

SONDAR SK - Bodenschutznetzwerk der Donauregion: Musterbeispiele aus Niederösterreich und der Westslowakei

Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region: Best-Practice Examples from Lower Austria and Western Slovakia

Soil has been the starting point for all life on Earth, and it provides for more than 90% of our food. It is threatened in various ways: Mass construction and exploitation in favorable conditions, neglect and give-up in unfavorable conditions. Common awareness among the population seems to get lost and does no longer correspond to reality, respectively. The Province of Lower Austria has been a member of the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA) since 2003. Upon the initiative of Provincial Governor Dr. Erwin Proell, numerous best-practice projects have ever since been implemented in municipalities, and the campaign "Our soil - we stand upon it" has become an international best-practice example for citizen-friendly creation of awareness. About half the members of the European Land and Soil Alliance stem from Lower Austria. Also the „Ecology Working Group“ of the Danube Countries Working Community, with Prof. Michal Dzatko from the project partner VUPOP (Soil Science and Conservation Research Institute, Slovakia) presiding, is evaluating a soil protection strategy and shows principles of good soil practice in the whole of the Danube region. And the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) has participated in the foundation of a network linking universities (ICA Network for Central and South Eastern Europe, CASEE) in the Danube region. The project partner VVB (Bratislava water engineering institute) has gained rich experience in planning, implementation and supervising large flood protection projects.

It is the target of the SONDAR project to set up a network of increasing responsibility for soil: between science and practice, administration and users of land, between education, arts and the entire population. It is a matter of implementing measures and initiating processes, which shall be enabled to develop further, as a consequence, in the regions and countries participating in the project, but also in others. The effect of the project examples shall become relevant for the entire Danube region, and after project termination it shall lead to the development of strategies for a continuation of activities. The measures set by the partners aim at demonstrating quantitative and qualitative soil protection by best-practice examples.

Main topics of the project are SOIL AWARENESS and SOIL-WATER-INTERACTION. Therefore the target is an increase of soil awareness of the people by information relevant to target groups, service / support for multipliers, work in educational institutions, extraction of soil colours from regional soils, soil colour painting competition, and documentation of municipal model projects. In the field of "soil-water-interaction" it is a matter of integrating the connection, which can be read in the soils, between soils and flood occurrences in the past 1.000 years into present soil map material, and of comparing existing maps with regard to their suitability with a view to management of natural dangers and flood protection. Voluntary organizations (fire brigades etc.) are informed about the findings, and they are trained. In model municipalities, the bases for future planning considerations are elaborated. Using the example of at least one cross-border region, the threat shall be specially illustrated. The flood occurrences in 2002 or 2006 shall be explained as examples using soil maps. Soils are living systems, which can only perform their functions within the ecosystem and for man, if their properties are largely intact. A sustainable agriculture in the Danube region can be a substantial contribution to soil fertility, preventive flood protection, and the use of soils as a carbon reservoir (= climate protection).

Four project partners / Period of project: 3 years, from October 2010 to October 2013

- **Lead partners:** Soil and Energy Network of European Countries - SENEC, Eschenau/Austria
Chairmen: Mayor Rennhofer, Member of Lower Austrian Parliament; Mayor Singraber;
Franz Rybaczek
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- **PP3:** VUPOP Výskumný ústav pôdozvedectva a ochrany pôdy (national soil protection
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Eine Initiative von Landeshauptmann Dr. Erwin Proell
und Landesrat Dr. Stephan Pernkopf

