



Results overview for the Morava river basin (Slovakia)

This fact sheet summarises the results of the Water and Wetland Index for the Slovakian part of the Morava river basin. Information about the project and the different issues presented in this fact sheet can be found in the WWF Report “Water and Wetland Index - Critical issues in water policy across Europe” (2003).

Water Resources in the Slovakian Morava

Some 2,227 km² out of the total 26,658 km² of the Morava river basin belong to the Slovak republic on its lowermost course. The river itself is a boundary river with the Czech republic and then, on the very lower course, with Austria. The Slovakian stretch has a length of 114 km and a mean annual discharge of 120 m³/s. The area of the river basin is mainly used for agricultural purposes, while forests are in marginal mountain ranges (Little Carpathians and White Carpathians) and partly also in the central flat part. Most of the basin has a lowland character.



Application of Integrated River Basin Management principles

Public participation in water management

Information provision

Most of the available information is presented in adequate language and form, though its level of detail should be improved in some aspects. There is relatively good potential for being informed, but information flow towards some stakeholders (environmental NGOs) is sometimes found to be insufficient.

Existence of arrangements¹ 😊

Adequacy² 😞

Public consultation

The law provides the legal framework for most of the stakeholders (industry, water supply, farmers) to be consulted on specific documents in the decision-making process. The environmental NGO sector believes that there is room for improvement in consultation contacts.

Existence of arrangements 😊

Adequacy 😞

Active involvement

The River Basin Authority involves some stakeholders - mainly from the academic and research sector - on a commercial basis while other sectors consider the stakeholders' involvement as insufficient.

Existence of arrangements 😊

Adequacy 😞

¹ This assesses the existence of arrangements (e.g. the celebration of information days, the existence of public consultation procedures, the existence of water management plans, etc).

² This assesses the adequacy of the existing arrangements and their implementation on the ground. It is based on the opinion of WWF, partner NGOs and other water stakeholders.

Integrated management of water resources

Transboundary cooperation

There is traditionally good and well developed cooperation with the Czech Republic lasting from the period of a common state (Czechoslovakia). Also cooperation with Austria is generally quite good. This was confirmed during the 1997 floods when joint and active cooperation contributed to a lowering of flood damages.

Existence of arrangements	
Adequacy	

Integration of competencies in water management

The existing legislative and administrative system does not satisfactorily reflect the unity of the different types of water bodies. Nevertheless, the River Basin Authority as the responsible body for water management is attempting to coordinate actions linked to different water bodies on the basis of relevant state water management policies, documents and legislative requirements.

Existence of arrangements	 
Adequacy	

Integration of water policy with sector policies

The integration among water supply, industry, farmers and forestry is quite adequate. This is made easier also by the abundance of water sources in the basin. The cooperation with territorial planners and building companies/individuals is not satisfactory as building companies, developers and territorial planners do not consider in all cases the limitations caused by proper floodplain management and flood protection.

Existence of arrangements	
Adequacy	

Wetland management

Integration of wetlands into water management

When compared to other main river basins in Slovakia, the Morava river basin has the best developed wetland management and protection. There are several environmental NGOs focusing their activity on wetland issues and also the attitude of state controlled DRBA towards nature (and wetland) protection is quite open.

Existence of arrangements	
Adequacy	

Wetland protection policy

See text above.

Existence of arrangements	
Adequacy	

Wetland restoration policy

Though many useful steps have been already done in terms of wetland restoration, the process needs to be significantly improved. While practical performance of the projects is hampered by the lack of finances, much theoretical and analytical work has been done so far.

Existence of arrangements	
Adequacy	

Response to key pressures and impacts on freshwater ecosystems

Water quality problems (agriculture)

Approach to the problem

The problem is acknowledged and reflected in the hydro-ecological plan of the Morava basin. However, the lack of a clear plan – with clear actions and timetable – reveals that it is not considered with sufficient urgency.

Adequacy 

Legal & regulatory instruments

There still exists a large discrepancy between the legislative/regulatory aspects on one side and their practical implementation on the other side. Legislative / regulatory aspects are sometimes single-sided. For instance, the code of good agricultural practices is oriented only to reduction of pollution caused by nitrates. Much less attention is devoted to pollution caused e.g. by residuals of heavy metals and other pollutants (e.g. pesticides).

Adequacy  / 

Financial & economic instruments

Formally, the situation is quite acceptable: charges and taxes on emission of nutrient and other pollutants are quite well introduced into the system of water protection through fines. Nevertheless, direct and higher subsidies or other financial/economic instruments are still missing. The budget on subsidies remains poor in terms of support of biofarming.

Adequacy  / 

Information & voluntary instruments

In spite of the existence of several research projects and studies, existing information/voluntary instruments are adequate only in a few aspects. The results of research projects remain often on a declarative level only. The code of proper agricultural practice is valid only for a short time and its application is unclear.

Adequacy 

River fragmentation due to infrastructure

In the River Basin Authority there is a pronounced effort to deal with flood management policy in a more environmentally friendly way. In the Northern part of the Morava basin there is a project for designing dry polders as a flood protection measure, which can be considered as a positive step. The positive function of wetlands for biodiversity and flood protection is recognised in water management sectors.

River fragmentation and flood defence 

Legend:

Good



Fair



Poor



Very poor



Note: In 'Adequacy', where there is a double score, the face on the left of the slash represents the assessment of the adequacy of the instruments themselves, while the face on the right represents the assessment of the implementation of the instruments 'on the ground'. Where no double score is specified, it means that the two aspects got the same score.



Further information

The WWI for Slovakia was completed by Jan Hanusin (member of the Society for Sustainable Living in Slovakia), on behalf of WWF.

For further information about the WWI project and the pan-European results contact:
Sergey Moroz, Programme Officer, WWF Living Waters Programme - Europe
e-mail: smoroz@wwf.fr tel. +33 1 446 44047