

Output title: 3.2: SavaParks Capacity Building Programme

The aim of the Output **3.2. SavaParks Capacity Building Programme** was to improve knowledge, develop new skills and competences of the SavaParks Network members for effective invasive alien species (IAS) management that would contribute towards improved conservation status of habitats and wetland ecosystems in the Sava River basin.

Capacity building program was realised by implementation of the Activity A.T1.2 Raising capacities of SavaParks Network members that resulted into following deliverables:

- Deliverable D.T1.2.1 Study visit
- Deliverable D.T1.2.2 Trainings for partners and other stakeholders

Deliverable D.T1.2.1 Study visit

Sava TIES Study visit was held on 11-13 September in Kiskunság National Park and Körös-Maros National Park, Hungary. Purpose of the Study visit was to introduce Sava TIES project partners and associate partners, as well as other SavaParks network members to different methodologies of invasive species control, containment and eradication. In total 29 participants took part at Study visit.

In the Kiskunság National Park the group, guided by PhD Vadász *Csaba*, key expert and ranger in national park, visited several sites in the surroundings of Kecskemét town. On the very first site the participants were introduced to the "good example" a successful spontaneous restoration of forest - steppe vegetation after agricultural plots were abandoned. On the second site participants had opportunity to learn about "herbicide -injection-method", selectively applied to target IAS of black cherry (*Prunus serotina*). The third site was a "partnership-to-combat-IAS" example, where large business organisation "adopt" the habitat of conservation interest, and through voluntary work periodically cleans the area from IAS manually.

In Körös-Maros National Park the group, guided by Sallainé Kapocsi Judit, ecologist in national park, visited several sites within the Park. The first site visited was in Körös river floodplain, a mosaic of willow-poplar - meadows habitats overgrown in false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*). IAS management measure applied here is cattle grazing on approximately 100 ha of meadow (a herd of 100 Hungarian Grey). The second site visited was a plot of more recently grazed meadow, where a strip of false indigo was already post-browsing cut (by tractor). The late summer cutting is essential for the next spring starting as open meadows.

The ecosystems and habitats affected by IAS in Kiskunság and Körös-Maros are ecologically similar to the ecosystems in protected areas alongside the Sava River. Additionally invasive species present in NPs in Hungary are present in the Sava River basin. Having in mind that lessons learned during the Study visit are fully transferable and applicable to the Sava River basin and would be used by Study visit participants in the future.

Deliverable D.T1.2.2 Trainings for partners and other stakeholders

The aim of the trainings was to increase participants` knowledge on IAS management good practices in different sectors (nature conservation, agriculture, forestry, water management) as well as to develop new skills for increasing impact of the IAS management activities among stakeholders and improve communication and negotiation skills with stakeholders from different sectors and with different interest.

In total 3 training were organised:

The first training was held in Bihac on 18 October 2019 with the purpose of developing skills of project partners and other SavaParks Network members on (i) how to make a plan to increase an impact of a project results among wider stakeholder community and (ii) how to use World Café method to establish collaborative dialogue among different stakeholders.

The second training was organised on 7 October 2020 Online on ZOOM platform with the main purposes of (i) developing participants` communication and negotiation skills and (ii) gaining new knowledge about good practices in IAS management coming from Serbia and Croatia.

The third training was organised on 24 February 2021 Online on ZOOM platform with the aim of introducing SavaParks Network members and other stakeholders with good practices in IAS management applied worldwide. Topic and speakers were as follows: (i) Invasive alien species in the Danube Region - networking and strategy development by *Dr Teodora Trichkova*, Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, Bulgaria, (ii) IAS management in agricultural sector by Prof. dr Ahmet Uludag, Faculty of Agriculture, Plant Protection Department, Duzce, Turkey, (iii) IAS Management in the Sava River Flood Plain in Slovenia (selected cases) by Doc. dr Blaž Repe, Geography, Faculty of arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, (iv) Invasive alien species management: lessons learned from Kruger National Park, South Africa by Dr Llewellyn Foxcroft, Kruger National Park, South Africa, (v) Managing Invasive Species in the Anthropocene by Prof. dr. Brendon M. H. Larson, School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability Faculty of Environment, University of Waterloo, Canada, (vi) IAS Management - Experience from California By Prof. dr Marcel Rejmánek, Department of Evolution and Ecology University of California, Davis, USA

Conclusion

Representatives of different institutions relevant for nature management in the Sava River Basin from 4 countries participated at study visit and 3 trainings which was not only opportunity for increasing relevant knowledge, but also opportunity for sharing experience and discussion among Sava River basin stakeholders which fostered joint spirit and awareness on necessity of transnational cooperation for efficient IAS management in the SRB.

Skills and knowledge provided by the capacity building program will be used by project partners, SavaParks Network members and other stakeholders after project is finished. Gained knowledge on IAS management good practice will be used by stakeholders to improve IAS related filed work, while more general skills on communication, negotiation, project impact planning will be used in activities related to nature protection in general and IAS management in particular.