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**PROJECT UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2006****DANUBE REGIONAL PROJECT UPDATE:  
NOVEMBER 2006**

The goal of the 'DRP Update' is to keep you aware of what's happening with the UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project (DRP), including its achievements, events and plans. We encourage you to find out more about the information briefs listed above by contacting us. Many of the briefs are also linked to the "News", "Themes" and other sections of our website ([www.undp-drp.org](http://www.undp-drp.org)). The "Update" is a key tool for enhancing stakeholder awareness and use of DRP products, activities, tools and lessons learned.

**DRP Final Seminar**

The DRP will hold its 'Final Seminar' from February 21-22, 2007 in Bucharest, Romania. Its goals will be to disseminate overall DRP results since the project began in 2001, discuss how they will be used by the ICPDR, and to get feedback and lessons learned from Danube countries and the ICPDR. Selected participants will include representatives from ICPDR delegations and expert groups, international organizations and NGOs. The Seminar will be followed by a high-level meeting of ministerial representatives from Danube and Black Sea countries invited by Romania's Prime Minister.

**Iron Gates cruise**

In September, the Serbian ship Argus was captained by DRP experts from Hungary and scientists from Serbia and Romania to sample bottom sediment trapped behind Romania and Serbia's 'Iron Gates' dam. The samples are being tested for pollution including heavy metals, organics and nutrients. The tests will provide information about the accumulation and distribution of, and changes to, pollution in the reservoir over time. The DRP sub-project is also reviewing current information on sediment pollution in the reservoir and impacts that might follow the potential remobilization of sediment pollutants. Recommendations for future monitoring and precautionary measures will also be provided. Initial findings indicate no extreme pollution values as well as a need to better map the structure of the unique gorge underlying the reservoir. (See the upcoming story in 'Danube Watch')

**Visits to NGO projects with DRP Grants**

It's no easy task to monitor the progress and results of over 60 NGOs in ten countries that received financial assistance through the second round of the DRP Small Grants Programme. But it's important to know how they are contributing to improved Danube water quality and awareness raising. For that reason, a handful of DRP evaluators are now on field missions, visiting a variety of NGOs and sites from national capitals such as Bucharest to villages in Hungary, to monitor what's happening on the ground, from reducing agricultural pollution to restoring wetlands. Incoming reports to date are proving that many NGOs, with limited funds, are capable of achieving excellent results. Once the missions are completed, the DRP will develop a number of success stories highlighting the most impressive results. (See the upcoming story about a Hungarian wetland project in 'Danube Watch')

**Enhancing information and participation**

New products have been developed by participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania and Serbia engaged in a DRP sub-project geared to enhancing access to information and public participation in environmental decision-making. Participants have written, published and distributed manuals in each of their countries that will make it easier for government officials to carry out their legal responsibilities to provide water-related environmental information to the public and to encourage public input into the critical issues facing the Danube. In the same four countries plus Bulgaria, participants also developed brochures to help citizens and NGOs understand and exercise their legal rights to information. In addition to print format, manuals and brochures will be available in electronic format on the websites of ministries, NGOs and REC Country offices.

In a basin-wide 'Dissemination Workshop' held October 16-17 at the Regional Environmental Center in Szentendre, Hungary, 50 participants from 13 Danube countries met to discuss tools and methodologies to improve public access to information about water quality and to share best practices, many of them developed through the DRP sub-project. The participants, who included government officials and NGOs, also considered how member, accession and pre-accession countries to the European Union can meet the public participation requirements of the Water Framework Directive. (See new Products and Activities Sheet at: [www.undp-drp.org/drp/themes\\_public-participation](http://www.undp-drp.org/drp/themes_public-participation) )

**Strengthening WFD and NGO capacities in the Sava Basin**[Login](#)

A DRP sub-project is providing capacity building services to the Sava River Basin, agreed with Sava countries (BiH, CRO, SLO, SRB) and the Sava Commission in February 2006. This began with a Gap Analysis to assess the national availability of information needed for EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) reporting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. Austrian and German consultants have advised local government experts from the Sava countries in how to meet WFD reporting obligations in terms of hydromorphology (risk assessment, identification), groundwater characterization, GIS tools and point and diffuse source pollution. On November 13-14 in Sarajevo, a regional workshop, also involving Slovenia, will prioritize key transboundary issues and measures for the Sava Basin. In January 2007, the project will culminate with a workshop to develop the structure of the future Sava River Basin Management Plan and related Road Map. The regional DRP activities work in synergy with support from a CARDS Sava project focusing on local sub-basins. This assistance will put the Sava countries into a pilot position in terms of WFD implementation in Europe.

In addition, a DRP Small Grant was awarded in December 2005 to four NGOs from the Sava Basin to strengthen NGO participation in EU WFD implementation in the Sava River Basin. On November 10, a new 'Sava NGO Committee' will be established in Krapinske Toplice, Croatia -- a new strong partner for better cooperation between the Sava Commission, relevant government institutions and NGOs.

#### Harmonized sampling and assessment

Three DRP-led training courses were held last summer in Miskolc (Hungary), Cluj Napoca (Romania) and Bratislava (Slovakia) for hydro-biological and monitoring experts from 11 Danube countries. Experts were trained in using methods that are compliant with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) for sampling and assessing 'macrozoobenthos', a 'biological quality element' that is one determinant of good ecological status under the WFD. To date, methods used in the Danube countries lacked a consistency of approach, thereby making difficult a sound basis for comparing results basin-wide. The programme was developed by German institute 'Schulung Fließgewässer GbR'.

#### Help for municipal wastewater financing

DRP efforts in disseminating outputs from its efforts related to 'Water and Wastewater Utility Investments and Pricing' are in full force. Romania has been a key target where information was presented at a workshop held in Constanta for some 30 Romanian water managers. Participants expressed keen interest in learning more about project products and activities, possibly through a future workshop dedicated to ASTEC and reform proposals. They were further interested in progress with the ongoing pilot project in Pitesti, Romania. Translated DRP Project Information Sheets were mailed out to some 70 additional water managers Romania-wide to encourage their participation.

Numerous other Project Information Sheets have now been translated into Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Romanian, Serbian and Slovak, and posted onto the DRP website ([www.undp-drp.org/drp/themes\\_municipal-ws-ww](http://www.undp-drp.org/drp/themes_municipal-ws-ww)). (For more information: [kis.andras@makk.zpok.hu](mailto:kis.andras@makk.zpok.hu))

#### Getting farmers to reduce water pollution

The DRP sub-project geared to reducing water pollution from agriculture visited a number of farmer associations and extension and advisory services in the Vojvodina region of North Serbia, presenting information about and encouraging the use of best agricultural practices (BAP). A related brochure was also developed and disseminated, explaining why and how BAPs should be used, soon to be translated into seven other languages and posted on the project website.

A survey found that farmers already targeted by the project were highly positive about its outputs and benefits. Serbia's Ministry of Agriculture has provided a statement officially supporting the project and similar future initiatives. Cattle and pig feeding seminars were organized with North Serbian farmers. Finally, the project received widespread media coverage including a 20-minute film produced by National Radio and Television Serbia and inclusion in a number of local TV, radio and magazine spots. (Visit: [www.carlbrodrp.org.yu/page1](http://www.carlbrodrp.org.yu/page1))

#### Wetlands news

Progress with the sub-project on 'Monitoring and Assessment of Nutrient Removal Capacities of Riverine Wetlands' began with the establishment of a literature database with over 130 scientific reports and a project database with over 50 projects dealing with wetland restoration and/or nutrient removal in the Danube Basin. Three pilot sites in Moldova, Romania and Ukraine were also selected to develop and implement concrete wetland restoration and nutrient retention programmes. These real world examples will highlight the importance of including nutrient removal into wetland management planning, to be incorporated into a final 'Guidance Document' in wetland restoration and management for wetland and river basin managers.

In Slovakia, an initial survey done on 105 regional and local decision-makers and water managers showed that most respondents are aware of the importance of wetlands but not about how wetlands can help river basin management (RBM) efforts. This is the first output from the DRP-funded project carried out by the NGO 'Daphne' to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands for RBM. In October, seven workshops with 208 participants were also conducted in

Eastern and Central Slovakia. A press conference on October 26 in Bratislava publicly presented the project's goals and preliminary results, including an excursion to the Water Research Institute in Bratislava where a physical model of the Morava Floodplain was shown to journalists.

A final meeting disseminating the DRP's overall efforts related to wetlands will be held in the Danube Delta next March.

#### Support to BiH for WFD implementation

The DRP and ICPDR are jointly supporting the appointment of an expert to assist MOFTER (the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). The expert will act as a key linkage between the ICPDR, Sava Commission, MOFTER and the competent authorities in Republica Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. BiH voluntarily agreed to meet the requirements of the EU WFD although it is not obliged to.

#### P-free detergents

A seminar is being organised by the DRP and ICPDR to discuss the findings of the DRP project on the elimination of phosphorus in washing detergents. It is estimated that between 20% and 30% of phosphorus in urban wastewater has its origins in washing detergents and elimination at source would be an important step in reducing the loads of this nutrient. The seminar, planned for January 25, 2007, is anticipated to involve a range of stakeholders including detergent manufacturers, the European Commission and environmental specialists. The goal is for them to help identify an appropriate mechanism for the ICPDR to propose a basin-wide reduction of phosphorus-containing detergents.

#### WFD workshop in Chisinau, MD

The DRP and ICPDR completed a workshop October 11-12 on the implementation of the EU WFD in Moldova. The objective was to assist Moldovan experts and ministry staff to begin a national implementation plan. Experts from other countries in the Danube Basin including Romania, Hungary, Slovenia and Ukraine shared their experiences of implementing the WFD in their countries. Workshop conclusions were presented to Moldova's environment minister and ICPDR President for 2006, Mr. Constantin Mihailescu.

*For more info contact:*

*Paul Csagoly, Communications Expert / UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project*

*(tel) +43 1 26060 4722 / (mob) +43 664 561 2192*

[paul.csagoly@unvienna.org](mailto:paul.csagoly@unvienna.org) / [www.undp-drp.org](http://www.undp-drp.org)

top ↑

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