

Workshop

Sustainable Development in Lake Areas: Empowering Local Initiatives and Civil Society



15 - 18 June 2009
Lake Võrtsjärv, Estonia

Supported by



Welcome!

Forum Synergies and Global Nature Fund cordially invite you to a series of four workshops on participatory implementation strategies of environmental policies in lake areas, taking place in Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and France.

The workshops are meant to empower civil society actors to contribute to participatory sustainable development, and shall yield recommendations to local and EU governments about more participatory ways to implement environmental policies.

Goals and Objectives

The workshops are organised in the framework of the project “Sustainable Development in Lake Areas”, which is supported by Fondation de France.

The general objective of the project is to support initiatives in sustainable development by exchange on good practice of participatory implementation and local sustainable development. The exchange shall lead to capacity building of private actors, NGOs and local governments in environmentally sensitive areas.

The thematic workshops will contribute to the development of local democracy and to a more participative management of environmental resources, in order to fill the gap between European citizens and their institutions, and also via feed-back to decision makers to contribute to environmental and rural policies that better meet peoples’ need for participation.

The project’s objectives are

- ☞ to exchange experiences about different participatory implementation strategies of Nature 2000 and WFD in concerned rural areas
- ☞ to give local actors and authorities better access to practical knowledge about sustainable Nature 2000 and WFD implementation strategies via exchange with successful projects
- ☞ to develop political proposals to regional, state and EU governments to use the existing participatory options that are provided from EU-side in order to support sustainable development in rural areas.

The scientific partnership with University of Marburg / Germany assures that the project integrates political knowledge of integrated water body management

Background

Empowerment of Local Actors

Sustainable development depends on actors – actors that are willing to persistently strive for sustainable ways of life in their daily behaviour and take initiative to generate renewable energy, consume locally grown & organic food, use tourism services that save energy and look for ways of a sustainable life style. Since economic regional development is one crucial pillar of sustainability, governments depend on local initiatives of people and civil society organizations to turn the chances of regulative frameworks and accompanying funding policies into practical action. Therefore an exchange about best practice in motivation and integration of local actors is an important contribution to sustainable rural development and the empowerment of civil society. An exchange between old and new EU member state participants seems particularly useful in this respect since it combines long-term knowledge about EU regulation practices with newly emerging civil society movements.

Participatory Processes

The Aarhus convention, signed in 1998 by most European countries, invites authorities to enhance the public participation in decision-making related with environmental issues. The Natura 2000 network (based on the 'Habitat' and the 'Birds' directives) is requesting from national governments to protect species and habitats of common interest by preserving their current existence. It does not specify by which measures and thereby leaves room for participatory implementation. The European Water Framework Directive is requesting from national states to achieve a "good ecological state" for all surface water bodies until 2015. It expects explicitly the implementation of an active public participation. The three directives – and especially the Habitat Directive – are in many cases seen as very critical by farming organisations and local governments who fear economical constraints. On the other hand, at the local level the participatory implementation options frequently are unknown to the relevant actors because of lack of good examples.

Lake Areas

Lakes, river basins and coastal areas are good topics for exchange workshops about participatory implementation strategies because they fall usually under both Natura 2000 and water framework regulation, they give a common thematic focus, are of high public relevance and give room for integrated development approaches. Furthermore there tend to be serious conflicts of interest between different stakeholders, giving need for mediation and participatory conflict solution. More specifically, a common problem of European lakes is eutrophication from agricultural sources. EU regulation (Nitrogen directive) requests farmers since 2000 to restrict fertilization in order to prevent nutrient runoff to ground and surface waters. But there are implementation deficits, and big leftovers from former times pose a question of acceptable cleanup strategies. All this gives reason to look for more participatory implementation.

The Workshop Sites

The map shows the partners, the workshop sites and the site of the co-ordinating project office.

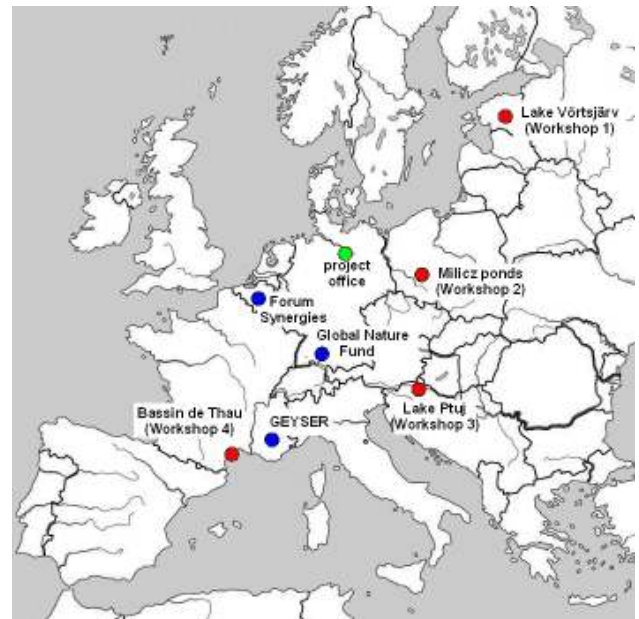
The project's four partner sites, of which Lake Võrtsjärv and Milicz ponds are members of Global Nature Fund's Living Lakes network, show the context of the project in different ways.

Lake Võrtsjärv near Tartu in Estonia, the biggest inner-Estonian lake, is mainly used by fishermen from the five surrounding villages with some recently evolving soft tourism and recreational activities. Nutrient intakes from the last decades caused heavy mud deposits in the shallow lake, deteriorating the water quality especially in summers with a thread of oxygen crises, and causing a reed belt of more than 100 meters to grow on its shore, preventing inhabitants to access the lake as they used to. There is need for an ecologically adapted solution under participation of the different interest groups.

The Milicz ponds near Wrocław in Poland are a great lake area that has been created by medieval monks for aquaculture. Nowadays they create an almost natural environment with very large numbers of birds and also plant species on the surrounding wetlands. ProNatura, an ecological NGO, takes care for the ponds and has organized a number of successful projects. We hope to learn a lot about successful integration of social inclusion, renewable energy initiatives and ecological initiatives into an overall activity that preserves the lake environment, creates jobs and develops cultural, economical and social potential.

The Lake Ptuj near Rače, Slovenia's biggest lake, is an artificial water body behind a dam on Drava river. The reservoir suffers from eutrophication from agricultural land use in its catchment area and from heavy metal loads. Initiatives to enhance its quality of water and to develop local tourism are about to begin. Our partner organisation is currently developing a couple of activities around the lake and looks forward to hear from other sites' experiences about ways to mobilize local actors and come to terms with interest conflicts concerning land use in the catchment area.

Thau basin (Bassin de Thau) near Montpellier is the largest lagoon on the Mediterranean coast of France and one of the largest French lakes. The shallow lagoon experiences a high pressure of uses from fishery, mussel cultivation, agricultural land use and nutrient intakes from its catchment area, but also recreational use from its densely populated surroundings. Oxygen crises due to phosphorus loads occurred repeatedly during the hot summer months and, besides their environmental impacts, have caused heavy losses to the fishing industry. Needs for better water quality and for preservation of its ecological value for breeding and migratory birds are obvious. There are conflicts of interest around Thau lagoon – but also significant possible coalitions of interest e.g. between environmentalists and fish and mussel farmers.



Structure of the Workshops

After arrival of the participants and a welcoming evening, the workshops proceed in three steps.

On the first day the host organisation presents their situation and the foreign guests pose questions to better understand the situation and relate it to their own experiences. The participants are taken to a first field trip to get a more practical feeling about the local situation.

The second morning session allows the international guests to contribute their views, ideas and experiences with respect to the local situation. A second field trip in the afternoon of this day brings the participants to local initiatives and civil society groups to talk with them about their vision, their practical options and the specific local obstacles to their engagement.

The third morning session is dedicated to politics. Local politicians, national and EU governmental officials are invited to explain their view on possible support for sustainable development initiatives. Towards the end of the session the moderators try to crystallise political conclusions in order to formulate a valuable feedback to EU decision makers.

In order to enable the local public to participate in the meeting there is a cultural evening with presentation of local arts and culture and room for talk and drinking, and a political evening with a public presentation of the foreign guests and with latest information about EU political tendencies.

Conference Venue

The conference takes place at the shore of lake Võrtsjärv in Vehendi Guest House, Vehendi village, Rannu parish, Tartu County, Estonia. For more information see www.vehendi.ee (different languages available).

Participation Fee

Due to the support by the Fondation de France, no conference fee for participation will arise, and invited participants may be granted a 50% reimbursement on their travel costs.

Since the number of possible participants is limited to about 25, please consider your early registration.

Hosting Organisations, Supporters and Partners

Forum Synergies

Forum Synergies is a European network of practical pioneers in many aspects of sustainable rural development that has gathered rich and varied practical experiences since 1994. Forum Synergies holds contacts to different rural organisations as well as to policy makers on EU level, turning practical experiences into an input for the evolution of EU sustainability policies.

Global Nature Fund (GNF) and Living Lakes Network

GNF was founded in 1998 with the objective to foster the protection of nature and environment as well as animals. GNF's work consists mainly of initiating and implementing nature and environment protection projects to preserve the animal world, the protection of migrating species, their habitat and their migratory routes.

In 1998 the Living Lakes network has been launched by Global Nature Fund. At the moment there are 45 partner lakes represented by more than 55 member organisations. Our vision is that all lakes, wetlands and freshwater bodies of the world should be healthy ecosystems and being used in a sustainable way.

Lake Võrtsjärv Fisheries Development Agency and Lake Võrtsjärv Foundation (LVF)

Lake Võrtsjärv Fisheries Development Agency (FDA) is an independent, non-profit organisation, voluntarily founded by different juristic and physical persons around Lake Võrtsjärv in Tartu and Viljandi counties, which operates in purpose to support local initiative and local life in order to develop the whole Lake Võrtsjärv fishing area.

The Lake Võrtsjärv Foundation was established in 2000. Aims of the foundation are: raising the environmental awareness of the public, promoting the balanced development of the Lake Võrtsjärv region, protecting the lake as a sensitive water body, and promoting Lake Võrtsjärv as a rapidly developing recreational region both in Estonia and beyond.

Estonian University of Life Sciences, Centre for Limnology

The history of the Centre goes back to year 1954 when a small field station of the Estonian Academy of Sciences was established on the eastern shore of Lake Võrtsjärv. Today the Centre for Limnology constitutes a department of the Institute of Agriculture and Environment protection of the Estonian University of Life sciences (EULS). The activity of the Station comprises fundamental research of Estonian water bodies, teaching of students and applied research.

Fondation de France

Fondation de France was established in 1969 to encourage the growth of private philanthropy as an intermediary partner. The foundation sets up action programs in many fields: solidarity, the elderly or disabled, and for the benefit of children. Fondation de France also promotes professionalism in the management of the voluntary sector in France and Europe.

Programme

Monday, 15. June 2009

Welcome

	<p>Arrival of participants at Tallinn Airport Bus shuttle from Tallinn to Lake Vörtsjärv (ca. 2,5 hours) Check-in and dinner at Vehendi Guesthouse</p>
20:00	<p>Welcome from our hosts Introduction of programme and participants</p>

Tuesday, 16. June 2009

Workshop Day I: The Local Situation

(joint day with guests from Dnestr river, Moldova / Ukraine)

8:00	<p>Breakfast at Vehendi Guesthouse</p>
9:00	<p>Introduction of guest participants from Dnestr river</p> <p>Field trips: participants are divided in two groups. <i>Agenda group 1 (Agenda of group 2 will be in opposite order):</i></p> <p>1. Kale-boat tour on the lake Introduction to Lake Vörtsjärv and its surroundings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural and political history - Land use and economic activities - Social situation around the lake <p>2. Presentations in the Limnological Centre & Lake Museum <i>Margit Säre, Jaanika Kaljuvee, Representative of the Limnological Centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental situation and problems at Peipsi and Vörtsjärv - Natura 2000 - Requirements of the Water Framework Directive - Water management plans - Living Lakes network and local NGOs
12:30	<p>Lunch at Vehendi Guesthouse</p>
14:00	<p>Afternoon session: Participation of local stakeholders in lake area development <i>Local guests. Moderators: Titus Bahner and Philippe Barret</i></p> <p>NGOs and other interest groups around the lake present their situations</p>

	<p>and positions: Situation of participatory development Mapping of possible conflicts of interest Role game: mediation exercise</p>
16:30	Bus transfer
17:00	<p>Fish and Craft Fair at mouth of river Emajõgi Tasting of local eel soup and home-made food Pre-event of National Song Festival Arrival at the festival fire on the waterway. Local cultural programme.</p>
20:30	<p>Farwell to guests from Dnestr River Bus transfer to Vehendi Guesthouse Evening buffet and open talks</p>

Wednesday, 17. June 2009

Workshop Day II: The View from Outside

8:00	Breakfast at Vehendi Guesthouse
9:00	<p>Morning session: the view from outside Moderators Titus Bahner and Philippe Barret</p> <p>Summarising Day I</p> <p>Individual experiences about participatory or sustainable development – Guests contributions! Personal reflections Proposals for thematic groups Small group work: exchanging comments and propositions (coffee will be provided)</p> <p>Plenary meeting: short presentations from group work</p>
12:30	Lunch at Vehendi Guesthouse
14:00	<p>Field trips (bus transfer) to local actors, groups or projects Participants are divided into groups – each group visits one project <i>Presentations by local actors (English interpretation provided)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding the local initiatives - Understanding reasons for limitations - The challenge of sustainability - Restrictions and options from EU policies

17:00	<p>Plenary session <i>Moderators Titus Bahner and Philippe Barret</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Groups report from field trips - Exchange on impressions - View on the policy dimension
18:30	<p>Dinner at Vehendi Guesthouse Bus transfer (15 min.)</p>
20:00	<p>Public evening event at Rannu Center: Sustainable rural development at Lake Võrtsjärv region <i>Panel discussion (English/Estonian interpretation) with participation of national and EU governmental officials (to be named)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explaining the local situation to the politicians - What does sustainable development mean for this region? - How can national and EU policies support it?
<p>Thursday, 18. June 2009 Workshop Day III: The Political Dimension</p>	
8:00	<p>Breakfast at Vehendi Guesthouse</p>
9:00	<p>Morning session: policy conclusions <i>Moderators Titus Bahner and Philippe Barret</i></p> <p>Summarizing Day II Group work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do we see political limitations for sustainable development at Lake Võrtsjärv? - Should participatory implementation options be improved? - What recommendations can we draw for policies? <p>Plenary meeting: summaries from group work</p>
11:30	<p>Coffee Break</p>
12:00	<p>Workshop evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from participants - Summarizing essential findings - Conclusions for next workshop
13:00	<p>Lunch at Vehendi Guesthouse</p>
14:00	<p>Departure of participants</p>

General Information

Time Zone	Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) plus 2 hours
Weather	In June the weather in Estonia can be warm. The average temperatures range from 15°C to 25°C. You may find some helpful weather forecast at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/5day.shtml?world=4981 or http://www.weather.ee/ .
Workshop Language	The workshop language will be English.
Currency	Estonian Kronas EEK (Exchange rate approx. 1 Euro = 15,6 EEK)
Communication	The international code for Estonia is +372. Mobile phone networks cover most areas
Electricity	Various electrical sockets can be found. Voltage is 230V. Information on adapters and plugs is available under http://kropla.com/electric2.htm

Address of Conference Venue

Vehendi Guesthouse

Address: Vehendi, Rannu parish, Tartumaa 61117, Estonia

Phone +372 7460 580, email vehendi@hot.ee; www.vehendi.ee

Hosts and Conference Team

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