



CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENT
CENTAR ZA ŽIVOTNU SREDINU



BULGARIAN
BIODIVERSITY
FOUNDATION



E L F



International Scientific Forum
„Danube-River of Cooperation“



Joint communication for the ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation to climate change at national level

Report of activities

Objective

CEEweb for Biodiversity, as an organization focusing primarily on biodiversity issues, has the mission of promoting the understanding on the deep interrelation between climate change and biodiversity, and facilitating coherence between the policies in these two fields.

During autumn 2011 we organized joint communication targeting five CEE governments. Our aim was to communicate the synergies between nature conservation and mitigation of / adaptation to climate change, to draw the attention of CEE national decision makers to the huge capacities and potential benefits offered by the ecosystem-based approach of climate change in our region, and to influence national climate change policies in a way that biodiversity and sustainability aspects are given higher priority in the future. Since responses to climate change are necessary in an extremely wide variety of fields, our further aim was to channel our messages into the ongoing sectoral national processes too, with a highlight on nature conservation, agriculture, forestry and water policies.

Duration

The project was implemented between 01.10.2011 and 31.12.2011.

Summary of activities

- Prepare joint position on ecosystem-based climate change adaptation at national level, as baseline for the communication
- screen ongoing national processes (e.g. new laws and regulation under construction, public consultations, national conferences) related either directly to climate change

or to other sectors important for climate adaptation, primarily nature conservation, agriculture, forestry and water

- adjust the joint message to the actual national situations, prepare national communication plans
- Raise awareness of national governments, scientific and NGO communities for adopting recommendations in relevant national policies (email communication, meetings with responsible persons from national administration, posters or presentations in conferences, participation in public consultations, expert meetings etc.)

Joint message

A document was prepared, with the title of ‘The necessity of ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change at national level - recommendations to national decision makers in Central and Eastern Europe.’ Please find the document at the CEEweb web site: http://www.ceeweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/CEEweb_recommendations_climate_adaptation.pdf

Structure of the document:

- Climate change is already unavoidable
- The interrelation between climate change and biodiversity
- The ecosystem-approach in adaptation to climate change
- CEEweb’s recommendations for some critically affected sectors: agriculture, water, forestry, nature conservation
- National Climate Change Strategies should target the roots of the problem

Partner organizations and responsible persons

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Center for Environment (CfE), Natasa Crnkovic (natasa.crnkovic@czzs.org)
- Bulgaria: Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF), Neli Nikolova and Stefan Avramov (stefan.avramov@biodiversity.bg)
- Estonia: Estonian Fund for Nature (EFN), Silvia Lotman (silvia@elfond.ee)
- Serbia: International Scientific Forum “Danube – River of Cooperation” (*ISF “DRC”*), Edita Stojic-Karanovic (forumdanube@yahoo.com)
- Slovakia: BROZ, Lubomira Vavrova (vavrova@broz.sk)
- CEEweb for Biodiversity, Ildiko Arany (arany@ceeweb.org)

Relevant bodies contacted during the project

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - o Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - o Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of Republic of Srpska
- Bulgaria
 - o Ministry of Environment
 - o Council of Ministries (MC)
- Estonia
 - o The Government Office Commission for Sustainable Development of Estonia
 - o Estonian Ministry of Environment

- Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs
- Estonian Board of Renewable Energy
- Estonian University of Life Sciences
- University of Tartu
- Board of Estonian Environmental NGOs
- Serbia
 - deputy prime ministers Bozidar Djelic, Verica Kalanovic
 - European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management: Forestry Directorate, Water Directorate, Department of Strategic Planning and Management and International Cooperation in the Field of Water
 - Ministry of Health
 - Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning
 - Ministry for Infrastructure and Energy
 - Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia
 - Institute for Water-management, “Jaroslav Cerni”
 - EPS (Electric Power-industry of Serbia)
- Slovakia
 - Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
 - Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic
 - Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic
 - regional environmental offices

Events, meetings, consultations organized / participated

- Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - personal meeting in Sarajevo with representative of Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Discussion about BiH presence on UNFCCC conference in Durban; further plans in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation in BiH; agreement on future cooperation.
 - personal meeting in Banja Luka with person in charge for climate change from Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of Republic of Srpska, discussion about possibilities to include CEEweb recommendations in existing and future documents
- Bulgaria
 - BBF participated in the stakeholder consultations about the third National action plan on climate change (NAPCC), focusing on discussions about Forestry, Land use and Agriculture. Participation in meetings: first open conference, 3 internal meetings for each of the abovementioned sectors with the leaders of the internal working groups, second open conference presenting the more detailed drafts of NAPCC.
 - BBF prepared three statements and concrete proposals on Forestry, Land use and Agriculture for the chapters of NAPCC dealing with the above fields
- Estonia
 - Estonia is a small country rich in ecosystems that are considered carbon storing: forests, mires etc. At the same time Estonia uses its own mineral resource – oil shale – for making electricity, heat and fuels. In light of communication regarding climate change there are two main channels: (1)

- promoting the sustainable use of forests and other natural ecosystems and (2) promoting renewable energy use for decreasing mining of fossil fuels.
 - Board of Estonian Environmental NGOs was informed on the joint climate change communication project. During the discussion the need for approaching the energy sector came to the table and future actions were discussed
 - Eesti Energia – the Estonian energy company and its oil shale mines was visited.
 - meeting with Estonian Board of Renewable Energy. Discussion on sustainable development of renewable energy – need for marine planning, sustainable biofuel use vs intensive forestry, joint future actions.
 - meeting with the Government Office Commission for Sustainable Development on wood and CO2 emissions. EFN prepared a written position paper to the Commission about sustainable forestry measures and its role in carbon storing.
 - Discussions with scientists from Centre of Excellence of Estonian University of Life Sciences ENVIRON to find out possible joint communication (<http://environ.emu.ee/en/>). ENVIRON is a very new centre of excellence about environmental adaptation, in future the findings about greenhouse gases and Estonian mires and natural wetlands will be a good base for discussions with the decision makers.
 - Meeting with Estonian project coordinator of University of Tartu Maret Saat. An overview of Estonian participation in two climate adaptation related projects: Regioclimate (<http://www.regioclimate.eu>) and BaltAdapt (www.baltadapt.eu). The Estonian scientists in the projects are related to marine and coastal planning of the Baltic Sea.
 - Estonian Ministry of Environment opened consultations on Estonian nature conservation action plan. The Board of Estonian Environmental NGOs prepared joint position paper containing sustainable forestry needs, wetland restoration needs and other comments on biodiversity.
 - The Board of Estonian Environmental NGOs decided to give name „Estonian Environmental Fraud 2011 “to the minister of economic affairs for supporting the continuous large scale mining of oil shale.
- Serbia
 - joint message was translated into Serbian while adjusting the common messages to the situation in Serbia, communication materials prepared and printed in few copies
 - letters sent to 16 persons representing relevant bodies (as listed above), personal meetings realized with 9 of them, information collected about several ongoing or foreseen national legislation processes, agreement was made about future cooperation in these processes
 - the project was presented in the 22nd Conference “Danube – River of Cooperation”, Environmental protection in the Danube Strategy Action Plan with marking the World’s River Day
 - message channelled to the delegations of the Republic of Serbia during their preparation for the UNFCCC COP17 in Durban, South Africa
- Slovakia

- As member of a dedicated expert group, active participation in the modification and EU-harmonization of the Law on nature and landscape conservation in Slovakia.
- input in the re-evaluation process of the existing national network of protected areas in Slovakia, including revision of list of protected species and biotopes. Participation in several national meetings organized by the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic in 2011.
- participation at an open dialogue on energetic through a public questionnaire posted on the web site of the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic.
- activities related to climate change impacts and adaptation were presented in several exhibitions and meetings, e.g. exhibition on Danube migratory water birds, exhibition on management and conservation of *Microtus oeconomus mehelyi* in the Danube River basin at the premises of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic.
- communication with relevant state bodies (see list above) as well as with business sector, media and public campaign about protection of species and biotopes in urban areas. Highlighted topic: keeping habitats of urban species (e.g. Common Swift, bats) after insulation and reconstruction of buildings, sharing information about compensation measures, also as part of an ongoing programme supported by EC LIFE+ and Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic.
- communication with relevant state bodies and institutions (see list above) about possibilities to minimize negative impact of climate change on biodiversity and human well-being through future projects elaborated jointly by NGOs, state bodies and institutions and business sector.

Results and next steps

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: This four months' project have been great opportunity to open new talks in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding climate change adaptation. CfE used this opportunity and is pleased to say that BiH authorities are open for new approaches and recommendations, although that is so far personal view of people with whom they cooperate with. Much harder advocacy needs to be done on adaptation and implementation of those recommendations. Second report of Bosnia and Herzegovina for UNFCCC is now under preparation. Preparing concrete recommendations for the document will be a key activity of Center for Environment in 2012.
- Bulgaria: sectors of Forestry, Land use and Agriculture became a priority in BG mostly related to the conservation NGOs' efforts on the development of Natura 2000 network. Because of that, those topics are also recognized as field of work with high level expertise from NGO side. That's why on the process of developing the third NAPCC, the environmental NGOs became leaders of those three areas, and most of their proposal and suggestions made in 3 statements and concrete proposals on Forestry, Land use and Agriculture were accepted in the preparation process. BBF will continue participating in the NAPCC preparation in 2012 (schedule: public consultation February/March, final adoption April/May, publication May/June). In parallel, the third National action plan on climate change will start to be developed by the Ministry of Environmental in 2012. BBF will be actively involved in that too.

- Estonia: the summary and pictures of the Eesti Energia visit are available: <http://www.eko.org.ee/?p=369> (In Estonian). Written position paper to the Government Office Commission for Sustainable Development was prepared about sustainable forestry measures and its role in carbon storing. Online press release: <http://valitsus.ee/et/riigikantselei/saastev-areng/uudised/47512/saastvaarengu-komisjon-rohutas-puidust-ehitamise-olulisust> (In Estonian). Press release of lobby against large scale mining of oil shale: <http://www.eko.org.ee/?p=396> (In Estonian).
- Serbia: The delegations of the Republic of Serbia at the UNFCCC COP17 as well as Republic Hydro-meteorological Service of Serbia (RHMS) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management were equipped with the concept of the ecosystem-approach in climate change. Agreement was made that in the near future, ISF "DRC" will contribute to several measures and activities foreseen at the national level, such as preparation of the second UNFCCC national report, international cooperation in the field of climate research and systematic observation, knowledge transfer of clean technologies, adoption and implementation of adaptation measures, education, training and public awareness raising on climate change, upcoming development and implementation of national multidisciplinary studies on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, EU-harmonization of the national agricultural legislation and the regulation of wastewater treatment.
- Slovakia: the project positively supported already ongoing activities of BROZ related to climate change adaptation and conservation of biodiversity. Climate-vulnerable species and habitats got priority in the national list of protected species and biotopes. Minimization of fossil energy sources and increased share of "clean green energy" was advocated at the Ministry of Economy. It is obvious that to achieve further positive results, responsible authorities need to join forces with NGOs and experts and vice versa. Raising public awareness plays a significant role in the process for it is also the public that needs to change its approach concerning using renewable energies and wise use of natural resources.



The project was generously supported by European Commission DG Environment.