



LAND USE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AS OF 31.12.2023

As of 31 December 2023 the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, computed by the National Statistical Institute using the digital models of the cadastral map of the country, is 110 996.76 sq. km. According to the types of durable land use (specific purpose of use) of the land properties, the largest area is occupied by agricultural areas - 54.5% and forest areas - 33.3% of the total area of the country. Urbanized areas cover nearly 5 279.4 sq. km or 4.8% of the country's territory.

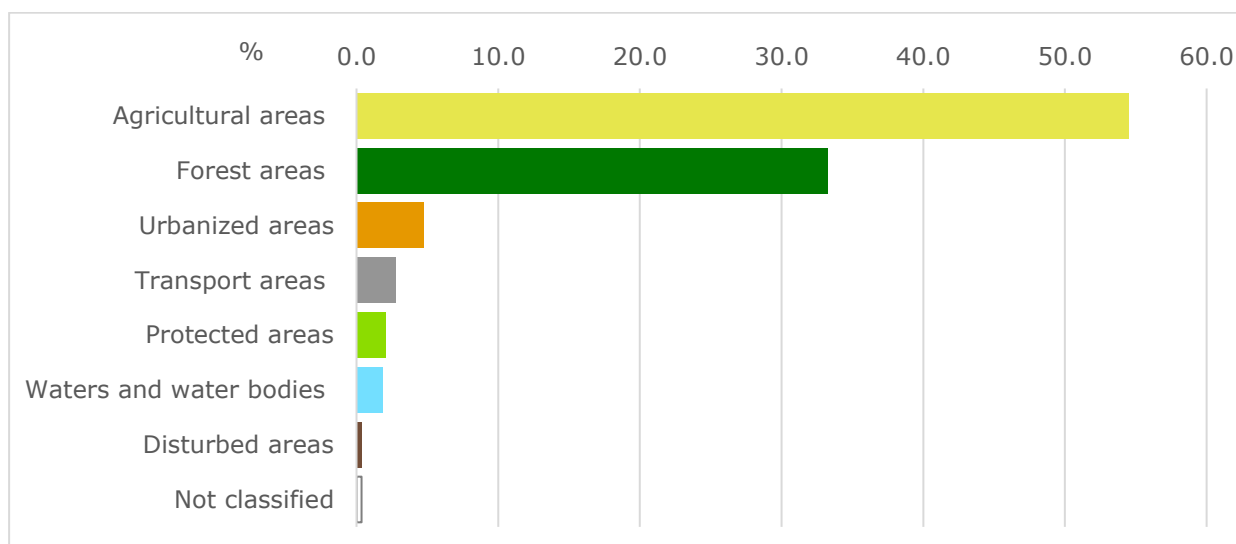
Table 1. Land use distribution of the Republic of Bulgaria as of 31.12.2023

Land use type	Sq. km	Ha
Total	110996.76	11099675.82
Urbanized areas	5279.37	527936.99
Transport areas	3055.51	305550.77
Agricultural areas	60524.12	6052412.28
Forest areas	36910.09	3691009.08
Areas occupied by waters and water bodies	2093.00	209300.29
Protected areas ¹	2275.74	227573.57
Disturbed areas	464.20	46419.99
Not classified ²	394.73	39472.86

¹ Does not cover all protected areas within the meaning of the Protected Areas Act (PAA). The total area and types of protected areas under the PAA are published on <https://www.nsi.bg/en/node/2580/>.

² Areas for which there is no information in the digital cadastral map or individual land properties that are not classified by types of durable land use and by main land use type, as of 12/31/2023.

Figure 1. Land use distribution of the Republic of Bulgaria (%)



LAND USE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA AS OF 31.12.2023

The population density as of 31.12.2023, on average for the country, is 58.1 persons per square kilometre. In the urbanized areas it is 1220.9 persons per sq. km, decreasing by 25.4 persons per sq. km compared to 2022. The highest population density in the urbanized areas is recorded in the districts of Sofia (capital), Blagoevgrad and Plovdiv, and the lowest in the districts of Vidin, Dobrich and Targovishte (see Table 3 of the annex).

Table 2. Population density by types of territory and by years as of 31.12. for the period 2015 - 2023

(Number of population per sq. km)

Year	Total	Urbanized areas	Areas occupied by waters and water bodies
2015	64.5	1393.6	65.7
2016	64.0	1383.5	65.2
2017	63.5	1373.4	64.7
2018	63.1	1363.7	64.3
2019	62.6	1354.2	63.8
2020	62.3	1347.4	63.5
2021	61.6	1332.3	62.8
2022	58.1	1246.3	59.2
2023	58.1	1220.9	59.2

Figure 2. Population density by municipalities as of 31.12.2023

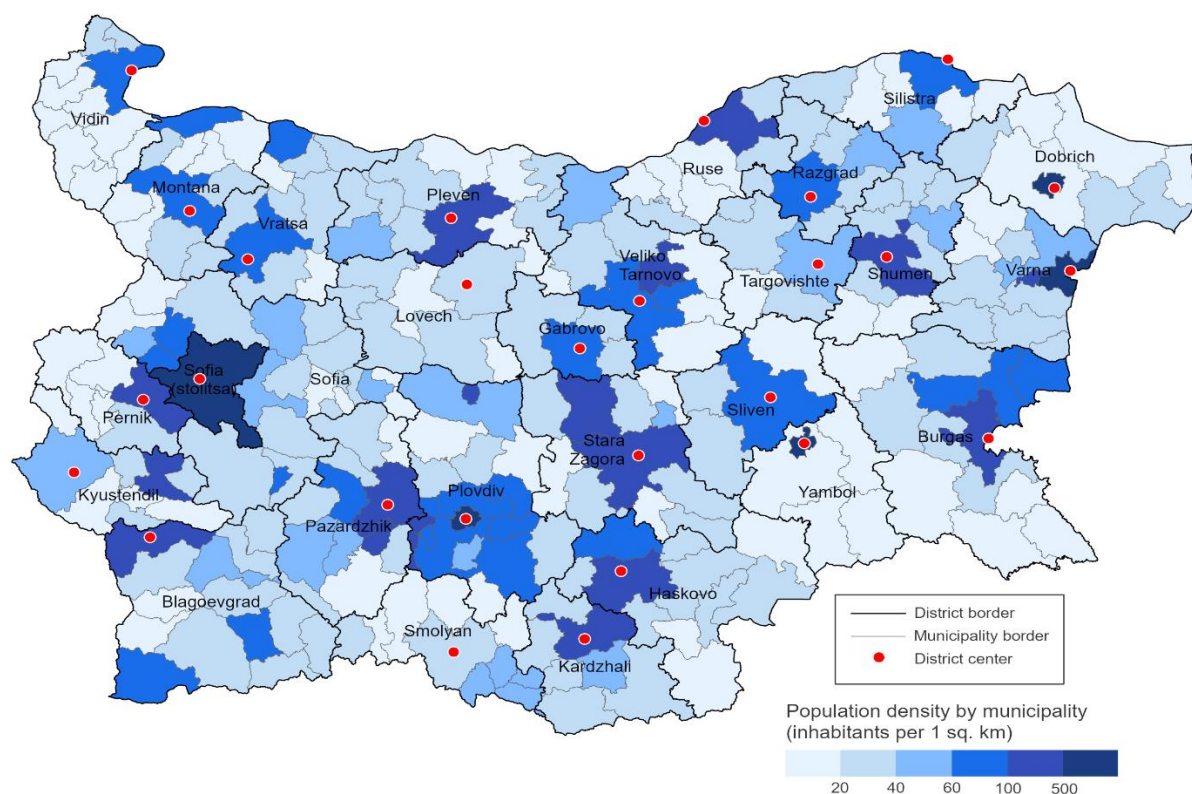


Figure 3. Distribution of the total territory by districts (sq. km)

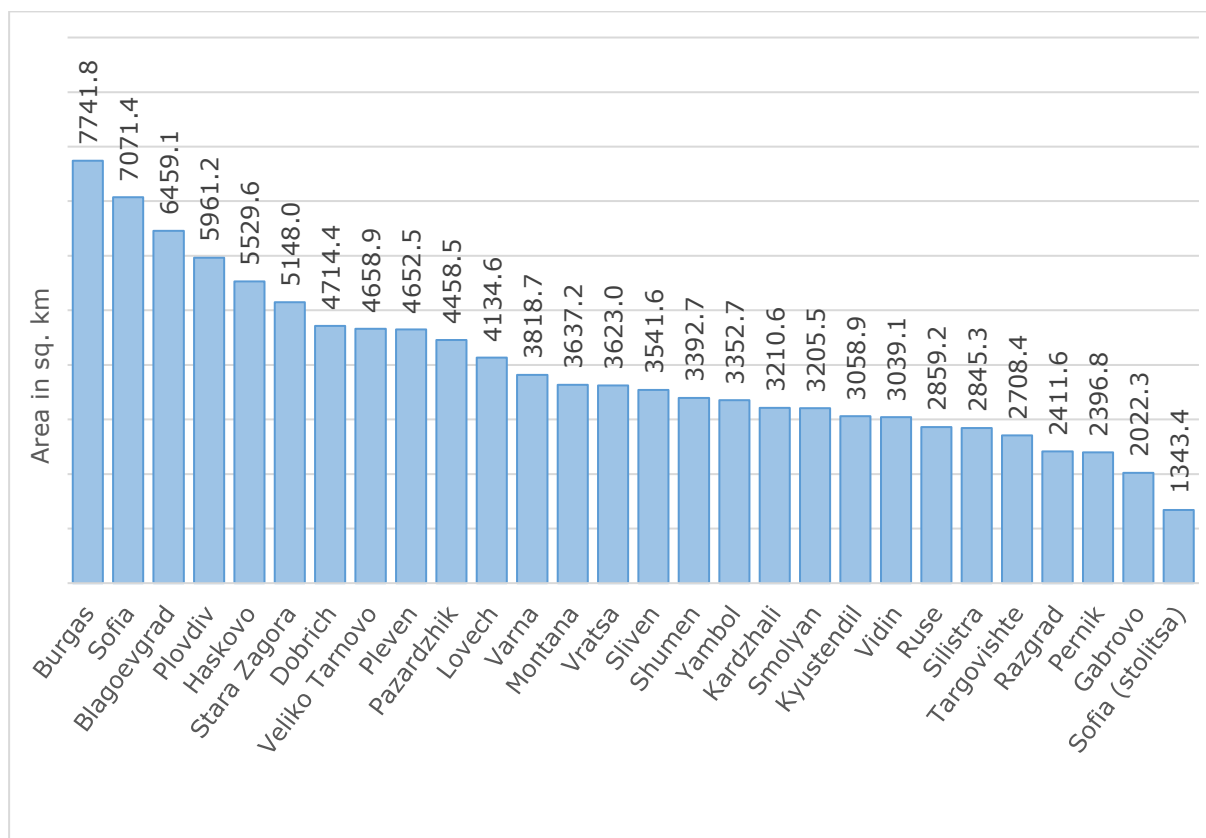


Figure 4. Distribution of the urbanized territory by districts (sq. km)

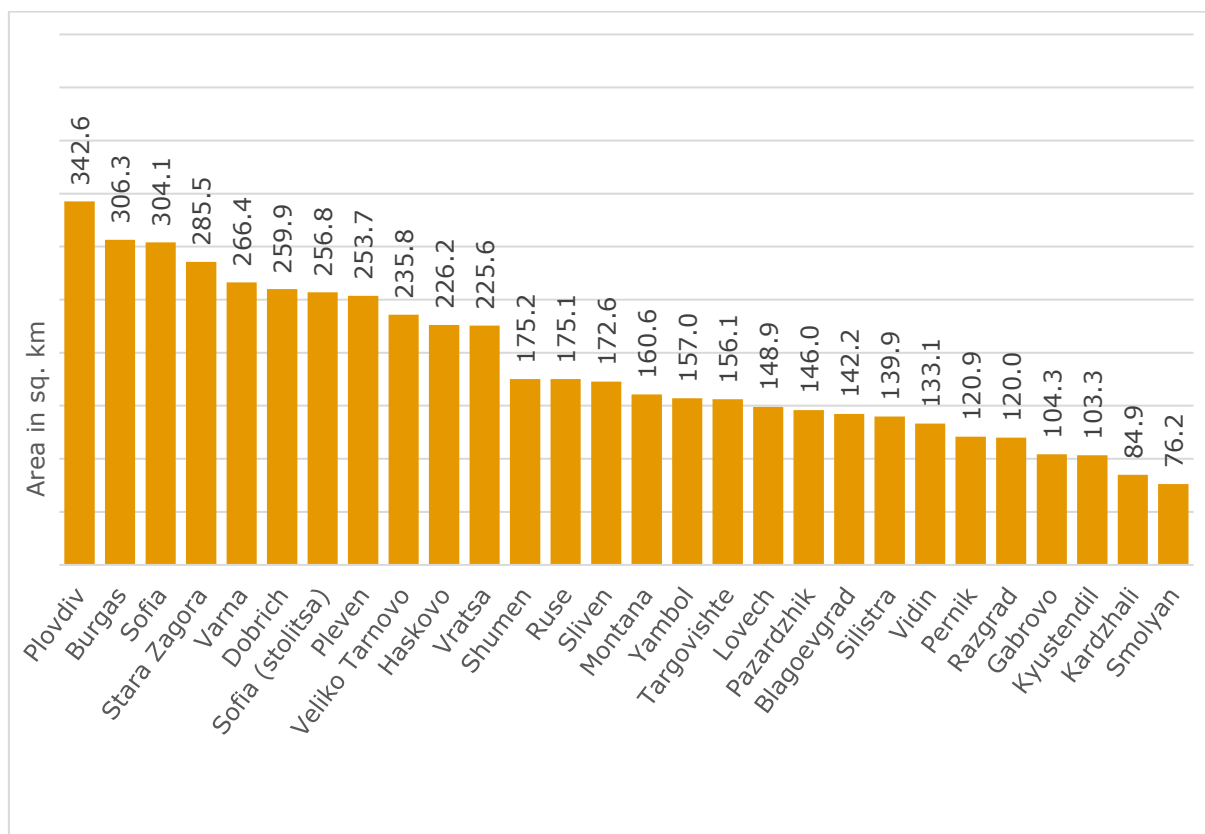


Figure 5. Distribution of agricultural territory by district (sq. km)

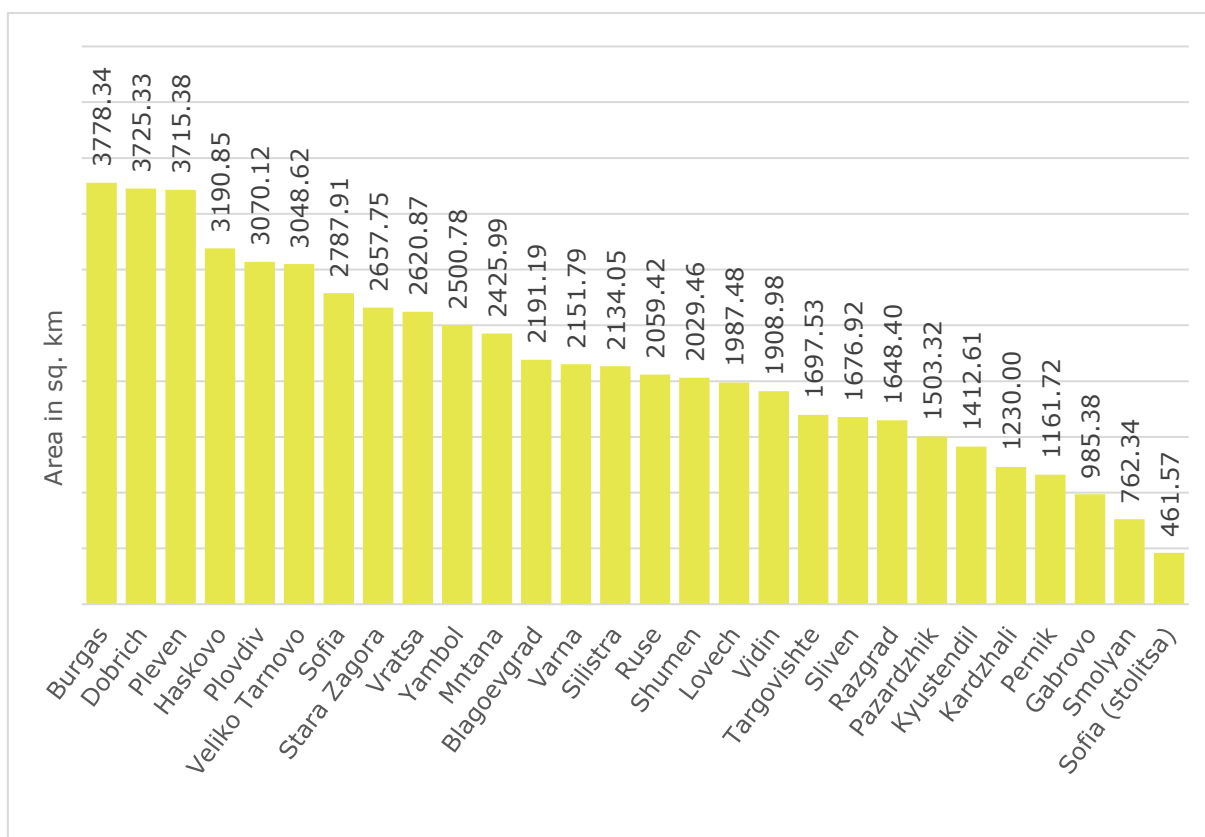


Figure 6. Distribution of forest territory by district (sq. km)

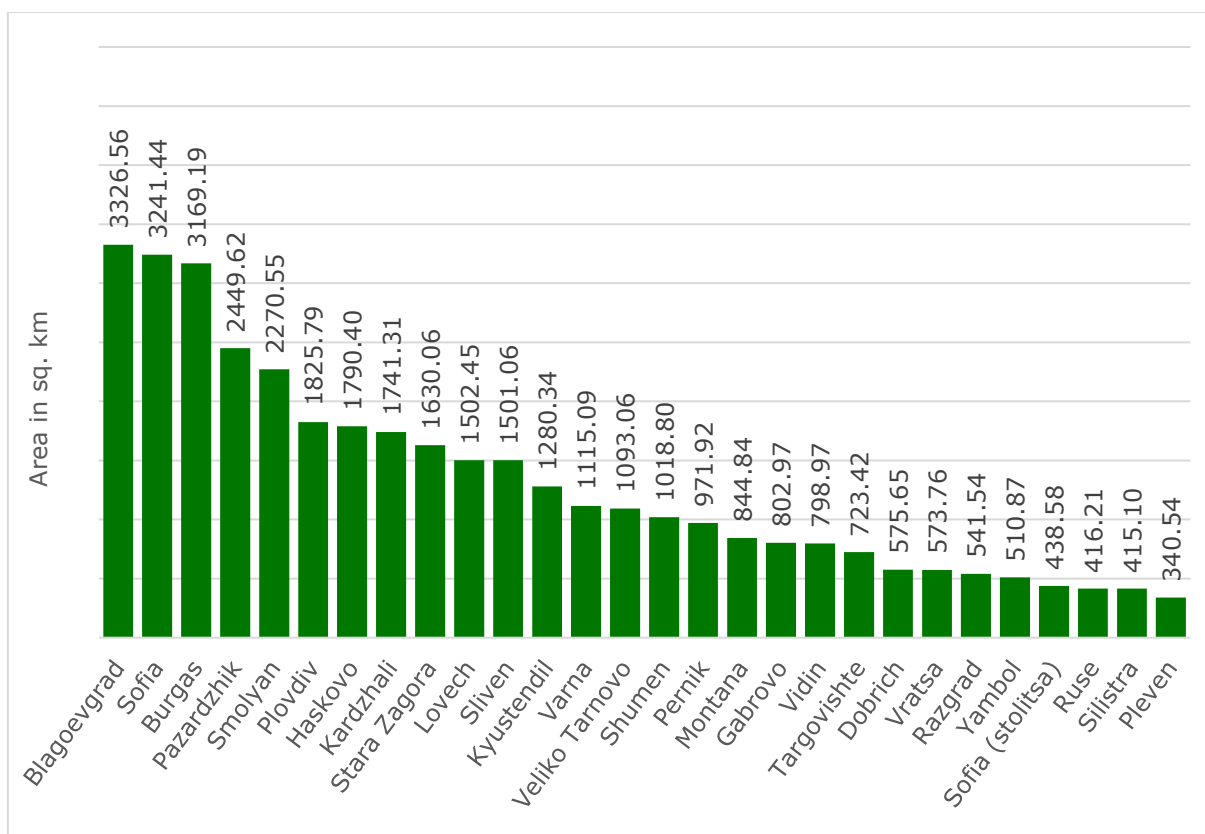


Figure 7. Land use distribution of Severen tsentralen region (%)

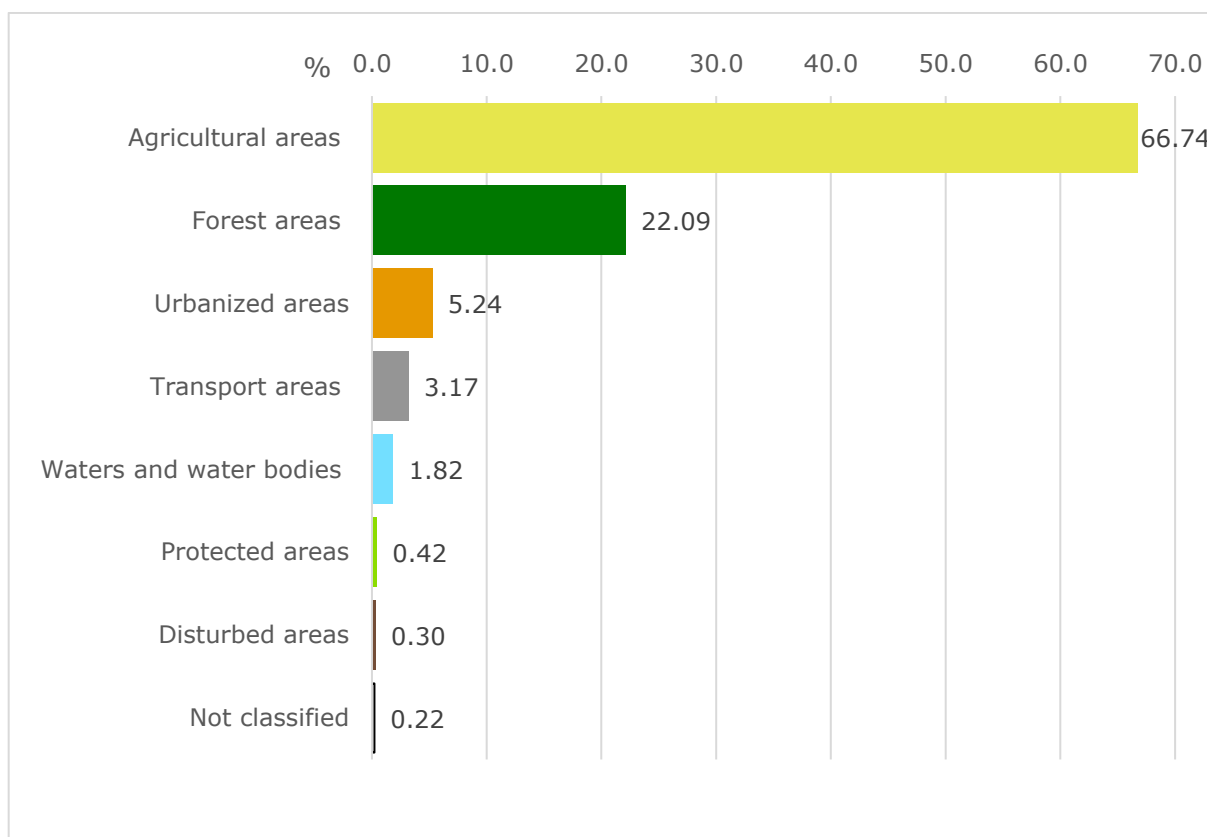


Figure 8. Land use distribution of Severozapaden region (%)

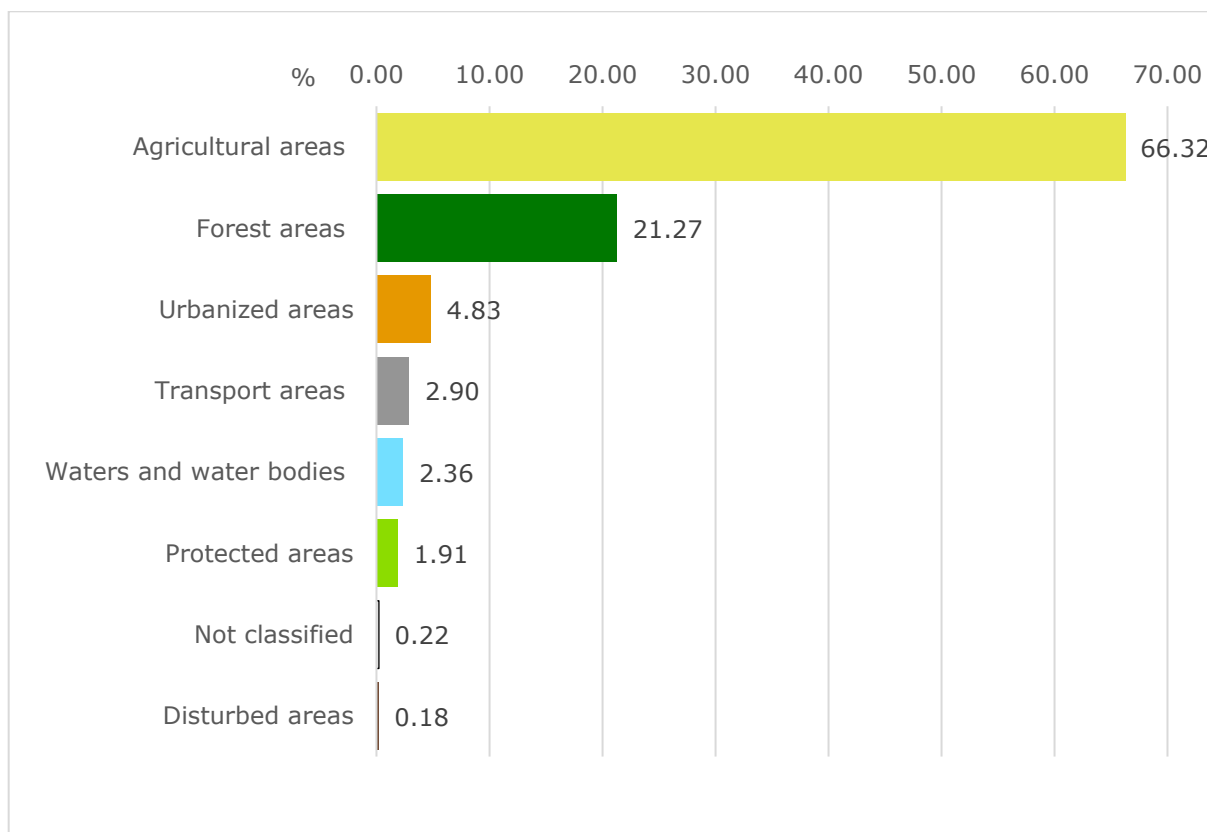


Figure 9. Land use distribution of Severoiztochen region (%)

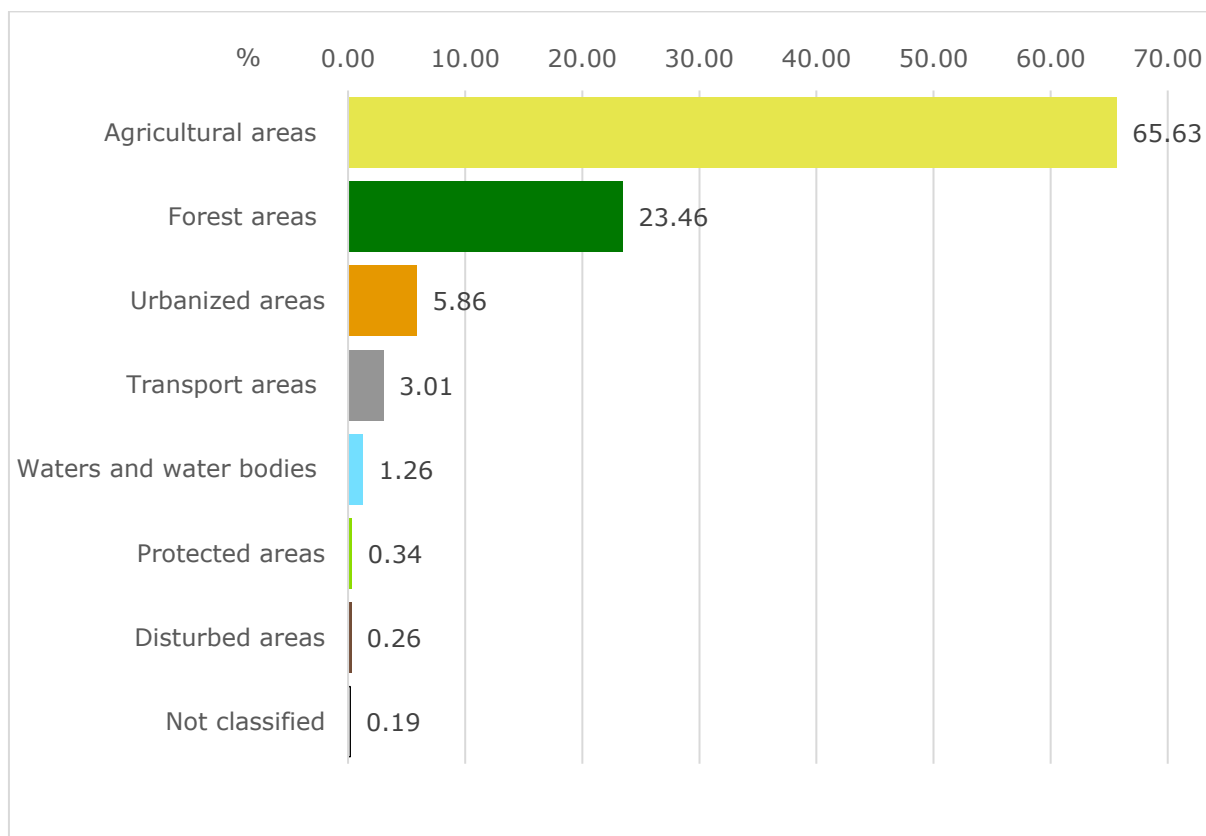


Figure 10. Land use distribution of Yugozapaden region (%)

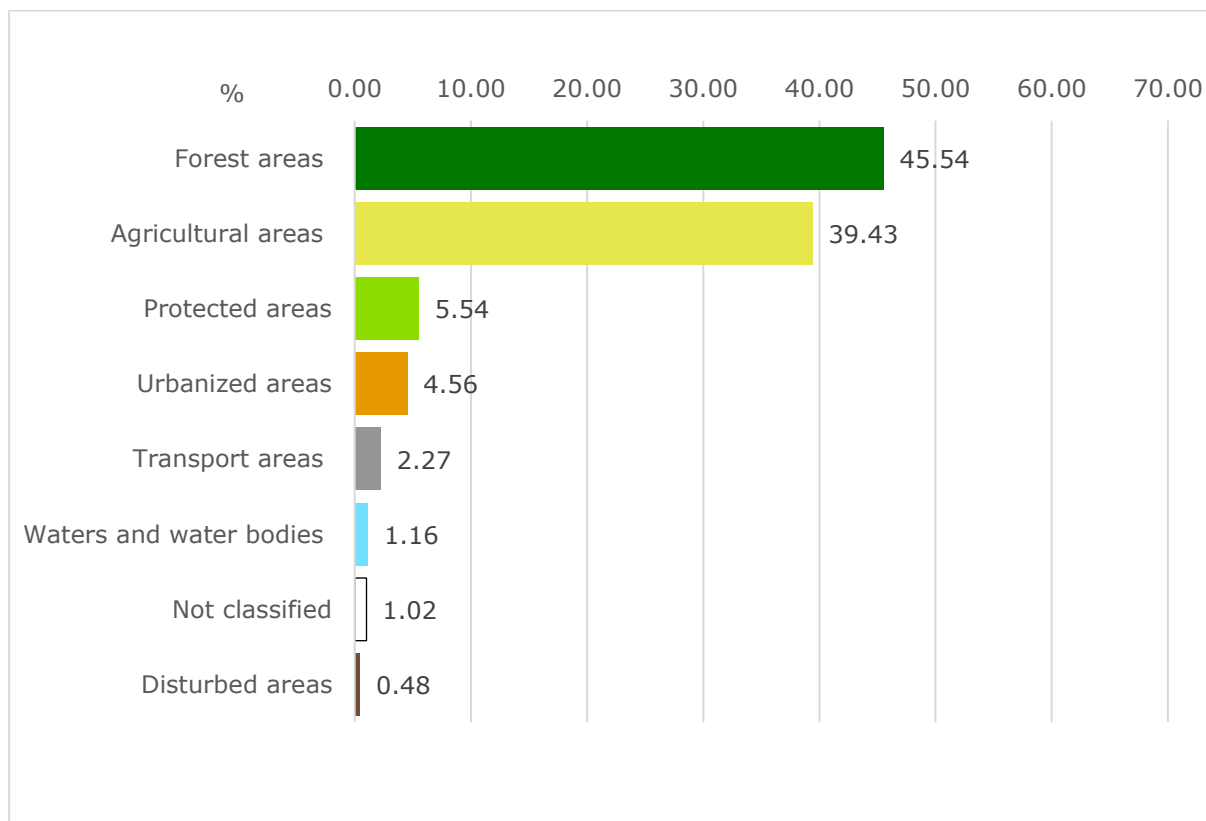


Figure 11. Land use distribution of Yugoiztochen region (%)

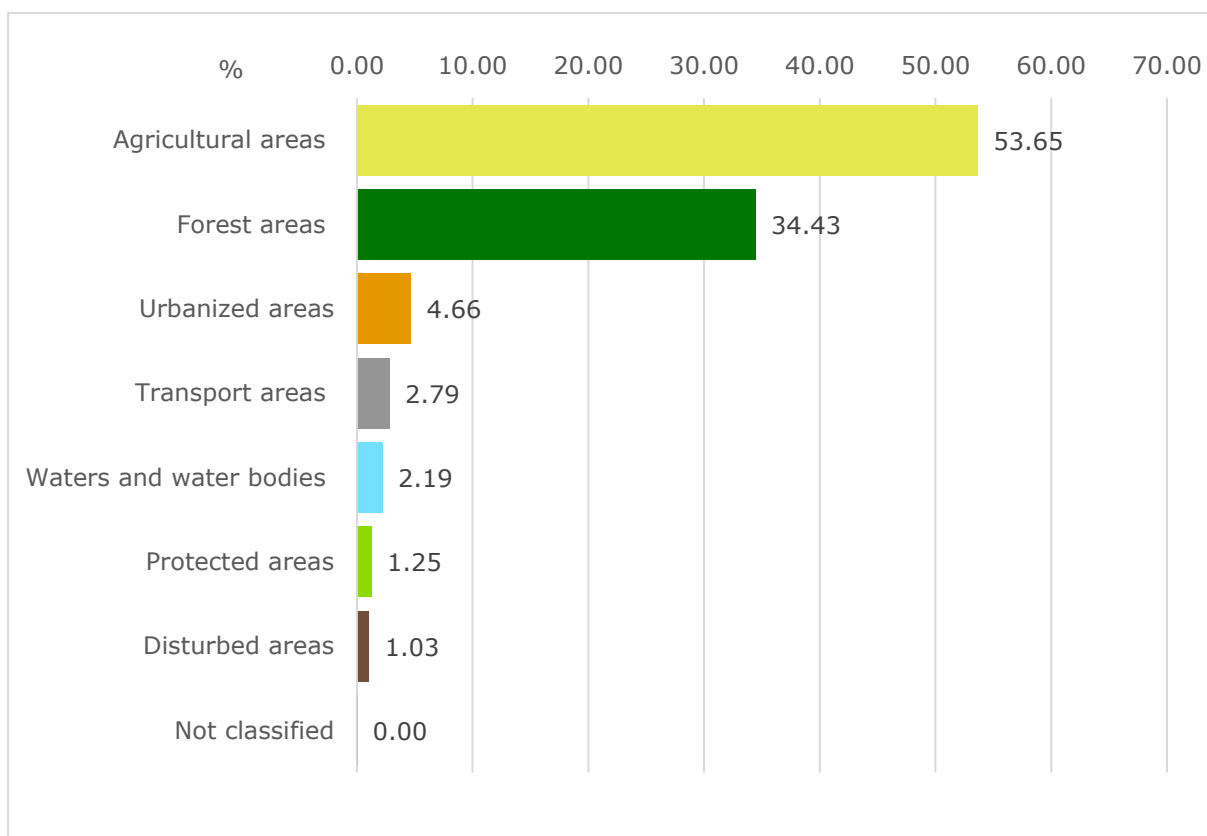
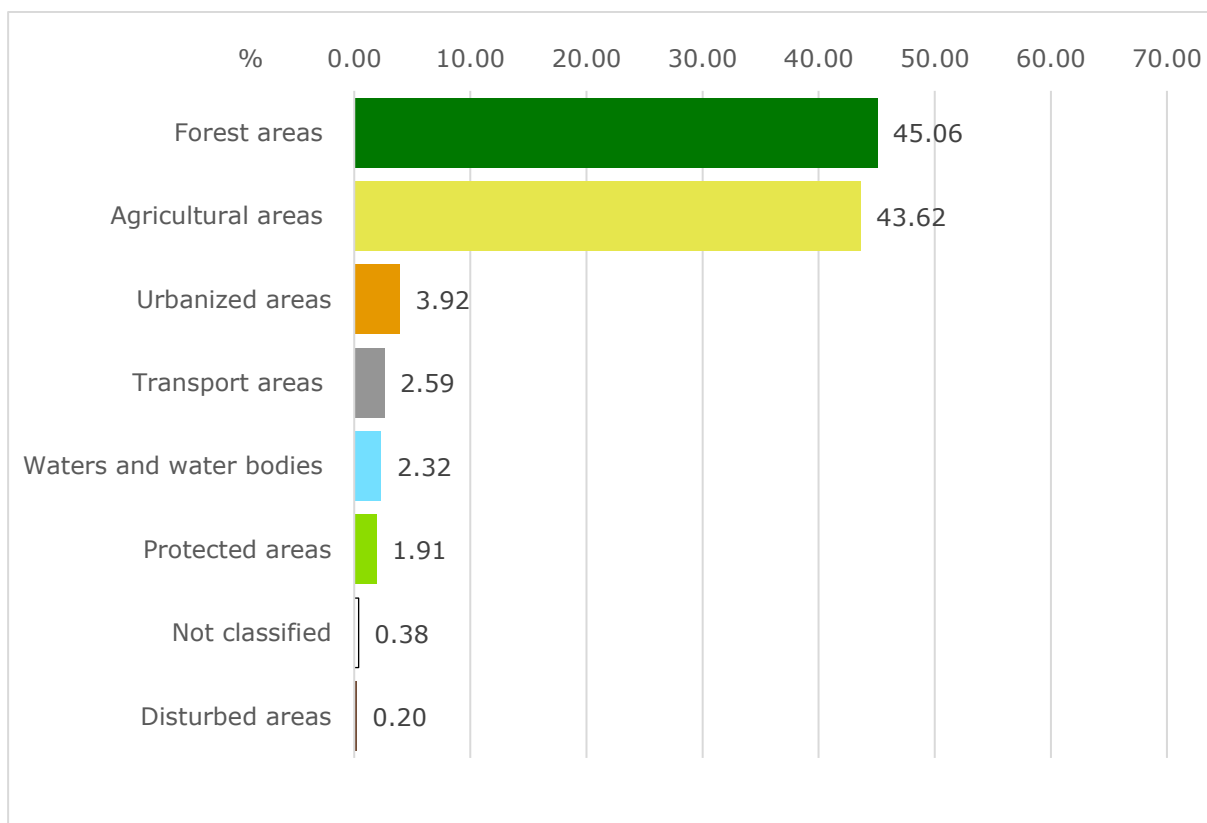


Figure 12. Land use distribution of Yuzhen tsentralen region (%)



Methodological notes

The unit of observation is the land property, together with the main cadastral data on the durable land use of the land property and the purpose of use of the territory, recorded in the cadastral registers.

Land property - part of the territory, including areas permanently covered by water, defined by boundaries in conformity with the right of ownership. (Territory Planning Act (TPA), in force since March 31, 2001).

Durable land use (specific purpose of use) of the land properties shall be determined by the relevant detailed plan and recorded in the cadastral registers. In areas without development plans, the designation of land properties is determined by their actual use until the plans come into effect, unless the use contradicts the law (TPA, in force since March 31, 2001).

The classification of the durable land use of the land properties as well the relevant codes are determined in Annex 3 of Regulation No. RD-02-20-5 of 15 December 2016 on the content, creation and maintenance of the cadastral map and cadastral registers.

The area of the land property shall be assigned to the territory of one of the main classes of land resources (land use types), according to the durable land use of the land property.

The results of the survey are presented at a national level, statistical zones, statistical regions, districts and municipalities according to the current administrative-territorial division as of 31.12.2023¹ and according to the Classification of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)².

For summarizing the area, the following more general types of territories are defined:

Urbanized areas - include land properties for residential use, public buildings and complexes, green areas and sports facilities, resort and recreational facilities, production and storage facilities as well as land properties with a special purpose and use.

Transport areas - include land properties for traffic and transportation facilities and land properties for conduit facilities.

Agricultural areas - include land properties - crop fields, permanent crops, meadows and pastures.

Forest areas - include land properties - wood producing and non-wood-producing forest areas.

¹ Source: [National register of populated places](#)

² [Classification of Territorial Units for Statistics in Bulgaria \(NUTS\)](#)

Areas occupied by water and water bodies - include land properties for watercourses, water bodies and facilities.

Protected areas - include land properties for a protected natural environment and for cultural heritage sites. Land properties that are state owned are mainly included in this type of durable land use. It should be noted that this category does not correspond to the protected areas within the meaning of the Protected Areas Act (PAA). The total area and types of protected areas under the PAA are published on: <https://www.nsi.bg/en/node/2580/>.

Disturbed areas - include land properties for mineral extraction sites, land properties, occupied by industrial and municipal waste, degraded land.

Not classified - This category includes all areas without digital cadastral map coverage. It also includes individual land properties from the cadastral map for which there is no value for the durable land use and for the purpose of use of the territory.

Data sources

The data source of the spatial data layers (data on land properties and detailed boundaries of municipalities) is the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency.

Computation method

The calculations of the area size of different land use types were carried out on the spatial data from the cadastral map, using GIS tools and the BGS2005 UTM35N coordinate system.

Initially, an analysis to determine the size and the administrative-territorial belonging of the land for which there is no coverage in the digital cadastral map was carried out. These areas have been assigned to the category 'Not classified'. As a next step, the durable land use values of the land properties are recoded with main land use type codes.

Land properties without defined specific economic use, such as rocks, sands, sandbanks, gullies, ravines, washes and pits, as well as those with mixed or undefined durable land use, have been recoded using the purpose of use values, in order to assign them to the appropriate land use type.

The area of the land properties is summed by main land use type for each of the territorial levels.

Table 3. Recoding of the values for durable land use with codes for main land use type

Main categories for durable land use	Code for durable land use	Code for main land use type	Main land use type
1. Land properties for residential use	1000, 1010, 1020, 1030, 1040, 1050	1	Urbanised area
2. Land properties for public buildings and complexes	1100, 1110, 1120, 1130, 1140, 1150, 1160, 1170, 1180, 1190, 1200, 1210	1	Urbanised area
3. Land properties for greened areas	1300, 1310, 1320, 1330, 1340, 1350, 1360, 1370	1	Urbanised area
4. Land properties for sports facilities	1400, 1410, 1420, 1430, 1440, 1450, 1460, 1470, 1480, 1490, 1500	1	Urbanised area
5. Land properties for resort and recreational facilities	1600, 1610, 1620, 1630, 1640, 1650, 1660, 1670, 1680, 1685, 1690	1	Urbanised area
6. Land properties for production and storage facilities	1700, 1710, 1720, 1730, 1740, 1750, 1760, 1770, 1780, 1790, 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930	1	Urbanised area
7. Land properties for cultural heritage sites	2000, 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040	6	Protected area
8. Land properties for traffic and transportation facilities	2100, 2110, 2120, 2130, 2140, 2150, 2160, 2170, 2180, 2190, 2200, 2210, 2220, 2230, 2240, 2250, 2260, 2270, 2280, 2290, 2300, 2310	2	Transport area
9. Land properties for conduit facilities	2400, 2410, 2420, 2430, 2440, 2450, 2460, 2470, 2471, 2472	2	Transport area
10. Land properties - crop fields	2500, 2510, 2520, 2530, 2540, 2550, 2560, 2570, 2580	3	Agricultural area
11. Land properties - permanent crops	2600, 2610, 2620, 2630, 2640, 2650, 2660	3	Agricultural area
12. Land properties - meadows	2700, 2710, 2720, 2730	3	Agricultural area
13. Land properties - pastures	2800, 2810, 2820, 2830, 2840	3	Agricultural area
14. Land properties - wood-producing forests	2900, 2910, 2920, 2930, 2940, 2950	4	Forest area
15. Land properties - non-wood-producing forests	3000, 3010, 3020, 3030, 3040, 3050, 3060	4	Forest area
16. Land properties for watercourses, water bodies and facilities	3100, 3110, 3120, 3130, 3140, 3150, 3160, 3170, 3180, 3190, 3200, 3210, 3220, 3230, 3240, 3245, 3246, 3250, 3260, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304	5	Area occupied by water and water bodies

(Continued and end)

Main categories for durable land use	Code for durable land use	Code for main land use type	Main land use type
17. Land properties for a protected natural environment	3400, 3410, 3420, 3430, 3431, 3432, 3440, 3441, 3442, 3443, 3450, 3460	6	Protected area
18. Land properties for mineral extraction sites	3500, 3510, 3520, 3530, 3540, 3550, 3560	7	Disturbed area
19. Land properties, occupied by industrial and municipal waste	3600, 3610, 3620, 3630, 3640, 3650, 3660, 3670, 3680	7	Disturbed area
20. Land properties for degraded land	3700, 3710, 3720, 3730	7	Disturbed area
21. Land properties with a special purpose and use	3800, 3810	1	Urbanised area
22. Land properties without defined specific economic use	3900, 3910, 3920, 3930, 3940, 3950, 3960, 4000, 4100	1 - 7	According to the basic purpose of use of the territory of the land property

Legal references

- [Statistics Act](#)
- [National Statistical Programme](#)
- [Administrative and Territorial Structure of the Republic of Bulgaria Act](#)
- [Spatial Development Act](#)
- [Cadastre and Property Register Act](#)
- [Regulation № 02-20-5 from 15 December 2016 for the content, development and maintenance of the cadastral map and the cadastral registers \(BG version only\)](#)

Table 1. Land use distribution by districts as of 31.12.2023^{1,2,3}

(sq. km)

District		Total	Urbanized areas	Transport areas	Agricultural areas	Forest areas	Areas occupied by water and water bodies	Protected areas ²	Disturbed areas	Not classified ³
BG	Bulgaria	110996.76	5279.37	3055.51	60524.12	36910.09	2093.00	2275.74	464.20	394.73
BLG	Blagoevgrad	6459.08	142.23	106.18	2191.19	3326.56	63.93	591.92	6.62	30.46
BGS	Burgas	7741.76	306.27	195.61	3778.34	3169.19	182.92	90.08	19.31	0.04
VAR	Varna	3818.69	266.42	139.71	2151.79	1115.09	75.78	28.87	19.97	21.07
VTR	Veliko Tarnovo	4658.85	235.84	147.48	3048.62	1093.06	98.16	4.81	10.94	19.93
VID	Vidin	3039.14	133.08	88.01	1908.98	798.97	78.92	23.59	7.57	0.02
VRC	Vratsa	3623.02	225.63	100.20	2620.87	573.76	69.32	25.08	8.17	0.00
GAB	Gabrovo	2022.26	104.34	61.80	985.38	802.97	19.45	33.73	2.32	12.26
DOB	Dobrich	4714.41	259.88	117.10	3725.33	575.65	16.74	12.72	6.99	0.00
KRZ	Kardzhali	3210.59	84.93	41.42	1230.00	1741.31	73.47	9.05	4.36	26.05
KNL	Kyustendil	3058.88	103.28	66.64	1412.61	1280.34	33.32	133.39	19.20	10.10
LOV	Lovech	4134.61	148.90	108.65	1987.48	1502.45	46.17	293.35	6.78	40.82
MON	Montana	3637.17	160.60	97.75	2425.99	844.84	100.05	2.83	4.09	1.01
PAZ	Pazardzhik	4458.49	145.99	110.79	1503.32	2449.62	119.96	107.03	18.87	2.91
PER	Pernik	2396.79	120.92	56.72	1161.72	971.92	31.43	3.93	22.94	27.22
PVN	Pleven	4652.53	253.71	159.02	3715.38	340.54	155.81	19.58	8.48	0.00
PDV	Plovdiv	5961.19	342.59	207.82	3070.12	1825.79	172.90	284.62	10.17	47.17
RAZ	Razgrad	2411.61	119.97	74.96	1648.40	541.54	17.08	5.74	3.92	0.00
RSE	Ruse	2859.16	175.06	105.70	2059.42	416.21	79.36	7.91	15.51	0.00
SLS	Silistra	2845.28	139.94	79.14	2134.05	415.10	55.45	9.24	12.36	0.00
SLV	Sliven	3541.56	172.61	94.66	1676.92	1501.06	65.77	16.11	13.73	0.70
SML	Smolyan	3205.48	76.17	41.57	762.34	2270.55	24.45	19.42	2.82	8.17
SFO	Sofia	7071.43	304.07	142.10	2787.91	3241.44	53.38	384.37	32.02	126.12
SOF	Sofia (stolitsa)	1343.40	256.85	89.10	461.57	438.58	54.00	13.62	16.86	12.81
SZR	Stara Zagora	5147.98	285.54	155.59	2657.75	1630.06	121.89	132.05	165.05	0.05
TGV	Targovishte	2708.44	156.11	81.11	1697.53	723.42	40.25	0.70	3.39	5.92
HKV	Haskovo	5529.55	226.21	177.87	3190.85	1790.40	128.54	6.58	8.27	0.84
SHU	Shumen	3392.70	175.16	102.27	2029.46	1018.80	51.61	6.90	7.61	0.88
JAM	Yambol	3352.70	157.04	106.54	2500.78	510.87	62.90	8.51	5.88	0.18

¹ The area by territorial units is calculated from the digital model of cadastral map in the coordinate reference system BGS2005 UTM35N. The area of territorial waters of the Republic of Bulgaria in the Black sea is not included in the calculations.

² Does not cover all protected areas within the meaning of the Protected Areas Act (PAA). The total area and types of protected areas under the PAA are published on <https://www.nsi.bg/en/node/2580/>.

³ Areas for which there is no information in the digital cadastral map or individual land properties that are not classified by types of durable land use and by main land use type, as of 12/31/2023.

Table 2. Land use distribution by districts as of 31.12.2023^{1,2,3}

(%)

District		Total	Urbanized areas	Transport areas	Agricultural areas	Forest areas	Areas occupied by water and water bodies	Protected areas ¹	Disturbed areas	Not classified ²
BG	Bulgaria	100.00	4.76	2.75	54.53	33.25	1.89	2.05	0.42	0.36
BLG	Blagoevgrad	100.00	2.20	1.64	33.92	51.50	0.99	9.16	0.10	0.47
BGS	Burgas	100.00	3.96	2.53	48.80	40.94	2.36	1.16	0.25	0.00
VAR	Varna	100.00	6.98	3.66	56.35	29.20	1.98	0.76	0.52	0.55
VTR	Veliko Tarnovo	100.00	5.06	3.17	65.44	23.46	2.11	0.10	0.23	0.43
VID	Vidin	100.00	4.38	2.90	62.81	26.29	2.60	0.78	0.25	0.00
VRC	Vratsa	100.00	6.23	2.77	72.34	15.84	1.91	0.69	0.23	0.00
GAB	Gabrovo	100.00	5.16	3.06	48.73	39.71	0.96	1.67	0.11	0.61
DOB	Dobrich	100.00	5.51	2.48	79.02	12.21	0.36	0.27	0.15	0.00
KRZ	Kardzhali	100.00	2.65	1.29	38.31	54.24	2.29	0.28	0.14	0.81
KNL	Kyustendil	100.00	3.38	2.18	46.18	41.86	1.09	4.36	0.63	0.33
LOV	Lovech	100.00	3.60	2.63	48.07	36.34	1.12	7.10	0.16	0.99
MON	Montana	100.00	4.42	2.69	66.70	23.23	2.75	0.08	0.11	0.03
PAZ	Pazardzhik	100.00	3.27	2.48	33.72	54.94	2.69	2.40	0.42	0.07
PER	Pernik	100.00	5.04	2.37	48.47	40.55	1.31	0.16	0.96	1.14
PVN	Pleven	100.00	5.45	3.42	79.86	7.32	3.35	0.42	0.18	0.00
PDV	Plovdiv	100.00	5.75	3.49	51.50	30.63	2.90	4.77	0.17	0.79
RAZ	Razgrad	100.00	4.97	3.11	68.35	22.46	0.71	0.24	0.16	0.00
RSE	Ruse	100.00	6.12	3.70	72.03	14.56	2.78	0.28	0.54	0.00
SLS	Silistra	100.00	4.92	2.78	75.00	14.59	1.95	0.32	0.43	0.00
SLV	Sliven	100.00	4.87	2.67	47.35	42.38	1.86	0.45	0.39	0.02
SML	Smolyan	100.00	2.38	1.30	23.78	70.83	0.76	0.61	0.09	0.25
SFO	Sofia	100.00	4.30	2.01	39.43	45.84	0.75	5.44	0.45	1.78
SOF	Sofia (stolitsa)	100.00	19.12	6.63	34.36	32.65	4.02	1.01	1.26	0.95
SZR	Stara Zagora	100.00	5.55	3.02	51.63	31.66	2.37	2.57	3.21	0.00
TGV	Targovishte	100.00	5.76	2.99	62.68	26.71	1.49	0.03	0.13	0.22
HKV	Haskovo	100.00	4.09	3.22	57.71	32.38	2.32	0.12	0.15	0.02
SHU	Shumen	100.00	5.16	3.01	59.82	30.03	1.52	0.20	0.22	0.03
JAM	Yambol	100.00	4.68	3.18	74.59	15.24	1.88	0.25	0.18	0.01

¹ The area by territorial units is calculated from the digital model of cadastral map in the coordinate reference system BGS2005 UTM35N. The area of territorial waters of the Republic of Bulgaria in the Black sea is not included in the calculations.

² Does not cover all protected areas within the meaning of the Protected Areas Act (PAA). The total area and types of protected areas under the PAA are published on <https://www.nsi.bg/en/node/2580/>.

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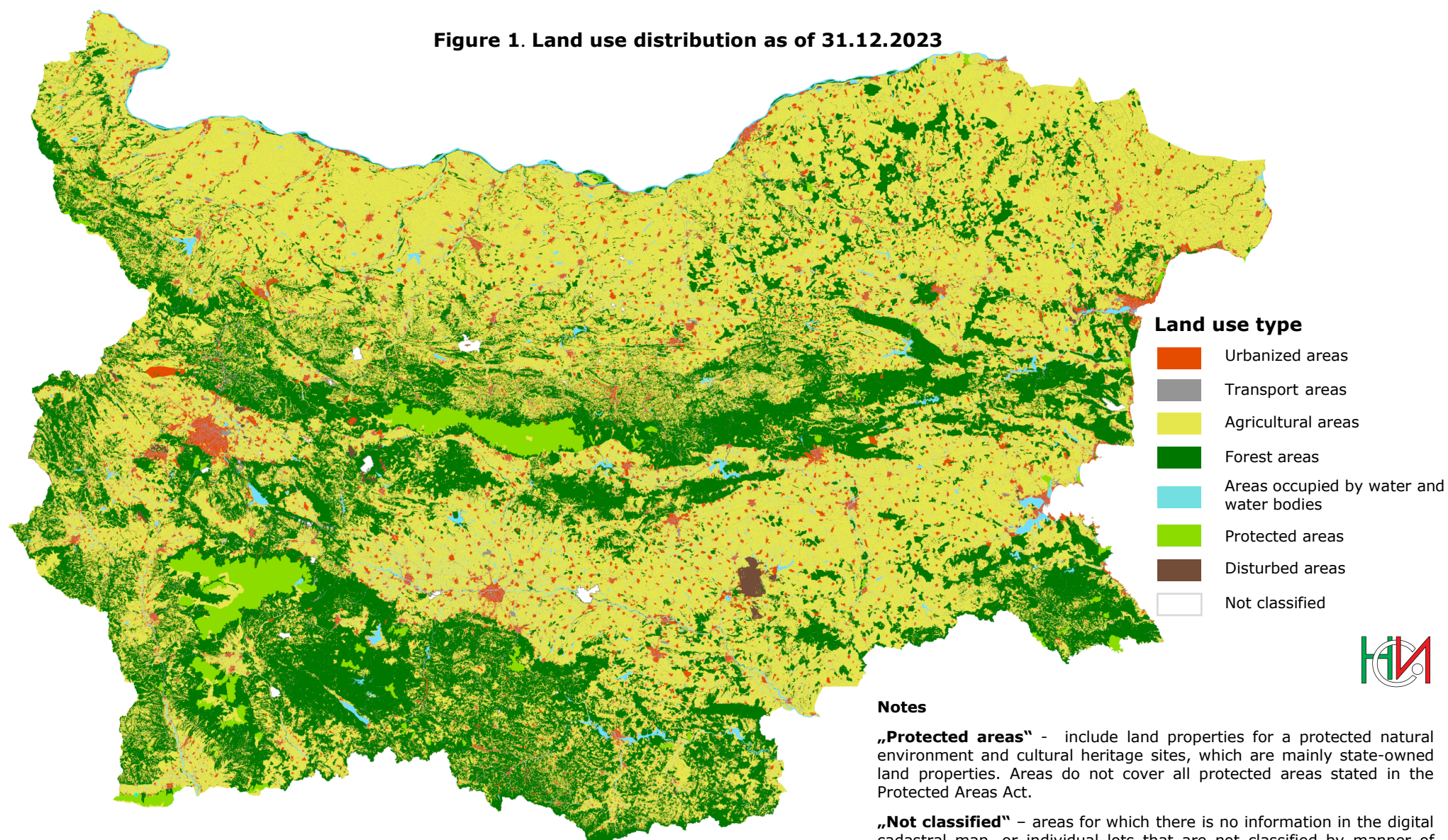
Table 3. Population density by types of territory by districts as of 31.12.2023 ^{1,2,3}

(Number of population per sq. km)

District		Total area	Urbanized areas	Total area – without areas occupied by water and water bodies
BG	Bulgaria	58.1	1220.9	59.2
BLG	Blagoevgrad	44.4	2018.5	44.9
BGS	Burgas	49.7	1255.2	50.9
VAR	Varna	113.7	1629.7	116.0
VTR	Veliko Tarnovo	43.4	857.5	44.3
VID	Vidin	23.6	539.3	24.2
VRC	Vratsa	40.7	654.3	41.5
GAB	Gabrovo	46.9	909.2	47.4
DOB	Dobrich	31.1	564.2	31.2
KRZ	Kardzhali	45.6	1725.6	46.7
KNL	Kyustendil	35.2	1042.6	35.6
LOV	Lovech	27.1	753.7	27.4
MON	Montana	31.5	713.1	32.4
PAZ	Pazardzhik	50.5	1543.0	51.9
PER	Pernik	46.3	918.3	46.9
PVN	Pleven	46.8	858.8	48.5
PDV	Plovdiv	106.3	1849.4	109.5
RAZ	Razgrad	41.8	839.3	42.1
RSE	Ruse	65.7	1072.9	67.6
SLS	Silistra	33.3	677.0	34.0
SLV	Sliven	48.0	985.2	48.9
SML	Smolyan	28.7	1209.2	29.0
SFO	Sofia	32.0	744.6	32.3
SOF	Sofia (stolitsa)	958.0	5010.6	998.1
SZR	Stara Zagora	56.4	1016.8	57.8
TGV	Targovishte	35.3	612.4	35.8
HKV	Haskovo	37.5	915.6	38.3
SHU	Shumen	44.1	854.6	44.8
JAM	Yambol	31.7	677.0	32.3

¹ The indicator is calculated as the number of the population as of 31.12 of the reference year is divided by the area of the corresponding territorial unit in square kilometres.² Source of the population data is the current demographic statistics: Population and demographic processes 2023, NSI.³ Source of the data for the areas of territorial units and for the type of territory: Land use distribution by type of durable land use of land properties 2023, NSI.

Figure 1. Land use distribution as of 31.12.2023



Spatial data source:
Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Agency



Figure 2. Land use distribution of Severozapaden statistical region as of 31.12.2023

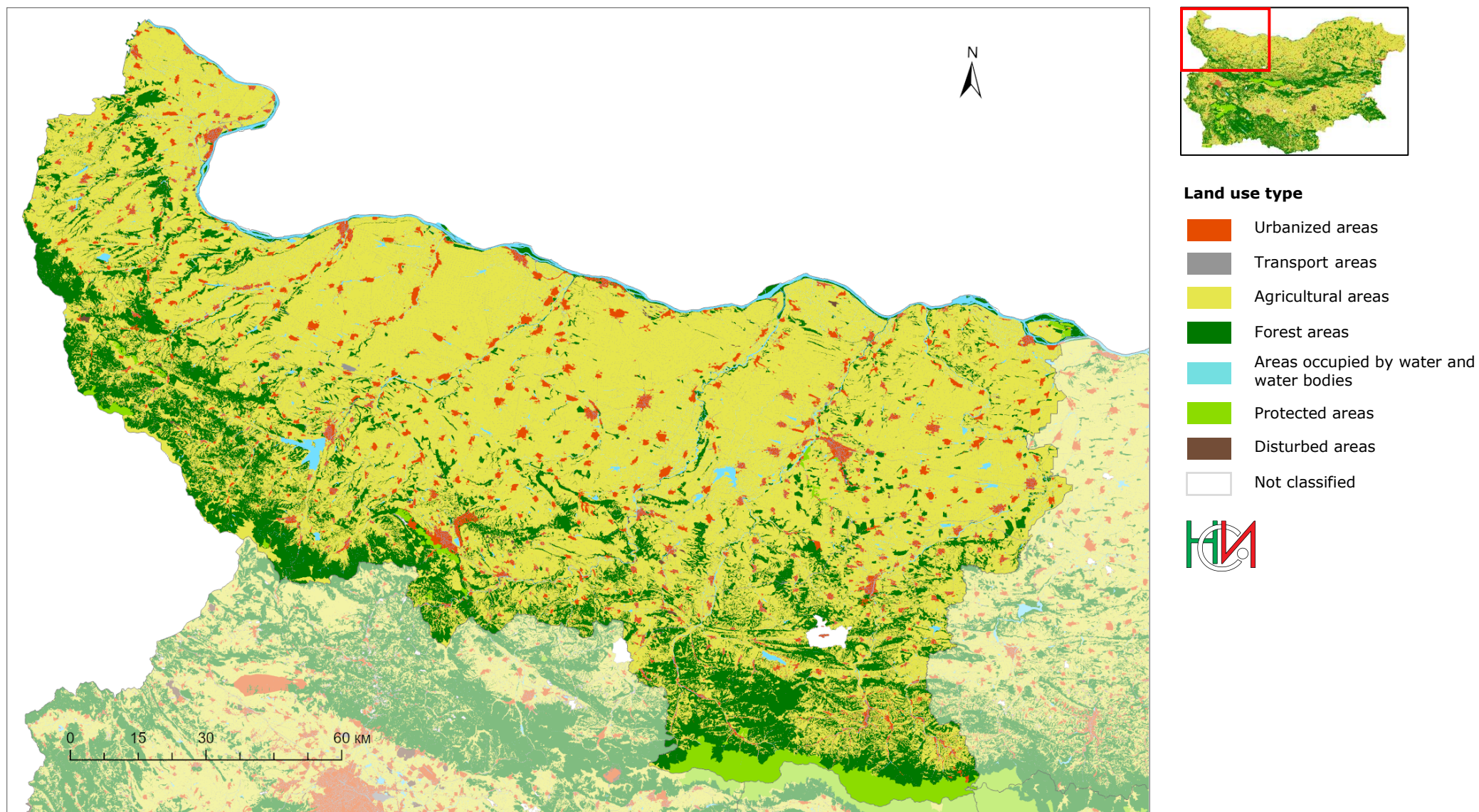


Figure 3. Land use distribution of Severen tsentralen statistical region as of 31.12.2023

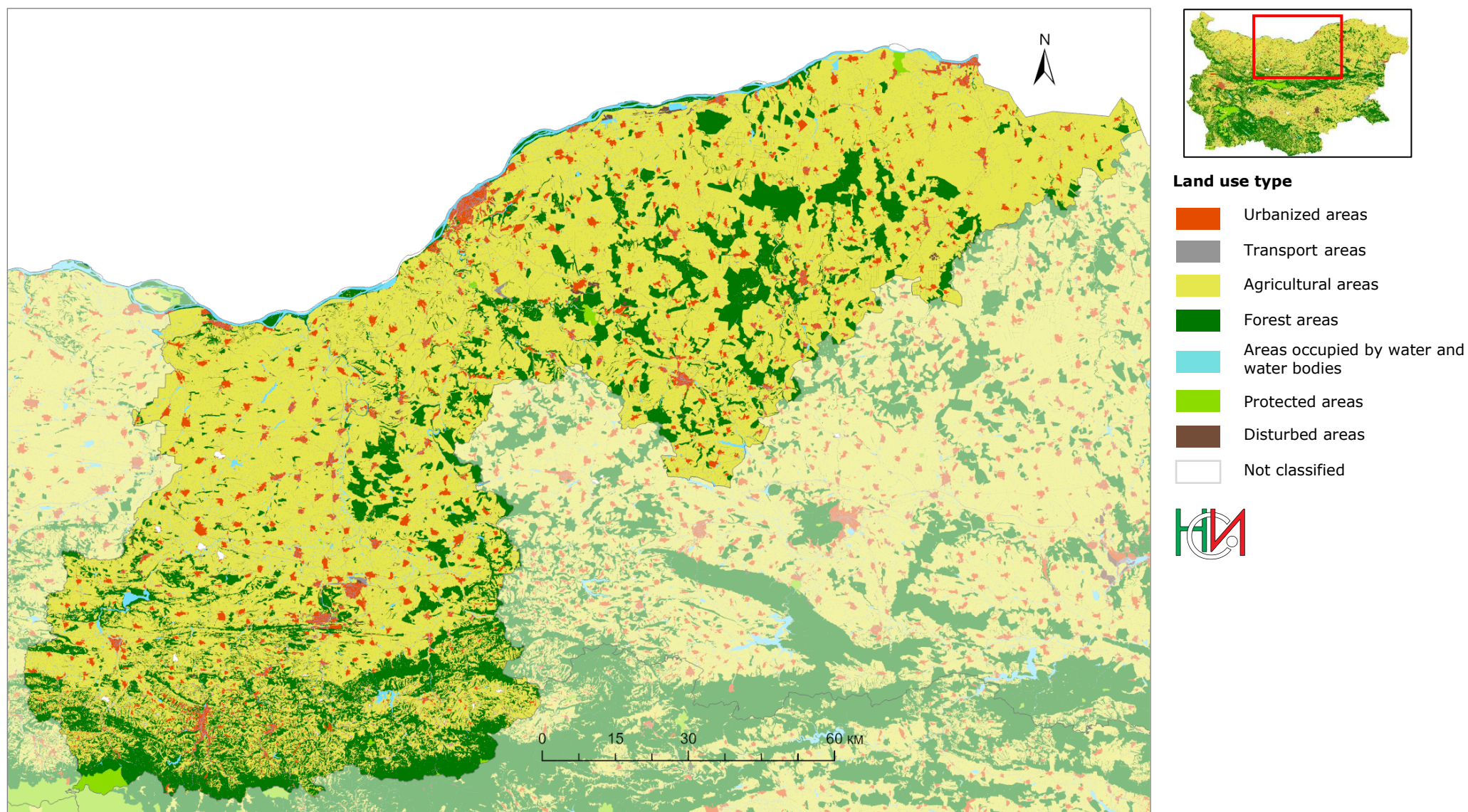


Figure 4. Land use distribution of Severoiztochen statistical region as of 31.12.2023

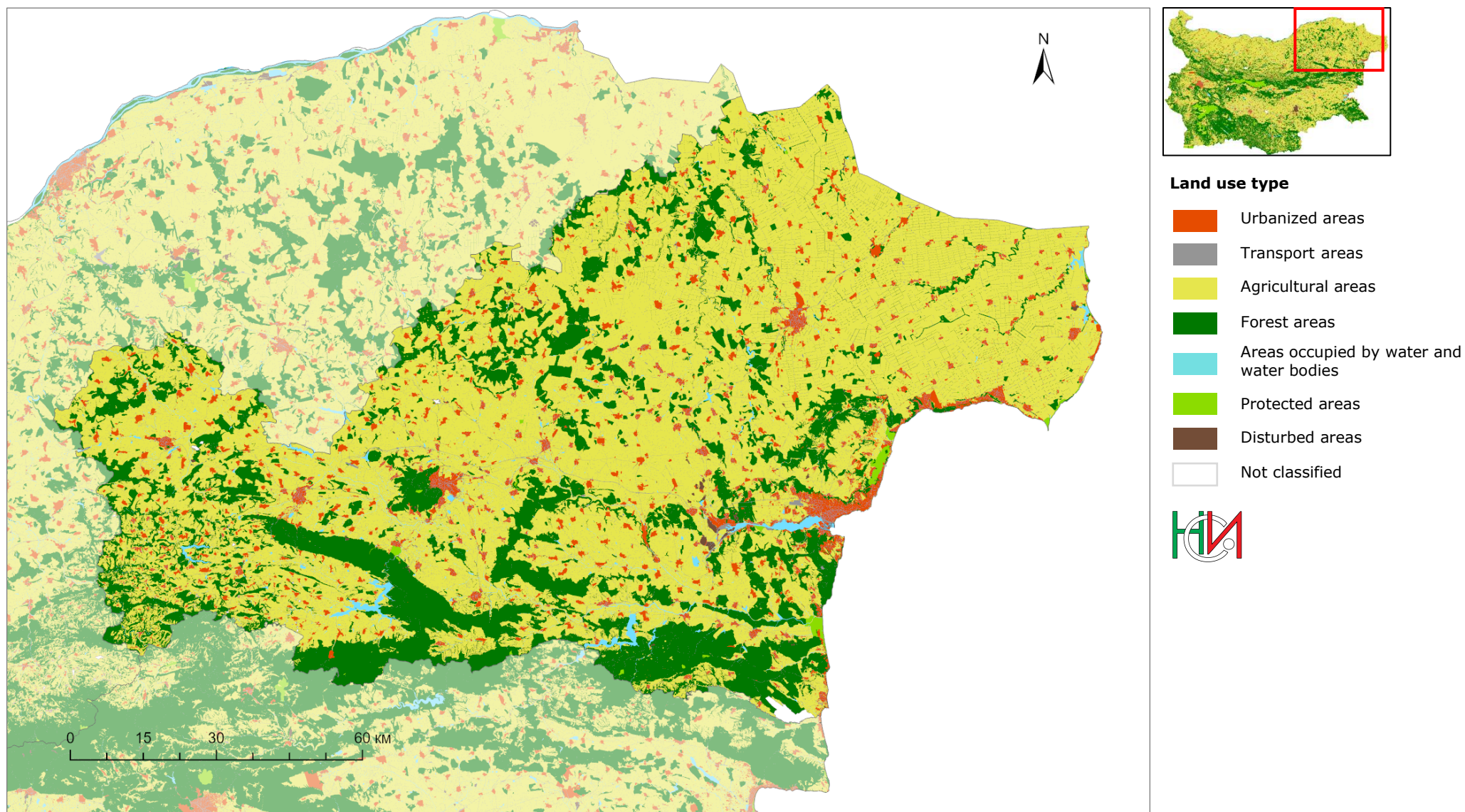


Figure 5. Land use distribution of Yugozapaden statistical region as of 31.12.2023

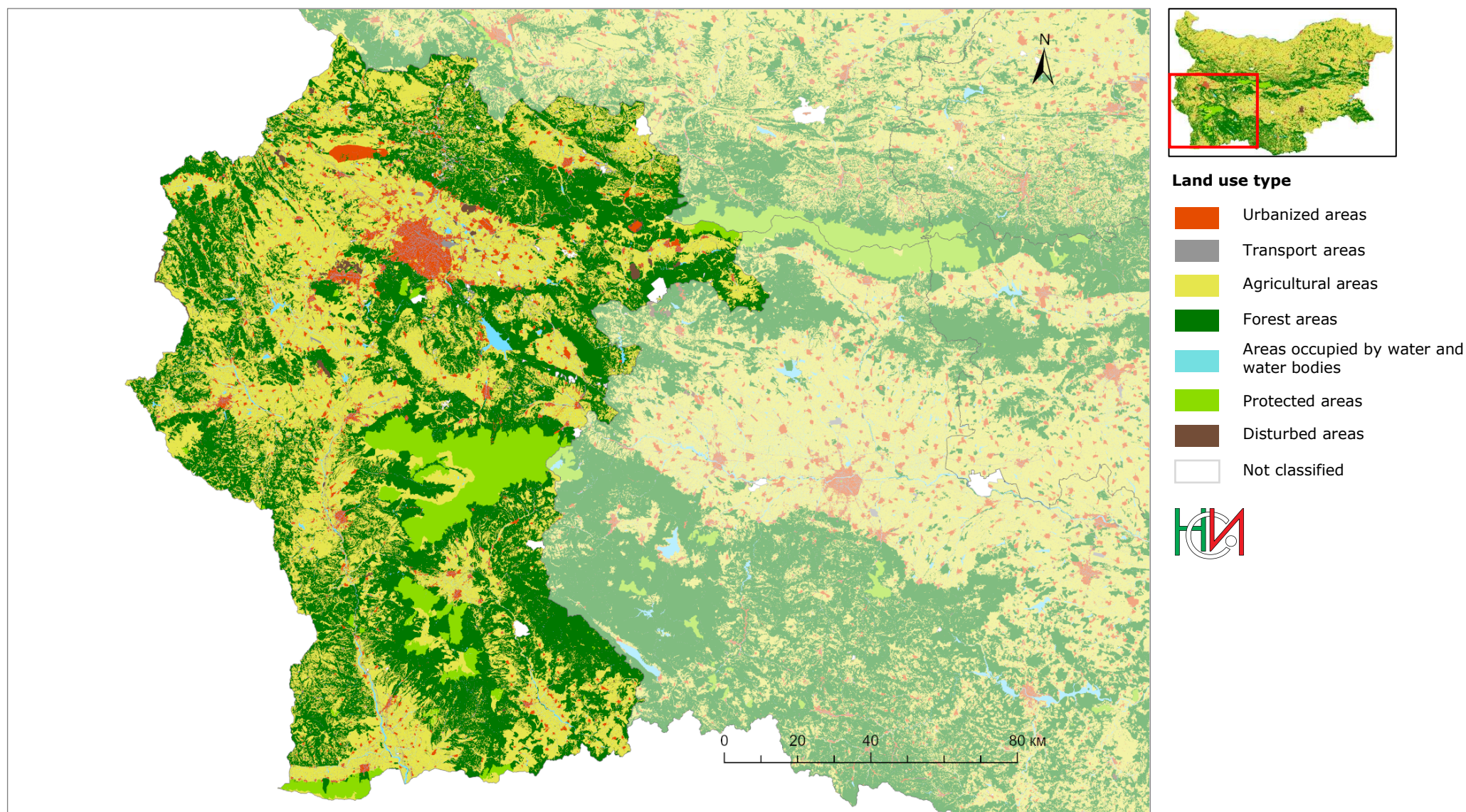


Figure 6. Land use distribution of Yuzhen tsentralen statistical region as of 31.12.2023

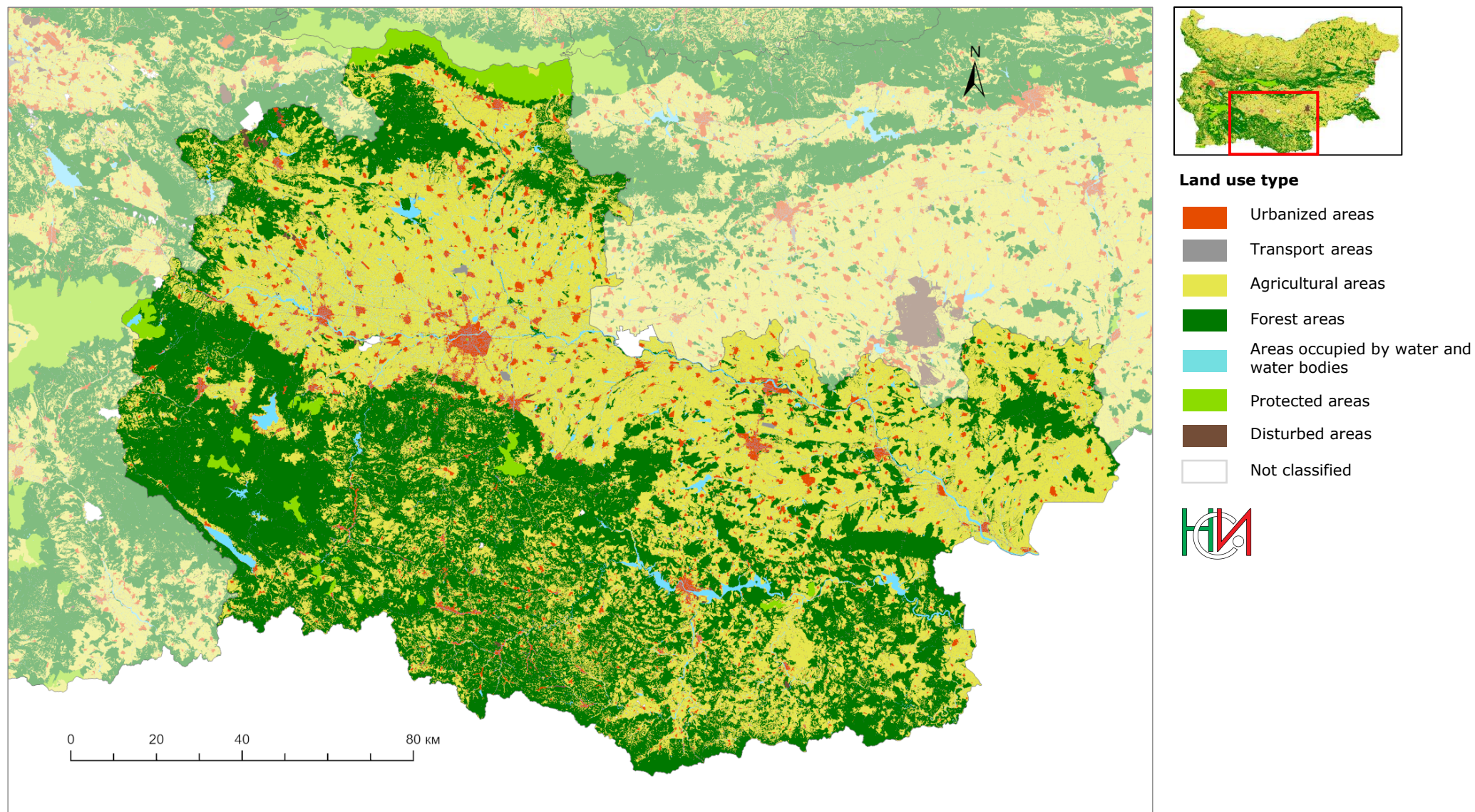


Figure 7. Land use distribution of Yugoiztochenstatistical region as of 31.12.2023

