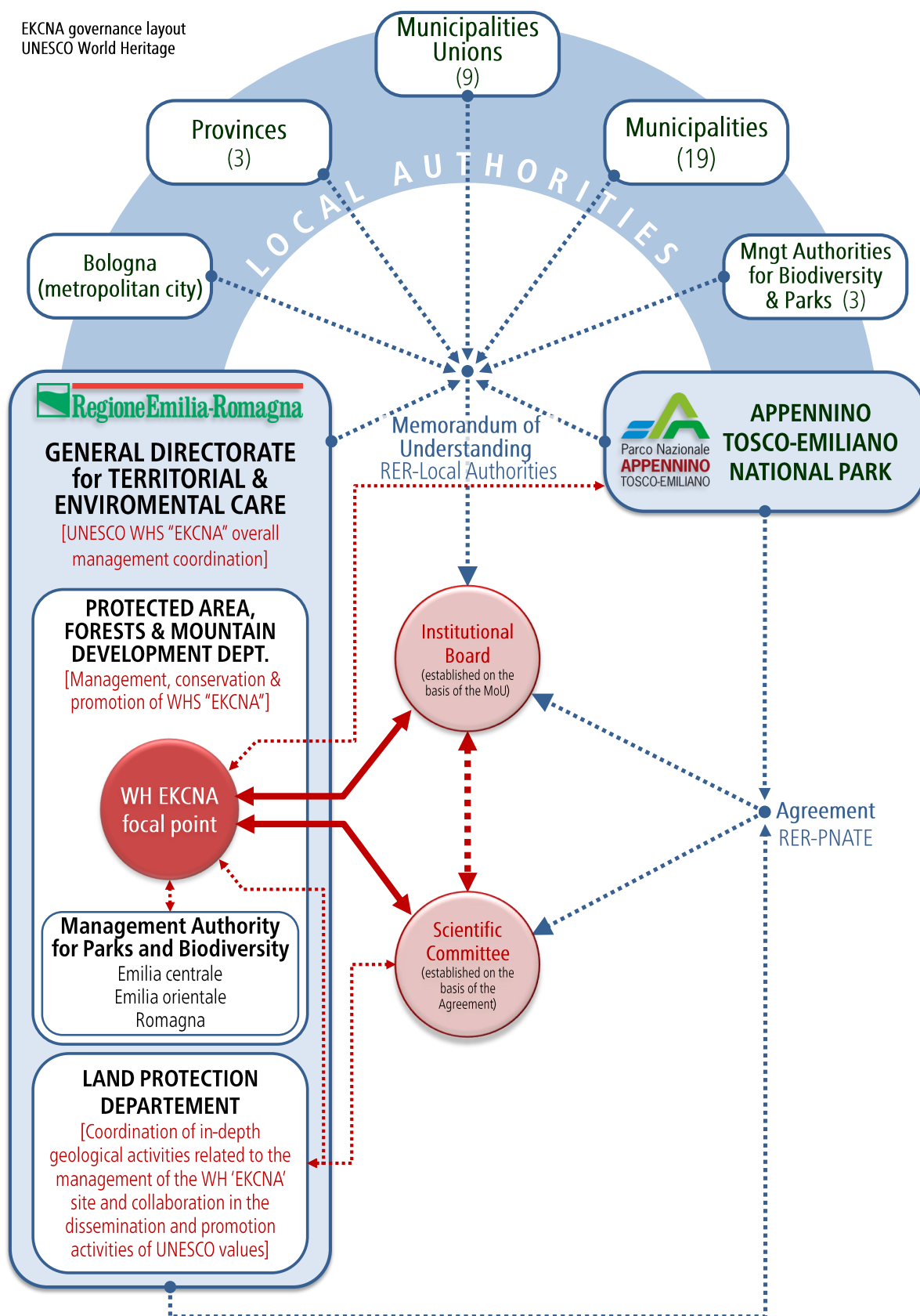
- **Establishment of the EKCNA Focal Point:** created on 08/07/2024 and is now fully operational.
- **RER - PNATE Agreement:** signed by both entities on 13/11/2024.
- **RER - Territorial Authorities Protocol:** approval for the Institutional Board is underway, with 16 out of 37 authorities having signed (progress was delayed due to regional elections on 17-18 November 2024).
- **Financial Resources:** €585,000 allocated to the WH EKCNA focal point by RER for activities and projects over 2024-2025.
- **Scientific Committee Appointment:** Initiated on 22/10/2024, with requests for nominations sent to involved bodies (protocol ref: 1191054/24).

Activities after 01/12/2024

- as at 20/11/2024, have signed the MoU 18 out of 36 Authorities. Completion of the signing of the 'RER - Local Authorities protocol' is expected by the first half of 2025;
- The appointment of the Scientific Committee is expected by 31/03/2025;
- Implementation by the Protected Area Management Authorities of the initiatives and investments financed with regional funds.

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EKCNA governance layout
UNESCO World Heritage



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e) visitor experience management plan for the different component sites of the serial property

Description of the activity

The Overall Management Strategy, outlined in the ND, identifies 4 key themes to be developed:

- a) *Geo Heritage,*
- b) *Geo Tourism,*
- c) *Knowledge & Training,*
- d) *Sustainable Development.*

Among these, **Geo Tourism** holds particular significance. It emphasizes enhancing both above-ground (epigean) and below-ground (hypogean) visitor experiences, bridging the values of Geo Heritage with public knowledge and engagement among both local and foreign people.

However, visitor flow impacts are a critical concern, especially regarding: (a) the potential pressure on epigean habitats and attributes. (b) the sensitivity of hypogean environments and attributes. Managers of the protected areas involved in the WHS management system closely monitor these factors to ensure sustainable tourism practices.

To address these challenges, the **EKCNA focal point** has established a multidisciplinary working group (WG). This group is led by the **RER coordinator** for regional protected area and biodiversity conservation and includes representatives responsible for visitor management from all protected areas involved:

- Appennino Tosco Emiliano National Park;
- Management Authority for Parks and Biodiversity - Emilia orientale
- Management Authority for Parks and Biodiversity - Emilia centrale
- Management Authority for Parks and Biodiversity – Romagna
- Speleological Federation of Emilia-Romagna Region

The participatory process for the formation of the visitor experience management plan includes a schedule of meetings (1 per month for approx. 6-8 months) that was launched on 20 September 2024 and is divided into 3 operational phases:

phase A. DEFINING THE CURRENT VISITING PRESSURE LEVEL;

To define the current visiting pressure level, the working group (WG) will build upon the data collected for the ND (2020). The planned activities include:

- a) *Updating surveys on the annual number of visitors to the visitor centers.*
- b) *Updating surveys on the annual number of visitors along open-air routes and in key locations ("hot spots").*
- c) *Updating surveys on the annual number of visitors to underground environments and natural caves.*
- d) *Collecting and comparing actions and management methods currently implemented by each site within its area.*
- e) *Identifying the main categories of stakeholders already active in the geotourism sector.*

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phase B. IDENTIFYING MEASURES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES:

the WG is focusing on the following initiatives:

1. *Mapping suitable locations: Charting epigean (surface) and hypogean (underground) areas suitable for tourism, while excluding sites incompatible with sustainable use and conservation. The mapping ensures all features contributing to the EKCNA's Outstanding Universal Value are represented.*
2. *Enhancing tourism quality: Managing current visitor flows and increasing the area's attractiveness by designing itineraries that integrate both surface and underground geological features.*
3. *Developing a visual identity: Creating a cohesive visual identity for the serial property to facilitate public understanding of its geological values.*
4. *Establishing geo-trails: Designing routes that showcase the geological values of the entire serial property and each component site.*
5. *Introducing geocaching and digital tools: Incorporating geocaching practices and developing applications/software to highlight the geological significance of each site.*
6. *Promoting interpretation centres: Strengthening the network of interpretation centres and thematic museums to enhance public dissemination of the site's geological values.*
7. *Supporting tourist facilities: Engaging with local tourism businesses (refuges, guest houses, B&Bs, restaurants, refreshment points, etc.) to foster awareness of UNESCO values. This includes professional training for operators to emphasize the site's World Heritage status.*

phase C. DEFINING MONITORING METHODS:

the WG has already identified the following key-indicators:

value / feature	key indicators	frequency	monit.lev.
inhabitants	number of inhabitants	P	R+N
	mobility data	P	R
	data on schooling	P	R+N
flow of visitors/tourists	number of overnight stays	P	R
	number of accesses to the sites of interest;	P	R
	distribution of attendance;	P	R+N
	types of visitors;	P	R
	index of satisfaction and evaluation of services (number of sample surveys).	P	R
education	number of interventions in schools and among stakeholders;	O	R+E
	number of extracurricular educational projects;	O	R
	number of training courses.	O	R
scientific production	number of geological/geomorphological publications	O+P	R+E
communication	number of articles in academic journals	O+P	R+N+E
	number of film productions	O	R+N
	number of television reports	O	R+N

Legend

frequency	O = occasional, P = periodic, C = continuous
monitoring level	R = regional; N = national; E = European

Property	Evaporitic Karst and Caves on Northern Apennines
ID N°	1692
State Party	Italy
Criteria	(viii)
web-ref	https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1692/

Current Progress on EKCNA Management

- The multidisciplinary WG has already held 3 meetings and is completing the first step (phase A).

Activities after 01/12/2024

- It is expected to complete the definition of the measures of the second phase (phase B) by April 2025 and to define the monitoring protocols of the third phase (phase C) by May 2025.
- The WG is scheduled to end in June 2025 with the validation of the visit experience management plan by the Scientific Committee and submitted to the Institutional Board for its assessment by 31/12/2025.

It should be noted that the Visiting Experience Management Plan is an interlinked part of the **Overall Management Strategy**, and interfaces closely with the Coordinated Communication Plan, which is scheduled to be drawn up in the first half of 2025.




unesco

World Heritage Site



 **Regione Emilia-Romagna**

 **MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE E
DELLA SICUREZZA ENERGETICA**

WHS

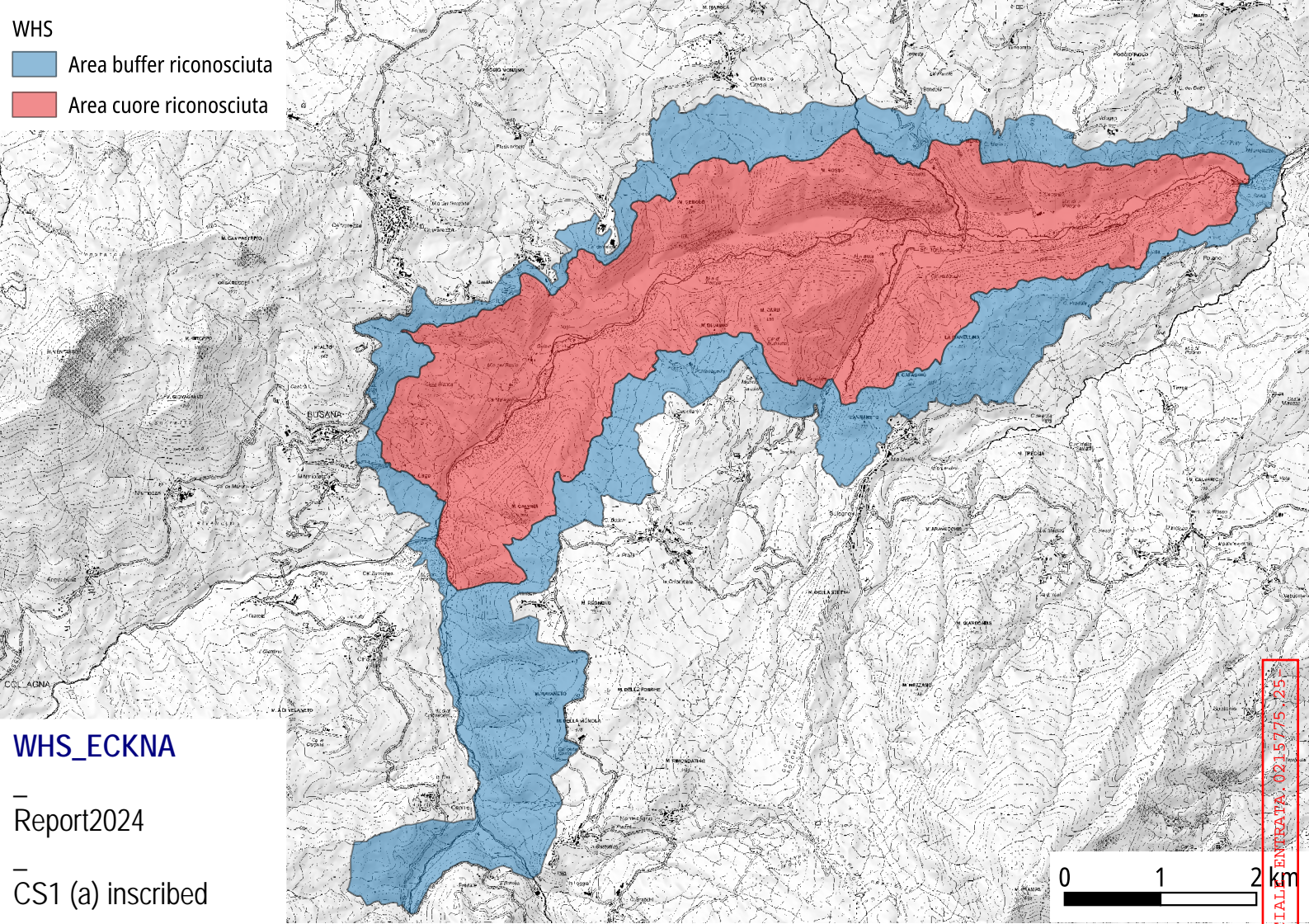
Area buffer riconosciuta

Area cuore riconosciuta

WHS_ECKNA


Report2024

CS1 (a) inscribed



Modifiche apportate

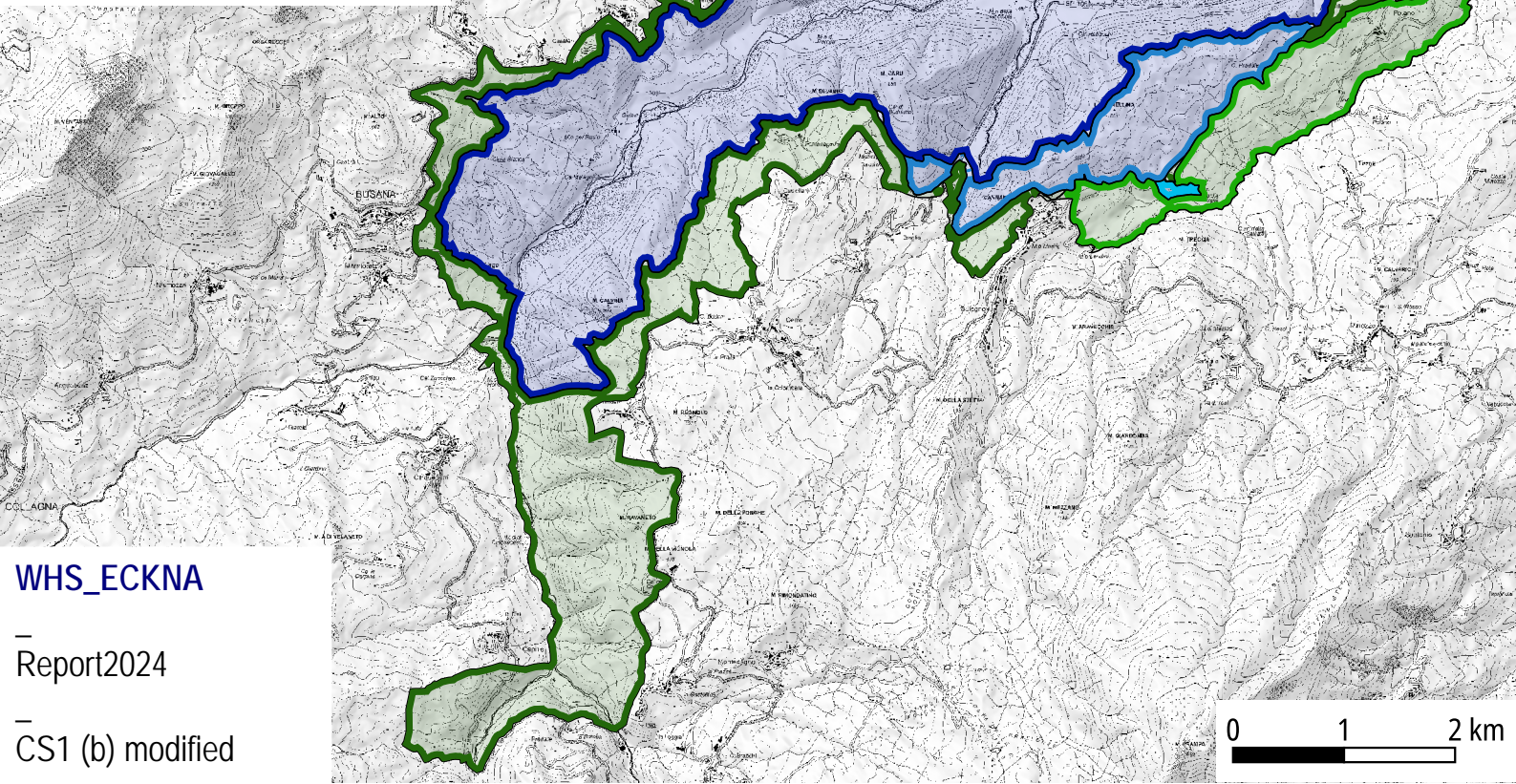
 NUOVO_CORE

 TRASFORMATO_da_BUFFER_a_CORE

 CORE_ORIGINALE

 BUFFER_ORIGINALE

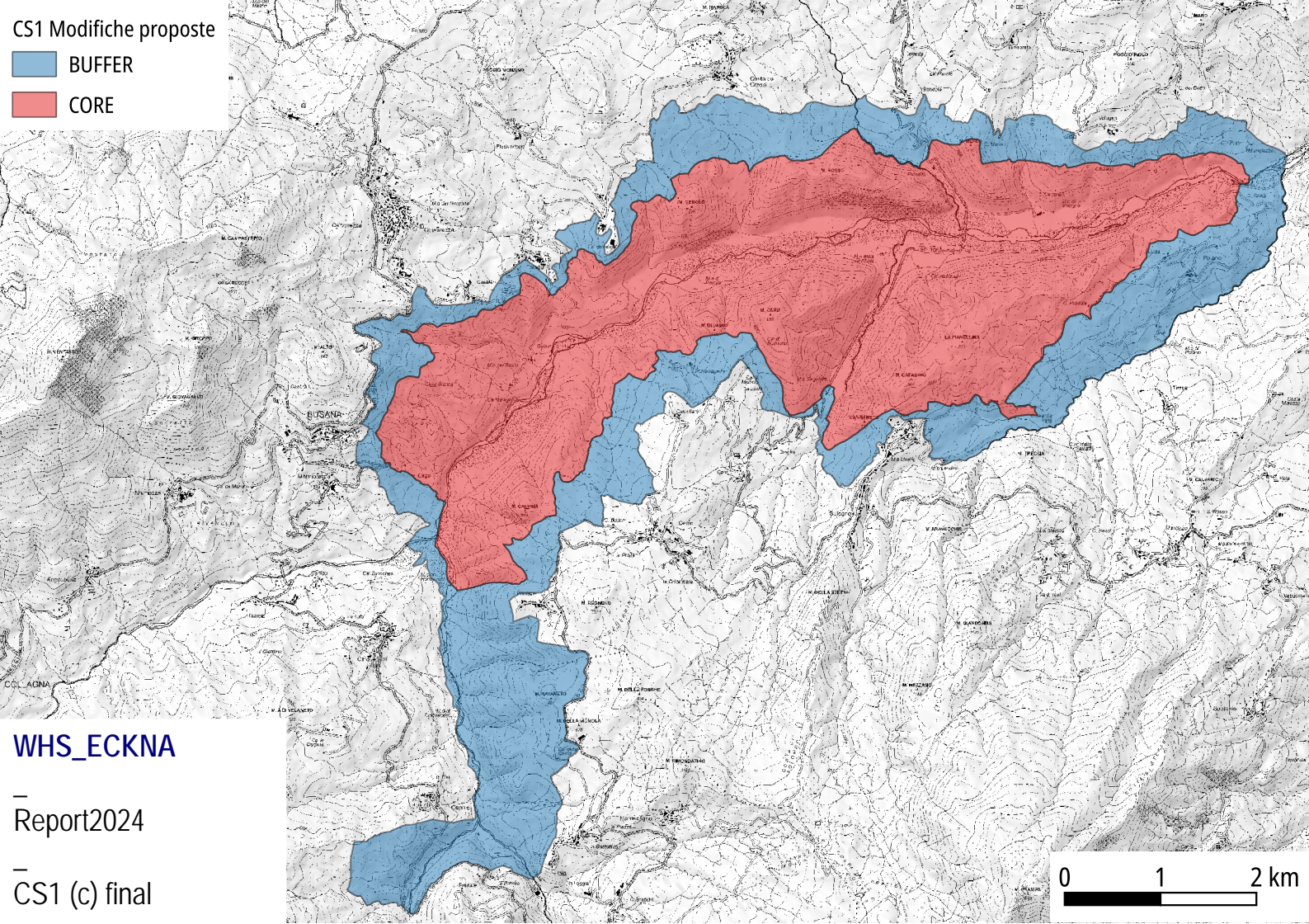
 NUOVO_BUFFER



WHS_ECKNA

— Report2024

— CS1 (b) modified



CS1 Modifiche proposte

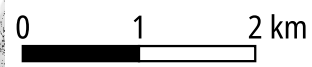
 BUFFER

 CORE

WHS_ECKNA

— Report2024

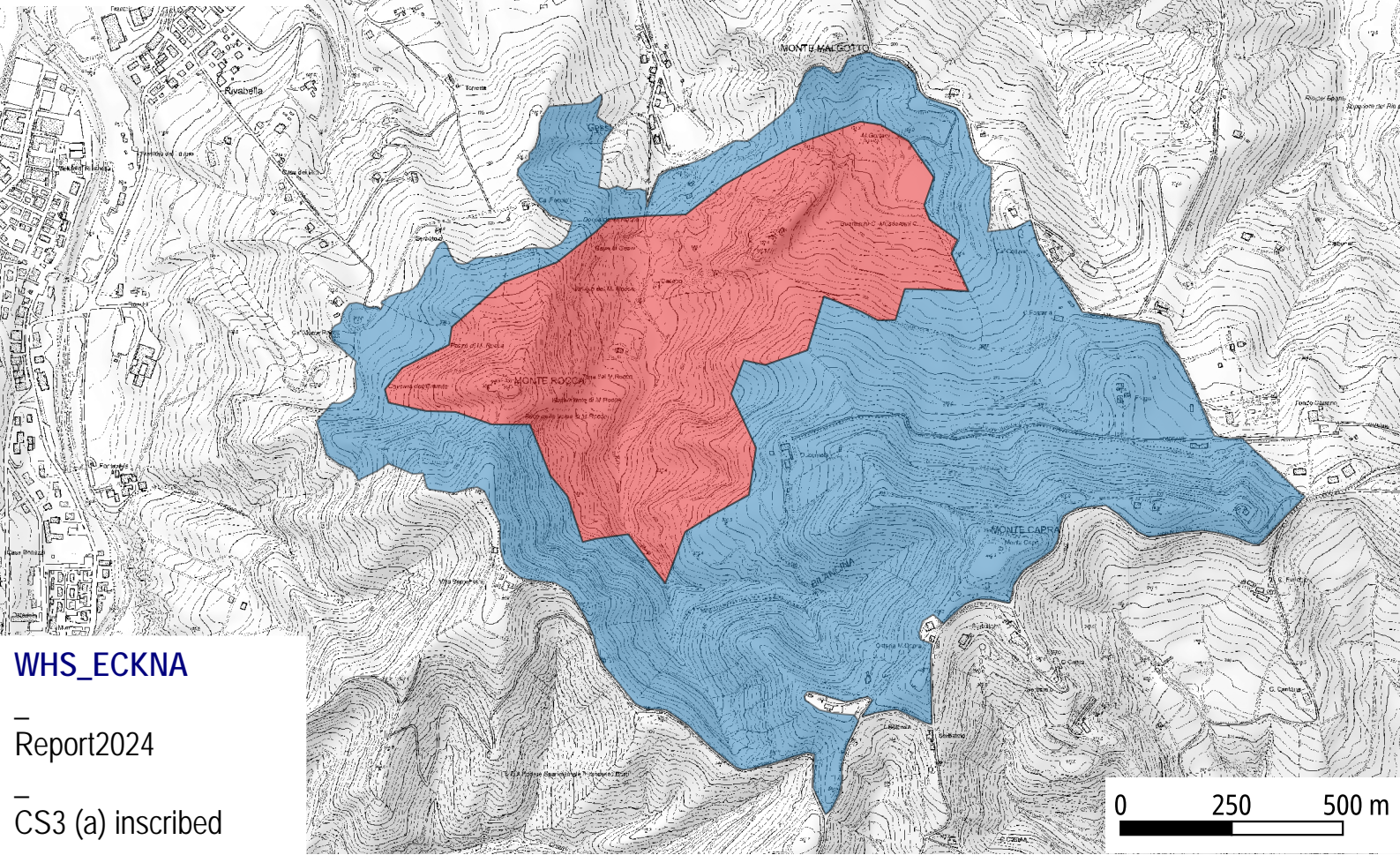
— CS1 (c) final



WHS

Area buffer riconosciuta

Area cuore riconosciuta



WHS_ECKNA

Report2024

CS3 (a) inscribed

0 250 500 m

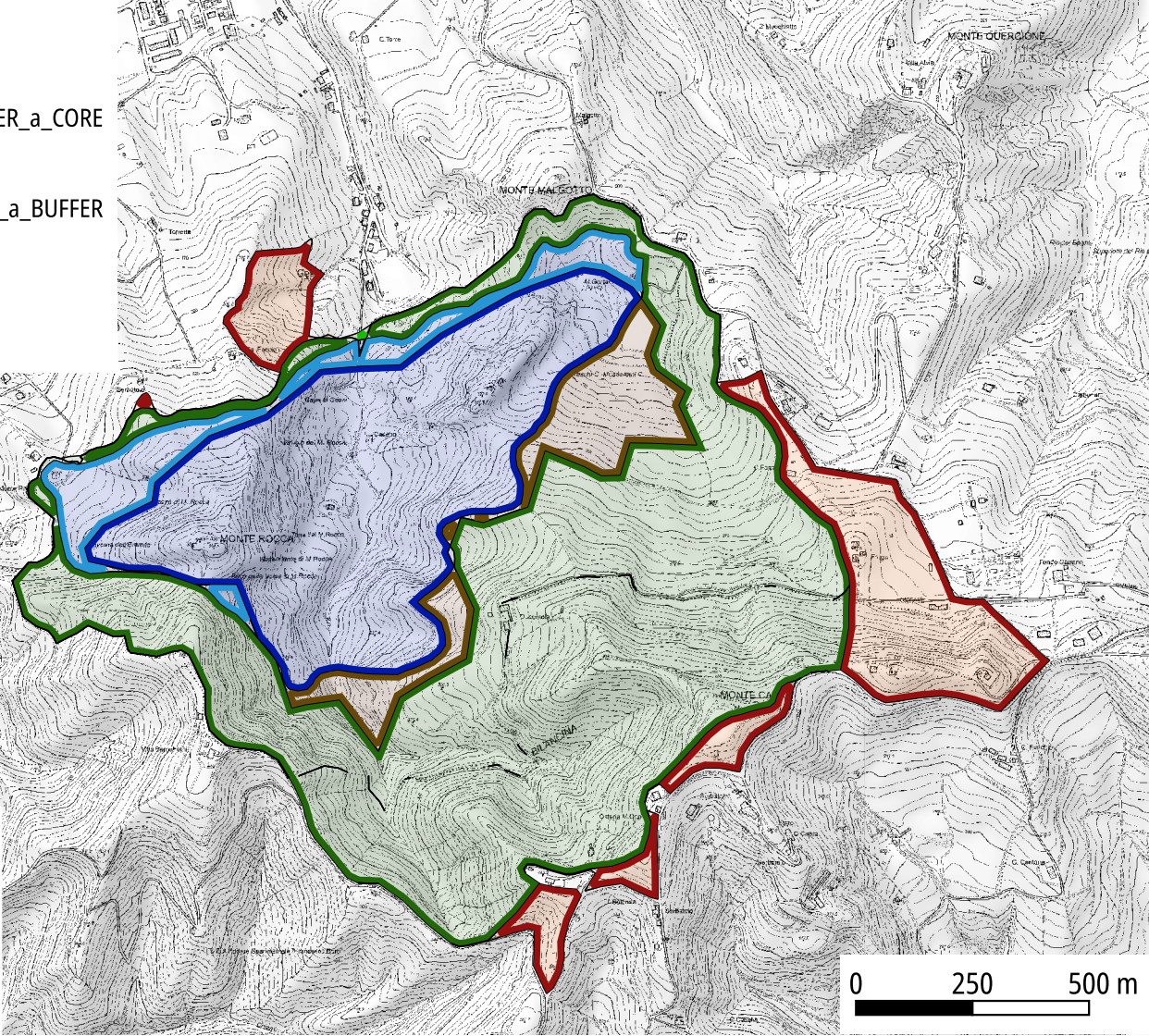
CS3 Modifiche

- NUOVO_CORE
- TRASFORMATO_da_BUFFER_a_CORE
- CORE_ORIGINALE
- TRASFORMATO_da_CORE_a_BUFFER
- NUOVO_BUFFER
- BUFFER_ORIGINALE
- BUFFER_ELIMINATO

WHS_ECKNA

Report2024

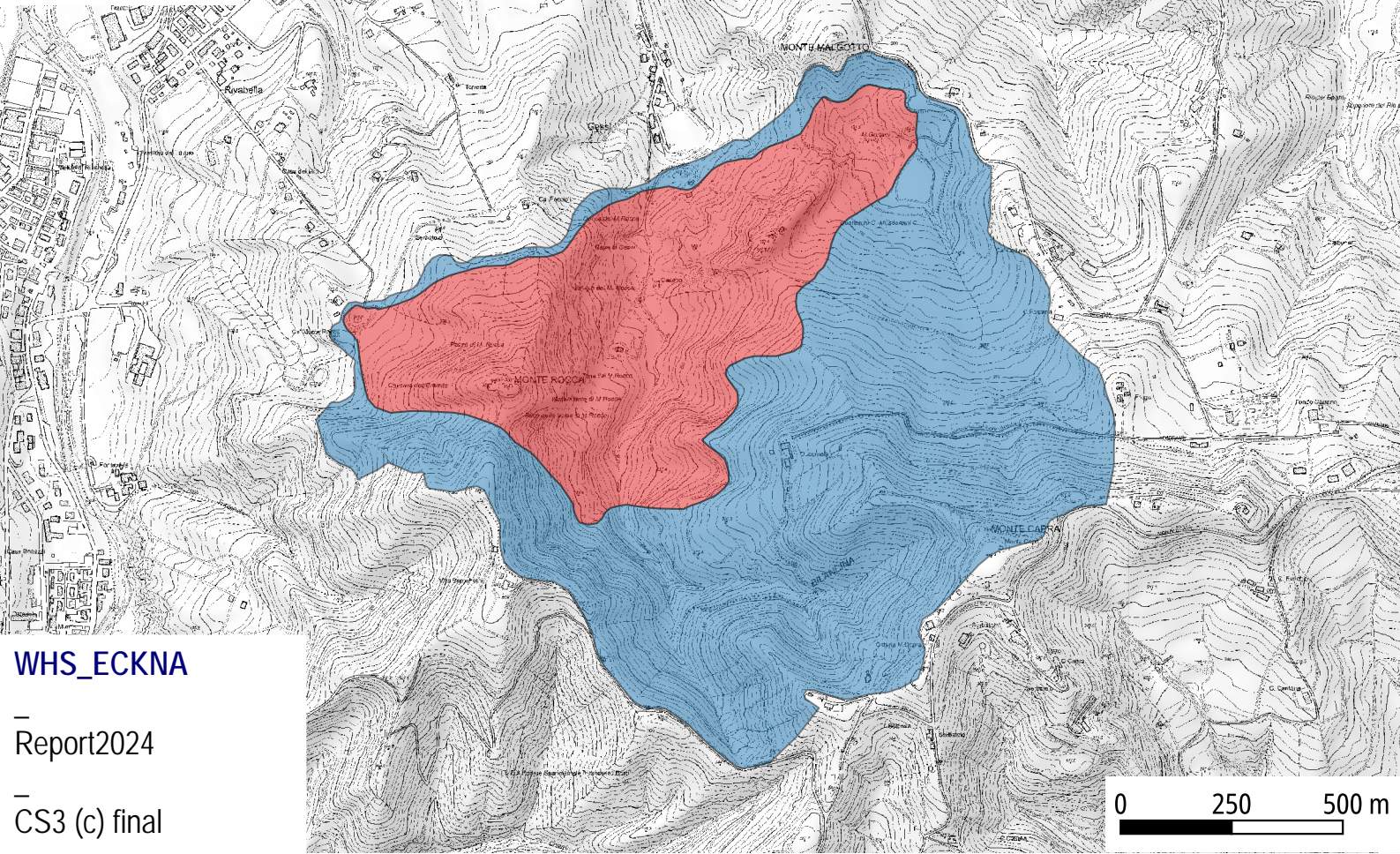
CS3 (b) modified



CS3 Modifiche proposte

Buffer

Core



WHS_ECKNA

Report2024

CS3 (c) final

0 250 500 m

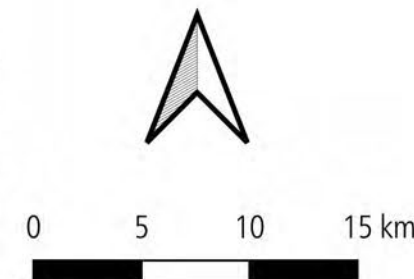
APPENNINO TOSCO-EMILIANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

BOUNDARIES 2024

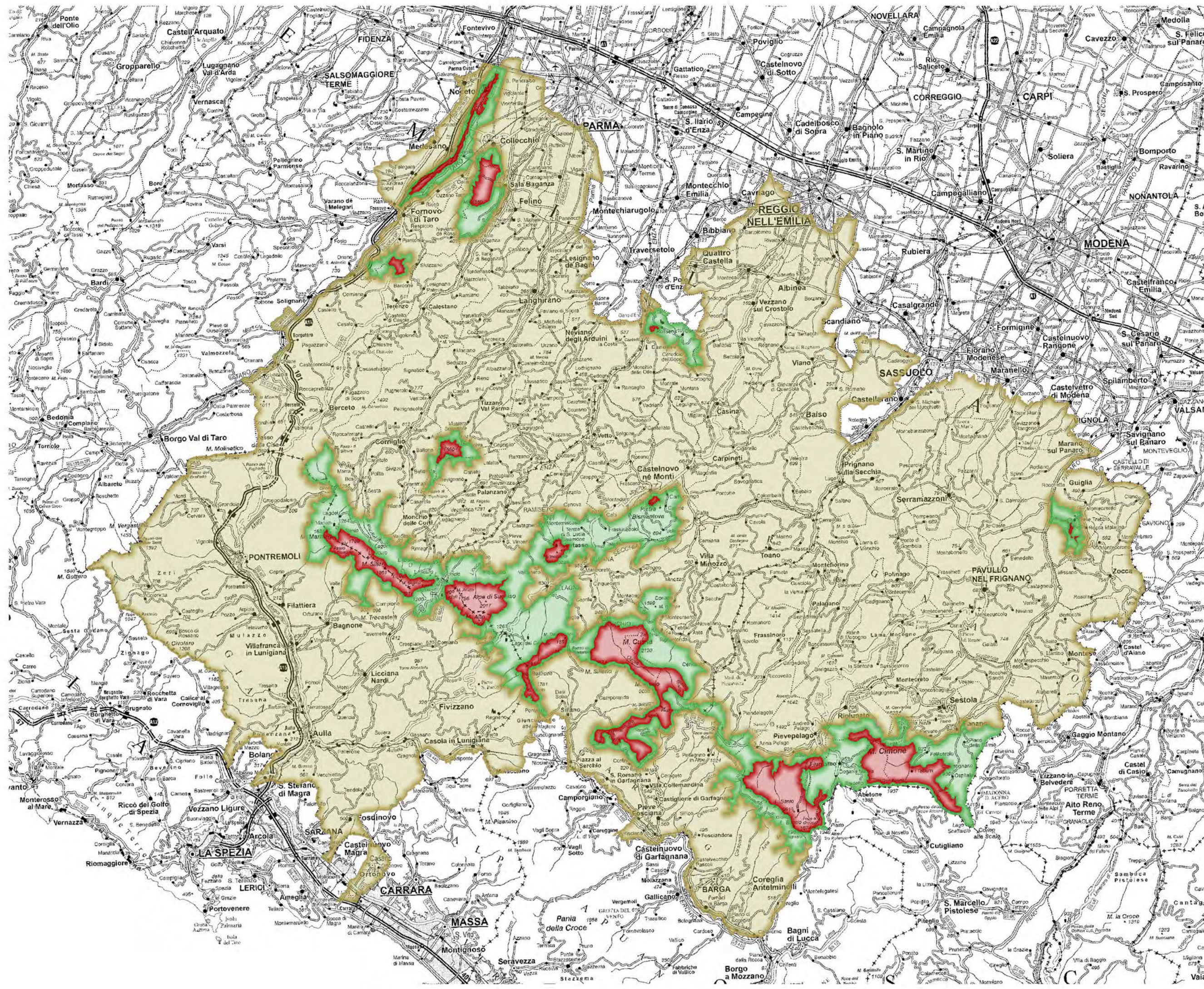
Current boundaries
of the biosphere reserve areas

BR zones

- BUFFER
- CORE
- TRANSITION



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ALLEGATO 5_m_ante_e_MASE.REGISTRO UFFICIALE. ENTRATA. 02157775. 25-

APPENNINO TOSCO-EMILIANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

BOUNDARIES 2024

Current boundaries of the biosphere reserve zones with the boundaries of the WHS component sites superimposed on them

BR zones

- BUFFER
- CORE
- TRANSITION

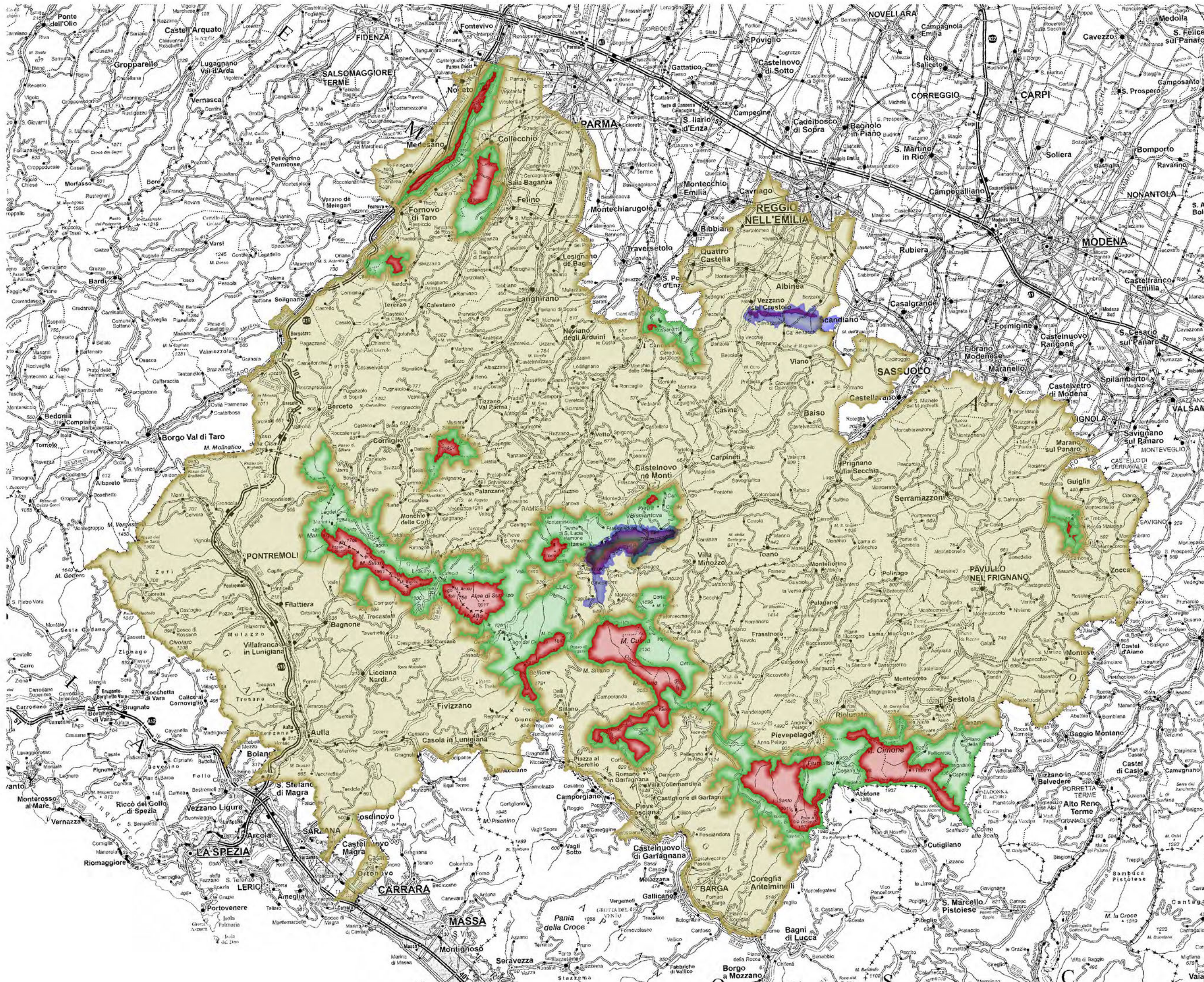
WHS zones

- CORE
- BUFFER

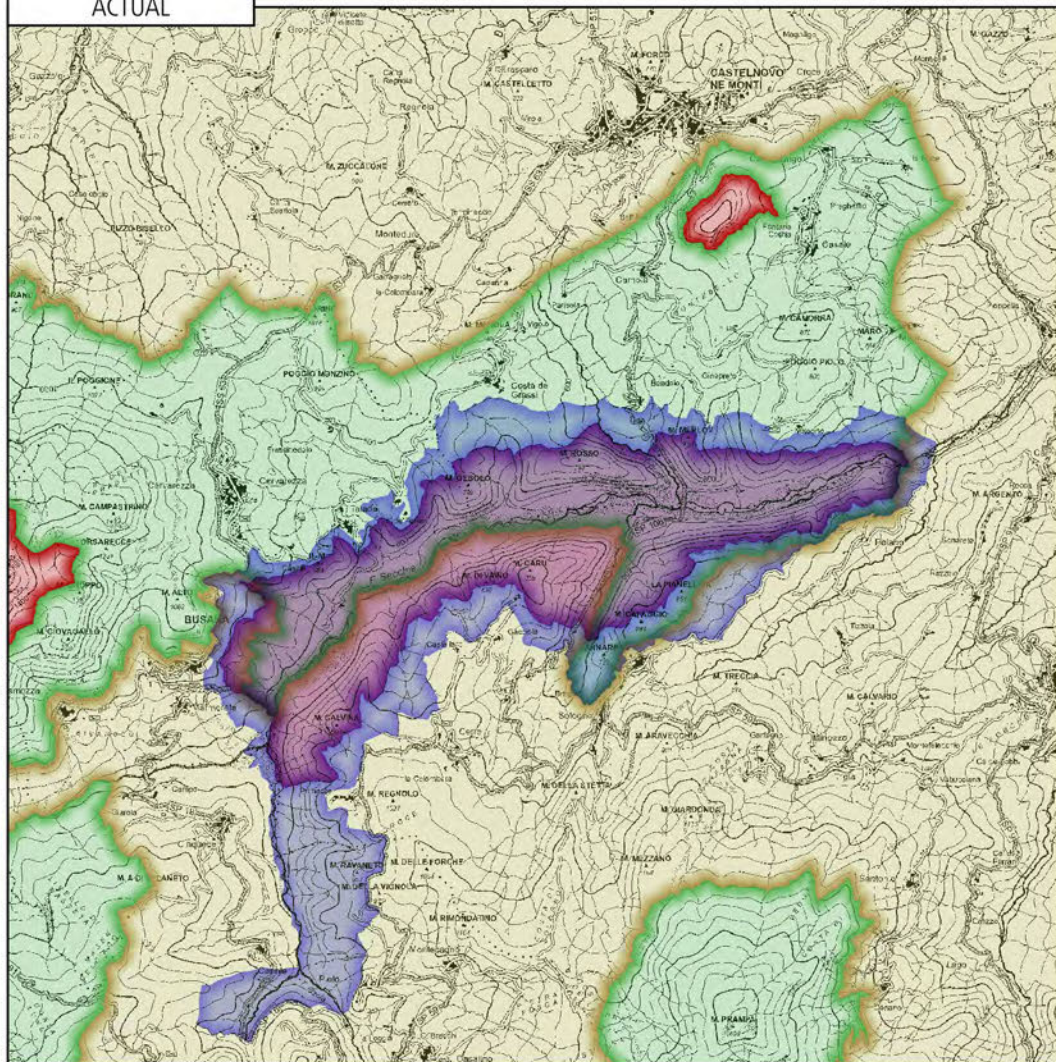


0 5 10 15 km

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ACTUAL



RISERVA DI BIOSFERA
APPENNINO
TOSCO-EMILIANO

APPENNINO TOSCO-EMILIANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Proposed boundaries around
WHS CS1 ALTA VALLE DEL SECCHIA

BR zones

 BUFFER

 CORE

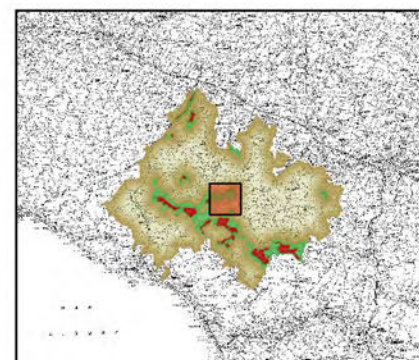
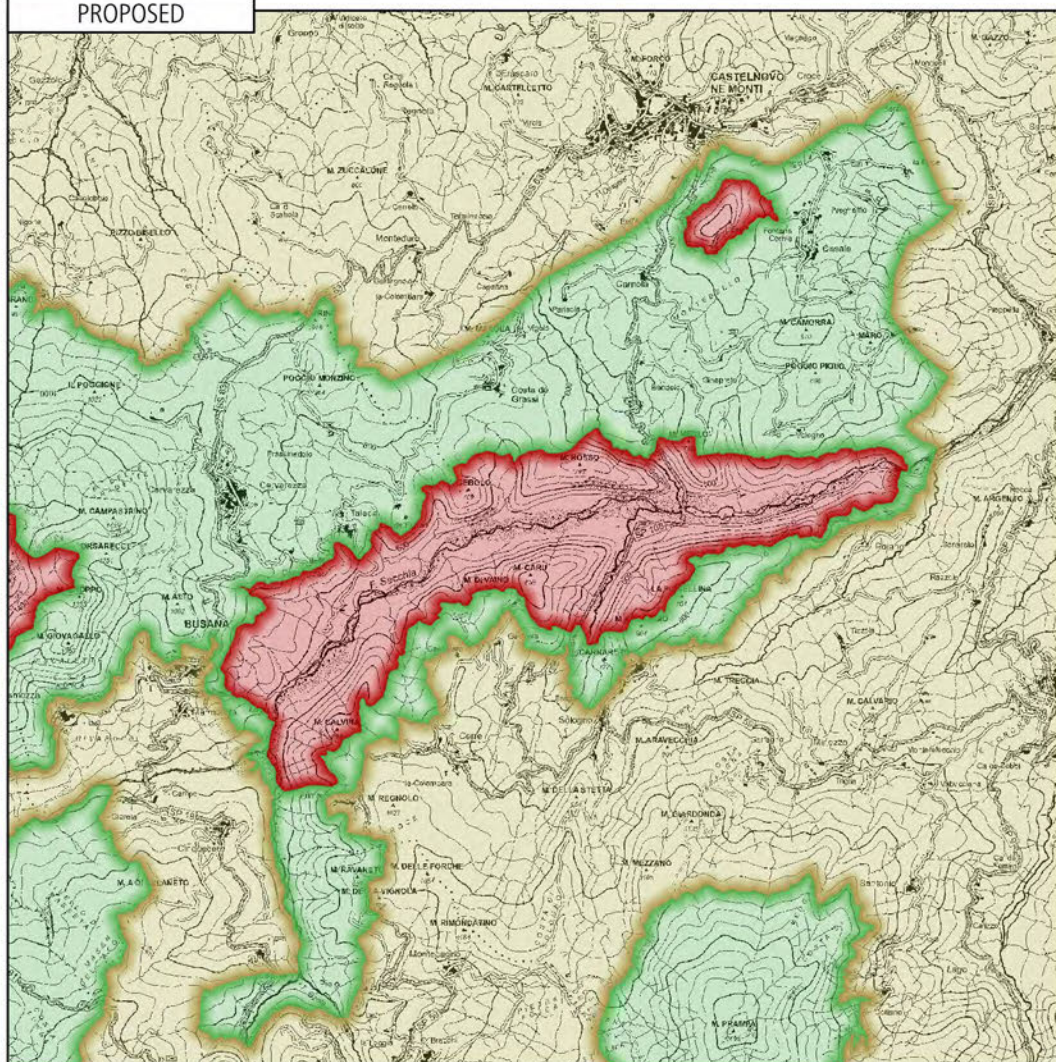
 TRANSITION

WHS zones

 CORE

 BUFFER

PROPOSED

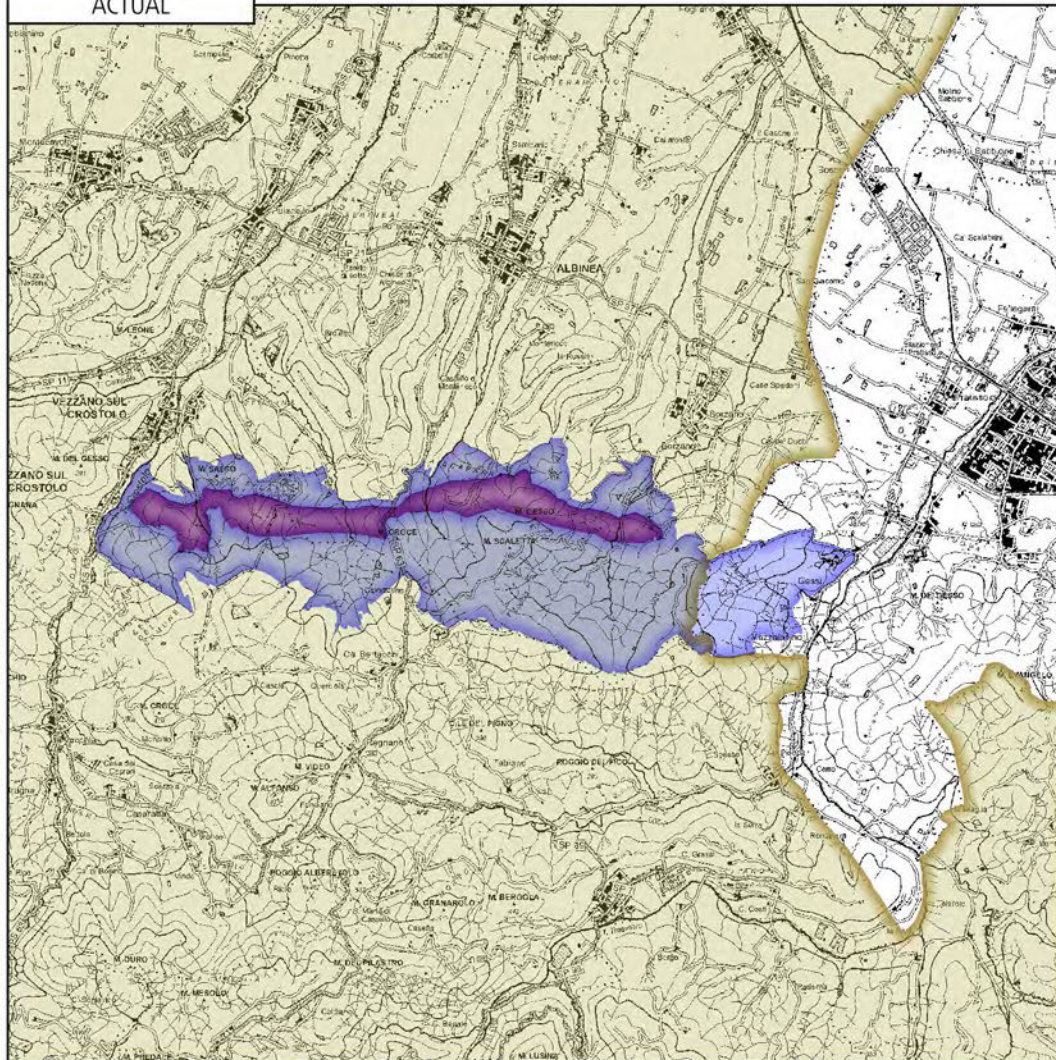


0 1 2 3 4 km



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ACTUAL



RISERVA DI BIOSFERA
APPENNINO
TOSCO-EMILIANO

APPENNINO TOSCO-EMILIANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Proposed boundaries around
WHS CS2 BASSA COLLINA REGGIANA

BR zones

CORE

BUFFER

TRANSITION

NEW BUFFER

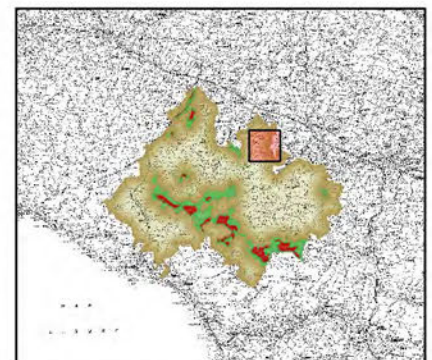
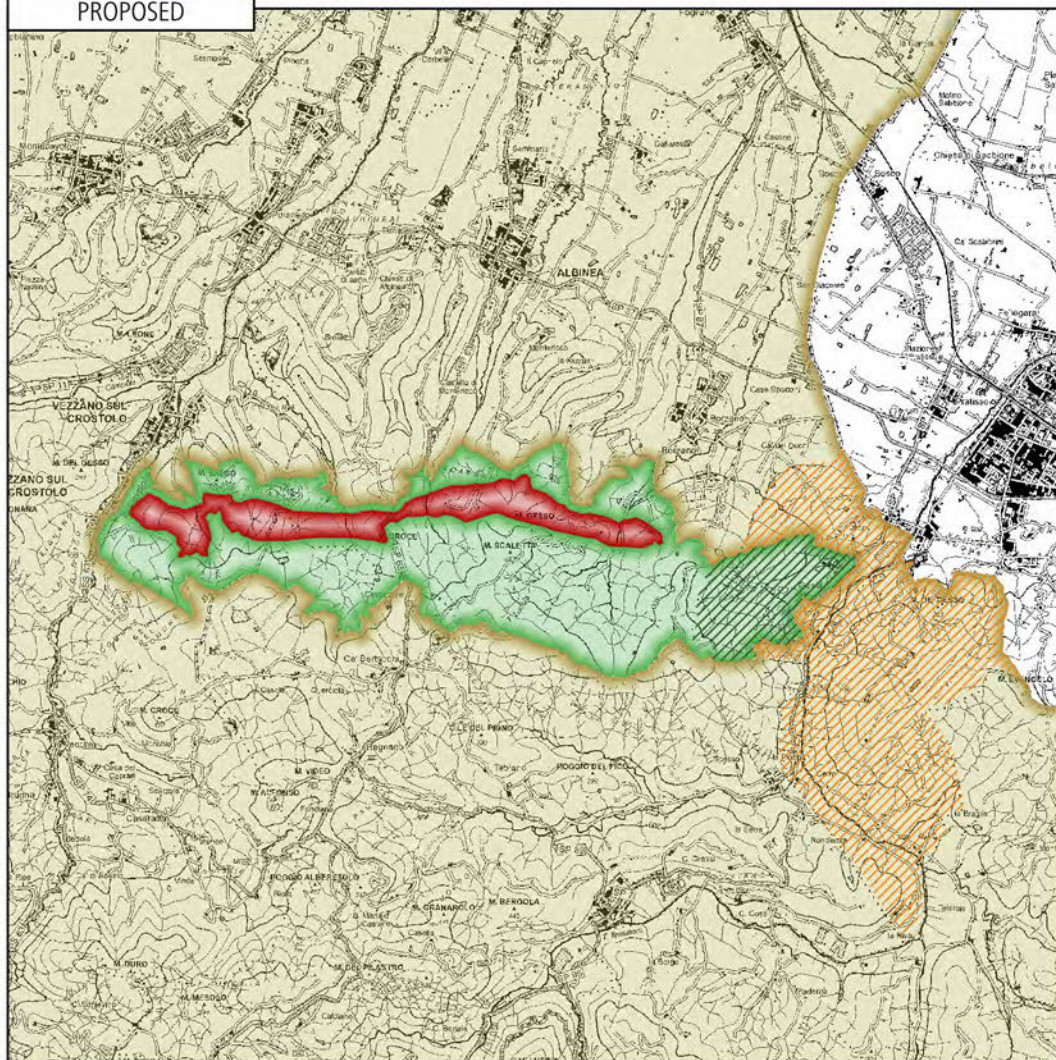
NEW TRANSITION

WHS zones

CORE

BUFFER

PROPOSED



The proposed changes to the BR boundaries must include an extension toward Scandiano municipality. The area that will be added is highlighted with a line pattern.



0 1 2 3 4 km



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APPENNINO TOSCO-EMILIANO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

PROPOSED BOUNDARIES

Proposed future boundaries of the Biosphere Reserve, aligned to harmonize with the boundaries of the nominated World Heritage Site (WHS).

BR zones


 BUFFER

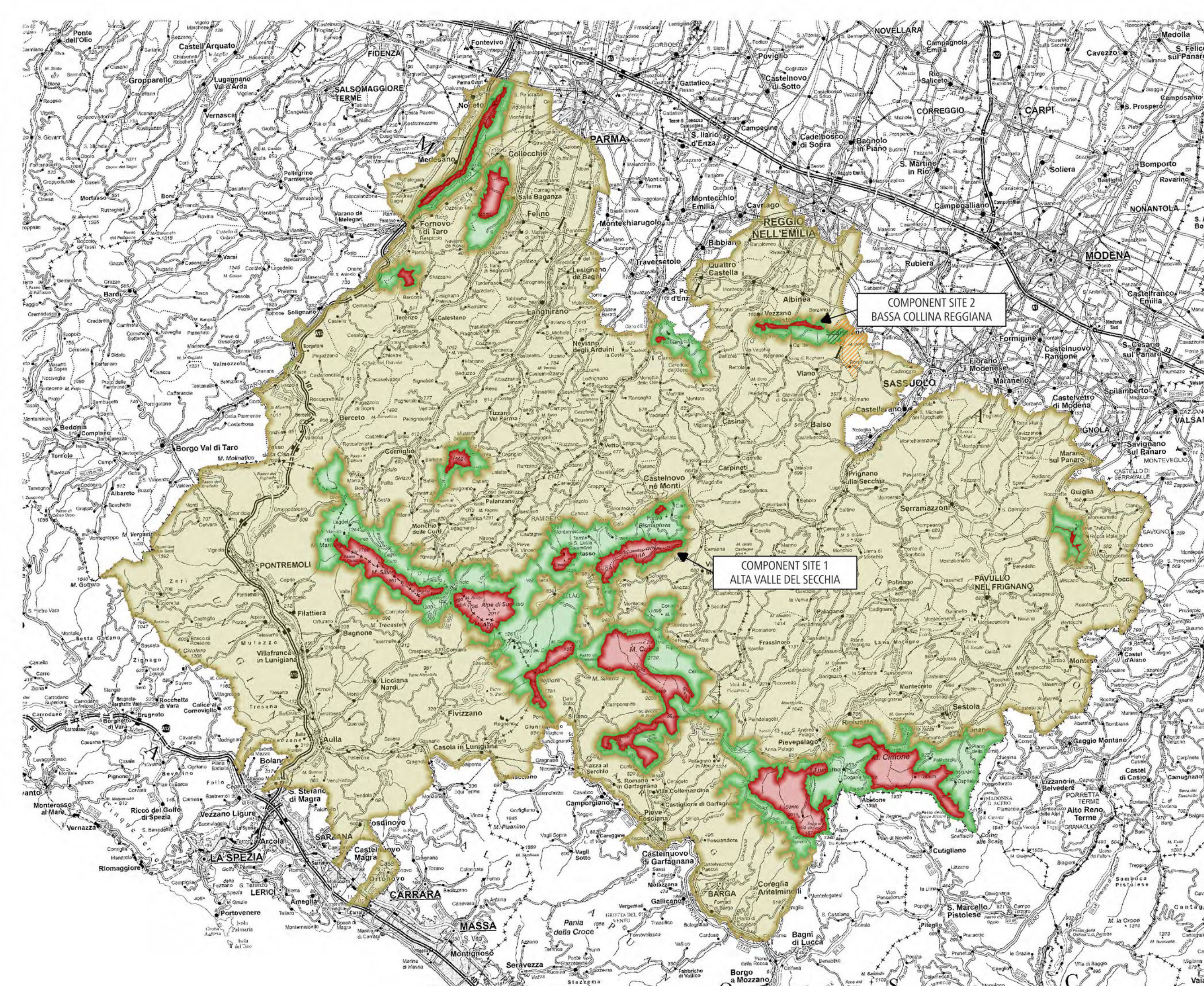
 CORE

 TRANSITION

ADDITIONS TO THE ACTUAL
BR TERRITORY

 NEW BUFFER

 NEW TRANSITION



0 5 10 15 km