

D.T4.2.2

Feedback reports on Co-Creation workshops

Project region



ERDF PP17 KSR Košice self-governing Region
ERDF PP7 Bioeconomy Cluster/ 2022

Project Information

Project Title: GoDanuBio - 'Participative Ecosystems for fostering the revitalization of rural-urban cooperation through governing Danube Circular Bioeconomy'

Project code: DTP3-471-4.1

Lead partner: BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH

Start of the project: 01/07/2020

Duration: 30 months

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/godanubio>

Deliverable Information

Author/-s: ERDF PP17 - KSR

Deliverable no.: D.T4.2.2.

Submission date: 08/2022

Dissemination level: Public

Version	Date	Content	Elaborated by	Reviewed by
0.1	22/03/2022	Template for feedback reports on Co-Creation workshops	Biz-up	BIOPRO
0.2	20/07/2022	Feedback reports on Co-Creation workshops_KSR		
0.3	09.08.2022	Review	KSR	Biz-up

Table of content

1. General information about the co-creation workshop.....	4
2. Objective of the workshop.....	6
3. Methods used within the workshop	8
4. Lessons learned for next upcoming workshops.....	8
5. Initial situation of your region.....	7
6. What do the citizens expect from the process of participation governance?.....	9
7. Outcome of the co-creation workshops	9
8. Innovation potential for your region	10
9. Strengths and weaknesses of the process of participation governance	11
10. Do you plan to use the process of participative governance also in future?	11
11. Identified opportunities for rural development in your region.....	12
12. Annexes	14

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1. General information about the co-creation workshop

Date of the workshop	9 th June 2022
Topic of the workshop	Košice Region Forum on Landscape Recovery
Format of the workshop	physical
Region/Adress	Congress Hotel Roca, Južná trieda 117, 040 01 Košice, Slovakia
Project partner(s) involved	Košice self-governing Region
Guiding question/theme of the workshop	How to identify the essential tools for the implementation of strategic objectives of the Landscape Recovery Programme
Number of participants	120
Type of participants (Target groups) ¹ and name of institutions	regional public authority: Municipality offices: Spišská Nová Ves, Horňa Čierne Pole Hincovce Zemplínska Nová Ves Hrašovík Margecany Michalovce Čierne Pole Prešov Skároš Bajany Rakovec nad Ondavou Rožňava Kostoľany nad Hornádom Krompachy Šterusy Haniska Moravany Rozhanovce Gemerská Panica Rochovce Majerovce Stará Ľubovňa Paňovce, Kráľovský Chlmec

¹ Please group the target groups according to the ones listed in page 42 of the Application Form

	<p>national public authority: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Slovak Environmental Agency Slovak Land Fund</p> <p>interest groups including NGOs: People and Water NGO Agency for the Support of Regional Development Košice Action Senior NGO Vodales,s.r.o., Študentská 20, 96001 Zvolen waterholistic NGO OZ Rozhanovce NGO Národné lesnícke centrum SZOPK Kosice 2013 NGO (environmental agency) OZ: EKO OBNOVA NGO Humanitarian Association Humanitný spolok, NGO OZ EKO ĽUDIA Ružínska priehrada NGO Society for the Greening of Kosice NGO Regional association of owners of non-state forests Gemer Region District Forest cooperative Slavošovce Landowners' cooperative Čierna Lehota Land community of forests and pastures Remetské Hámre Žehra Urban Community Slovak Paradise National Park, Urban forests Košice Military Forests and Estates of the Slovak Republic s.p. Pliešovce National Forestry Centre Gemerské regional association of owners of non-state forests Rožňava Urban and land community Žehra Land Forest Community Čičarovce Slovak Ornithological Society/BirdLife Slovakia</p> <p>higher education and research: Technical University of Košice Research Institute of Agroecology Secondary Technical School Beniakovce Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute Košice</p>
Cooperation with experts (i.e.	Michal Kravčík – People and Water NGO, KSR

speakers, external moderators, politician...)	parliament member Jaroslav Tešliar – Head of Agency for regional support Košice NGO., Martin Kováč – State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic Jana Bielíková – Pedal CONSULTING, transition2bio
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2. Objective of the workshop

The guiding objective of the fourth co-creation workshop organized by KSR was to find out how to support the functioning of Water Councils using the methodology of participative governance in the field of the Landscape Recovery Programme process implementation.

The concept of three co-creation workshops organized by the Košice Region was focused on supporting the initiative of the existing Water Councils initiative, which follows the strategic document of the Košice Region: Landscape Recovery Programme.

The Landscape Recovery Program reflects the regional need to address landscape damages in urban and rural areas here in Košice Region. Water Councils have the potential to tackle the regional challenges from the position of an advisory body to the regional authorities - therefore the concept of co-creation workshops focuses on their activities.

The co-creation workshop series was divided into three separate workshops with the same guiding objective, presented in different regions within the Košice Region.

The aim was to find out the current situation in the implementation of the Landscape Recovery Programme with regard to its participative character.

The co-creation workshops were aimed at fulfilling the individual objectives – how to:

- support the functioning of Water Councils using the methodology of participative governance
- establish the Informal Platform of Water Councils as an advisory body to local government
- dive deep into the local and regional ecosystems and identify regional needs, particularly in rural areas, following the concept of the Landscape Recovery Programme
- how to support green and blue infrastructure, and water retention in the landscape of Košice Region in specific rural and urban areas
- how to identify the essential tools for the implementation of strategic objectives in the Košice Region
- what are the legislative constraints on the implementation of actions aimed at the restoration of damaged landscapes?

Main goal of organized workshops was to strengthen local connections across stakeholders from municipalities, communities, farmers, foresters, environmentalists, and activists. To strengthen their cooperation and trust in the participatory process. The second step will be

to seek linkages with regional and state authorities and strengthen their cooperation with each other in the case of the implementation of the Landscape Recovery Programme of the Košice Region.

The second step was to verify the level of participatory governance from the perspective of the Water councils of the Košice Region. Water councils by their nature meet the criteria of participatory governance and bring together participants in the interest of building and developing a cooperative decision-making tool for regional authorities, following the themes of the Landscape Recovery Programme.

3. Initial situation of your region

The initial situation was the alarming state of the urban and rural areas of Košice Region in terms of land degradation, land desiccation, soil infertility, and other socio-economic conditions.

In 2018, the Council of the Košice self-governing Region approved the Landscape Recovery Programme. Under the Restoration Plan, 6 Water Councils were established, based on participatory character, to implement measures for the restoration of damaged landscapes.

The Landscape Recovery Programme aims to change the approach to managing forest and agricultural landscapes as well as urban landscapes and to enable the development of water retention measures so that a substantial proportion of rainwater can be retained in the landscape. By implementing these measures, KSR, in cooperation with its partners, aims to contribute to restoring biodiversity processes, increasing soil fertility, increasing water supply, and improving the climate.

In February 2019, the Action Plan of the Landscape Recovery Programme of the Košice Region for 2019 was approved.

The aim of the Landscape Recovery Action Plan of the Košice Region is to create, activate and systematically prepare conditions for the comprehensive implementation of the Landscape Recovery Programme in the coming years. Thus, the goal of systematic and Integrated Landscape Restoration of the Košice Region through the executive body of the informal platform of Water Councils was defined.

The expected impact of the activities under the Action Plan was: Increased interest in landscape care by local government and urban and rural residents. Improved preparedness of residents to face the adverse impacts of climate change. Increased motivation of local governments to address issues from their municipalities with innovative revitalization measures.

The three co-creation workshops aimed to map the current status of the implemented activities and to increase the motivation of the members of the Water Councils to be more active in the region. The second objective was to identify the barriers that hinder the process of implementing measures for the recovery of damaged landscapes within the Košice Region. The third objective was to identify stakeholders to be involved in the process besides Water councils' initiative.

The pressure on the local government is huge, given the constantly deteriorating state of the landscape of the Košice Region - especially in rural areas, which are a source of food due to the significant agricultural nature of these areas.

The most important long-term goal of the organized co-creation workshops is to avoid dealing with the problems of damaged landscapes through a sector-oriented approach.

4. Methods used within the workshop

The training was conducted online using the methodology of the open space conference, focused on the topic of participatory governance methodology in the public administration system. The workshop was designed to bring to the fore the topic of participatory management, its basic definition, definition of terms, in order to ensure a smooth course and understanding of the topic as a whole. The main aim of the workshop was to discuss possible solutions on how participatory governance could be used to improve the functioning of Water councils.

The method of the first co-creation workshop was discussion, which was expertly guided by environmentalists and regional development experts.

The third co-creation workshop took place in Košice. The meeting was attended by regional, local and state authorities, members of Water councils, interest groups including NGO's and general public.

The most important objective of the fourth workshop was to map how the participatory management process of the members of the water councils works in the territory of Košice Region. Participants confronted the actual implementation of the activities versus the plan and identified the barriers that hinder the implementation of the participatory process.

The questions to ask:

- Why is active stakeholder participation necessary
- Who do you want to target? Which stakeholders are necessary to reach?
- How to foster trust in the participatory approach to decision-making in local government
- How are you going to deliver your message?

5. Lessons learned for next upcoming workshops

We had the opportunity to organize 4 workshops. The first three were accompanied by considerable mistrust in possible positive change. Participants were offered the opportunity to directly confront those in charge. This happened at the fourth workshop organised. Through panel discussions led by the competent, the participants had the opportunity to talk about the things that hinder the implementation of landscape restoration measures. The results of the panel discussions were presented before the State Secretary of the Ministry of Land Economy of the Slovak Republic.

6. What did the local or/and regional administration and the citizens expect from the process of participative governance?

The participants of the first workshop expected new impulses that would strengthen their position in the decision-making process within the Košice Region - in the implementation of the Landscape Recovery Programme measures. This approach was involved in the organization of all three co-creation workshops.

The Košice self-governing Region, as the host of the meetings, is expected to map the results of the work of the Water Councils - an informal initiative based on the principle of participatory governance. It is in the interest of the Košice self-governing Region to solve the problems of the damaged landscape. To do this, it needs an executive body, the Water Councils, which best reflects the situation and needs of the regions.

Previous care of the landscape to solve problems sectorally-based brings serious risks in water protection (water scarcity, deterioration of, water quality, increasing flood frequency), environmental (loss of biodiversity), food (decline in production potential of soils), social (poverty, migration waves) and climate risks.

Professional capacity building is needed to turn around the sectoral approach to dealing with the restoration of damaged landscapes. KSR expected workshop participants to define the space for collaboration, identify partners necessary to engage in the process, and identify barriers to participatory management.

In the case of the three co-creation workshops that were organized within the 6 regions of the Košice Region, there was a need to organize 4th workshop to bring together all the members and stakeholders involved in the guiding objective of the Landscape Recovery Program in one place.

To support the main idea of professional capacity building, we invited representatives of government and decision-making bodies to the workshop.

After the three co-creation workshops, series of five small workshops were held in the regions that participated in the co-creation workshops (May 2022).

At these meetings, the planning of the agenda for the 4th workshop started. According to the ongoing discussions, a list of relevant stakeholders was selected.

7. Outcome of the co-creation workshops

Fulfill this table with the outcomes (you can add columns if you need)

Outcome:	Name:	Stakeholder involved:	Expected duration:	Field of action (bioeconomy in general /rural development/urban rural cooperation)

Project co-funded by the European Union Funds (ERDF and IPA)

Initiative				
Project				
Project idea				
Network				
Other (please specify)				

Explain your outcomes (initiatives/ideas/projects etc.) in detail.

Who is connecting/coordinating these different outputs? What are the next steps? Who is going to finance the following steps?

8. Innovation potential for your region

Provide the big picture of the innovation potential in your region by interconnecting ideas/initiatives/projects identified via the co-creation workshops. How could the innovative power of the region be increased through participative governance? Were future scenarios identified and strategies developed to increase the attractiveness of rural areas? Were future cooperations and strategies for urban-rural cooperation developed?

The Košice self-governing Region continues the implementation of the Landscape Recovery Programme, which focuses on the adoption of water conservation measures or a change in the approach to land management. On Thursday, 9 June, the Košice Region organized a 4th co-creation workshop - Forum on Landscape Recovery at the Congress Hotel Roca. Speakers were interesting guests from state and public administration, civil associations, and environmental activists.

The 4th workshop will present the outcomes as well as the actions that need to be taken to improve the environment. It will also benefit from insights into how the restoration of the damaged landscape of the Košice Region can contribute to a neutral carbon footprint.

We anticipate that, in parallel with the start of the program implementation, there will be a partnership with research, which will monitor the feasibility of the above quantification of the objectives with possible correction. By implementing of the Landscape Recovery Programme will also make a significant contribution to the employment of harder-to-employ citizens who are not finding employment in the current labor market. It can be expected that

the creation of these new jobs will make it possible to employ more than 10 000 inhabitants of the Košice Region.

However, the first step towards the big targets was the organization of the 4th co-creation workshop with the active participation of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Slovakia.

9. Strengths and weaknesses of the process of participative governance

Strengths and benefits of the participatory process in the regions, identified during the 4 co-creation workshops:

- ✓ Better and more effective communication between stakeholders (exchange of information, networking, elimination of tensions, and consensus building),
- ✓ a better formulation of actions based on the suggestions received from the participants
- ✓ increased mutual trust between stakeholders
- ✓ improving the potential for cooperation in the future

KSR did not identify problems with the involvement of different stakeholders in the process of finding a solution - they were open to it. In Slovakia, the participatory governance process is still a new experience for the municipalities thus there is a need to build trust in this governance process. Which we also see as a weakness of the participatory process in the intentions of the Košice self-governing Region.

10. Do you plan to use the process of participative governance also in future?

Within the Landscape Recovery Programme, activities aimed at improving the functionality of participatory governance will be mainly concentrated in this area. Further steps will be focused on support the functioning of Water Councils using the methodology of participative governance.

As a representative of the regional authority, we are committed to engaging policymakers to further use participatory governance. Therefore, we have focused on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of this process in co-creation workshops. The main weakness was identified as the centralized approach in local governments, which hinders the use of participatory governance in the regions.

Next steps:

- ✓ Map the key stakeholders of the Landscape Recovery Programme, building new capacities in field of participative governance
- ✓ Strengthening the decision-making powers of territorial self-government
- ✓ Publication of the outcomes of the panel discussions
- ✓ Declaration of the co-creation workshop participants – Draft available online, ready for comments

11. Identified opportunities for rural development in your region

Opportunities to address demographic changes within the Košice Region (in the context of the Landscape Recovery Programme):

- ✓ Landscape Recovery as a key task for ensuring environmental, food, social and climate security, in any part of Slovakia
- ✓ development of local agriculture
- ✓ adaptation of water retention measures, retention of rainwater in the landscape, promotion of small-scale water cycle (This is one of the main reasons that agricultural production is becoming more and more costly in terms of the need to maintain soil fertility)
- ✓ job opportunities in agriculture, which are in significant shortage, especially in the rural areas of the Košice Region
- ✓ The workshops brought about new collaborations between the different stakeholders

Thanks to the three previous workshops, the topic of Water Councils has regained the attention it had lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We discovered what problems are still plaguing the region:

- ✓ Rural areas suffer significantly from landscape damage in terms of agricultural production
- ✓ lack of communication between municipalities to share experiences in landscape restoration measures.
- ✓ lack of financial resources in the municipalities for the restoration of damaged landscapes which means a lack of trust in the willingness of the authorities to tackle the problem
- ✓ non-settled land under municipal administration

The 4th workshop organized by Košice self-governing Region aimed to create a space for an open discussion focused on the barriers that complicate the implementation of the Landscape Recovery Programme in the framework of the Košice Region: (legislation, centralization of the system, funding, etc.) The discussion took place between representatives of the regional authority and a representative of the state administration - the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. Workshop was a great opportunity to present examples of good practice within the field of the Landscape Recovery Programme. The main objective of the organized workshop was to dive deep into the plans of the Water Councils of Košice Region within the Landscape Recovery Program 2021-2030 of individual regions included topics for comprehensive solutions for the WEF (water, energy, food) approach, like climate change effects on water supply; soil fertility; extreme heat and the occurrence of natural disasters.

The aim was to visit the whole region of the Košice region. To find out the current situation in the area of the damaged landscape. To bring together examples of good and bad

practices. To define the problems of the region in the communication between local, regional, and state authorities.

In the second half of the workshop, there was space for panel discussions, which resulted in an action plan:

Activity 1: Establishing an institutional framework for the implementation of the POK CoordinationLandscape Recovery Programme and the work of the Water Councils

Activity 2: Data analysis and studies for landscape revitalization

Collection of relevant data and information with public participation and creation of a database,

studies - design of rainwater harvesting measures

Activity 3: Raising awareness and motivation of stakeholders on the need for to revitalize the landscape, conferences, seminars, workshops, competitions, excursion

Activity 4: Integrated landscape restoration, a pilot project of the Roňava river basin with the proposal of adaptation measures and pilot implementation, video shots of good examples of revitalization

Activity 5: Pilot projects for the implementation of revitalization measures, implementation rain gardens and implementation of other water retention and "green measures"

Activity 6: Maximising the use of funding schemes under operational programs in Slovakia.

Annexes





