



Summary Report of the National Drought Seminars (act. 6.3; D.6.3.3)

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Activity leader	GWP CEE
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Participating partners	all
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1. Main information

National drought (final) seminars took place in all 10 countries in March and April 2019 and brought together over 400 participants. The seminars were the concluding point of a very active cooperation with national stakeholders within 2 years of the project implementation. The aim was to exchange opinions, feedback and suggestions for improvements on DriDanube outputs, which are in its final stage of development. Discussions focused especially on:

- drought monitoring tool Drought Watch (previously known as Drought User Service)
- unified methodologies for drought impacts collection and drought risk assessment
- Strategy which will support proactive drought management in the region

There was a special focus on how partners and stakeholders can together support integration of the results into daily operational work and how to assure sustainability of a 2,5-year long effort.

The purpose was to bring together a wide range of national stakeholders, to present the results of the project, to show and discuss with them how the newly developed tools can be used and how they can benefit from the newly acquired information and processes. Partners were also interested to find out if drought management in their countries and in the Danube region has made any progress since the project's initial seminars and how DriDanube project has contributed to it.

National seminars took place in 10 countries on these days:

- 19 March 2019, Bratislava, Slovakia - [Agenda](#)
- 19 March 2019, Ljubljana, Slovenia - [Agenda](#)
- 2 April 2019, Zagreb, Croatia – [Agenda](#)
- 2 April 2019, Bucharest, Romania - [Agenda](#)
- 3 April 2019, Vienna, Austria – [Agenda](#)
- 11 April 2019, Trebinje, Bosnia & Herzegovina
- 15 April 2019, Budapest, Hungary - [Agenda](#)
- 16 April 2019, Belgrade, Serbia - [Agenda](#)
- 25 April 2019, Brno, Czech Republic

Number of participants:
- Austria: 22
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: 19
- Croatia: 43
- Czech Republic: 112
- Hungary: 25
- Montenegro: 24
- Romania: 40
- Serbia: 21
- Slovakia: 50
- Slovenia: 47
Total: 422

2. Summary report

2.1. Feedbacks of stakeholders on DriDanube outputs

Discussions at the national seminars focused on presentation of the outputs DriDanube partners developed (Drought Watch, National Reporting Networks, Drought management model, etc.), what are the possibilities for integration into operational work and how to assure sustainability, financing (project money or state support).

Seminars were basically an “exercise” to evaluate themselves (partners), together with key stakeholders, whether they have achieved overall goals and objectives of the project (for national level), what were the lessons learned and what are possible actions for the future.

You can read comments/input to different Outputs from the stakeholder in National reports (point 2) in annexes. They were used in a process of shaping and finalizing the DriDanube outputs. Some of the comments collected below:

Drought Watch:

- (Austria) Participants expressed particular interest in the Soil Water Index product. They see this product as having the potential to combine it with other data e.g. calculation of insurance premiums for farmers in case of drought damages; easy visualization of the current status of grassland areas and identifying the mowing patterns in these areas.
- (Slovenia) DW is a very important source of information to optimize the operation of water infrastructure for the purpose of low water and to inform the public to adjust the use of water during hydrological droughts.

National Reporting Networks:

- (BiH): Great example of connection of researchers and institutions with the people from the ground (Farmers)
- (Croatia) NRN opened many questions on agriculture policy in Croatia, regarding the drought management, irrigation system plans and on possibilities of developing drought resistant cultivars. The seasonal weather forecast, and yield forecast are one of the major interests of farmers.
- (Montenegro): additional ideas were shared among the participants on expanding the NRN network: volunteers from the stock market in Podgorica and from NGOs, Information system for environmental protection, ranger service of National Parks, private agricultural producers; to ask Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to support reporters (e.g. with 100 eur/year)

DriDanube Strategy:

- (Slovakia): Cooperation among relevant sectors is still weak. The concern for drought is not unified among meteorologists, hydrologists, soil and crop (and forestry) scientists. Most sectors do report a high interest in drought topic as they are really strongly affected by this phenomenon. However, the “out of sight-out of mind” approach of most stakeholders is evident. The irrigation sector must also undergo the complete rebirth (from pipe to law) in Slovakia.

2.2. Sustainability and Impacts of DriDanube outputs

Participants at the national seminars were mainly important stakeholders from policy levels (national authorities, sectoral agencies) and discussion with them was focusing on how to integrate DriDanube tools into operational use and made them sustainably also after project ends. Some of the conclusion on this topic collected below:

Drought Watch:

They all agreed that DW is a great tool for faster drought recognition of the drought which enables faster respond of responsible decision makers. Many participants expressed usefulness of the products in their daily work but It is necessary to further promote and train people on how to use DW. They also expressed hope the data provided by Drought Watch will be possible to use for free in the future.

Based on stakeholder opinion Drought Watch is the strongest point of the project because it offers the possibility to visualise drought-related products in real time, although questions were Still raised in terms of user-friendliness (expert vs non-expert users) and long-term sustainability.

National Reporting Networks:

Partners use the opportunity at the seminar and were looking (among the stakeholders) for a support for the National Reporting Network. Reporters are voluntary based, so they only need verbal and organisation encouragement to continue their work. They have to see that their inputs is used and important information (forecast, yield prediction, etc.) is communicated back to them. They also agree that NRN is the best tool to build up awareness for drought among general public and people from the field.

DW and NRN serve as great motivation. Users are ready to adopt products that are communicated and are seen as understandable. However, any user is very concern about the system accuracy and will not use it if he/she 1) does not understand it; 2) has concerns about the accuracy or methodology used.

DriDanube Strategy can contribute to supplement national water management plan with the protocol of drought management to avoid ad-hoc solutions during drought. A lot of them saw DriDanube strategy as a good guidance for the development of a legislative framework at the national level that would define proactive actions and readiness for the upcoming drought. Everyone involved in the drought management process needs to understand what their roles and the role of the others in the process. Drought management plans and policies can help to organize and the work of institutions and existing legislation in an optimal way of cooperating and reacting during the different stages of drought development (before, during, after). It is necessary that all “actors” have the same understanding and knowledge of how to manage drought.

Stakeholder agreed that one of the main achievements of the DriDanube project is the increased awareness about drought as a larger phenomenon that goes beyond the national level but still further work is need in order to change the communication flow within and between different key stakeholders, sectors and levels and to change the way we manage drought

2.3. Next steps / Recommendations

Participants see following actions/recommendations as next steps of the project:

- **Awareness raising:** People still need to be better informed about the problem of drought and water scarcity in the region. Level of awareness and seriousness of the problem (in the light of future climate change) is still pretty low.
- **Operational DriDanube tools:** All efforts need to be directed towards the sustainability of developed tools– operational and financial sustainability of the DriDanube tools; especially Drought Watch and National Reporting Networks.
- **Advocate** for an **integrated, proactive approach** to drought planning, adaptation and management. Steps towards development of the national legislation related to drought should not stop with the project but continue. Especially the forum of a multi-stakeholder platform (on a national and regional level) developed with the help of DriDanube seminars should be kept alive and used for further actions towards better management of droughts.

3. Conclusions

The inputs from these national discussions will be integrated into the project results and presented at the project's Final conference in Vienna on 7-8 May 2019.

The shift that DriDanube project wants to bring is that we will not be only reacting to the damages caused by drought but start acting ahead of the crisis and get prepared in advance. Knowing whether there is drought or not and detecting its actual stage is the basic prerequisite of the successful drought management.

Knowing who is doing what and when in each respective stage and the shared understanding of responsibilities is an equally important condition of success. This was discussed and "shaped" together with the key stakeholders at the National Drought Seminars because DriDanube partners believe that combating drought is achievable through proactive problem solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels.

4. Annexes:

- 10 Reports from 10 National Drought Seminars



Authors

Sabina Bokal (GWP CEE)

Contributors:

All partners by their national seminar reports

Date and place

Bratislava, 30 June, 2019