



Summary Report of the National Briefing Seminars (act. 6.3)

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1. Introduction

National briefing seminars were intended for stakeholders and end-users of drought related information in all 10 partnering countries of the DriDanube project. Project outline was presented as well as planned outputs and deliverables of project activities. The information on current status of the drought management was shared with the participants and the links with similar past or on-going projects or processes in the respective countries were identified. During the discussions (in different forms: general discussions, roundtables, smaller groups, panels, etc.) project partners collected inputs and comments for all five aspects on which DriDanube is focusing - drought monitoring, drought impact and risk assessment, drought management (response) and communication.

Country:	All 10 partnering countries of DriDanube project
Date:	Period 1 & 2
Organizers:	Project partners

2. Report

2.1. Agenda and main points of the Seminar

Austria: The National Briefing Seminar in Austria was connected to the national workshop 'Copernicus Nutzbar Machen' (which translates to "Make use of Copernicus") organized by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien) and the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG).

BiH: introduction with project and next steps of cooperation in project activities, and similar experiences related to drought in past years and management of drought.

Croatia: DriDanube project was presented by DHMZ, and current status of water management in Croatia with existing strategies and plans for irrigation system

Czech Republic:

- introduction, basic information about reporters work – main goal, importance and meaning of cooperation with reporters
- basic information about results, data processing and outputs from cooperation with reporters; positive feedback and where we see problems, what we need improve within the cooperation with reporters
- process of weather forecasting, models used within bonus agrometeorological predictions for reporters
- actual information about drought compensation (within the year 2017) and potential and real role of reporters
- presentation of DriDanube project and which news and new products this project will bring

Hungary:

- successfully implemented research projects (DMCSEE, CarpatClim, DanubeClim) which established the cross-border cooperations between countries in the Danube Region

- Diana Heilman as the representative of Water Quality Priority Area (PA4) in EUSDR and as the staff of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade gave a summary about JoinTisza project.

Montenegro:

- Main objectives of DriDanube project and its importance
- Current state of drought monitoring
- Issue on Reporters and presenting the Drought User Service
- Presenting the SPI monitoring on the IHMS' website.

Romania:

- Project & similar projects (CAMARO, DanubeSediment, JoinTisza) & idmp cee
- Drought management plan

Serbia: presentation of the project

Slovakia:

- Project and its linkage to IDMP and consultation dialogues
- Planned National drought action plan - presentation (examples of plans)
- Three cross-cutting inter-sector working groups – discussion

Slovenia:

- Past projects and national consultation dialogues (IDMP CEE)
- Project (all WPs)
- Discussion in groups (DUS, drought impact and risk, communication and information and respond to drought)

2.2. Participants

Austria: 41
BiH: 19
Croatia: 43
Czech Republic: 112
Hungary: 25
Montenegro: 24
Romania: 40
Serbia: 21
Slovakia: 50
Slovenia: 47
Total: 422

2.3. Discussions at the seminars

Austria:

- experts in the field of Earth observation and drought should establish a better link to agricultural experts and potential users of a drought user service to get to know the requirements and needs

BiH:

- finding the way to reach to producers/farmers on field and to give them simple advices and clear and simple forecast or warning
- future connections, what can the project offer and what knowledge and experience can be gained from the stakeholders (researchers from faculties and institution, and from producers from field).

Croatia:

- 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.

Czech Republic:

- the main topic of general discussion was drought compensation and the system of compensation
- Second topic for discussion was facilitated by representatives from Agriculture chamber (vice-president and president) and deal with insufficient number of reporters.

Hungary: after presentation roundtable – discussion on questionnaires

Montenegro:

- discussions focused on reporters and trainings

The main conclusions were:

- a) to hire the volunteers from the stock market in Podgorica and from NGOs
 - b) to inform and ask for help Information system for environmental protection
 - c) to ask ranger service of National Parks
 - d) to engage private agricultural producers
 - e) to ask the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to support reporters (e.g. with 100 eur/year)
- another interesting topic of discussion was Training of Reporters, as well as Training for Users Service.

Romania:

- Forest sector: joint efforts to manage information on drought in order to find appropriate solutions, and carrying out a plan that can be applied in these cases.
- Proposed study: effects of drought and its impact on agricultural production during extremely dry years registered in Romania.

Serbia:

- The Drought User Service - would be significant for both: Policy makers and the farmers
- Serbian stakeholders mentioned importance of monitoring of precipitation in the critical phases of the development of corn and other cultures
- effect of drought not only in the field of agriculture, but also in the field of hydrology, transport, electricity etc.

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.
- Much higher effort must be given to creative awareness raising campaigns. The public must be fed with relevant information on every-day basis.

Slovenia:

Each thematic area was additionally supported by several points concerning the following: the usability of Drought User Service, suggestions to improve the usability of Drought User Service, the reporting of drought impacts in Slovenia, data availability of the drought impact reports, drought impacts assessment, advantages and disadvantages of implementation of drought measures, legislation of drought management, strategic documents for drought management, communication on drought to public as well as among responsible institutions - responsibilities, methods, media, awareness and understanding of drought monitoring.

3. Outcomes

3.1. Stakeholders' feedback

Austria: In general, the comments from the stakeholders' perspective and the interest in participating actively in the DriDanube project was rather reluctant, still most of the stakeholders and interested persons want to be informed about ongoing activities and issues. It was also possible to increase the extent of our national stakeholder database with a few additional persons, who seemed to be quite interested in different parts of the project

BiH: Ministry supported the project and will take active part in it, especially in reporting from field and in management of drought. There are good connections with agricultural institute to work even closer on project activities. Most of participant will help with preparation of drought impact historical data base.

Croatia: Stakeholders are generally very interested in the planned outputs of DriDanube. They expressed the need for establishing Drought User Survey and the representatives from Ministries will try to implement the planned Strategy in Croatian legacy framework.

Czech Republic: Participants of seminar were interested mainly in new product of DriDanube project – yield prediction.

Hungary: common government approach in area mitigation/adaptation to impacts of climate change, water management and agricultural development is missing. The attended companies emphasized the need for the real practical outputs and results from DriDanube project which can be used in their daily activities.

Montenegro: stakeholders interested to be involved in the project activities, especially in the training for Drought User Service, to present their needs for it.

Romania: All the present stakeholders agreed to be further informed about reports, results of DriDanube progress and to contribute with the feedback regarding questionnaires and be more actively involved in the project activities.

highlighting that the central part of this project consists of communication and interaction between all stakeholders and target groups.

Serbia:

- want to receive the further information
- responded positively to the presented activities and mentioned the importance for end users.

Slovakia:

- Communication with general public on effective use of water is crucial in drought management.
- Some sectors are very prone to drought phenomenon while others (e.g. healthcare) do not perceive the drought as an issue currently, although there are reported new effects of climate change.
- There is a lack of connectivity between rapidly developing hydromet. services and very robust agro-hydrological research to provide appropriate and usable info for farmers.
- Drought management planning should consider the long-term aspect of the IWM

Slovenia:

- Drought User Service; should contain the drought prediction model and datasets, data on advanced drought research analyses, climate change simulations, spatial data, meteorological data, weather forecasts, short and long-term predictions of drought occurrence and its duration, long-term drought datasets for drought research. It is important that the user service should be cross sectorial promoted.
- Drought impact and risk assessment; The reporters should be the users of a drought service to have a personal interest in the reliability of reporting.
- Communication and information on drought; A part of the drought management strategy must clearly define the protocol for communicating both vertically involving the institutional level and horizontally with the stakeholders. Effective communication must be cross-sectorial and should contribute to the awareness of the general public concerning the problems of drought. Awareness can be achieved through continuous improvement of knowledge. The system of the effective communication on drought should have a positive connotation and should be supported by recommendations for effective drought management measures.
- Response to drought; In order to manage the drought effectively, it is essential to establish transparent national Strategy of water use by an overall consideration of drought risk in cross-sectorial integration and rational use of water. The water management and drought management strategy should have the legislative basis.

3.2. Regional cooperation

Hungary: need better information channel between partners, institutions and countries after closing the project

Romania: Participants were interested to know the details about current status of drought warning system and how the drought risk assessment and the impact in real time is evaluated in the country partners from the Danube Region.

Serbia: information exchange is important (drought knows no boundaries)

Slovenia: needs cooperation, the exchange of data, experiences and knowledge on all fields concerning drought management. Therefore, it is important to promote drought management also in other sectoral activities - besides agriculture also hydrology, continental waters transport management, hydropower management, tourism and recreation, etc.

3.3. Outcomes

Austria:

- First get-together with the main Austrian stakeholders and experts in the field of drought monitoring and drought management was the most important outcome of this seminar.
- Introduction of the main objectives of the project and established new contacts with several other interested parties.
- Delivering the message that it is of great interest for the project to keep in constant contact with the stakeholders.
- Existing and new key stakeholders were given an introduction to the DriDanube questionnaires and were actively invited to fill them in

BiH:

- Better connection with similar institutions and agreed future steps in cooperation.
- Better connection with farmers on field.
- Support from ministry of agriculture, forestry and water management for whole project and support in creation of reporting network from field.
- Closer work with agricultural institute on field (drought monitoring, forecast, irrigation decisions...)
- Closer work with faculties: share of knowledge and research results and we can also involve some of students in some aspect of project activities

Croatia:

- necessity for preparation of a common data base which will provide information on existing data bases from different sectors in Croatia. It was motivated by the lack of systematic long-term data base on yields in Croatia.
- the problem on data of losses from natural hazards was also introduced since only the Ministry of Finance collects economic losses and the method of such collection will not always provide realistic picture.

Czech Republic:

- it is necessary to increase the number of reporters;
- Agricultural chamber is considering the activity of drought reporting as a useful and necessary tool for drought management;
- drought compensation system has deficiencies, higher number of reporters would be very helpful to improve it

Hungary:

- present objectives and tasks to public and potential end-user
- meet with high level representatives from other DTP supported projects and PA of EUSDR
- collect information about stakeholder's demand
- discuss about main mistakes of strategies which was prepared earlier in Hungary

Romania:

- necessity of a National Drought Management Plan correlated with main phases of main crops in Romania
- collaboration between institutions and other stakeholders at local / regional level, in order to carry out studies in pilot areas within which the information needed to implement such a plan at national could be accumulated
- farmers need a more detailed forecast adjusted to the area of interest covering a range of meteorological parameters such as wind speed, rainfall.

Slovenia:

- It is necessary to raise the entire society's awareness that water should be considered as valuable natural resource/goods
- It is necessary to improve a national drought management strategy that will be a binding document for cross-sector coordination of water use, inspection control regarding water use, simplifying of bureaucratic procedures for obtaining water permits for water use and construction of irrigation systems.
- It is necessary to accept a communication plan for communicating in the frame of drought management.
- To be constantly active in the process of rising awareness of the drought risk (thematic workshops and campaigns, improving education system with new teaching contents – junior level as well as university level, research reporting, media).
- Participants expressed their belief that drought service could be very promising in drought management. It will improve the long-term drought forecast models, and with regard to drought risk, it will serve as support in planning of land use and the choice of cultures, determining the quality of land management, identifying of areas that are suitable or necessarily need irrigation infrastructure etc.

3.4. Next steps

Austria:

- Sending out the questionnaires to the stakeholders and new interested stakeholders/parties.
- To keep in constant contact with the stakeholders.

- Outlook: the need was identified for a potential follow-up seminar organised by the Ministry

BiH:

- share of data and experience from past events.
- individual meeting with stake holders.

Croatia: filling in the Questionnaires'

Montenegro: will start to work with each of the stakeholders in order to choose the reporters and to train them.

Slovakia: dissemination of various types of questionnaires, the synthesis of gained knowledge and its reporting to Ministry of Environment of SR to be included in preparation of the Drought Management Action Plan.

Slovenia:

- Questionnaires
- Connection with ongoing projects (reporting impacts)

In the frame of national Water Framework Directive (NUV), measures regarding drought indicators will be further upgraded.

4. Narrative Summary

The focus of all seminars was to present the DriDanube project, its main outputs, results and to share information on current status of the drought management and identify links with similar past or on-going projects or processes in the countries. During the discussions (in different forms: general discussions, roundtables, smaller groups, panels, etc.) partners were collecting inputs and comments for all five aspects on which DriDanube is focusing - drought monitoring, drought impact and risk assessment, drought management (response) and communication.

Seminars' programmes differed from each other country by country but one common objective was to engage the stakeholders already at the beginning of the project, exchange their ideas and expectations, discuss with them the main challenges in their daily operations and involve them into further developments of the project outputs.

Some of the partners used the opportunity and organized their seminars in connection with some other events or initiatives in order to attract more stakeholders. In Austria the seminar was connected with national workshop focusing on using the data from Copernicus satellite – focus of the DriDanube seminars in their case was on drought monitoring. Slovenian Seminar used the opportunity of celebrating the World Day to Combat Desertification (June 17) and emphasized even more the importance of better drought management in order to protect land and water resources. In Slovakia, process of preparing National Drought Action Plan has started before the summer hence the seminar was organized just in time. DriDanube was presented and explained to the responsible institutions and assured that information and outputs produced within the project will serve as inputs for the preparation of the National Drought Action Plan.

Stakeholder involvement

Over 400 individuals participated at all 10 seminars, representing all main project target groups (public authorities, sectoral agencies, NGOs, private sector, international organizations, etc.). All of them are playing different roles in DriDanube “process” – either they have access to the databases that project needs, or they will use the outputs of the project in their every-day work or can importantly influence drought policy processes. Most of them expressed their interest to be further involved and informed which is one of the ultimate goals of the project. Likely the DriDanube partners consider bottom up approach and involvement of all stakeholders as very important element for the “uptake” and usage of the project outputs once the project finishes.

With some concrete requests to the stakeholders (filling out the questionnaires about the current status of drought monitoring and management, reporting drought impacts from the field, etc.) partners managed to raise interest for the project even more and start building the ownership for the project outputs already at the beginning of the project.

Outcomes of the seminars

All the stakeholders pointed out that connection among different sectors is a crucial part towards establishment of the efficient drought management cycle (monitoring – response – assessment – preparedness). Romanian stakeholders emphasized that “the central part of the project should be communication and interaction between all stakeholders and target groups”. It was also important that all Associated Strategic Partners took active part in the seminar as “promoters” of the DriDanube project.

Among so many projects and activities, there is a high demand from the stakeholders for the practical and usable outputs that can support their everyday work. This is important especially in agricultural sector. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it was raised that the projects should “find a way to reach producers, farmers on the field and give them simple advices based on the drought forecast and warnings”. While so many similar works have already been done it is also important to “identify and discuss main shortcomings of already accepted strategies or policies or built on knowledge produced in previous projects, activities” which was emphasized at the Hungarian seminar.

When talking about drought in the Danube region we are still mainly focusing on agricultural sector but, as it was mentioned at the seminar in the Republic of Serbia, “droughts do not affect only agriculture but also hydro energy production, transport, tourism, etc.”, so all the sectors should join efforts in preparation and implementation of the drought management plan.

Drought is already one of the major topics for water management. In Croatia, they see drought “as one of the results of climate change that directly impacts efficient and sustainable water management.”

One of the main concerns pointed out at all seminars, is still the “out of sight - out of mind” approach of most of the stakeholders when it comes to drought. General awareness about drought risk and impacts is still on a very low level in the region. In Slovakia participants agreed that “much higher effort must be given to creative awareness raising campaigns”. In Slovenia, they said that “communication on drought should have positive connotation and should be supported with concrete recommendations for effective drought management measures”.

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All partners by their national seminar reports

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