

IMPLEMENTING THE SEE RIVER PROJECT IN HUNGARY SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RIVER CORRIDORS IN SEE COUNTRIES

L. Balatonyi (Hungary, South-Transdanubian Water Management Directorate, balatonyi.laszlo@ddvizig.hu),

Background

The basis of SEE RIVER Project is the symposium held in Maribor from 23rd to 25th September 2008. The declaration got articulated and signed by the five Dráva countries after the event. South-Transdanubian Water Management Directorate (DDVIZIG) is one of the 12 water directorates in Hungary which manages important water infrastructure and attends administration duties in the region. Its areas of expertise are very diverse but have one common element which is water with more than 50 years experience.

The PROJECT

Together with NeKI (another Hungarian organization), DDVIZIG prepared geodesic surveys for branches where this was not done yet in order to provide information for the SEE RIVER Toolkit. DDVIZIG's benefit of the project is the methodology that helps to establish a framework for integrated and sustainable management in the Drava River corridor. The SEE RIVER Toolkit gets applied in the Drava River corridor and especially in the pilot area where the synergetic solutions will be sought between water management, navigation and nature conservation. Cooperation with Duna Drava National Park will be used and further enhanced through SEE RIVER project.

CONCERNED FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

In order to achieve the objectives of the SEE RIVER Project in Hungary, there was 1 national-regional, 3 local stakeholder and 2 minor meetings held, specifically focusing on one expertise field per meeting. These meetings got visited and actively participated by the stakeholders from the expertise fields of nature protection, river management (including: branch and river revitalization, flood protection), agriculture, forestry, local communities, governments, tourism – recreation, fish farming, angling, shipping, environment protection and last but not least regional development.



Figure 1. The 1st local stakeholder meeting. 04.12.13 (dd.mm.yy), Sellye- Hungary



Figure 2. The 2nd local stakeholder meeting. 25.03.14 (dd.mm.yy), Sellye- Hungary



Figure 3. Stakeholder meeting. 29.04.14 (dd.mm.yy), Drávaszabolcs- Hungary



Figure 4. Cross border cooperation- Croatian project partner participation on our project event (Mladen Matica, Branka Španiček)



Figure 5. Group working session, presenting-discussing

The participants marked the following topics as the most important issues to be addressed:

- Riverbed erosion, decreased water-level and ground-water level,
- The adverse impact of Croatian hydro-power plants on the water regime and other linked issues,
- The impact of the decreased water level of River Dráva on recreational activities in the region of Barcs,
- The current extent of river regulation out-of-date,
- The adverse effect of bed dredging in the last periods,
- The impact of agricultural technologies on the subsistence of local inhabitants,
- The cut-off of branches, the decrease in their water supply,
- Lack of territorial water retention, the presence of drought in the region,
- Lack of environmental and economic conditions in tourism,
- The unfavourable social and economic situation of the region



SUMMARY

This is the very first project of DDVIZIG where close dialogue was needed with the wide-level of stakeholders and the representatives of the various expertise fields. As a result of the joint work, a good community formed who are committed to the goals of the project. During the continuous dialogue, topics having more interest and arguments linked to got discussed and conciliated on in-depth. The elements of the topics changed dynamically throughout the conversation according to the emphasis articulated by specific stakeholders. Since the Multi-Sectoral Agreement reflects the combined and complex view, attitude and interest of the involved parties, it has a much greater chance of being supported and realized should there be no funds or follow-up project opportunities for implementation in the future.



Figure 7. High representative Official signing ceremony
(a) Attila Nagy- mayor of Sellye, (b) Dénes Lóczy associate professor at University of Pecs

RIVER CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT AFTER THE SEE RIVER PROJECT

The results of the meetings held with the representatives of various fields of expertise and local stakeholders clearly highlighted on the fact that finding solutions for Dráva's current issues is indispensable in order to preserve the values of the river. Without unity, joint thinking and conciliations only certain, isolated local issues could be sorted by an organization or an enthusiastic volunteer whilst would require a major effort and be shockingly slow. As a consequence, one should see that settling the issues of rivers like Dráva within the borders of a country will neither be final nor complete. Most of the problems are cross-border-like (deepening of the river bed, river regulation, utilization of the watershed, impact of power generating objects, sediment loss, etc.); therefore, the problem-solving process must include a cross-border, comprehensive-type of approach. Action plans are needed, their implementation require a cross-border mindset, the integration of various interests just like the consultation process that has been initiated by the SEE RIVER Project and got jointly implemented by its participants.

In order to trace the implementation of activities recorded in the Action Plan, to assess the results, to make newer decisions occurred during the process, to put across the different interests and aspects further co-operation, dialogue and regular conciliations are required. Based on experiences, conciliation would only work long-term if it is channelled into an organised way followed by systematic, scheduled activities with all participants becoming involved.

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