

Public Consultation on Draft Management Plans 2015

The Danube River Basin Management Plan Update 2015 and the 1st Flood Risk Management Plan for the DRB are published for comments until 22 July 2015.

Some contributions by the administration of Lower Austria concerning the topics of soil (soil protection, soil awareness raising) and sustainable land use (agriculture)

First example: concerning “soil and cross border co-operation”

SONDAR (Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region)

Lower Austria and its neighbouring countries Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary cooperated in three bilateral European Territorial Cooperation projects from 2010 until the year 2014. The main aim of all three projects under the framework of SONDAR was to establish a network of increasing responsibility for soil: between science and practice, between administration and users of land, between education, arts and the entire population.

The effect of the project examples shall become relevant to the entire Danube region, and after termination the projects shall lead to the development of strategies for a continuation of activities.

SONDAR SK-AT

Key aspect of the project: Soil as an indicator of flood occurrences

Soils have a long-term memory, and they store the history of their formation like an archive. This stored information can be used in order to deduce the occurrence of rare historical floodings. Therefore soils can be used in order to localize potential flooding areas. Important aims of this project were the preparation of soil maps as an instrument of forecasting and sensitization and for creation of awareness.

SONDAR CZ-AT

Key aspect of the project: Improving quality of soil by raising soil awareness

Soil is the starting point for all life on Earth, and it provides for more than 90% of our food. It is threatened in various ways: Building blocks and excessive exploitation in favorable conditions, neglect and give-up in unfavorable conditions. A general

awareness of the population seems to get lost and does no longer correspond to reality, respectively. Soils are living systems, which can only perform their functions within the ecosystem and for man, if their qualities are largely intact. A sustainable cultivation of land in the Danube region can decisively contribute to soil fertility, preventive flood protection, and to the use of soils as carbon storage tanks – and thus to climate protection.

SONDAR HU-AT

Key aspect of the project: Soil as a filter for pollutants, soil as a reservoir for carbon

In the province of Western Hungary the topics “soil as a filter” and “soil and groundwater” are very important. Storing and filtering of nutrients and pollutants are closely linked with the production of save food as well with the protection of groundwater and drinking water and with the possibility of reducing soil erosion by area-wide soil protection.

Main aim of the project is the improvement of soil protection regarding quantitative and qualitative aspects by means of awareness raising and realization of paradigms on communal level. Another aim is to establish well trained soil ambassadors.

Further information www.sondar.eu

Second example: concerning “soil and cross border co-operation”

ELSA European Land and Soil Alliance

The European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA) e.V. is an association of cities, towns and rural districts together with comparable local authorities with the aim of making an active contribution to sustainable soil use.

The members of ELSA are committed to a determined approach in terms of soil protection and spatial development, particularly on a local and regional level, and promote an awareness for soil issues in the local authorities. Cooperation among the local authorities in the European countries and over and beyond their national

frontiers with all partners in the alliance opens up new chances and is at the same time a challenge for responsible use of soil in Europe.

Currently almost 200 members in 11 European countries (UK, NL, D, CH, A, IT, CZ, SK, HU, RO, BG) – many cities and communities – are engaged in ELSA. Due to its engagement in the Working Community of Danube Region Countries the province of Lower Austria is an important hub to our Eastern members, and there exist valuable cross-connections to the European Strategy of the Danube Region and to other conventions and organizations.

Further information www.bodenbuendnis.org

Third example: concerning „land use and organic matter“

Pilot project „Management of soil organic matter and regional production of biofertilizers“

This project aims at optimizing the management of soil organic matter and biogenic wastes in order to preserve soil fertility as a pivotal resource. The major focus is to establish humus balancing using the humus balancing software tool in agricultural practice and to optimize the production of regional biofertilizers.

Specific goals are to create new products for the optimum use of biogenic wastes and biofertilizers and to develop a catalogue of measures for sustainably safeguarding soil humus and soil fertility.

Further information

**Forschungs-, Technologie- und Innovationsprogramm Niederösterreich
Lower Austrian Program for Research, Technology and Innovation**

<http://noe.gv.at/Bildung/Wissenschaft-Forschung/FTI-Strategie.html>