

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Date

29th of June 2020

CEPF Grant 110830

Grantee

Udruga Dinarica

Project Title

Conservation of steno-endemic species Mostar minnow (lat. Phoxinellus pseudalepidotus) in Mostarsko Blato

Project Location

Mostarsko Blato, Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the past Mostarsko Blato was a marsh area flooded in the wintertime and providing a natural habitat for Mostar minnow. In 2010, a hydropower plant built had one canal that drains the marsh area and steers the water into the hydropower plant. In 2016, the second canal constructed completely prevented the creation of the marsh area in wintertime. Elektroprivreda HZHB (the investor in the hydropower plant) during the period when the marsh is dry constantly conducts works to change the landscape of this ecosystem by making roads, drainage canals by pouring concrete on karst water springs area from which the Mostar Minnow exits to breed when the floods create the marsh. Elektroprivreda HZHB is (according to our knowledge) doing these works with no environmental or construction permit. This provides significant threat to the existence of the Mostar minnow, as its spawning season runs from late January to late May (2003 Bogutskaya & Zupančič). Since 2016, there was no action to examine the population of the Mostar minnow. Articles in newspapers with testimonials of local people (mainly fisherman) point out to a significant reduction in the population of Mostar minnow especially after the construction of the second drainage canal. Local inhabitants highlight other threats such as uncontrolled water levels by the management of the hydro power plant, pollution by companies, uncontrolled introduction of new species not indigenous to the area and predatory to Mostar minnow, etc. Local people consumed the Mostar minnow for decades and another indicator of a significant reduction of the population is the increase in the price of the fish in local restaurants, or its frequent substitution with sardines due to the lack of local fish. From the period of the construction of the hydropower plant the price of a kilo of (illegally) bought Mostar Minnow rose from 7 BAM (3.5 EUR) to 25 BAM (12.5 EUR).

Mostar minnow lives up to 4 years. It matures sexually as early as the first year of life, and spawns repeatedly during the breeding season, which runs from late January to late May. It reproduces more times in breeding season. During the period when Mostarsko Blato is not flooded, it lives underground (2003 Bogutskaya & Zupančič). With the introduction of drainage canals, some karst springs of underground water were and cut off from the flooded area. This is another significant cause of the reduction of Mostar minnow population.

Up to 2014, different scientists created several Mostar minnow studies. The studies mostly focused on identifying the species and its characteristics. Some conclusions given by Radek Šanda, Jasna Vukić, Dario Marić, Ivan Bogut in their 2009 research, pointed out the vulnerability of the Mostarsko Blato ecosystem and gave the example of eel and river crab extinction from the area.

Mihinjač et al., 2014 points out the threats of the river system regulation by hydropower plant and influence of non-indigenous species predatory to the Mostar minnow.

To our knowledge, no study so far determined the population of the endemic species (or steno-endemic) nor did an Action Plan / Strategy propose the species preservation.

Within this project, the main aim is to determine the existing population of the Mostar minnow and develop an Action Plan for its preservation. Within the project a scientist will be hired to conduct a field work and examine population of Mostar minnow. He will also conduct mapping of estavellas where Mostar minnow emerges and submerges seasonally. Legal expert will also be hired to a socio-economic and legal analysis. This will all be a part of the Action Plan. Legal expert will use the findings of his/her socio-economic analysis and compare it to the national categorization of levels of protected areas. He will also suggest measures of protection and zoning (to determine zones or stricter protection which are crucial for biodiversity). Legal expert will also compare the findings to international standards (eg. IUCN criteria, NATURA) and propose future protection measures for Mostarsko Blato.

At the beginning of the project, the project coordinator will make a Stakeholder Engagement Plan to determine the timeline of activities with stakeholders. Through the course of the project all relevant stakeholders (local community, government sector, private sector and NGO's) must receive and understand the dangers of losing this endangered endemic species and the effect on the ecosystem of Mostarsko Blato identified through the Action Plan. After presentation and hopefully commitments from the stakeholders, press releases and media awareness campaigns will be prepared.

Final Conference will be organized on zoom where all the findings will be presented to the stakeholders. It will be covered by media.

10. Summary of Previous Stakeholder Engagement Activities:

Udruga Dinarica is located in the City of Mostar which is 20 minutes drive from Mostarsko Blato. This is the first project that Dinarica is doing on Mostarsko blato. However, two employees of Dinarica are from Mostarsko blato and have good contacts with local communities so advocacy work will be easy to do. In writing the project proposal Dinarica already consulted the local communities and everyone is very interested because Mostar minnow (prikanac) is a national heritage of the region.

11. Project Stakeholders:

The identified stakeholders in the project are the following:

- Elektroprivreda HZ HB
- Local Government of Široki Brijeg
- Local Government of Mostar
- Hercegovina Neretva Canton Government
- West Herzegovina Canton Government
- Local Communities in villages surrounding Mostarsko Blato including Religious leaders (priests), and mjesne zajednice (local community associations)
- Neretva 1933 Fishermen Association
- Borak DSR Fishermen Association
- Adriatic Sea Watershed Agency
- Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Other local NGO's, Associations
- Garbage disposal companies

They will be targeted through press releases on local media. The first one will be published when the project starts. Subsequent ones will be published when we find the first findings in the project. Meetings will be organized with all of the stakeholders for their comments of the project design and feedback on project findings. Mailing lists will be made so that the materials are sent to the stakeholders for commenting. Final conference will be organized to include all stakeholders and to present the recommendations for further work.

12. Stakeholder Engagement Program:

Engagement with stakeholders will start with obtaining the permit to conduct field research which entails informing the ministries in charge, inspectors and local police that we will conduct the research. After obtaining the research an article will be sent to the media that this research is under way. Upon first field work results and legal analysis workshops with stakeholders will be organized where results will be presented. Participation of local communities will be asked.

13. **Consultation methods:**

Consultation will be done with individual interviews and meetings with stakeholders, as well as public meetings, workshops and focus groups. Workshops and forum meetings will be organized after every significant finding in the project. The stakeholders contact list will be made to mobilize stakeholders in case of further developments on the construction roads and closing sinkholes in Mostarsko blato are made by the Hydropower plant company. Dissemination of project results will be managed by project coordinator. In case of force majeure meetings will be held online.

14. **Other Engagement Activities:**

Documents will be sent to stakeholders for comments.

15. **Timetable:**

July 2020 stakeholder consultation for field work
September 2020 media informed about the start of the project
September 2020 first meeting with stakeholders held to present the results
December 2020 presentation of legal analysis
January 2020 meeting with stakeholders
January 2020 stakeholder consultation for field work
April 2020 consultation with stakeholders for Action Plan
May 2020 final conference, presentation of results and recommendations

16. **Resources and Responsibilities:**

Project coordinator is responsible for stakeholder engagement plan with his respective salary budgeted in the project.

17. **Grievance mechanism:**

This grievance mechanism must include, at a minimum, the following elements.

- Email and telephone contact information for the grantee organization.: vkordic@wwfadria.org
phone: +387 36 830 270
- Email and telephone contact information for the CEPF Regional Implementation Team. Liz Smith liz.smith@birdlife.org
- Email and telephone contact information for the local World Bank office:
[mail to bosnia@worldbank.org](mailto:bosnia@worldbank.org), +387 33 251-500
- The email of the CEPF Executive Director: Olivier Langrand cepfexecutive@conservation.org
- A statement describing how you will inform stakeholders of the objectives of the project and the existence of the grievance mechanism (e.g., posters, signboards, public notices, public announcements, use of local languages).
- You should include the following text, exactly, in any grievance mechanism: “We will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the

grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.”

Following the guidance above, describe the grievance mechanism that you will use.

During the first meeting with stakeholders we will explain the grievance mechanism. The contact information of our organization hierarchy well as of the CEPF Regional Implementation. The grievance mechanism will be explained to stakeholders as part of the meeting to build their capacity to recognize conservation measures. The conflict resolution follows a four steps approach: a- Any complaints would be addressed first by Udruga Dinarica and WWF Adria. Upon reception of the complaint, the project coordinator would organize a meeting with a representative of the authority in charge and the person complaining, to find a solution. b- If no satisfactory solution is found, the complaint will be raised to Grant Director for mediation. c- If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. d- If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.” Grievances raised by the grantees will be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team for CEPF (Birdlife International) and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response.

18. Monitoring and Reporting:

Monitoring will be done by CEPF RIT team and reporting will be provided every 6 months in the progress report.