Raising public awareness, enhancing knowledge and empowering NGOs to protect and conserve freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin

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NGOs key role in promoting environmental protection and sustainable development

Active participation of NGOs at local, national and transboundary level in all phases of projects and processes, contributes not only to increased transparency, wide visibility and outreach of the project or process, but also to enhanced overall quality and increased ownership of the project itself and its outcomes.
Major gap identified...

A series of initiatives are being implemented in the Drin River Basin and substantial investments are being made aiming to address key environmental challenges. Some of these initiatives entail to some extent **public participation and awareness raising** related components, however **the resources being invested for such activities are rather limited**. In addition, even in the cases where provisions have been made to involve NGOs in project activities the role of NGOs has been often perceived as **a less active and rather as a more passive one**.
The project seeks to:

- **Empower NGOs** in effectively and meaningfully promoting IWRM with a special focus on the protection, conservation and restoration of freshwater ecosystems.

- **Expand public awareness** on the intrinsic values of freshwater habitats and species of the region and to promote concrete, comprehensive and continuous actions towards the safeguarding the biodiversity of the Drin River Basin.
Clusters of activities

1. Increased capacities of local/national NGOs to promote IWRM and freshwater biodiversity conservation in transboundary settings

2. Enhanced coordination, cooperation and networking NGOs working in the Drin River Basin and effective involvement of NGOs in the Drin related process

3. Increased awareness of local communities and the wider public on the importance of the Drin River Basin and its freshwater ecosystems
The Act4Drin NGOs workshop

Mapping exercise to identify all local/national NGOs interested in working on issues related to IWRM and freshwater biodiversity conservation in the region, as well as a preliminary assessment of their needs

The Act4Drin collective and collaborative learning workshop
28-29 April 2015, Lin, Albania

ACT 4 DRIN
Living well in harmony with the Drin
Taking stock of environmental NGO capacities in the Drin River Basin

- **Capacities to generate, use and share information and knowledge:** most NGOs have long standing experience in sharing/communicating environmental information and knowledge produced, less experienced in the fields of generating knowledge, including the assessment of the hydrological and physical/chemical characteristics of a water body; identification of pressures and impacts, assessment of ecosystem services; and/or assessing and making use of relevant information to diagnose and understand environmental problems and potential solutions.

- **Capacities to engage in policy analysis and dialogues:** most NGOs have a long standing experience in promoting common NGO positions and voicing collective views, direct involvement in policy debates, expert groups, consultations, etc. Advising decision-makers, not only in the policy formulation stage but also in the technical preparation phases by making use of environmental research results seems to be the area where their experience is more moderate.
Capacities to design, manage and implement projects: most NGOs have a longstanding experience in designing/developing feasible project proposals, while 43% of the respondents stated their long standing experience in either executing projects aimed at promoting integrated water resources management approaches (carrying out studies for long-term development and management of water resources; implementing demand management measures to improve water use efficiency in all sectors; protecting and rehabilitating catchment areas; establishing processes/platforms for stakeholders’ participation in water management decisions making; etc.) or projects aimed at freshwater biodiversity protection (monitoring of protected areas, enhancement of the natural environment, habitats management and restoration, consensus building and participatory processes, etc.). Executing projects at transboundary level yielded the lowest rate of longstanding experience. Last but not least, regarding the mobilization of resources, only 50% of the respondents assessed their experience as longstanding while some 43% assessed their experience as moderate.
An inventory of freshwater biodiversity conservation and restoration examples

Featuring a collection of concrete NGO actions on the ground that have contributed to the protection and conservation of freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean.

It is an account of the diversity, wide ranging scope and extent of NGO involvement in promoting IWRM & biodiversity conservation.

Distils and captures lessons learned and communicates acquired knowledge so as to ensure that beneficial information is factored into future NGO activities.
The ‘Extended Drin River Basin’ is a unique water body connecting the people of the five Drin riparians – it is our common natural heritage.

The intrinsic value of the Drin Basin is priceless – it is beyond doubt one of the most important freshwater biodiversity hotspots in Europe.

Whether we realize it or not, freshwater ecosystems together with every bit of biodiversity they support and the ecosystem services they provide, determine our quality of life and wellbeing.

Every action or ‘inaction’ along the Drin Basin affects us all.

The protection of our natural common heritage cannot be left only to governments, treaties, top-down regulations and other similar approaches. We, as individuals can make the real difference by simply caring, respecting the right of all beings to enjoy this planet and by taking a holistic ‘life cycle’ view on life based on a sustainable consumption of resources.

A concrete display of the commitment and solidarity of environmental NGOs of the region to protect and conserve the Drin River Basin

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A wealth of events commemorated Act4Drin 2015!

Water adventures; networking events for NGOs & local communities; bird watching activities; contests of photos and paintings; school interventions; guided nature tours; biodiversity camp for students, volunteers and NGOs; ....
A wealth of events commemorated Act4Drin 2016!

Drin Day 2016 - 5 May 2016

The Drin has its Day!

Let’s join the actions, activities & initiatives dedicated to the Drin River Basin
The ‘Echoes from the Drin’ short films triplet

1. Echoes from the Drin - Part I | Whispers of Water
   by M10 - ECSDE

2. Echoes from the Drin - Part II | Reflections of Life
   by M10 - ECSDE

3. Echoes from the Drin - Part III | Impressions of Humans
   by M10 - ECSDE
Act4Drin Spring School 2016

Act4Drin Spring School 2016
The natural wealth and legacy of the Drin River Basin: from field observations and knowledge to collective actions towards protecting freshwater ecosystems
7-15 May 2016

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The Act4Drin Alliance launched on the World Wetlands Day 2016

13 NGOs from the five Drin riparians join forces to form the Act4Drin Alliance aiming to protect and conserve freshwater ecosystems in the Drin River Basin.
NGO actions to protect and conserve freshwater ecosystems in the Drin Basin

The CEPF Mediterranean Basin Storymap

Project Showcase

Contributing to science and conservation change
Understanding everything that happens in an ecosystem is key for its protection - so data collection is often needed to provide the backbone of policies, legislation and management plans.

Local people can draw on lifetimes of experience to understand the complexities of local ecology, giving them greater success at mitigating threats.
Thank you!

For more info:

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