

SEE River project: Development of bottom up approaches in Drava River pilot areas and their integration from local to transboundary scale

Mateja Softić¹ & Andrej Grmovšek²

¹Alianta, Ljubljana, Slovenia, mateja.softic@alianta.si

²Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Maribor, Slovenia, andrej.grmovsek@zrsvn.si

Mission, aim, approach

Our mission:

To achieve that the **Drava River in its whole transboundary course becomes a contemporary river.**

Our aim:

To find **consensus on concrete future actions for integrated Drava River corridor management** and implement them in period 2014-2020 and beyond in all five riparian countries and on the transboundary level, and **to increase the involvement of stakeholders** not only in planning and decision-making, but also in implementing the agreed actions by motivating them for taking control of the actions as their future coordinators.

Our approach:

Working bottom up on the pilot areas and integrating the agreed solutions into a joint action plan on the transboundary Drava River corridor.

SEE RIVER PROJECT - HAND IN HAND FOR RIVERS

First step towards our goal - Drava River Vision Declaration (2008):

- signed by representatives from all five riparian countries,
- encompasses a common vision and ten objectives for conservation and development of the Drava River,
- forms a basis for work in the SEE River project.

Working bottom-up towards the Vision in the Drava River corridor pilot areas

In all five riparian countries stakeholder involvement processes have been initiated with the aim to:

- initiate a dialogue between stakeholders from all levels and sectors,
- build trust among stakeholders to ensure long-term cooperation towards common goals,
- compile and address stakeholders' interests in each river corridor,
- look for win-win solutions for the identified interests and agree on concrete actions towards their realisation,
- integrate the agreed solutions into relevant strategic documents on all levels and ensure their implementation in period 2014-2020.

In each country, partners use a combination of:

- expert work of partners through joint workshops, field and desk work,
- problem-solving within thematic action groups consisting of key drivers, representatives of key stakeholder groups and project team,
- meetings and workshops with wider group of stakeholders for consultation and joint decision-making on the solutions proposed by the action groups,
- communication and awareness-raising activities for wider public and the media.

Based on background situation (cultural, political, economic etc.) in each of the five countries, the working methods and techniques may vary and are tailored to each country or pilot area.

Integration of pilot area results into project work and participation on transboundary scale

Project work on the transboundary scale encompasses:

- data exchange and collection of analyses: each country's river corridor analysis, hot spot maps, analysis of existing procedures for managing river corridors and good practice analyses are shared among SEE River project partners and used on local, regional, national and transboundary scale,
- transfer of inputs from local, regional, national level to the transboundary scale and vice versa: inputs obtained with stakeholder participation in each Drava country are transferred to the transboundary scale, while the inputs gathered and exchanged at transboundary level are transferred back to each country and pilot area through SEE River project partners' meetings and workshops, with project partners representing each country's stakeholders - indirect participation,
- preparation of a Joint Drava River Corridor Action Plan: all gathered inputs from stakeholders in all five countries will be used for the preparation of the transboundary Drava Action Plan, harmonised with the national and/or pilot area action plans prepared by each country.

Beyond SEE River: Implementation in 2014-2020

The SEE River project will be followed by implementation activities:

- action plans will be integrated into strategic or sectoral documents on all levels and within other local, regional, national or transboundary initiatives, and will also be considered by bilateral commissions,
- concrete actions will be implemented with support of EU and other funding schemes.

