

D.T2.1.2

GUIDELINE FOR STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND A RELATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Slovenia, Slovakia

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1. Introduction

The thematic work package 2 - Creation of a sustainable model for buffer zone management around World Heritage Beech forests targets pilot areas in Slovenia and Slovakia, where a variety of different stakeholders interact. The work package will produce a number of outputs targeting better active involvement of stakeholders, conflict management, visitor management, as well as sustainable forestry practices. Several activities on this work package are being implemented with participatory approaches.

Active involvement of the wide variety of participants in protected area (PA) management planning is widely considered beneficial. However, even so the knowledge, capacities, and experience on how to undertake these processes is often still lacking at public authorities and even environmental planning consultants (e.g. for Natura 2000 planning), despite quite impressive literature amassed to date. This Deliverable presents strategy for the active involvement of stakeholders, developed on the basis of BEECH POWER activities undertaken in pilot areas Snežnik, Krokár, as well as Vihorlat and Poloniny clusters.

This Deliverable D.T2.1.2 was based on the results of two MARISCO (Adaptive Management of vulnerability and RiSk at COnservation sites) workshops, carried out in Ljubljana, Slovenia (18th-19th November 2019) and Kaluža, Slovakia (2nd-3rd December 2019), as well as two conflict resolution workshops organised in Slovenia (Kočevje - 21st November 2019 and Loška dolina - 11th December 2019). Additionally, relevant results of situational analyses prepared within the project were also taken into account (Grumsin, Germany - 4th-5th November 2019, Krokár, Slovenia - 16th November 2019, Snežnik, Slovenia - 30th November 2019, Paklenica, Croatia - TBD). Results of other Interreg projects, such as ECO KARST, are also summarised in this report. This Deliverable is thematically linked with other deliverables (D.T1.1.2, D.T1.2.1, D.T2.1.1, D.T2.1.3, D.T3.2.1) and outputs (O.T2.2, O.T1.2).

Table 1: BEECH POWER project deliverables and outputs, related to the present deliverable

Type of project result	Code	Title
Deliverable	D.T1.1.2	Participatory situation analyses (Germany, Slovenia, Croatia)
Deliverable	D.T1.2.1	Participatory strategy development (Germany, Slovenia, Croatia)
Deliverable	D.T2.1.1	2 workshops (in Poloniny NP, Slovakia and either Snežnik or Krokár, Slovenia) - Participatory vulnerability and risk assessments in buffer zones around protected areas
Deliverable	D.T2.1.3	Development of a strategy for conflict management
Deliverable	D.T3.2.1	4 regional studies on needs, potential, and requirements for good management by relevant stakeholders
Output	O.T1.2	Strategy for the creation of additional participatory processes in the surroundings of PAs
Output	O.T2.1	Strategy for the active involvement of stakeholders in WH beech forests
Output	O.T2.2	Strategy for conflict management in buffer zones of WH beech forests



The aim of this document is to inform and present options for World Heritage (WH) site managers about ways to actively involve the publics with an emphasis on the preventive actions. The deliverable is linked to and draws on the Output O.T2.1 (Strategy for the Active Involvement of Stakeholders in WH Beech Forest Buffer Zone Management), with specific suggestions for project pilot areas in Slovenia (Krokar, Snežnik) and Slovakia (Poloniny and Vihorlat clusters).



2. Challenges of WH beech forests

2.1. General overview

The nomination “Primeval and Ancient beech forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe” is the largest transnational site on the World Heritage list, spanning 12 countries, with 78 components in 45 protected areas. Therefore, from the start, this nomination represents an unprecedented level of international cooperation and is the most challenging and complex site to manage in the UNESCO portfolio.

On a more local level, since only small remnants of undisturbed forests remain, those are to be very strictly protected, on par with IUCN Category I. The State Parties have proposed these forests to be inscribed on the UNESCO list to “*preserve the last remnants of ancient and primeval European Beech forests, as examples of complete and comprehensive ecological patterns and processes of pure and mixed stands across a variety of environmental conditions in the still ongoing postglacial continental wide expansion process*”. Accordingly, all component parts currently enjoy a legally defined strict protection regime, which was a pre-requisite for site selection, thus being subjected to strict protection on a permanent legal basis preventing negative human influences, such as timber extraction, construction or infrastructure, grazing, etc. In order to avoid negative human impacts, public access is often restricted to certain parts and certain conditions (e.g. with guided tours). Some of the component parts are partly privately owned, but the majority are publicly owned (Kirchmeir and Kovarovics, eds., 2016). However, such strict protection regimes also mean that human activities and uses of the areas are curtailed to a large extent, which is not always widely accepted in the local communities.

IUCN, in its evaluation of the nomination, recognised that while the protection regimes in the component parts themselves are adequate, was concerned about the ability of such a diverse collection of buffer zones to effectively protect the entirety of the designation. Because of these discrepancies the State Parties and site managers are now often in the processes of extending the buffer zones and implementing stricter protection regimes within them, which can further conflict with the wishes of the local communities. While UNESCO designation provides additional incentive for better protection, it is a double-edged sword, as it also draws the attention of visitors and increase visitor pressures in areas. Given the remote locations of numerous component parts, the local communities are often counting on increased revenue from touristic exploitation of the sites, which goes against the protection requirements already in place. For these reasons, wide-ranging participation is key to ensure better management of buffer zones and WH component parts. Relatedly, communication strategies need to take into account the specificities of this particular UNESCO designation and the guidelines for this are presented in this document as well (IUCN, 2017).

Long-term and sustainable protection of these exceptional forests is dependent on positive relationship between the property and the surrounding communities, which can justifiably expect to gain benefits of the World Heritage site in their vicinity. Reconciling the variety of perspectives will therefore play a crucial role in the future conservation of European beech forests.

2.2. Challenges - Slovenia

2.2.1. Current protection regimes and management situation

Both Slovenian component parts, Snežnik and Krokár, are protected with the Decree on protective forests and forests with special purpose, as forest reserves. The protection regime is more stringent in Krokár, where no human activities are allowed, including visiting the component part. Snežnik has a milder regime, which still restricts anthropogenic activities, but allows visitors on marked trails that lead to the summit of Snežnik. The buffer zone of Krokár is formed of forest reserve Borovec, which is protected with the same Decree and has the milder regime, like Snežnik. The buffer zone of Snežnik component part, on the other hand, partly lies within the forest reserve and partly within protective forests, which extend beyond the reserve.

The Decree does not explicitly name the manager of forest reserves, yet it is implied that Slovenia Forest Service (SFS) is responsible under the oversight of the Ministry, responsible for forestry (currently, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food) and in some cases the need to collaborate with Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation is explicitly mentioned. Currently, there are no special funds allocated for the management of any forest reserve in Slovenia and the management of both UNESCO component parts is done through EU projects and on the side of day-to-day activities of SFS foresters.

Since the time of inscription in 2017, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, as the responsible body of UNESCO natural heritage in Slovenia and the Slovenian State Party to the World Heritage Convention, is preparing the documentation needed for protection of both component parts under the Act on Nature Conservation, as nature reserves. This new decree would afford additional layer of protection to both component parts, as well as designate a clear manager, accord some finances for management, and provide the legal basis for the preparation of management and visitor management plans. These processes are ongoing.

2.2.2. Buffer zone modifications

IUCN, in their Evaluation Report (2017), commented on small buffer zones, and specifically emphasised the narrow buffer zone of Snežnik reserve. Therefore, alongside the Coordination Office preparing zonation and management Guidelines for the approval of the Joint Management Committee and relevant WH Committee Decisions (41COM 8B.7, 42COM 7B.71, 43COM 7B.13), which specify that the protective buffer zone function requires at least a 100 meter wide buffer zone, unless justified exceptions can be made, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is preparing a proposal for extension of buffer zones in Slovenia.

SFS prepared the expert opinions on the extensions of buffer zones for both component parts. These opinions were taken into account by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation when preparing the Expert Suggestion for Protection of the component parts under the Act on Nature Conservation.



However, this is still an ongoing process. The extended buffer zones were informally and through BEECH POWER workshops communicated to a wide range of local stakeholders and other relevant and competent national institutions, such as the Slovenian State Forests Ltd. and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. The official process is planned to start during the year 2020.

2.2.3. Existing stakeholder involvement

There is some history of public engagement for both component parts, with more activities taking place in Krokar. For the area of Krokar, a group of expert institutions that have important stakes in the management of the area has been established for consultations. This group involves representatives of Slovenia Forest Service (Regional Unit), Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, State Forests Ltd, Municipality of Kočevje, and Public Institution Zavod Kočevsko (regional tourist organisation). This cooperation is positive and allows for relatively smooth communication among the major stakeholders. However, sometimes some of the local stakeholders feel they are not involved in the decision-making. Wide-ranging public participation events are usually held through different projects that Slovenia Forest Service participates in (Interreg, LIFE, Cohesion projects). The lack of clearly designated manager of the component parts is currently one of the main impediments to more regular and structured engagement, as the responsibilities of different institutions are not clear yet. Snežnik component part has seen less public engagement activities. This is partly due to its larger size and division into more management units.

BEECH POWER project allowed the commencement of structured and sustained stakeholder involvement through the activities in all three thematic work packages. The project will continue to allow for these activities to take place throughout its duration. It is planned that by the time the project is completed, a management structure will be established, which will be able to take on the activities that were started within the project.

2.2.4. Visitor and tourism pressure

There is currently a pronounced lack of control and proper signage around both component parts, which allows visitors to use illegal trails and move outside of marked paths. Moreover, some tourist providers are offering experience and adventures in forest reserves, where such activities are not permissible. These situations are expected to be resolved after the component parts get the status of nature reserves, solid management plans, and an official manager, which will be able to exercise surveillance over the areas. Yet, given that this is quite widespread currently, it might bring the manager into conflict with other stakeholders.

The UNESCO brand is attracting new visitors to both areas, which will require more active and comprehensive direction and redirection of visits, as well as potentially some new constructions in the vicinity of both areas, where conflicts between different stakeholder groups could be expected. New ways for experiencing nature (hiking, biking) to lessen the environmental impact will have to be established.

2.2.5. Ownership

Both component parts are entirely state owned, as well as the current buffer zones. The vast majority of forests in the extensions are state-owned. However, the extension will still result in the loss of economic income for the state-owned manager of the state forests (Slovenian Forests Ltd.). The loss of revenue and ways to find alternatives are at the core of their concerns about the extension (unofficial at this point). However, there is also a concern that some parts of the extended buffer zones, where spruce plantations are still present, could be places where bark beetle outbreaks could spread to the surrounding forests and thus cause additional economic damage on forests outside the reserves.

2.3. Challenges - Slovakia

2.3.1. Current protection regimes and management situation

The Slovak part of the World Heritage Site currently consists of four components in two component clusters, three of which - Havešová, Rožok and Stužica-Bukovské vrchy, are part of the National Park (NP) Poloniny (cluster Poloniny), the fourth component Vihorlat is part of the Protected Landscape Area (PLA) Vihorlat (cluster Vihorlat).

The management regime of the protected areas in Slovakia is regulated by the Act No. 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection. This act specifies that the strictest, fifth level of protection is applied in these natural reserves. This prohibits any forest management activities (including phytosanitary cutting), game management activities, fishing, constructions, etc. Putting up tents or bivouacking is not allowed either. For other activities, such as scientific research, building and marking tourist trails and nature trails, etc., it is necessary to obtain a permission. Visitors may move along the marked tourist trails only. In relation to the above mentioned facts, it is possible to say that natural processes in this component cluster take place without significant human influence.

2.3.2. Boundary modifications and resonation

There were discrepancies in the original nomination between the text and map sections. These differences led to unclear identification component part boundaries and the related obstacles to ensuring legal protection and site management.

On 14 October 2019, the Government of the Slovak Republic, by Resolution no. 508/2019, approved the proposal to modify the boundaries of the Slovak components of the UNESCO site and their buffer zones, prepared by State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic.



According to this proposal, in Poloniny cluster there are now four components - Havešová, Rožok, Stučica-Bukovské vrchy and newly proposed component Udava (part of the original component Stučica). In Vihorlat cluster there are two components - Vihorlat and newly proposed component Kyjovský prales.

2.3.3. Existing stakeholder involvement

Currently, the main conflicts are identified between the forestry sector and private forest owners and nature conservationists, including the Poloniny National Park, Vihorlat Landscape Protected Area and State Nature Conservancy. The disagreements will likely be resolved with governmental decrees and legislation, however the communication is still insufficient. The disagreements with private forest owners have partly been addressed through the rezonation and boundary modifications of the Slovak component parts, however, the forest owners and forest enterprises could remain a contentious stakeholder. Another current conflict is between the state and some environmental and nature conservationist NGOs and activist groups, which oppose the UNESCO designation and boundary modification processes, while also sending complaints to World Heritage Centre in Paris.

At the national level, it is necessary to present sufficiently the interest of the state to have such a territory of extraordinary value registered in the UNESCO World Heritage list and to ensure its conservation as a priority. However, it is not sufficient to merely register a site on the UNESCO World Heritage list and restrict activities that could be harmful. At the same time, there is a real interest in work with stakeholders at all levels to define objectives and priorities in the territory, the instruments to achieve them and to determine responsibility for their implementation. The nature conservation, forestry and tourism approaches that can be used or applied in the region should be clearly defined. In parallel, financial mechanisms need to be established to compensate for increased costs or losses in the transition from normal land use and resources to the required finer, near-natural, or non-intervention regime. This can also contribute to involving other stakeholders in the process (e.g. non-state forest owners). Legislative and economic prerequisites for the development of infrastructure in the region are expected, which will bring greater interest to tourists and the local population and will help to start the sustainable development of the region. This will create the preconditions for reducing regional unemployment, improving the socio-economic situation, reducing tensions and lead to a more positive perception of the UNESCO brand.

2.3.4. Visitor and tourism pressure

The area is located on the north-eastern edge of Slovakia, in a region with high natural potential and poor socio-economic situation. In the second half of the last century, the state took care of building industry and raising the standard of living of the local population. After the political and social changes in the 1990s, many manufacturing sectors and large employers have been reduced and gradually disappeared. Most jobs remained linked to agriculture, forestry, and tourism. A large part of the locals went to work in other regions of Slovakia or abroad.



Of the current industries, forestry is the region's economically strongest and largest sector, but its further expansion is strongly limited by nature protection requirements. It has no potential to employ more people than it currently employs, nor will it attract new people to the region.

On the other hand, the tourism sector still has the greatest potential for development in the territory. The location of the site and the proximity of two neighbouring states, Poland and Ukraine, with many similarly attractive offers, have not been used in the last years. Here, visitors/clients can be attracted by the UNESCO brand (existing and upcoming components of "beech forests", and other monuments registered in the UNESCO cultural heritage, such as wooden churches and so on).

At the local level, active cooperation and the creation of regional associations around the UNESCO site and the use of this brand for sustainable development are required. Completion and modernization of the necessary infrastructure, improvement of conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises in various sectors (tourism, woodworking, traditional crafts ...) is expected and in cooperation with state authorities to look for opportunities for employing forestry workers in other sectors. There is also a need for greater promotion of the UNESCO site, support for setting up interest associations and civic initiatives around the site, and creating a more favourable environment for visitors to the region. The benefits will increased local government revenue from local taxes and increased interest of residents in the region.

2.3.5. Ownership

With the rezonation and boundary modifications most of the private forest owners have been excluded from the UNESCO property. Their prior inclusion, without first acquiring their consent was one of the main issues with the original nomination and inscription of Slovak forests on UNESCO List. World Heritage property in Slovakia is now state-owned. However, there are still some areas in the buffer zones where private owners remain. Some of these will be bought by the state, others have agreed for their forests to be included in these areas. Sustained stakeholder engagement will have to be maintained.

2.4. Conclusion

There are some stakeholder involvement and communication activities ongoing in both countries, those are relatively restricted and often follow outdated and ineffective communication strategies, where stakeholders are mainly just informed about the decisions taken on other levels. Slovakia is already experiencing some of the fallout, due to that, as there are a number of open conflicts between different national authorities and private owners, as well as NGOs. Moreover, the communication and visitor information has not been adapted yet to the specificities of UNESCO inscribed sites and component parts, where public and visitor interest are increased.

Component parts and their managers in both countries need to improve their stakeholder outreach and update management practices to be more inclusive and assure more widely accepted strict management of the protected areas or even develop adjacent areas for the sole purpose of experiencing WH forests, outside of actual WH component parts. This is important in both countries, as Slovakia is currently redesigning the



component parts' boundaries and Slovenia is in the process of extending the strictly protected buffer zones of both component parts.

There are foundations built in both countries for effective communication and stakeholder involvement. BEECH POWER project will already build on these foundations, and the PA managers are strongly encouraged to continue these efforts after the conclusion of the project.



3. Guidelines for stakeholder involvement

Intact, primeval, and ancient beech forests provide a variety of services and possess an outstanding intrinsic value, but their protection can only be achieved through systematic, continuous, wide-reaching, and encompassing cooperation with groups and individuals with an interest in their conservation or a stake in their development. The presented guidelines will focus on stakeholder involvement in World Heritage component parts in Slovenia (Krokar, Snežnik) and Slovakia (Poloniny and Vihorlat clusers).

Managers of protected areas containing World Heritage sites or managers of WH sites themselves are likely in the best position to organise these participation and stakeholder engagement processes. In Slovenia, the management is divided between the Slovenia Forest Service and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, according to the Decree on Protective Forests and Forests with Special Purpose. Any development also needs to get the approval of Institute of Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation. Since the inscription, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning is also competent for WH natural heritage and coordinated management on transnational level. Some of the management tasks are still unclear among all involved institutions. In Slovakia, there are different managers for different component parts, Poloniny National Park Administration indirectly manages (influences management) Stučica-Bukovské vrchy, Havešová, Udava and Rožok component parts, while Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area Administration manages Vihorlat and Kyjovský prales components parts. But in both protected areas the forest management is done by: State enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic and partly by private owners. In Poloniny NP, most area is managed by Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič. In the Vihorlat PLA also State enterprise Military Forests own and manages the forests in the components.

3.1. Stakeholder identification

The process should always start with a stakeholder analysis, where the stakeholders are identified and grouped in terms of their roles. If possible, it is beneficial to conduct interviews with them, to establish what are their interests and opinions and what kind of cooperation would work best for them. The first step is to compile a database of all stakeholders around WH component part. A number of different data sources should be consulted:

- Land-use contracts or GIS-based collection of land managers/owners,
- Management plans,
- Databases on tourism,
- Data on infrastructure elements around the area,
- Permissions issued for activities and events around the area,
- Event calendar (for local events),
- Local news sources (media),



- Municipalities, associations, chambers of commerce,
- Local distribution platforms,
- Online fora,
- Official and unofficial partnerships.

The identified stakeholders should cover at least the following organisations or individuals:

- Responsible regional and municipal institutions, which have jurisdiction over the sites in question,
- Expert organisations on biodiversity and ecosystem condition,
- Professional and advisory institutions in forestry,
- Public companies, such as public forest enterprises,
- Organisations with concessions for wildlife, fish, and other natural resources management,
- Environmental and conservation NGOs,
- Tourism NGOs,
- Land owners and business operators,
- (Schools).

These and other stakeholders should be grouped into, at least, three different categories:

1. True collaborators

- Stakeholders to be involved in the processes actively and which can contribute the most to the implementation of management decisions. They are expected to play an active role throughout the entirety of the process. BEECH POWER suggests the formation of local action groups and expert committees, which can take over this role.

2. Consultation

- Stakeholders to be consulted in early stages, as they possess valuable information or power. They should be invited to events for stakeholders, although a less active role might be acceptable. BEECH POWER suggest inviting them to, at least, annual meetings.

3. Information

- Stakeholders to be only informed about new developments. While it is not expected that this group will play an active part in decision-making, there should still exist conduits for members of this group to propose suggestions.

It should be noted that stakeholder identification is an ongoing process. Throughout the public participation activities, new information about stakeholders will likely emerge. Therefore, continuous updating of the stakeholder lists should be going on (Kuslits and Sólyom, 2019).

3.1.1. Stakeholder identification for Slovenia and Slovakia

Within BEECH POWER thematic work package 1, these stakeholder lists were created for the project purposes and are included below for Slovenia and Slovakia. BEECH POWER project is oriented towards transparent and engaging public participation throughout its course. As such, one of the first activities undertaken on the project was to identify the relevant stakeholders for each of the pilot areas by the relevant project partners. In some cases, the lists of relevant stakeholders have already been prepared in previous projects or for the purposes of UNESCO nomination (e.g. Krokar and Snežnik, Slovenia, Tables 2 and 3). In these cases, the existing lists were reviewed, contact details updated if needed, and supplemented with new stakeholders, which were not considered or involved before. Local experts and rangers, who are intimately aware of the situations on the ground, helped identify these new stakeholders. The new stakeholders are often smaller NGOs and societies, which operate on mostly voluntary and recreational basis, making it more difficult to keep track of their activities, as well as wishes.

For some of the other pilot areas, more extensive stakeholder identification studies had to be undertaken to establish these lists for the first time. In Slovakia, most of the stakeholders communicated in the previous period were forest owners and managers, and some ministries, professional organizations and NGOs were also involved. The list was provided by the associated project partner, the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic. During the project, a broader range of groups was involved. Therefore, the existing lists were supplemented by all the affected municipalities, regional self-government, universities, tourism associations and so on. It was necessary to explore a lot of information and gather contacts to these partners (Tables 4 and 5).

Particular data were collected about all identified stakeholders, such as their contact details (telephone, email, and postal addresses), as well as notes on their relation to WH component parts, which can in subsequent phases allow for their grouping and easier planning of the public engagement events.

Table 2: Identified stakeholders for component part Krokar, Slovenia

	Identified stakeholders	Stakeholder description	Group category
1	Forestry Society Kočevje - Bear	A society concerned about ecological, humanistic, technical, economic and organisational questions about forest management. Organises activities around the WH component part (biking, hiking), also through the buffer zone.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
2	Mountaineering Society Kočevje	Society of hiking and mountaineering enthusiasts, many of whom frequent both the buffer zone and the component part itself (as some trails still exist from before the designation and people use them, even though it is not allowed).	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
3	Municipality Kočevje	Municipality in which the entire component part and its buffer	Collaborators



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		zone are located, with pronounced interest in the touristic development of the site. Associated strategic partner in the project.	
4	Touristic Society Brezpotje	Small touristic society organising trips in the Kočevsko forests, raftings on Kolpa, biking tours, also through the WH property buffer zone, along the established educational trails.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
5	Touristic Sport and Culture Society Kočevska Reka	Small touristic society organising trips in the Kočevsko region, also through the WH property buffer zone, along the established educational trails.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
6	Municipality Osilnica	Municipality bordering the the southern part of the WH component part and where potentiall the buffer zone could be extended too. Have interest in touristic development of the WH property.	Collaborators
7	Touristic Society Kočevje	Touristic society organising main touristic events in the region, with interest in bringing more people to the region due to UNESCO designation.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
8	Kočevje Public Institute for Tourism and Culture (Zavod Kočevsko)	Public Institute established by the Kočevje, Kostel and Osilnica Municipalities, developing regional destination brands, promoting the region as a tourist destination and developing high class, green, healthy, and active experiences. Also interest to include the WH component part in their offers.	Collaborators
9	Slovenian State Forests Ltd.	State owned enterprise, which is the designated manager of all public forests in the country, including the entirely of the WH component part, their buffer zones and most of the surrounding forests.	Collaborators
10	ARS NATURAE - photography, tourism, and development	Small touristic provider offering experiences in the Kočevsko forests and its wilderness. Therefore, also interested in Krokar component site.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
11	Dinaricum NGO	NGO working in the interest of conservation and sustainable development in the Dinaric part of Slovenia. Particularly active on the issues of large carnivores. Interested in protection of primeval forests.	Consultation

12	DOPPS - BirdLife Slovenia	BirdLife International's partner NGO in Slovenia in favour of protection of primeval forests.	Consultation
13	Slovenian Forestry Institute	Public research institution focussed on forestry research, forest landscapes, forest ecosystems, game ecology, hunting, forest management, use and functions of the forests.	Consultations
14	University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Forestry and Renewable Forest Resources	University faculty educating the next generations of foresters and instilling the close-to-nature and sustainable forestry practices in students.	Consultations
15	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food	The competent ministry for everything related to forestry and agriculture. Both Slovenian component parts currently have formal, legislative protection due to legislation passed by them.	Collaborators
16	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning	The competent ministry for all environmental and conservation topics and associated strategic partner in the project. Preparing new legislation to declare both component parts as nature reserves as well.	Collaborators
17	Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport - UNESCO Office	Ministry hosting the UNESCO Office, for all four Slovenian UNESCO sites.	Information
18	Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts	The main research institution in Slovenia, which also specialised in beech genetics and paleoecology, as well as spread after the last ice age.	Consultations
19	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation	Institute to which all nature conservation topics are delegated and main authority on the implementation of nature legislation. Also preparing conservation guidelines for both property sites.	Collaborators
20	Slovenia Forest Service	The institution currently „managing” the component part and the organisation engaged in all WH-related activities since the nomination procedure. Also responsible for forest management plans for the entire country.	Collaborators
21	DONDES NGO	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in a wider region, therefore also with an interest in the WH property.	Consultation
22	Alpe Adria Green NGO	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in Alpine-Adriatic region, also with interest	Consultation

		in conserving the WH component parts.	
23	Lutra NGO	Nature conservation institute (NGO) active throughout Slovenia, with a focus on European otters (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) and all their interactions with the environment.	Consultation
24	Association of hunting associations Kočevje	The Association of local/regional hunting associations, which manage game species in the entire region (without the property site and its buffer zone).	Information
25	Touristic Society Osilnica	Touristic society organising main touristic events in the region, with interest in bringing more people to the region due to UNESCO designation	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
26	Hunting association Osilnica	A local hunting association to the south of the WH component parts.	Information
27	Sports Ecological Society Outsider Osilnica	Sport and ecological society promoting recreational activities, located to the south of the component part. Touristically active.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
28	Tourist Farm Jurjevič	Touristic farm in close vicinity to the WH site, with some agricultural production and catering to tourists. Interest in increasing the touristic recognisability of the area.	Information

Table 3: Identified stakeholders for component part Snežnik, Slovenia

	Identified stakeholders	Stakeholder description	Group category
1	Municipality Ilirska Bistrica	Municipality in which most of the component part and its buffer zone are located. Interest in marketing the area, but a bit disinterested with conservation aspects.	Collaborators
2	Alpine society Snežnik Ilirska Bistrica	Society of hiking and mountaineering enthusiasts, many of whom frequent both the buffer zone and the component part itself (as there are still four maintained hiking trails through the component part).	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
3	Alpine society Sviščaki	Society of hiking and mountaineering enthusiasts, many of whom frequent both the buffer zone and the component part itself (as there are still four maintained hiking trails through the component part).	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)



4	Numismatic society of Primorska Ilirska Bistica	Cultural society, which showed an interest and got involved in the nomination procedures of the WH.	Information
5	KŠTD Tabor Kalc 1869	Cultural and sporting society active in the wider region and with interest in the Snežnik area.	Information
6	Society of scouts POD Snežniških ruševcev	Scout society, which has a strong focus on outdoors and survival skills, therefore an interest in »wild« forests of the Snežnik region.	Information
7	Municipality Loška dolina	Municipality in which part of the component part and its buffer zone are located. Associated strategic partner in the project.	Collaborators
8	Tourist Information Centre Lož	Touristic society organising main touristic events in the region, with interest in bringing more people to the region due to UNESCO designation.	Collaborators
9	Slovenian State Forests Ltd.	State owned enterprise, which is the designated manager of all public forests in the country, including the entirety of the WH component part, their buffer zones and most of the surrounding forests.	Collaborators
10	Tourist association Loška dolina	Touristic society organising main touristic events in the region, with interest in bringing more people to the region due to UNESCO designation.	Collaborators
11	Dinaricum NGO	NGO working in the interest of conservation and sustainable development in the Dinaric part of Slovenia. Particularly active on the issues of large carnivores. Interested in protection of primeval forests.	Consultation
12	DOPPS - BirdLife Slovenia	BirdLife International's partner NGO in Slovenia in favour of protection of primeval forests.	Consultation
13	Slovenian Forestry Institute	Public research institution focussed on forestry research, forest landscapes, forest ecosystems, game ecology, hunting, forest management, use and functions of the forests.	Consultations
14	University of Ljubljana, Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Forestry and Renewable Forest Resources	University faculty educating the next generations of foresters and instilling the close-to-nature and sustainable forestry practices in students.	Consultations
15	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Food	The competent ministry for everything related to forestry and agriculture. Both Slovenian	Collaborators



		component parts currently have formal, legislative protection due to legislation passed by them.	
16	Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning	The competent ministry for all environmental and conservation topics. Preparing new legislation to declare both component parts as nature reserves as well. Associated strategic partner in the project.	Collaborators
17	Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport - UNESCO Office	Ministry hosting the UNESCO Office, for all four Slovenian UNESCO sites.	Information
18	Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts	The main research institution in Slovenia, which also specialised in beech genetics and paleoecology, as well as spread after the last ice age.	Consultations
19	Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation	Institute to which all nature conservation topics are delegated and main authority on the implementation of nature legislation. Also preparing conservation guidelines for both property sites.	Collaborators
20	Slovenia Forest Service	The institution currently „managing” the component part and the organisation engaged in all WH-related activities since the nomination procedure. Also responsible for forest management plans for the entire country.	Collaborators
21	DONDES NGO	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in a wider region, therefore also with an interest in the WH property.	Consultation
22	Alpe Adria Green NGO	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in Alpine-Adriatic region, also with interest in conserving the WH component parts.	Consultation
23	Association of Slovenian catholic scouts STEG, Loška dolina	Scout society, which has a strong focus on outdoors and survival skills, therefore an interest in »wild« forests of the Snežnik region.	Information
24	Society EN-TRN Civil Initiative for development and promotion of Loška dolina	Civil Initiative established in Loška dolina, promoting the region and its development. Also interest to include the WH component part in their offers.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
25	Alpine Society Snežnik Loška dolina	Society of hiking and mountaineering enthusiasts, many of whom frequent both the buffer zone and the component part itself (as there are still 4	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)



		maintained hiking trails through the component part).	
26	Sport-recreational society Snežnik Kozarišče	Society of hiking and mountaineering enthusiasts, many of whom frequent both the buffer zone and the component part itself (as there are still 4 maintained hiking trails through the component part).	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
27	Regional Park Škocjanske jame	UNESCO designated cave system, which was formed by the river originating in the Snežnik massif. The buffer zone of Škocjan Caves includes part of the Snežnik WH component part.	Consultation
28	Regional Development Agency Zeleni kras	Regional Development Agency active and responsible for the wider region of Notranjska, which includes also the Snežnik component part and has expressed an interest in better and structured marketing of the area.	Collaborators
30	Forestry association Postojna	A society concerned about ecological, humanistic, technical, economic, and organisational questions about forest management. Organises activities around the WH component part (biking, hiking), also through the buffer zone.	Consultation and inclusion in local action group (Collaborators)
31	Society Drobnovratnik	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in a wider region, therefore also with an interest in the WH property	Consultation
32	Society for development for rural development from Snežnik to Nanos	Local Action Group connecting people in the wider region and working in close cooperation with RDA Zeleni Kras. WH property site is part of their area.	Consultation

Table 4: Identified stakeholders for cluster Poloniny, Slovakia

	Identified stakeholders	Stakeholder description	Group category
1	Municipality Nová Sedlica	Municipality in which a large part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
2	Municipality Zboj	Municipality in which a part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as extensions of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy and Rožok component parts as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators



3	Municipality Ruský Potok	Municipality in which a small part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
4	Municipality Runina	Municipality in which a part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
5	Municipality Stakčín	Municipality in which a part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as extensions of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy and Havešová component parts as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
6	Municipality Hostovice	Municipality in which a part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as extensions of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy and Udava component parts as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
7	Municipality Osadné	Municipality in which a small part of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as extensions of the Rožok and Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component parts as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
8	Municipality Topoľa	Municipality in which a part of the buffer zone of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy component part is located, as well as extensions of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy and Havešová component parts as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
9	Municipality Uličské Krivé	Municipality in which the entire component part Rožok and its buffer zone are located, as well as extensions of the Stužica-Bukovské vrchy and Udava component parts as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
10	Municipality Ulič	Municipality in which a small part of the buffer zone of the Rožok component part is located, as well as extensions of the Rožok component part and buffer zone of the Havešová component part as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
11	Municipality Kalná Rostoka	The municipality in which the majority of the Havešová component part and its buffer	Collaborators

		zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	
12	Municipality Stakčinska Roztoka	The municipality in which the small part of the Havešová component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
13	Municipality Kolbasov	The municipality in which a part of buffer zone of the Havešová component part is located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
14	Municipality Klenová	The municipality in which the small part of buffer zone of the Havešová component part is situated, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
15	Municipality Ruská Volová	The municipality in which the buffer zone extensions of the Havešová component part are located.	Collaborators
16	Municipality Pčoliné	The municipality in which the buffer zone extensions of the Havešová component part are located.	Collaborators
17	State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic	Institute to which all nature conservation topics are delegated and main authority on the implementation of nature legislation. Also preparing conservation guidelines for all property sites. This institution also includes both protected areas administrations. Associated partner in the project.	Collaborators
18	Poloniny National Park Administration	The institution which ensures nature protection and indirectly manages the processes at the site. It is part of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic.	Collaborators
19	Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Directorate for Nature, Biodiversity and Landscape Protection	The competent ministry for all environmental and conservation topics. Preparing new legislation to declare both component parts as nature reserves as well. Associated partner in the project.	Collaborators
20	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	The competent ministry for everything related to forestry and agriculture.	Collaborators
21	Ministry of foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Slovak commission for UNESCO, The Secretariat of SC UNESCO	Ministry hosting the UNESCO Office for all Slovak UNESCO sites.	Collaborators

22	Owners and associations managing non-state forests	Owners and associations managing non-state forests located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.	Collaborators
23	Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič	State organization managing the largest part of forests located in the Poloniny cluster.	Collaborators
24	State enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic	State organization managing part of state-owned forest land located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.	Collaborators
25	Slovak Heritage Association	Interest association of Slovak sites registered in UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage, whose aim is to promote cooperation and promotion of UNESCO sites in Slovakia.	Information
26	Aevis Foundation, Aevis NGO	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in the Carpathian region.	Information
27	Prales Civic Association	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in the Slovakia.	Information
28	WOLF Forest Protection Movement	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in the Slovakia.	Information
29	Technical University in Zvolen	Higher education institution providing education focused on the spheres of forest - wood - ecology - environment, and also research in ancient beech forests of the Carpathians. It also cooperated on the original proposal of the UNESCO site inscribed in 2007.	Collaborators
30	National forest centre Zvolen	A public institution providing forestry science and research, framework management of forests, consultancy in forestry, etc. It carries out various expert assessments for forest management and nature conservation. Project partner in the project.	Collaborators
31	District authority Snina, Department of Environmental Care	State administration body, which decides on environmental and nature protection issues at district level. Its competence covers the entire cluster Poloniny.	Collaborators
32	Prešov Self-Governing Region, Department of regional development	The institution that procures, negotiates, and approves the spatial planning documents of the self-governing region and the spatial plans of the regions, participates in the creation and protection of the environment, creates conditions for the	Information

		development of tourism and coordinates such development, etc. Its competence covers the entire cluster Poloniny.	
33	Regional tourism organization Northeast Slovakia	An interest association established by the Prešov Self-Governing Region and other regional organizations in order to increase the number of visitors to the destination Northeast Slovakia through active cooperation of members and other subjects in tourism. Its competence covers the entire cluster Poloniny.	Information
34	Regional tourism organization Horný Zemplín and Horný Šariš	An interest association based on the support and promotion of tourism in the region with a view to the sustainable development of tourism and the protection of the interests of its members. Its competence covers the entire cluster Poloniny and north part of cluster Vihorlat.	Information

Table 5: Identified stakeholders for cluster Vihorlat, Slovakia

	Identified stakeholders	Stakeholder description	Group category
1	Municipality Kolonica	Municipality in which a large part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
2	Municipality Stakčín	Municipality in which a small part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
3	Municipality Snina	Municipality in which a part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
4	Municipality Zemplínske Hámre	Municipality in which a small part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
5	Municipality Poruba pod Vihorlatom	Municipality in which a part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
6	Municipality Remetské Hámre	Municipality in which a large part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators

7	Municipality Vyšná Rybnica	Municipality in which a large part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
8	Municipality Strihovce	Municipality in which a small part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its buffer zone as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
9	Municipality Ladomirov	Municipality in which a small part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its buffer zone as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
10	Municipality Valaškovce (military district)	Municipality in which a large part of the Vihorlat component part and its buffer zone are located, as well as its extensions and the entire new component part Kyjovský prales as proposed in 2019.	Collaborators
11	State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic	Institute to which all nature conservation topics are delegated and main authority on the implementation of nature legislation. Also preparing conservation guidelines for all property sites. This institution also includes both protected areas administrations. Associated partner in the project.	Collaborators
12	Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area Administration	The institution which ensures nature protection and indirectly manages the processes at the site. It is part of the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic.	Collaborators
13	Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Directorate for Nature, Biodiversity and Landscape Protection	The competent ministry for all environmental and conservation topics. Preparing new legislation to declare both component parts as nature reserves as well..	Collaborators
14	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	The competent ministry for everything related to forestry and agriculture.	Collaborators
15	Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic	The competent ministry for everything connected with the defense of the state. The forests included into the Vihorlat cluster and its buffer zone belong to the protective zone of the Military Training Centre Valaškovce.	Collaborators
16	Ministry of foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic,	Ministry hosting the UNESCO Office for all Slovak UNESCO sites.	Collaborators

	Slovak commission for UNESCO, The Secretariat of SC UNESCO		
17	Owners and associations managing non-state forests	Owners and associations managing non-state forests located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.	Collaborators
18	State enterprise Military Forests	State organization managing part of state-owned forest land located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.	Collaborators
19	State enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic	State organization managing part of state-owned forest land located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.	Collaborators
20	Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič	State organization managing a small part of forests located in the Vihorlat component part .	Collaborators
21	Slovak Heritage Association	Interest association of Slovak sites registered in UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage, whose aim is to promote cooperation and promotion of UNESCO sites in Slovakia.	Information
22	Aevis Foundation, Aevis NGO	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in the Carpathian region.	Information
23	Prales Civic Association	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in the Slovakia.	Information
24	WOLF Forest Protection Movement	An environmental and nature conservation NGO active in the Slovakia.	Information
25	Technical University in Zvolen	Higher education institution providing education focused on the spheres of forest - wood - ecology - environment, and also research in ancient beech forests of the Carpathians. It also cooperated on the original proposal of the UNESCO site inscribed in 2007.	Collaborators
26	National forest centre Zvolen	A public institution providing forestry science and research, framework management of forests, consultancy in forestry, etc. It carries out various expert assessments for forest management and nature conservation. Project partner in the project.	Collaborators
27	District authority Snina, Department of Environmental Care	State administration body, which decides on environmental and nature protection issues at district level. Its competence covers a part of cluster Vihorlat.	Collaborators



28	District authority Humenné, Department of Environmental Care	State administration body, which decides on environmental and nature protection issues at district level. Its competence covers a part of cluster Vihorlat.	Collaborators
29	District authority Sobrance, Department of Environmental Care	State administration body, which decides on environmental and nature protection issues at district level. Its competence covers a part of cluster Vihorlat.	Collaborators
30	District authority Michalovce, Department of Environmental Care	State administration body, which decides on environmental and nature protection issues at district level. Its competence covers a small part of cluster Vihorlat.	Collaborators
31	Prešov Self-Governing Region, Department of regional development	The institution that procures, negotiates and approves the spatial planning documents of the self-governing region and the spatial plans of the regions, participates in the creation and protection of the environment, creates conditions for the development of tourism and coordinates such development, etc. Its competence covers the north part of component part Vihorlat and the entire new component part Kyjovský prales .	Information
32	Košice Self-Governing Region, Department of Regional Development, Spatial Planning and Environment	The institution that procures, negotiates, and approves the spatial planning documents of the self-governing region and the spatial plans of the regions, participates in the creation and protection of the environment, creates conditions for the development of tourism and coordinates such development, etc. Its competence covers the south part of component part Vihorlat .	Information
33	Regional tourism organization Zemplínska	An interest association based on the support and promotion of tourism in the region with a view to the sustainable development of tourism and the protection of the interests of its members. Its competence covers north part of cluster Vihorlat.	Information
34	Information Office Michalovce	A local information office providing information on the wider region.	Information
35	Tourist Information Office Sobrance	A local information office providing information on the wider region.	Information

36	Tourist Information Office Vinné - Hôrka	A local information office providing information on the wider region.	Information
37	Tourist Information Office Kaluža	A local information office providing information on the wider region.	Information

It is crucial to ensure the highest levels of inclusivity, by continuously revising existing stakeholder databases. The grouping should not be entirely formalised, and would be best implemented by a group of people with a good overview of the area and stakeholders. Individual categories should reflect various legal statuses of stakeholders, decision-making powers, and different socio-economic backgrounds.

3.2. Participation processes

It is important to then structure the participation process in advance and lay out the plans for all stakeholders to see. Stakeholder need to know what is expected of them and when they will have the opportunities to contribute to the process. A good example of this is the stakeholder roadmap, which was developed within BEECH POWER project (see Figure 1). Generally, the participative action planning consists of, at least, three rounds of stakeholder events:

1. Situation analysis

- Where a variety of different stakeholders is invited. In certain cases, it might make sense to divide them into different groups and events, to be able to better capture their inputs (i.e. local stakeholders in one group, experts in the other). There is also a number of different methodologies to be used. BEECH POWER suggests the use of Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation and potentially MARISCO (Adaptive Management of Vulnerability and Risk at Conservation Sites) methodologies.

2. Setting goals and objectives

- Goals, objectives, and strategies for management should be defined commonly, with all different stakeholders present. Nevertheless, the manager should know where the realistic boundaries are and keep them in mind and the participants informed of them. BEECH POWER again suggests the use of the above mentioned methodologies (Open Standards and MARISCO).

3. Measures and activities (implementation)

- The implementation of defined measures should be divided among different stakeholders, where the three categories presented above come into play (International Association for Public Participation, 2020).

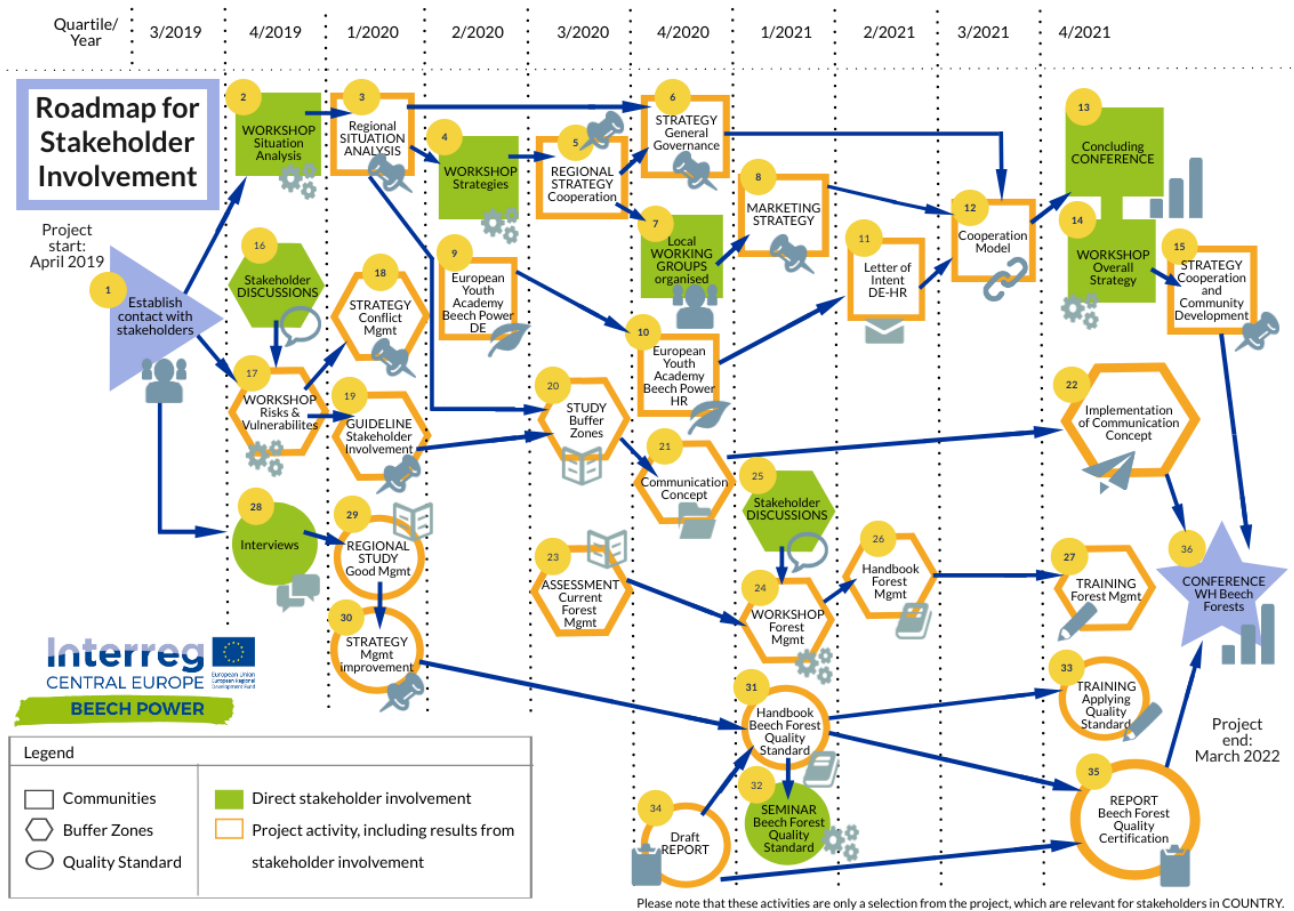


Figure 1: The roadmap for involvement of stakeholders within BEECH POWER project

Oftentimes, it is also beneficial to establish cooperation with other organisations outside protected areas and their managers to lead similar, parallel processes with wider regional stakeholders. These organisations could include regional tourist organisations or sustainable development agencies, as well as some sectorial agencies. There can be issues with improper stakeholder involvement, when public participation is on paper implemented, but the actual level of involvement of publics is questionable or their inputs are not translated into management action. Therefore, it is often recommended to use a trained, professional moderator to provide, at the very least, supervision of the public engagement, or, even better, lead the public engagement for the management authority. This should be implemented in general, not only for Slovenian and Slovakian component parts.

The World Heritage sites and in particular component parts of the Primeval and Ancient Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe have a number of specificities that have to be taken into account. A number of goals, objectives, and required activities is already set, either by the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines, or the World Heritage Beech Forest Committee decisions. Moreover, given the numerous extensions and evaluation by the IUCN, a number of challenges that have been identified have to be addressed. Considering also that this WH site is a transnational serial designation, and by far the most complex and extensive one at that, guidelines from the coordination office and decisions of the Joint Management Committee have to be respected as well. These considerations limit the scope of the stakeholder discussions and goals, as some of them are already pre-set and have to be adapted to by all. Nevertheless, the limitation is often that these restrictions are not communicated clearly. Therefore, the stakeholders and publics are unaware of the restrictions placed upon the area and their interactions with



it, as well as broader UNESCO recognition, related to cooperation, intercultural exchange and public inclusion, amongst others. There are also limited possibilities for transfer of the local opinions and perspectives to the upper levels, both related to the management level, as well as to the transnational level.

Stakeholder participation is crucial and should be planned well, starting at the level of the manager. A number of elements need to be defined:

1. Purpose and programme for each workshop,
2. List of invited stakeholders and the method of invitation,
3. Introductory presentations and what they will contain,
4. Engagement of a moderator and approval of a method (optional, but recommended),
5. Time and venue of the event,
6. Programme for field visits (if appropriate, but highly recommended),
7. Logistics and catering,
8. Post-event engagement.

Invitations are an important and often a crucial step in the involvement of stakeholders. The general option is an invitation letter, which includes the goal of the process and the desired role of stakeholders in it. However, in addition to that it is desirable, and often needed, to engage stakeholders also personally (by telephone, for example) and talk to them about their indispensable role in the process (Golob, 2019).

Successful stakeholder involvement will require certain skills from the manager. A background in social sciences and experience with empirical methods and in design and implementation of participatory processes is an advantage, yet it is possible to work without these qualifications. Even better would be the involvement of professional moderators and facilitators in stakeholder activities. These are professionals that act as neutral actors in discussions, ensure equal representation, keep the debates on topic, and are trained in the solution of conflict situations. Moderators, as external service providers, can also ensure that the gap between the manager and distrustful stakeholders can be bridged by a neutral party, that is seen as trustworthy on both sides. Facilitators become truly invaluable when more complex stakeholder involvement activities are planned and when an actual effort to co-create solutions to issues or to collaborate with local stakeholders is made (Bryson, 2003).

3.2.1. Participatory processes in Slovenia and Slovakia

A number of participatory processes were already going on in both countries before the start of BEECH POWER project. In Slovenia, these processes were mainly led through various projects, such as LIFE Kočevsko and public unveilings of relevant forest management plans. The activities somewhat intensified in the time of the preparation of the UNESCO nomination dossier, when dedicated stakeholder identification, workshops, and lectures were organised for both component parts. Sustained, organised, and widely inclusive participatory processes, beyond those obliged by law, were not conducted yet. In Slovakia, there were also various projects concerning on the topic of stakeholder involvement and in the phase of WH



project renomination there were many negotiation meetings with relevant stakeholders. There was established also an advisory board at ministry level with involved experts from relevant stakeholder and other state organizations, representatives of private owners and NGOs also. There were involved the participants of Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence.

Through BEECH POWER project, a number of different stakeholder involvement activities are being implemented. Situational analyses with involvement of local and national stakeholders, using the methodology of Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation were carried out for both Slovenian component parts. Additionally, a MARISCO workshop on vulnerability and risk assessment with national and international experts was conducted for both Slovenian component parts, which included also a brief situational analysis from a different perspective. For Slovak component parts, only the MARISCO workshop with national and international experts, and some local stakeholders was carried out, which also allowed the preparation of situational analysis. Moreover, in Slovenia, a set of educational conflict resolution workshop were organised to give participants better tools for effectively and constructively resolve any existing or potential new conflicts. These workshops allowed a better insight into the existing tensions between stakeholders, thus offering important knowledge to be taken into account in the next steps.

All above mentioned workshops also provided the opportunity to jointly define goals and objectives for management of the component parts, while also explaining the existing restrictions of land use, that are ingrained with the UNESCO status and cannot be changed.

Through BEECH POWER project further stakeholder involvement activities are planned in Slovenia in the form of Strategy workshops, where management measures and activities will be jointly defined with wide group of stakeholders for both component parts. These workshops are planned in May 2020. Furthermore, in Autumn 2020, the formation of local action groups which would focus on productive communications with the manager and implementation of some measures is planned, again for both Slovenian component parts, through the work in WP T1.

3.2.1.1. Situational analysis workshops (Krokar, Snežnik)

As part of thematic work package 1, situational analysis workshops, using Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, were organised in Angermünde (Grumsin - Germany), Kočevje (Krokar - Slovenia), Ilirska Bistrica (Snežnik - Slovenia), and Starigrad (Paklenica - Croatia). The workshops resulted in four regional situation analyses, which will be the basis for strategy development in later stages of the project. The workshops allowed the local stakeholders to discuss what was done well so far and what could be improved, as well as identify elements for local wellbeing, ecosystem services, objects that need to be conserved, as well as threats and their contributing factors.

3.2.1.2. MARISCO workshops (Krokar, Snežnik, Vihorlat, Poloniny)



Participatory vulnerability and risk assessment workshops for forest reserves Snežnik, Krokár, and component clusters Vihorlat and Poloniny were organised as two full two-day events, in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on 18th-19th November 2019 and in Kaluža (Slovakia) on 2nd-3rd December 2019. In preparation for the workshop a field trip to the Virgin Forest Krokár WH component part was organised on 15th November 2019 for interested parties, as well as a lecture about Snežnik forest reserve on 17th November 2019 (due to unfavourable weather conditions, field trip was impossible). Field trips to Vihorlat were organised on 1st December and 4th December 2019.

The first workshop day focussed on identification of conservation objects, their key ecological attributes, stresses, as well as their associated threats and further contributing factors. The second day revolved around assessments of criticality of stresses and threats, with particular emphasis on the ability to buffer these impacts and conserve the outstanding universal value (OUV) of both component parts.

3.2.1.3. Conflict resolution workshops (Krokár, Snežnik)

In order to jointly identify risks and develop solutions for existing and expectable conflicts between stakeholders, two conflict resolution workshops were organised in Slovenia, within the BEECH POWER project. SFS organised two additional workshops with local stakeholders on the topic of conflict resolution for each of the two Slovenian WH component sites (Krokár and Snežnik). Both workshops were targeted to the local participants, space users, and landowners or managers and followed the same format. The workshops were entitled “How to reach a solution, when we have different views?” and took place in Kočevje on 21st November 2019 for component part Krokár and in Loška dolina on 11th December 2019 for component part Snežnik.

Both workshops commenced with an introductory round and then discussed why certain disagreements escalate into conflicts, as well as how to best recognise different disagreements in early stages and mitigate them. Three communication techniques for neutralising the emotional charge of conflict situations were presented and a practical exercise was conducted. Additionally, different and various approaches for resolution of environmental conflicts were presented, with a focus on environmental mediation.

3.2.1.4. Recommendations for future work in stakeholder involvement for Slovenia and Slovakia

The stakeholder involvement activities that are being carried out or are still planned on the BEECH POWER project provide a great foundation on which the managers of the WH component parts in Slovenia and Slovakia should build in the future.

The situational analyses have largely been prepared, while it would be recommended that the managers of Slovak components verify the results of the MARISCO workshop with their local stakeholders on a more local/regional level. All prepared situational analyses should be seen as evolving documents that should be updated on a regular basis with wide involvement of stakeholders. More details on how to achieve that are given in the next chapter (Communication Strategy).



The activities related to setting objectives and goals, as well as their implementation, should follow the roadmap set for the BEECH POWER project. Therefore, it is expected that for Slovenian component parts, at least the initial round of activities will be implemented through BEECH POWER project. After the conclusion of the first two years of BEECH POWER project, the manager of Slovenian WH component parts should carry on with these activities as outlined in the next chapter (Communication Strategy). For Slovak component parts, the PA managers are encouraged to integrate the guidelines from the Communication Strategy into their management plans, so that similar stakeholder involvement procedures can take place.

4. Communication strategy

The UNESCO World Heritage (WH) Site 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe' represents the most complex transnational serial natural site in the UNESCO portfolio - comprising 78 component parts in 45 protected areas (PAs) in 12 countries. The programme area shares almost 25% of the components parts distributed in five countries (Austria, Germany, Croatia, Slovakia, and Slovenia). While local management units of the component parts face similar challenges, i.e. concerning buffer zone management, the respective environmental and socio-economic contexts differ considerably on local and national level.

The results of successful communication will be that protected area managers, national policy-makers, representatives from the civil society and other relevant stakeholders understand the importance of UNESCO WH component parts and see them as compatible with their needs. The communication should aim to encourage stakeholders to be active in the wider management of the component parts and buffer zones through active stakeholder participation. Communication of WH component parts should focus on raising awareness, increasing knowledge and changing attitude and behaviour of the stakeholders, as well as engaging all target groups, through the implementation of targeted activities.

The challenge in terms of communication of a transnational UNESCO designation will be to have a coherent message that incorporates, to a certain extent, all component parts from different backgrounds and countries. Such a message will also have to resonate at a European and a local level. This project must inspire the public and at the same time be understood by targeted stakeholders who are directly impacted by this WH inscription.

This particular UNESCO World Heritage Site has been inscribed under criterion (ix): *“outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals”*. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention furthermore specified that properties under this criterion should have *“sufficient size and contain the necessary elements to demonstrate the key aspects of processes that are essential for the long term conservation of the ecosystems and the biological diversity they contain”*. Additional requirements include that properties should *“reflect the spatial requirements of habitats, species, processes or phenomena that provide the basis for their inscription on the WH list. The boundaries should include sufficient areas immediately adjacent to the area of OUV in order to protect the property’s heritage values from direct effects of human encroachments and impacts of resource use outside of the nominated area”*.

Following these recommendations and the specificities of this serial nomination, communication activities can be tricky and should be carefully planned. The inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List often results in increased visitor interest, which can often be one of the main drivers of local and regional development. Particular when ancient and primeval beech forests are in focus, one must recognise that these outstanding forests were preserved mainly by banning the human activities and their protection is on par with IUCN Category I, which requires strict protection regimes, severely limiting human interactions with the inscribed property and its component parts. On the other hand, the WH Convention encourages all



State Parties to raise awareness of the WH in their countries and adequately mark and promote them. Furthermore, the WH Committee supports the development of educational materials, activities and programmes. These encouraged activities further increase the interest of visitors, which can lead to situation where visitors become one of the main threats to the integrity and the OUV of the UNESCO site, such as it the case of Brugge or Plitvice National Park. Therefore, communication of the component parts of this transnational property should be carefully planned. This strategy will focus on Slovenian and Slovakian components.

4.1. Slovenia

4.1.1. Krokar

Virgin Forest Krokar is already protected, as a strict forest reserve, where no visitors are allowed. Visiting is only allowed on existing hiking trail to the summit Cerk and along Borovška educational trail, both of which lead through the buffer zone. The component part lies on top of a cliff above the Kolpa River valley and is relatively remote in an already underdeveloped and less frequently visited part of the country. The Kočevsko region is the most densely forested part of the country, with up to 90% of the area covered by dense forests, which also feature a number of virgin forest remnants. Until the inscription of Krokar on the UNESCO list, most of the communication focussed on the virgin forest Rajhenavski Rog, which is nationally most well-known and most frequently visited by using the trail outside the border of the forest reserve. This trend was altered after the inscription in 2017, when higher attention was focussed on Krokar.

The competent authorities in the region already established effective and productive communication. The regional unit of Slovenia Forest Service, Institute of Nature Conservation of the Republic of Slovenia, Public Institute Kočevsko (main tourist institution for the region), and the Municipality of Kočevje jointly discussed the future development of the component part, which would assure the preservation of its intact nature and integrity, as well as offer the regional development opportunity for all neighbouring municipalities. This included planning of new visitor infrastructure around the component part and its buffer zone, such as improved access roads and parking areas, as well as preliminary planning of another educational round trail on the western part of the Virgin Forest (still within the buffer zone, in forest reserve Borovec). The collaboration also ensured that regional-level marketing did not start yet, as it was judged that the area is not yet ready for increased presence of uncontrolled tourism.

Despite the promising start, a number of aspects could be further improved. Due to lacking communication and slightly outdated visitor panels and information boards, most visitors are unaware of the protection regimes in place and often visit the virgin forest itself, which is illegal. Current protection regimes are not enforced properly nor communicated. In the absence of structured approach to the management of the site a number of smaller, local tourist providers started offering tours and excursions to the component part and in some cases also within it. This issue is also linked to somewhat lacking wider communication outreach, as most of the decisions are taken on the expert and decision-making levels. Wider consultations and interactions with wider stakeholder groups, including local forest owners and populations, tourist providers, tourists themselves, and other interest groups are needed. Additionally, it was discovered that a number of



key stakeholders, such as the Slovenian State Forests Ltd., and some of the relevant Ministries should be more closely involved to provide a better management of the area.

4.1.1.1. Communication measures

1. Expert committee established and operational

While the existing collaboration on the local level functions well, the already implemented activities within BEECH POWER project demonstrated that a wider group of national and regional level institutions should be closely involved at this expert level. This level of engagement corresponds to the collaboration level, mentioned above. The expert committee should be composed of the representatives of the following institutions:

- Slovenia Forest Service
 - Regional Unit Kočevje - as the institution with most on the ground knowledge of the area and its historical protection
 - Central Unit - to ensure decisions are coordinated with Snežnik component as well
- Institute for Nature Conservation of the Republic of Slovenia
 - Expert institution for nature conservation
- Slovenian State Forests Ltd. (SiDG)
 - The area of forest reserves Virgin Forest Krokar and Borovec is state-owned and therefore managed by the Slovenian State Forests enterprise
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
 - The core and the buffer zone are established forest reserves, which are managed by the Ministry responsible for forestry
- Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning
 - UNESCO natural WH in Slovenia is under responsibility of the Ministry responsible for environment, which is also the State Party on the Convention level
- Municipalities
 - Municipality of Kočevje
 - Municipality of Osilnica
 - Municipality of Kostel
 - All three municipalities have an interest in attracting visitors which are interested in UNESCO WH. However, given that Krokar lies in Kočevje Municipality, it is expected that this municipality will take the lead.
- Kočevsko Institute
 - Main central tourism organisation in the region



The 10 representatives of the above mentioned institutions should form an advisory body to the manager of the WH component part, which still needs to be formally defined. It would be recommended to designate a mediator among the representatives of the advisory body/expert committee or from the local communities. This person should be a respected person in the community, but not associated with the manager and the main decision-makers. The role of this person is mediation between stakeholders and ensuring the long-term sustainability of stakeholder involvement processes. Their regular meetings and oversight will provide a balanced, cross-sectoral perspective on the management and ensure a more fluid and efficient implementation of management activities on the ground. This body, in collaboration with the manager, also defines the general marketing and promotion strategies.

2. Local action groups

In order to more directly involve also local stakeholders, which are organised on lower levels and do not hold decision-making power, the formation of local action groups is proposed. This will be implemented already within BEECH POWER project, in a pilot manner. Local action groups will be self-organised and will meet according to their own schedules. The manager will have the right to call a group for a specific consultation at a month's notice. Otherwise, the meetings between the local action group and the manager will take place either once or twice a year, individually, and once a year with representatives of the expert committee and all other local action groups at the same time. According to the engagement level definitions given above, this measure would fall into consultations. Given the specific needs and specificities of Krokar component part, the following local action groups are proposed:

- Tourism local action group
 - Includes the representatives of local tourist operators, guides, and accommodation providers, as well as hiking associations.
 - Tourism is one of the main economic sectors that can be developed following the UNESCO inscription, with also the highest potential to endanger the ecological integrity of the site. Therefore, coherent action needs to be taken and jointly agreed on, where the wishes and needs of locals dependent on tourism are fully taken into account.
- Forestry and hunting local action group
 - There are a number of local forestry and hunting associations in the wider area, which should be involved.

3. General public engagement

At least once a year, and if necessary more often, a general workshop will be organised by the WH component part manager, where the management priorities of the last year and suggestions for the next year will be presented and then discussed and agreed upon with the wider stakeholders. This public forum will provide the opportunity for the public to be informed about the developments of the management in the component part, while still being organised at a time when constructive input from the public could be integrated into the management priorities for the coming year. Thus, the general public engagement refers mainly to information level of engagement, with some elements of consultation.

4.1.2. Snežnik

Forest Reserve Snežnik is the largest forest reserve in Slovenia and includes the highest part of the Snežnik-Javorniki karstic plateau with Snežnik summit, which is the highest mountain in Slovenia outside of the Alpine region. The summit is above the tree limit and offers 360° views all the way from the Alps to the Adriatic Sea and Croatia. As such, Snežnik Mountain is a popular hiking spot with several thousands of people visiting it every year, even without realising its protected or UNESCO status. There are four marked hiking trails that lead through montane and subalpine beech forests to the dwarf pine belt and beyond to the meadows at the summit of the mountain. Hiking on those trails through the component part is allowed. However, there are other, less prominent peaks in the southern part of the reserve, where no marked trails exist. Therefore, walking around that part of the reserve is illegal. Since the inscription in 2017, the interest in the area noticeably increased. However, the changes are not yet worrying. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the development opportunity for the region has not been realised yet.

There is currently little formalised cooperation existing among the relevant authorities and publics with focus on UNESCO WH component part, with the exception of activities undertaken through BEECH POWER project. Partly this is due to a much larger and complex site, which is divided between two municipalities, while none of them have a centralised tourism institutions, like in the case of Kočevje. The Regional Development Agency Zeleni Kras, has only recently started to work in the direction of using the area for the wider regional development. Similarly to Krokar, a number of small tourist providers are offering tours and excursions to the component part. However, in the case of Snežnik, efforts are spared by the manager to keep the public profile of the area low, as increased number of visitors is perceived as one of the main threats to the integrity and the OUV of the component part.

Communication for Snežnik component part should focus on the communication of the existing protection regimes and their implementation, with interpretation activities focussed outside of the WH property and all visitors directed to use the existing paths. Wide-ranging consensus from different levels of decision-makers and key stakeholder groups is needed to achieve these goals, which will require dedicated participation activities, where attention will have to be paid to the fact that increasing the amount of visitors on Snežnik could endanger its OUV and integrity.

4.1.2.1. Communication measures

1. Expert committee established and operational

The already implemented activities within BEECH POWER project demonstrated that a wider group of national and regional level institutions should be closely involved at this expert level. This level of engagement corresponds to the collaboration level, mentioned above. The expert committee should be composed of the representatives of the following institutions:

- Slovenia Forest Service



- Regional Unit Postojna - as the institution with most on the ground knowledge of the area and its historical protection
- Central Unit - to ensure decisions are coordinated with Kroker component as well
- Institute for Nature Conservation of the Republic of Slovenia
 - Expert institution for nature conservation
- Slovenian State Forests Ltd. (SiDG)
 - The area of forest reserve Snežnik is state-owned and therefore managed by the Slovenian State Forests enterprise
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food
 - The core area is an established forest reserve, which is managed by the Ministry responsible for forestry
- Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning
 - UNESCO natural WH in Slovenia is under responsibility of the Ministry responsible for environment, which is also the State Party on the Convention level
- Municipalities
 - Municipality of Ilirska Bistrica
 - Municipality of Loška dolina
 - Both municipalities should be equally involved as the forest reserve is in both municipalities
- Regional Development Agency Zeleni Kras
 - Main development organisation in the region, which is also active in tourism sector
- Tourist Information Centres
 - Ilirska Bistrica
 - Loška dolina
- Special purpose state hunting ground Jelen
 - The component part lies within the Special purpose state hunting ground, therefore any topic of game management should be discussed with the manager of this area.

The 12 representatives of the above mentioned institutions should form an advisory body to the manager of the WH component part, which still needs to be formally defined. It would be recommended to designate a mediator among the representatives of the advisory body/expert committee or from the local communities. This person should be a respected person in the community, but not associated with the manager and the main decision-makers. The role of this person is mediation between stakeholders and ensuring the long term sustainability of stakeholder involvement processes. Their regular meetings and oversight will provide a balanced, cross-sectoral perspective on the management and ensure a more fluid and efficient implementation of management activities on the ground. This body, in collaboration with the manager, also defines the general marketing and promotion strategies.

2. Local action groups



In order to more directly involve also local stakeholders, which are organised on lower levels and do not hold decision-making power, the formation of local action groups is proposed. This will be implemented already within BEECH POWER project, in a pilot manner. Local action groups will be self-organised and will meet according to their own schedules. The manager will have the right to call a group for a specific consultation at a months notice. Otherwise, the meetings between the local action group and the manager will take place either once or twice a year, individually, and once a year with representatives of the expert committee and all other local action groups at the same time. According to the engagement level definitions given above, this measure would fall into consultations. Given the specific needs and specificities of Snežnik component part, the following local action groups are proposed:

- Tourism local action group
 - Includes the representatives of local tourist operators, guides, and accommodation providers
 - Tourism is one of the main economic sectors that can be developed following the UNESCO inscription, with also the highest potential to endanger the ecological integrity of the site. Therefore, coherent action needs to be taken and jointly agreed on, where the wishes and needs of locals dependent on tourism are fully taken into account.
- Forestry and hunting local action group
 - There are a number of local forestry and hunting associations in the wider area, which should be involved
- Hiking and mountaineering local action group
 - Hikers are the most prevalent visitors of the component part and a number of Alpine mountaineering societies also manage the hut in the buffer zone on the summit of Snežnik Mountain and at Sviščaki, which is one of the main points for visitors outside of the component part.

3. General public engagement

At least once a year, and if necessary more often, a general workshop will be organised by the WH component part manager, where the management priorities of the last year and suggestions for the next year will be presented and then discussed and agreed upon with the wider stakeholders. This public forum will provide the opportunity for the public to be informed about the developments of the management in the component part, while still being organised at a time when constructive input from the public could be integrated into the management priorities for the coming year. Thus, the general public engagement refers mainly to information level of engagement, with some elements of consultation.

4.2. Slovakia



4.2.1. Poloniny cluster

The component cluster Poloniny is located in north-east corner of Slovakia and it adjoins to the Ukraine and Poland. The cluster is located in the Poloniny National Park, with up to 80% of the area covered by forests. The cluster currently consists of three component parts - Havešová, Rožok and Stužica-Bukovské vrchy, but in the context of the extension of the site, the fourth component part - Udava was added. Prevailing part of the component parts is covered by the existing natural reserves with the strictest, fifth level of protection, according to national legislation. New natural reserves should be designated in the rest part of the component parts in the near future. This ensures the strict protection throughout the component parts. This prohibits any forest management activities (including phytosanitary cutting), game management activities, fishing, constructions, etc. Putting up tents or bivouacking is not allowed too. For other activities, such as scientific research, building and marking tourist trails and nature trails, etc., it is necessary to obtain a permission. Visitors may move along the marked tourist trails only. In relation to the above mentioned facts it is possible to say that natural processes in this component cluster take place without significant human influence.

Stakeholder involvement so far has been more or less limited to bilateral negotiations on the UNESCO site boundaries or its extension. Other local communities were involved through individual workshops or presentations. Cooperation of the administrator of the protected area with experts is mainly in the field of ancient forest research. However, the range of issues to be solve today or in the future is much larger. No working groups involving local and national stakeholders have been set up yet. Recently, efforts have been made to initiate cooperation in the development of tourism in the region as part of an initiative involving a protected area administrator, a self-governing region, several municipalities and a non-governmental organization.

Within BEECH POWER, several activities have been carried out with the participation of stakeholders from different levels, and several such activities are still planned.

4.2.1.1. Communication measures

Given the lack of collaboration so far, there is a need to use other communication strategies and involve a wider range of stakeholders at all levels.

1. Expert committee established and operational

A group of experts should be set up to address the basic issues of sustainable management of the World Heritage Site and the wider area. At this expert level, a wider group of institutions at national and regional level should be closely involved. The Committee of Experts should be composed of representatives of the following institutions:

- State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC)



- Poloniny National Park Administration - as the institution with most on the ground knowledge of the area, a direct impact on the management of the area and nature protection
- Central Unit - Expert institution for nature conservation, to ensure decisions are coordinated with all component parts as well
- Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič
 - The largest part of forest in the Poloniny cluster is state-owned and therefore managed by the Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič
- State enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic
 - State organization managing part of state-owned forest land located in the Poloniny cluster
- Owners and associations managing non-state forests
 - Several private owners and companies manage forests in the WH area. We propose an agreement to one representative.
- Ministry of Environment
 - UNESCO natural WH in Slovakia is under responsibility of the Ministry responsible for environment, which is also submitted a proposal to extension the area
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
 - The Ministry responsible for forestry and at the same time is responsible for state-owned enterprises that manage the forests in the WH property
- Ministry of foreign and European Affairs
 - Ministry hosting the UNESCO Office for all Slovak UNESCO sites
- Technical University in Zvolen
 - Institution providing education focused on the spheres of forest - wood - ecology - environment. It carries out long-term research in ancient beech forests of the Carpathians. It also cooperated on the original proposal of the UNESCO site inscribed in 2007.
- National forest centre Zvolen
 - A public institution providing forestry science and research, framework management of forests, consultancy in forestry, etc. It carries out various expert assessments for forest management and nature conservation.
- Municipalities
 - The core zones of component parts are located in the territory of 12 municipalities, their buffer zones in the other 4 municipalities. With such a large number, it is not possible to have every municipality represented in an expert group. We propose an agreement with a maximum of 3 representatives.
- Regional tourism organization Northeast Slovakia
 - Representative of regional self-government and other organizations in the field of tourism development in the wider region.



The 12 (to 14) representatives of the above mentioned institutions should form an advisory body to the manager of the WH component cluster, which still needs to be formally defined. It would be recommended to designate a mediator among the representatives of the advisory body/expert committee or from the local communities. This person should be a respected person in the community, but not associated with the manager and the main decision-makers. The role of this person is mediation between stakeholders and ensuring the long term sustainability of stakeholder involvement processes. Their regular meetings and oversight will provide a balanced, cross-sectoral perspective on the management and ensure a more fluid and efficient implementation of management activities on the ground. This body, in collaboration with the manager, also defines the general marketing and promotion strategies.

2. Local action groups

In order to more directly involve also local stakeholders, which are organised on lower levels and do not hold decision-making power, the formation of local action groups is proposed. This will be implemented already within BEECH POWER project, in a pilot manner. Local action groups will be self-organised and will meet according to their own schedules. The manager will have the right to call a group for a specific consultation at a month's notice. Otherwise, the meetings between the local action group and the manager will take place either once or twice a year, individually, and once a year with representatives of the expert committee and all other local action groups at the same time. According to the engagement level definitions given above, this measure would fall into consultations. Given the specific needs and specificities of Poloniny component cluster, the following local action groups are proposed:

- Tourism local action group
 - Includes the representatives of local tourist operators, guides, and accommodation providers
 - Tourism is one of the main economic sectors that can be developed following the UNESCO inscription, with also the highest potential to endanger the ecological integrity of the site. Therefore, coherent action needs to be taken and jointly agreed on, where the wishes and needs of locals dependent on tourism are fully taken into account.
- Forestry and hunting local action group
 - There are a number of local forestry and hunting associations in the wider area, which should be involved

3. General public engagement

At least once a year, and if necessary more often, a general workshop will be organised by the WH component part manager, where the management priorities of the last year and suggestions for the next year will be presented and then discussed and agreed upon with the wider stakeholders. This public forum will provide the opportunity for the public to be informed about the developments of the management in the component part, while still being organised at a time when constructive input from the public could be integrated into the management priorities for the coming year. Thus, the general public engagement refers mainly to information level of engagement, with some elements of consultation.



4.2.2. Vihorlat

The component cluster Vihorlat currently consists of the component part Vihorlat, but in the context of the extension of the site, the second component part - Kyjovský prales was defined. The component cluster is located in the Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area, with 90% of the area covered by forests. The area of territory is built of volcanic units which include most of the central stratovolcano of Vihorlat Mts. Prevailing part of the component parts is covered by the existing natural reserves with the strictest, fifth level of protection. New natural reserves should be designated in the rest part of the component parts in the near future. This ensures the strict protection throughout component parts. The nature conservation situation is similar to the component cluster Poloniny.

The situation with the involvement of stakeholders so far is similar to that of Poloniny, mostly dealing with a separate problem with one particular partner. Public awareness and involvement is also relatively weak.

A special case is the component part Kyjovský prales, which is managed by Military Forests with a special regime of activities in the area. This significantly limits the possibility of involving other interest groups in decision-making and management.

The activities within the BEECH POWER project are also related to the component cluster Vihorlat.

4.2.2.1. Communication measures

Given the lack of collaboration so far, there is a need to use other communication strategies and involve a wider range of stakeholders at all levels.

1. Expert committee established and operational

A group of experts should be set up to address the basic issues of sustainable management of the World Heritage Site and the wider area. At this expert level, a wider group of institutions at national and regional level should be closely involved. The Committee of Experts should be composed of representatives of the following institutions:

- State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC)
 - Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area Administration - as the institution with most on the ground knowledge of the area, a direct impact on the management of the area and nature protection.
 - Central Unit - Expert institution for nature conservation, to ensure decisions are coordinated with all component parts as well.
- State enterprise Military Forests



- The largest part of state-owned forest in the Vihorlat cluster is managed by this enterprise.
- State enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic
 - State organization managing part of state-owned forest land located in the Vihorlat cluster
- Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič
 - The part of forest in the Vihorlat cluster is state-owned and managed by the Forest-Agricultural State Enterprise Ulič
- Owners and associations managing non-state forests
 - Several private owners and companies manage forests in the WH area. We propose an agreement to one representative.
- Ministry of Environment
 - UNESCO natural WH in Slovakia is under responsibility of the Ministry responsible for environment, which is also submitted a proposal to extension the area
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
 - The Ministry responsible for forestry and at the same time is responsible for state-owned enterprises that manage the forests in the WH property
- Ministry of Defense
 - The part of forests included into the Vihorlat cluster and its buffer zone belong to the protective zone of the Military Training Centre Valaškovce.
- Ministry of foreign and European Affairs
 - Ministry hosting the UNESCO Office for all Slovak UNESCO sites
- Technical University in Zvolen
 - Institution providing education focused on the spheres of forest - wood - ecology - environment. It carries out long-term research in ancient beech forests of the Carpathians. It also cooperated on the original proposal of the UNESCO site inscribed in 2007.
- National forest centre Zvolen
 - A public institution providing forestry science and research, framework management of forests, consultancy in forestry, etc. It carries out various expert assessments for forest management and nature conservation.
- Municipalities
 - The component parts are located in the territory of 10 municipalities, under the proposal to change borders two of them will lie only in the buffer zone. With such a large number, it is not possible to have every municipality represented in an expert group. We propose an agreement with a maximum of 3 representatives, except military district.
- Regional tourism organization Zemplínska
 - An interest association with a view to the sustainable development of tourism and the protection of the interests of its members, which operates in the wider region.



The 14 (to 16) representatives of the above mentioned institutions should form an advisory body to the manager of the WH component cluster, which still needs to be formally defined. It would be recommended to designate a mediator among the representatives of the advisory body/expert committee or from the local communities. This person should be a respected person in the community, but not associated with the manager and the main decision-makers. The role of this person is mediation between stakeholders and ensuring the long term sustainability of stakeholder involvement processes. Their regular meetings and oversight will provide a balanced, cross-sectoral perspective on the management and ensure a more fluid and efficient implementation of management activities on the ground. This body, in collaboration with the manager, also defines the general marketing and promotion strategies.

2. Local action groups

In order to more directly involve also local stakeholders, which are organised on lower levels and do not hold decision-making power, the formation of local action groups is proposed. This will be implemented already within BEECH POWER project, in a pilot manner. Local action groups will be self-organised and will meet according to their own schedules. The manager will have the right to call a group for a specific consultation at a months notice. Otherwise, the meetings between the local action group and the manager will take place either once or twice a year, individually, and once a year with representatives of the expert committee and all other local action groups at the same time. According to the engagement level definitions given above, this measure would fall into consultations.. Given the specific needs and specificities of Vihorlat component cluster, the following local action groups are proposed:

- Tourism local action group
 - Includes the representatives of local tourist operators, guides, and accommodation providers
 - Tourism is one of the main economic sectors that can be developed following the UNESCO inscription, with also the highest potential to endanger the ecological integrity of the site. Therefore, coherent action needs to be taken and jointly agreed on, where the wishes and needs of locals dependent on tourism are fully taken into account.
- Forestry and hunting local action group
 - There are a number of local forestry and hunting associations in the wider area, which should be involved

3. General public engagement

At least once a year, and if necessary more often, a general workshop will be organised by the WH component part manager, where the management priorities of the last year and suggestions for the next year will be presented and then discussed and agreed upon with the wider stakeholders. This public forum will provide the opportunity for the public to be informed about the developments of the management in the component part, while still being organised at a time when constructive input from the public could be integrated into the management priorities for the coming year. Thus, the general public engagement refers mainly to information level of engagement, with some elements of consultation.



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