

The final conference of the Change we care project for Croatian partners was held

PRESS RELEASE

As part of the CHANGE WE CARE EU project, the final conference on Climate Change in the Coastal and Transitional Areas was held at the Faculty of Geodesy in Zagreb. The conference was organized by project partners Faculty of Geodesy Zagreb and JU RERA S.D. for the coordination and development of the Split-Dalmatia County.

The project was coordinated by the Institute of Marine Sciences (CNR-ISMAR) and implemented in collaboration with ten other Italian and Croatian partners: Emilia Romagna Region, Venezia Giulia Region, Veneto Region, Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research ISPRA, Nature Park I Biodiversity Delta Po (Italy) and the Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Public Institution for Management of Protected Areas of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Public Institution for Coordination and Development of Split-Dalmatia County - RERA SD, Public Institution Vrana Lake Nature Park and Faculty of Geodesy Zagreb (Croatia).

The main goal of this conference is to raise public awareness of the needs for action to protect against climate change, to get acquainted with the results of the project and to design and integrate joint actions with other projects dealing with climate change into the new EU programming period, 2021-2027.

The results of the project were presented at the conference. Main results are plans for adaptation to climate change for three pilot areas in the Republic of Croatia: Neretva Delta, Kaštela Bay and the river Jadro and Vrana Lake.

A proposal for a Joint Action Plan and future activities for projects from the Safety and Resilience axis (Italy Croatia program) related to climate change adaptation was also presented.

The Dean of the Faculty of Geodesy, Almin Đapo, welcomed all participants in the City Hall of the Faculty of Geodesy and online, and pointed out the above-mentioned goals of this conference.

The conference was continued by the Interreg Italy-Croatia project manager, Ms. Diana Gracin Petrović, on the topic of future possible activities and financing in the next programming period.

Mrs. Branka Pivčević Novak, Head of the General Climate Protection Policy Department from the Directorate for Climate Activities of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, could not attend, but expressed the Ministry's readiness for any further cooperation.

The Project manager of the Change we care project, Mr Davide Bonaldo, joined from Italy, presenting the results of the project so far and emphasizing its essence, which consists of 3 steps: assessment of the current state and recent trends of physical and environmental processes in the Adriatic coastal areas. sea, projection of future scenarios in the conditions of climate change and identification of possible measures of adaptation to climate change in a series of 5 pilot areas that are the subject of this project, namely in Croatia Vrana Lake, Neretva Delta, Jadro River and Kastela Bay and in Italy Banco di Mula di Muggia and the delta of the river Po. The ultimate goal of the project is to identify adaptation measures to address the effects of climate change in the field of cooperation and the main recipients of the results are local communities and all entities that have certain roles at various institutional levels related to climate change.

After that, the results for three Croatian pilot areas were presented by Paola Marinović, Martina Baučić i Norma Fressel.

The key result of the CHANGE WE CARE project for the pilot area of the Neretva delta is the Adaptation Plan presented as part of the Final Info Day in Opuzen. The development of the Adaptation Plan was preceded by the development of four studies in cooperation with the University of Dubrovnik:

- Research of physico-chemical factors of climate change,
- Mapping of all target fish species,
- Research on the socio-economic status of the main stakeholders in the fisheries sector and
- Preparation of the Fisheries Economic Study.

In addition to the research results, an important part of the methodology of the Plan is a participatory approach in which three workshops were conducted in Metković, Ploče and Opuzen.

The current state of water is bad due to urbanization. Climate change will worsen the situation and increase the risks of floods, droughts, fires and erosion and ultimately increase water pollution in the basin.

The greatest attention should be paid to the collection and treatment of precipitation and wastewater from settlements and industry, and the disposal of all types of waste. In the further development of settlements and infrastructure, it is necessary to apply the concepts of urban design sensitive to water and blue-green solutions. Thus, settlements will be transformed from "hard and gray" to "soft and green" and will become stronger in terms of sustainability and resilience of water resources, biodiversity and human existence. In order to achieve this, the cooperation of all sectors that now manage the catchment area is needed, ie an integrated approach should be applied. Urban development should be accompanied by new concepts, the so-called. smart development and strive to build sustainable and energy efficient urban infrastructure.

Measures to adapt to climate change in the Vrana Lake Nature Park resulted from communication with a number of diverse stakeholders and the local community in the process of involving them through three workshops, surveys and interviews. Due to climate change, conventional agriculture in the basin has an extremely negative impact on water quality and the biological diversity of Lake Vrana. Emphasis in the adaptation plan was placed on methods of returning carbon to the soil, by encouraging tillage without plowing with the aim of building humus and the use of cover crops. The plan elaborates in detail the possibilities of implementing pilot measures for carbon farming in the Vrana Lake Nature

Park and its surroundings and the conceptual design of Natura 2000 in the area of Jasen for the revitalization of floodplain meadows and extensive livestock on the principle of rotational grazing. Important activities are also education and awareness raising on the possibilities of adapting to climate change in the local community and institutions, and strengthening partnerships for the successful implementation of the plan.

As part of the conference, other EU projects from the Interreg program Italy-Croatia were presented, the topic of which is also within the framework of climate change. The presented projects are: ADRIADAPT, CREW, ECOSS, JOINT_SECAP, MOST, PMO GATE, RESPONSE, WATERCARE, NET4MPLASTIC, IDEAL, I SAFER PLACES, ADRIACLIM. Their project managers gave valuable input for future joint activities to face with climate changes.

At the end, Ms Daria Povh Škugor, Senior Program Manager at the UNEP PAP / RAC Center in Split and Mili Novak, Communication Manager of the Change we care project presented the structure for the future joint action plan which lists all proposals from previous projects for each structural category in order to avoid overlapping future projects and better design activities for future EU programs in period 2021-2027. This part of the conference was interactive, so the other participants got involved with their additional questions and suggestions.