WWF DANUBE-CARPATHIAN PROGRAMME

Project: LIFE15 GIE/AT001004
"Sustainable protection of lower Danube sturgeons by preventing
and counteracting poaching and illegal wildlife trade"

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position title: Socio-economic and natural resource management specialist

Summary of functions: The specialist will be in charge of conducting the assessment of socio-economic situation and natural resources in fishing communities in Prahovo and Radujevac villages in East Serbia, and Negotin municipality as the district center, which includes collection of data via desktop and field research, data analysis and report writing.

Reports to: Project Coordinator and Regional Project Coordinator
Duration: March 2017 – July 2017 (5 months)
Starting date: March 1, 2017

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Project aims to contribute to the survival, recovery, and long-term protection from illegal fishing and trade of five[1] sturgeon species that are still found in the lower Danube and north-western Black Sea region (all of which are "species of Community interest" in the EU Habitats Directive).

Sturgeons are the most threatened animals worldwide (IUCN, 2010). Of the five surviving species in the Danube basin, four are listed as Critically Endangered. Population trends for all species are decreasing.

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[1] The five sturgeon species targeted by the Project are: the Russian Sturgeon (*Acipenser gueldenstaedtii*), the Ship Sturgeon (*Acipenser nudiventris*), the Sterlet (*Acipenser ruthenus*), the Stellate Sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*), and the Beluga (*Huso huso*).

Within the EU, the lower Danube and north-western Black Sea area is the only region still holding viable, naturally reproducing populations of sturgeons (Bloesch et al, 2006). While long life phases are spent in the Black Sea, all sturgeon species except the Sterlet migrate up the Danube to reproduce. The lower Danube is the single most important natural spawning area globally for three of the world's sturgeon species – Beluga, Stellate Sturgeon and Russian Sturgeon (Freyhof and Brooks, 2011). The World Sturgeon Conservation Society states the Danube as the only large river system in Europe where protection of existing sturgeon stocks is still possible. All this shows the outstanding importance of these populations and the high global responsibility that Romania and Bulgaria, two of the lowest-income EU Member States, as well as Serbia and Ukraine, who share the same stocks, have to assume (see attached map of main distribution/project area).

The dramatic decline of sturgeon populations in the Danube is well documented by collapsing catch data. Illegal or unreported fishing can make up to 90% of sturgeon catch, despite the national fishing bans for all sturgeon species in place in all lower Danube and Black Sea countries (except for Sterlet in Serbia) and the fact that trade in caviar from wild sturgeons is forbidden. As a consequence of these bans, fishing communities have been deprived of crucial income, resulting in lack of acceptance of legal obligations, scientific information on depleted sturgeon stocks and protective measures.

In an initial LIFE project (LIFE11 INF/AT/902) the essential basis has been set by increasing knowledge and awareness of fishermen, enforcement agencies and other key stakeholders in Romania and Bulgaria regarding the protection of sturgeons from illegal fishing and trade. In a final evaluation, 89% of representatives of enforcement agencies and 97% of fishermen in Romania want project measures to continue, same as 95% of agency officials and 100% of fishermen in Bulgaria. A follow-up project LIFE15 GIE/AT001004 focuses on determined needs of most crucial target groups to achieve a consolidated and enduring improvement for Danube sturgeons. It will be expanded to the whole range of the targeted species – to Serbia below the Iron Gate dams and the Ukrainian part of the Danube delta and north-western Black Sea coast.

Project Objectives

Objective 1: By 2020, law enforcement is implemented more effectively through enhanced capacity and practical knowledge of authorities and higher acceptance – and consequently compliance – by stakeholders to achieve a long-term reduction of illegal sturgeon fishing and trade in the lower Danube region.

Objective 2: By 2020, targeted fishing communities take ownership for sturgeon conservation and are willing and able to use alternative income sources to compensate profits from sturgeon fishing and to give stocks a break to recover.

Objective 3: By 2020, the availability of legal and illegal sturgeon products on the market is better known and under stronger surveillance by authorities, and respective retailers are aware of legislation and enabled to prevent illegal products from reaching the market.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND NATURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Poor livelihood and lack of paid jobs are a general problem in most fishing areas along the Danube. The difficult economic situation is a major driver for illegal fishing and trade. It is therefore an urgent requirement to actively support fishing communities in opening opportunities for alternative and legal income.

For that reason, a main part of the project (Objective 2) is the assistance for targeted fishing communities in identifying and accessing funding sources and in developing new skills and business opportunities to build up a more sustainable and resource efficient local economy[2]. Depending on the individual circumstances, different approaches will be applied. These can include tourism and gastronomy, merchandising of fish or fisheries products (where other fish is still abundant), production or selling of traditional goods (honey, jam, reed or leather products, etc).

A first step towards the development of the business plans is the assessment of the socioeconomic situation and natural resource base of targeted fishing communities, which would allow for a better understanding of the needs and resources available to develop alternative activities and for the design of relevant, actionable, and sustainable livelihoods strategies.

Specific objectives of the assessment

1) To create in-depth knowledge of the socio-economic circumstances in selected fishing communities in Serbia (Prahovo and Radujevac villages below the Iron Gate dams), including aspects related to: age groups, levels of education, resources of economic revenues, ownership of household assets, gender roles, opportunities and barriers to alternative income generation, among others.

2) To provide a thorough understanding of the natural resource base in selected fishing communities in Serbia (Prahovo and Radujevac villages below the Iron Gate dams), including aspects of governance, availability, and access.

3) To identify potential partners and funding options for future business plan in targeted fishing communities.

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[2] These activities are especially important in the project area, as the risk of poverty or social exclusion among all EU Member States is highest in Bulgaria (48.0 % of the population) and Romania (40.4 %). In Serbia, the rate was above 40%, the social situation in Ukraine is exceptionally bad due to continuing armed conflicts and difficult political status (EUROSTAT, 2015).

SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

Geographical scope

The consultant is expected to focus on the communities of Prahovo and Radujevac villages below the Iron Gate dams in Serbia, clearly using a statistically relevant sampling design. However, wider area including neighboring communities, Negotin municipality and the region of eastern Serbia should be considered where relevant.

Content scope

The consultant is expected to: assess the social and economic conditions of members of fishing communities that (used to) fish sturgeons; analyze the natural resource base (availability, access, governance) in target communities; analyze potential partners (socio-economic organisations) and potential funding options to support the development of alternative income.

In analyzing the socio-economic status the following will be considered, among others:
- Age structure
- Family/ household size
- Education levels and literacy rates in fishing communities;
- Levels of socio-economic vulnerability in the target communities, measured through indicators such as access to basic needs and services (food, health, water and sanitation, education), as well as other locally- relevant indicators to measure socio-economic vulnerability;
- Sources of income and income stability throughout the year (at household and community level), gender-disaggregated if possible (women, men, youth); percentage of income coming from fishing (at household and community level), gender-disaggregated if possible (women, men, youth);
- Gender roles (women, men, and youth) in fishery and gender-specific activities in the household and community;
- Types and ownership structure of productive assets (house, land, boats, etc.) at household and community level;
- Social capital in the community, measured through variables such as: degrees of association, cooperation, trust among community members, existence of networking and collaborative initiatives within the target communities; existence of opinion leader in the community;
- Availability of and access of fishing community members to infrastructure, including marketing infrastructure (roads, specialty shops, restaurants, hotels);
- Knowledge and perceptions of and attitudes towards: existing sturgeon stocks, sturgeon fishing and bans, sturgeon conservation, alternative income development, among others.

In analyzing the natural resources base in the target communities the following aspects will be tackled, among others:

- Current fish stocks, reed, arable land, livestock, fruits, etc., looking at traditional as well as other possible sustainable future uses (including potential uses for handicrafts or nature based or rural tourism);
- Focus on availability, access, and governance aspects of above-mentioned (and other) natural resources;
- In analyzing the natural resource base, assess supply chains and niche markets for products/services (including cross-border markets, if the case).
- Examine the potential role of women and youth to engage in alternative income development from managing natural resources sustainably.

This study will clearly show the household-, community-, and institutional- level barriers to alternative income development in fishing communities and the opportunities that can be leveraged on in implementing the proposed interventions.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The assignment will involve both a desk assessment of the available recent literature and field study to collect primary qualitative and quantitative data.

The consultant will be responsible for developing the methodology and workplan, including designing and testing appropriate survey tools, identifying sample size, sampling procedure, data gathering and analysis and report compilation. In doing this, the following aspects will be considered:
- Resources for desk-based research of information would include (but not be limited to): national census statistical data, local primary data available from City councils, and national/regional reports;
- Primary data would be collected through a mix of individual face-to-face meetings, focus groups, and expert consultations, as deemed appropriate for the study sites.

The project team will support the consultant in data collection by facilitating contacts with partners, institutions, community members, and other actors of relevance for the study and with which the project team has had previous engagements.

TASKS

1. In an inception report, define the methodology and work plan for the study, including:
   a. Sampling size and sampling procedures
   b. Methods for primary data collection
   c. Survey/ Interview instrument, discussed and validated with the Project team
   d. Methods for data analysis
   e. Detailed calendar of activities

2. Collate and review existing data on the socio-economic situation in the selected fishing communities using resources such as national census, as well as reports and datasets from different governmental and non-governmental institutions working in the area.
3. Collect and analyze primary data compiled through visits to the study areas, using methods defined previously (surveys, interviews, focus groups, as deemed relevant for the study context)
4. Write interim report
5. Write final report based on all information collected (See Annex 1 for a suggested outline of the final report).
6. Present key findings and recommendations of the study during a meeting with the in-country project team.

DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

Deliverable	Details of deliverable	Due date of deliverable
Deliverable 1	**Inception document** detailing the proposed detailed methodology for data collection and analysis, sampling, survey/interview instrument, and detailed work plan.	March 30, 2017
Deliverable 2	**Interim report** with preliminary findings and data sets.	May 16, 2017
Deliverable 3	**Final report** and **dataset** on socio-economic status and natural resources assessment in selected fishing communities. The final report will be compiled into a word/pdf document that will not exceed 60 pages. The data set will be compiled into an excel document.	July 23, 2017
Deliverable 4	**Contact list** of persons that have been interviewed/ contacted, including names, community/organization they belong to, email and phones number.	July 23, 2017
Deliverable 5	**Presentation** of key findings and recommendations during a meeting with the in-country project team (maximum 20 slides)	July 31, 2017

QUALIFICATIONS

The position is suitable for any person with qualifications in providing analytical research in the field of socio-economic development and natural resource governance and management. The following specific qualifications must be met:
- Relevant academic background (graduate qualification as minimum) in conservation-related research in the fields of sustainable and socio- economic development, environmental management, and other related fields;
- Proven experience in undertaking studies of similar or related development programs;

The consultant should also demonstrate:
- Knowledge, understanding, and practical implementation of participatory research techniques – both quantitative and qualitative and survey methodology;
- Solid analytical and conceptual skills and the ability to think creatively;
- Attention to detail with ability and sense to synthesize large data and paint a coherent overall picture;
- Knowledge and understanding of current issues related to fishing communities and fisheries in Serbia is considered as advantage;
- Proof of experience in and reputation for quality data analysis and producing high quality technical reports;
- Knowledge of English language (needed for communication with Project team and for developing the summary and conclusions of the report in English);
- Ability to provide reports in English is considered as advantage;
- Computer literacy;
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity to gender issues.

REFERENCES

Bloesch, J. et al. (2006) Action Plan for the Conservation of Sturgeons (Acipenseridae) in the Danube River Basin. Nature and environment No. 144, 112pp

EUROSTAT (2016). http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion

Freyhof, J. and Brooks, E. (2011). European Red List of Freshwater Fishes. Publications Office of the European Union, 61 pp.

IUCN (2010).Sturgeon more critically endangered than any other group of species. International news release, 18 March 2010

Annex 1: Submission guidelines and structure of final report

Submission guidelines

- Times New Roman, font size 12, justified, and with page numbers inserted
- Estimated page number: 60
- Report should include photos from the field and (optionally) graphics and testimonials/ citations
- The Executive summary, Recommendations, and Conclusions will be submitted in English, the other sections can be submitted in the native language.

Structure of final report

1. Cover page (1 page)
2. Executive summary (1-2 pages) (in English)
3. Table of contents (1 page)
4. Introduction (max 4 pages)
    a. Approach and objectives of the study
    b. Methods: geographical scope, data collection methods, sampling size and procedures
    c. Ethical considerations
    d. Limitations of the study
5. Findings and analysis (max 40 pages)
    a. Socio-economic status of fishing communities – analysis will include observations regarding:
        i. Age structure
        ii. Family/ household size
        iii. Education levels and literacy rates in fishing communities;
        iv. Levels of socio-economic vulnerability in the target communities, measured through indicators such as access to basic needs and services (food, health, water and sanitation, education), as well as other locally-relevant indicators to measure socio-economic vulnerability;
        v. Sources of income and income stability throughout the year (at household and community level), gender-disaggregated if possible (women, men, youth); percentage of income coming from fishing (at household and community level), gender-disaggregated if possible (women, men, youth);
        vi. Gender roles (women, men, and youth) in fishery and gender-specific activities in the household and community;
        vii. Types and ownership structure of productive assets (house, land, boats, etc.) at household and community level;
        viii. Social capital in the community, measured through variables such as: degrees of association, cooperation, trust among community members,

existence of networking and collaborative initiatives within the target communities; existence of opinion leader in the community.

    ix. Availability of and access of fishing community members to infrastructure, including marketing infrastructure (roads, specialty shops, restaurants, hotels).

    x. Knowledge and perceptions of and attitudes towards: existing sturgeon stocks, sturgeon fishing and bans, sturgeon conservation, alternative income development, among others.

    xi. Other relevant aspects regarding socio-economic status

  b. Natural resources – analysis will include a discussion on each type of natural resource identified in the community, tackling the following aspects:

    i. Governance and availability of and access to the resource

    ii. Traditional use(s) and management of the resource

    iii. Potential sustainable use(s) of resource for alternative income generations

  c. Potential partners and funding options for alternative income development

  d. Other relevant aspects regarding natural resources

6. Conclusions (max. 4 pages) (in English)
7. Recommendations (max. 4 pages) (in English)
8. References
9. Annexes
  a. Survey/ Interview instrument
  b. List of respondents (keep names confidential if the case)