Project **"Waterdrive"**
Interreg Baltic Sea Region
(Project No. #R094)

Stakeholder meeting on mitigation of impacts of Simnas fishery ponds in the Dovinė river catchment

Microsoft Teams meeting

Report
Date: April 13, 2021

Rapporteur: Elvyra Mikšytė
Všį Baltijos aplinkos forumas

Participants: 32 žmonės

Participant list in Annex 1

Meeting recording:

https://baltijosaplinkosforumas-my.sharepoint.com/:v:/g/personal/elvyra_miksyte_bef_lt/EdjjNNBeNOVJlZSZe-EGKekBrorfdYn0XHFutQxSXhjijA?e=5FKbET

Objectives of the meeting:

1. To present intermediate results of the water quality monitoring carried out during the Waterdrive project
2. To familiarise stakeholders with the water protection challenges identified in the Dovinė basin during the project
3. Discuss and find a way to make an optimal decision to reduce the impact of Simnas fishponds in the catchment and ensure protection of protected areas in the catchment
4. To discuss ways to strengthen water management in the Dovinė catchment and Lithuanian protected areas

Introduction:

Results of water quality monitoring, water management challenges and necessary changes in the Dovinė river catchment were presented. Key insights:

- The impact of ponds is not well known and easily assessed.
- The activities of Simnas fishponds affect the quality of water bodies and may also have a significant impact on the amount of water in the catchment.

- In order to ensure the protection of the ecosystems in the protected areas, the activities of Simnas fishery ponds must be balanced with the protection needs of the protected areas, the aim must be to reduce the impact on Žuvintas biosphere reserve.
- There is a need for close cooperation between stakeholders on the impact minimisation of fishery ponds on the catchment and protected areas.
- Main stakeholders identified for the task: Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Service under the Ministry of Agriculture, State Service for Protected Areas, Meteliai Regional Park Directorate, Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve Directorate, Management of Simnas fishery ponds, Environmental Protection Agency, NGOs, academic institutions, as well it is important to involve the Lithuanian Hydrometeorological Service and municipalities.
- A concrete action plan is needed for the Dovine River catchment, reconciling economic and environmental objectives and comprehensively considering the impacts of the decisions at the catchment level.

Discussion:

1. How to ensure the minimisation of the impact of fishponds and the protection of the Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve? What stakeholders should take action?

- Water resource management during droughts is becoming increasingly important. It is important to ensure that, in the event of droughts, there is a sufficient supply of water for ecosystems and the water needs of economic activities need to be adjusted accordingly. Legislative changes are currently planned regarding the use of water for economic activities during droughts. (Ministry of Environment, Agnė Kniežaitė-Gofmanė)
- For the Dovinė catchment, good catcment management is needed, taking into account the impact of ponds but also other potential water users, with their involvement and close cooperation. Currently available data on water quality measurements is inconsistent and cannot be easily obtained and summarized. It should also be borne in mind that Lithuania is no longer in the water surplus zone due to climate change. Water use during drought can have a significant impact on ecosystems (Dr. Julius Taminskas)
- Ponds are not completely filled during droughts. The environmental impact of ponds is currently within the limits set by Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, but there are instantaneous cases of pollution, resulting in fines. A sedimentation pond is needed to reduce the impact of pond pollution. This requires the approval of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture. (Artūras Vaickus, Simnas Fishery Pond Management)
- There is a lack of objective, detailed data to assess the situation. The openly accessible data would also make it possible to coordinate actions on water accumulation, i.e. knowing that there will be a shortage of water, the biosphere reserve could start accumulating it. We need to adapt to climate change, be prepared for any situation. Strategic priorities at a higher political level are also needed to decide how to develop activities that affect a protected area of

international importance. (Arūnas Pranaitis, Directorate of Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve)

- It is important to envisage complex, integrated measures that could be implemented in the Dovinė catchment. Proposals for river basin management plans can be made at this time. Measurements and data performed by the EPA capture several sources of pollution in the catchment, e.g. agriculture, but the biggest polluters are Simnas fishponds and Simnas town wastewater. Various solutions should be discussed in river basin management plans, e.g. sedimentation ponds and artificial wetlands in various places (Mindaugas Gudas, Environmental Protection Agency)

2. How to ensure proper and continuous monitoring of the quantity and quality of water in the Dovinė River catchment, including monitoring and assessing the impacts of Simnas fishponds? Who should take on the leadership and be involved?

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) carries out state monitoring, performs pollution modelling and, if necessary, supplements its data with data collected by other stakeholders. However, EPA does not have enough hydrologists and does not measure water levels and runoff. (Mindaugas Gudas, Environmental Protection Agency)
- Monitoring data and data collected by other stakeholders are not systematically collected in one place and not analysed systematically. It is important to strengthen monitoring and good data analysis and interpretation is essential. It has been suggested that such a role could be played by the catchment officers at local level. CO's could be responsible for data collection, stakeholder involvement and cooperate with EPA.
- Current state monitoring lacks local insights and data (Mindaugas Gudas, AAA)
- There is a real need to strengthen and improve the monitoring system. Now is a good time for proposals and proposals for pilot measures to involve the local level in river basin management plans, because the MoE does not know how (Agnė Kniežaitė-Gofmanė, Ministry of Environment)
- It is now important to name a methodology to make it clear what to measure, how and who can do it. Perhaps at the beginning some of the activities could be performed by the employees of the protected areas, without additional resources for new staff positions (Ramūnas Krugelis, Meteliai Regional Park)
- There is a need for a pilot project and a clear proposal, where it is clearly stated what and where it is necessary to measure, analyze and a clear plan, what the directorates can do, what State Protected Area Service can do, and who needs additional resources (Jonas Pašukonis, SPAS)

Ho should take action and leadership?

- The Ministry of Environment, the Environmental Protection Agency sees the importance and need, will show initiative in involving local level in discussions on river basin management plans, encourages local stakeholders to contribute and actively participate (Agnė Kniežaitė-Gofmanė, Ministry of Environment)
- Local stakeholders also are interested to be involved (Artūras Vaickus, Simnas Fishery Ponds)

3. How should water protection be secured in other basins with Natura 2000 sites? How to balance the needs for the protection of ecosystems with economic interests? What should be the vision for ideal situation in 2030?
    - When preparing river basin management plans, it is important to communicate with the municipality, involve them in order to create and maintain motivation, but there is a lack of knowledge on how to involve the local level, how to make it work effectively (Kristina Dapkūnienė, Ministry of Environment)
    - The aim must be to avoid a disproportionate distribution of responsibilities. These protected areas are of international importance, obligations are also international, not everything can be left only to the local level (Arūnas Pranaitis, Directorate of Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve).

Agreements:

1. Baltic Environment Forum team will submit proposals to the Environmental Protection Agency for river basin management plans for the Dovinė catchment, assess the needs for further monitoring and analysis, encourage local stakeholders to take responsibility, and provide insights how pilot catchment coordinator could be implemented in the catchment.
2. The Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency will take the initiative to organize the involvement of the local level in the preparation of river basin management plans.
3. The Environmental Protection Agency will hold a discussion with local stakeholders on preliminary river basin management plans and the Dovinė catchment case.

Annex 1. Participant list

	Name	Organisation
1	Justas Gulbinas	Baltijos aplinkos forumas
2	Artūras Vaickus	Simno žuvivaisos tvenkiniai
3	Daiva Urboniene	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Pietų aplinkos tyrimų skyrius
4	Darius Kačanauskas	Žuvininkystės tarnyba Žuvų išteklių atkūrimo skyrius
5	Audronė Alijošiutė	Baltijos aplinkos forumas
6	Tomas Pikūnas	Metelių regioninio parko direkcija
7	dr. Julius Taminskas	-
8	Elvyra Mikšytė	Baltijos aplinkos forumas
9	Rūta (Svečias)	-
10	Albertas Stanislovaitis	Valstybinė saugomų teritorijų tarnyba prie Aplinkos ministerijos
11	Vilija Margelytė	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Vandenų taršos prevencijos skyrius
12	Jonas Pašukonis	Valstybinės saugomų teritorijų tarnybos prie Aplinkos ministerijos Biologinės įvairovės skyrius
13	Džiugas Anuškevičius	Lietuvos Respublikos aplinkos ministerija gamtos apsaugos politikos grupė
14	Evelina Cuzanauskienė	Aplinkos ministerijos Taršos prevencijos politikos grupė
15	Inga Čitavičienė	Metelių regioninio parko direkcija
16	Martynas Pankauskas	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Hidrografinio tinklo skyrius
17	Laima Vaitonytė	Žemės ūkio ministerijos Žuvininkystės skyrius
18	Gintautas Sabas	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Hidrografinio tinklo skyrius
19	Laima Kulvičienė	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Vandenų būklės vertinimo skyrius
20	Irmantas Valūnas	Aplinkos ministerijos Taršos prevencijos politikos grupė
21	Mindaugas Gudas	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Hidrografinio tinklo skyrius
22	Vilmantas Graičiūnas	Aplinkos ministerijos Gamtos apsaugos politikos ir miškų politikos grupė
23	Gintarė Bevainienė	Aplinkos ministerijos Taršos prevencijos politikos grupė
24	Agnė Kniežaitė-Gofmanė	Aplinkos ministerijos Taršos prevencijos politikos grupė
25	Kristina Dapkūnienė	Aplinkos ministerijos Taršos prevencijos politikos grupė
26	Vahanas Grigorianas	Aplinkos apsaugos agentūra Vandenų būklės vertinimo skyrius
27	Justas Poviliūnas	Žemės ūkio ministerijos Žuvininkystės skyrius
28	Regimantas Vabuolas	Žuvinto biosferos rezervato direkcija
29	Edita (Guest)	-
30	Alina (Guest)	-
31	Arūnas Pranaitis	Žuvinto biosferos rezervato direkcija
32	Ramūnas Krugelis	Metelių regioninio parko direkcija