

Waterdrive



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



EUROPEAN
REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
FUND

EUROPEAN UNION

Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve – Lithuania

STØTTET AF

Promilleafgiftsfonden for landbrug

Lithuanian case area

Unique due to Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, which is a very sensitive place for biodiversity and protected species. A lot of species found in the area are in the Birds Directive Annex 1 and the Habitats Directive Annex 1 and 2. A part of the reserve is protected by the RAMSAR convention since 1993 and in 2011 the reserve was enlisted into UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme.



Žuvintas Lake is a shallow lake with floating vegetation islands important for breeding and migrating birds. *Picture: 15min.lt*

Case area – Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve

In 19th and 20th century, land reclamation and wetland drainage projects were carried out in order to expand agricultural lands and make most of fertile lands in the Dovinė river basin. Therefore, the natural hydrological cycle was interrupted, many wetlands were drained and meliorated to provide space for agricultural lands.



Case area – Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve

Currently, most of the surrounding areas are productive agricultural lands (productivity is higher than the average of the country). The forest cover is scarce, i.e. approximately 16 % of the area (the average in Lithuania – 33%). As a result, the water quality in the lakes within the Dovine river catchment, is remarkably deteriorating and results in eutrophication of the water bodies within the catchment. Žuvintas lake in particular and the whole wetland system in the reserve is under heavy pressure of leaching of nutrients mostly from agricultural activity in the basin, which is degrading the ecosystems and their values.



Picture: A. Pranaitis

Case study progress until June 2020

1. Carried out case area and stakeholder research, identification and analysis
2. Carried out national policy and policy gaps and bottlenecks research and analysis
3. Developed case area and success story reports
4. At least 18 separate meetings regarding case area and water management with case area and national stakeholders such as:
 - Experts, Žuvintas BR Directorate, municipalities, ministries, people with experience and knowledge in the case area, Meteliai Regional Park Directorate, etc.
5. Networking for allies and communities in the case area working with the case area and having potential interest in water management and pollution reduction
6. Connections made with Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and dialogue established on water protection measures in CAP

Case study progress until June 2020 (2)

7. Developed water quality monitoring strategy and started water quality measurements (carried out 4 monthly measurements so far)
8. Communicated with and participated in meetings and workshops with project partners, lead partner and group of activity leaders
9. Organised and hosted a partnership meeting in Lithuania
10. Communicated with and contributed to PCT meetings and planning activities
11. Participation in discussions with DESIRE project team on synergies for policy recommendations.
12. Contributed to Newsletter preparation and design
13. Carried out a focus group meeting with farmers and other stakeholders
14. Carried out a survey of municipalities and farmers on water management priorities
15. Developed national water management policy recommendations

Plans for 2020-2021

1. Continue water quality monitoring in the CA.
2. Carry out a meeting with local communities and stakeholders on the results of the monitoring from the data collected up to that point in autumn. Discuss problems detected and potential implementation of water management solutions in the CA.
3. Carry out meetings and discussions (possibly online) about implementation of Waterdrive recommendations with stakeholders in decision making and policy making such as representatives from ministries, municipalities, environmental agency, etc. Involve Waterdrive partners to share their best practice examples and discuss the potential of implementation in Lithuania.
4. Meet community groups to discuss potential LEADER or other project implementation on water management
5. Continue meeting separate stakeholders involved or interested in the water management to discuss their experience and water management challenges
6. Develop a water monitoring programme and recommendations for further water quality monitoring post-Waterdrive to continue data collection and identify water pollution sources in the CA