

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

26/06/2020

CEPF Grant 4-46

Croatian Biological Research Society/Hrvatsko društvo za biološka istraživanja

***Conservation of the Southern Dalmatian Minnow, Advanced Semi-cave Fish of the
Dinaric Karst in Bosnia and Herzegovina***

Dabarsko, Fatničko and Popovo poljes (BIH)

Grant Summary

1. Croatian Biological Research Society/Hrvatsko društvo za biološka istraživanja.
2. Conservation of the Southern Dalmatian Minnow, Advanced Semi-cave Fish of the Dinaric Karst in Bosnia and Herzegovina
3. 4-46
4. 25 000 (US dollars).
5. 01/06/2020 – 01/12/2021.
6. Bosnia and Herzegovina – Fatnik, Dabar and Popovo karst poljes in SW Bosnia and Herzegovina.
7. 26/06/2020.

The Process Framework will describe the project and how restrictions of access to natural resources and measures to assist affected communities. Affected communities should have the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the Process Framework. Typically, the Applicant will prepare a draft Framework that will then be shared and discussed with local communities and other relevant stakeholders. Based on the consultations, a final Framework will be prepared. CEPF may provide guidance on development of the Framework and will review and approve the final Framework prior to approving the final project proposal application. The Process Framework should include the following elements:

A. Project background

Project will be based on conservation of advanced semi-cave fish of Dinaric Karst and the main focus will be fish species *Delminichthys ghetaldii*, the most advanced semi-cave endemic species in Dinaric karst – which is extremely rare and threatened, mostly by habitat destruction and degradation (karst poljes and caves in karst). Karstic fields (poljes) are specific geographic formations characterizing the Dinaric karst from Slovenia to Montenegro. They have numerous underground channels to the surface allowing a water outlet through their waterproof bottoms. These sources feed rivers and streams meandering along the fields. That is why karstic fields are covered with the best cultivable soil in otherwise rather inhospitable karstic world. Area of our concern is complex karstic feature of Eastern Herzegovina consisted of Dabarsko, Fatničko and Popovo karst poljes. Underground fauna is one of the most unknown groups of species, with huge endemism. The area is also famous for its endemic fish species, usually stenoendemic (very restricted distribution), that are more or less connected to the cave system, so some of them are even called cave-fish. We have some historical data about this species, but recent research is missing. At the same time, this karstic fields are in plans to be used to upgrade existing HP system on Neretva and Trebišnica rivers, by damming them, connect them with tunnels, which can completely change the natural water drainage flows, deteriorate habitat for cave fauna and lead to loss of many species. Therefore we need to know more about this species ecology to be able to mitigate all possible negative impacts.

Biggest problem is that *D. ghetaldii* is endemic and rare species, making it one of the most vulnerable species in this area. At the same time about this fish is quite poor and scarce, therefore rising knowledge about it can lead to preparation of conservation measures and promoting them within decision makers and users of water resources that this fish is depending on. *Delminichthys ghetaldii* has very restricted distribution. According to IUCN its extent of occurrence (EEO) is <5,000 km² (area of occupancy (AOO) <500 km²) and it has been recorded on less than 10 locations in B&H and Croatia. Historical data imply that in B&H *D. ghetaldii* inhabits Popovo, Ljubomirsko, Dabarsko and Fatničko polje (field) in Trebišnjica river system, but newer records do not confirm such distribution. Recent scientific studies from western Bosnia indicate that *D. ghetaldii* inhabits only Popovo polje, whilst in other poljes it was probably misidentified with young specimens of similar *Telestes metohiensis* or *Phoxinus karsticus*.

According to the local Red Lists and legislation, *D. ghetaldii* is a protected and endangered species (EN). In B&H it is listed on the Red Lists of Federation of B&H and Republic of Srpska (OG FBiH 66/13, OG RS 124/12), but species action plan does not exist.

Main goals will be mapping of remaining habitats, reassessment of IUCN status and creation of conservation measures for *Delminichthys ghetaldii*. Another approach will be establishment of multistakeholder platform of relevant (and transboundary - with HR and MNE) stakeholders, with the aim of integrated management of Trebišnjica river catchment which is a habitat of this fish. Main goal is to enhance the knowledge base on freshwater biodiversity and the importance of freshwater ecosystem services. Additionally, through this project, second aim will be to engage with government, private sector and other stakeholders to support integrated river basin management practices that reduce threats to biodiversity in priority CMZs.

B. Participatory implementation

Main cooperators of HDBI in this project will be WWF Adria and WWF office in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Dinarica, which is working in the area for years on mitigating existing hydropower system and conservation of Hutovo Blato wetland. This project is definitely contributing to their work as they need more scientifically based arguments for their lobbying and advocacy, as well only by partnering and sharing the work on learning about the underground and surface biodiversity we can gain results and use them in conservation efforts. WWF Adria and its

partner organization Dinarica will organize and coordinate the work of the Multistakeholders Platform but also other activities that come out of the Multistakeholders Platform work. Mainly the idea is to build their capacity on topics relevant to conservation of Dalmatian minnow and its habitat. Multistakeholders Platform Management body from the start can be consisted form 5 members of strongest and most active members of the Platform (e.g. Dinarica, HBDI, local community representative, local authority or NGO, etc.) in order to increase later sustainability of the Platform.

- Main participants and stakeholders targeted through this project are decision makers (local self-government and RS Electricity Company) as they can directly influence project outcomes.
- Second participants will be local NGOs which will be used as allies. They are listed as secondary stakeholders since they have only interest in the project but they do not have any input in the decision making on the governmental level.
- Finally, third participants and stakeholder is general public which will be reached through media, just to be informed and to rise their awareness about the importance of karstic fields, underground habitat and general biodiversity of this area.

Additionally, there will be constant contact with government (Republika Srpska and Federation of BIH), Ministries for Environment and Agriculture, since they are main authorities in issuing permits for research and field work.

C. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

Through development of action plan and measures to protect *Delminichthys ghetaldii*, most affected persons will be those who use the water where this species live. This includes local anglers and fishermen, as well as touristic anglers. Furthermore, this also includes local people who use water for agriculture or other activities. With the protection of this species, it will not be possible to plan future hydropower plants without impact studies. The project will involve all stakeholders for the preparation of the management plan of future protected area.

The affected persons that will be considered for specific alternative actions are:

- agriculture: control the amount of pesticides used on the fields which drain to the protected rivers, streams and underground. Control the water that drains from the farmlands which can contain large amount of pollutants (pesticides, herbicides, heavy metals...). Measures to mitigate problem include water purification systems, such as water pools where water is kept for chemical degradation with natural UV light and particle precipitation
- the local, small-scale anglers who rely on the waterbodies where this species is distributed. Specific rights for these local fishermen will be discussed and agreed during the consultations, and integrated in the management plan. Measures to mitigate problems include quotas, fishing seasons, selection of species, sustainable fishing and angling (such as “catch and release”). Local fishermen will also be the main target for alternative, non-destructive activities (ecotourism, participation to monitoring, etc.). Additionally, large effort must be put forward to prevent introduction of non-native and invasive fish species. Introduction of these species can lead to almost certain habitat destruction, population decrease and eventually extinction of endangered endemic species.
- local tourism industry: while some limitations could be enforced as regards tourism, the tourist operators will be involved from the beginning of the project, and are expected to see their income increase as a result of the protected area.
- other activities: control of the water that comes from the industry, households, etc., which can act as a pollutant. Promote measures such as water purification systems, like the ones in agriculture. Control any type of activity that can degrade water or habitat quality – such as any type of construction and infrastructural works within or near water (dams, levees, dykes, left or right bank reconstruction, etc.)

For all other activities that will have any impact on the species and area of its distribution, Ministry of Environment or Nature protection will have to issue permits which will be based on special impact study.

For the easier conduct of impact studies and monitoring of this species, eDNA method will be developed which will enable any interested party to conduct fast, easy and cost-effective research in order to determinate if the species is distributed on certain area.

D. Measures to assist the affected persons

As already mentioned before, the consultations and workshops with local communities will determine the best way to ensure continuance of their activities, but in the respect of the local laws and regulations.

Regarding the fishermen, the capacity building activities, the setting up of incentives for fishermen willing to change their practices, as well as the creation of a label to add value to sustainable local products and services, are all measures meant to support the transition to a more sustainable economic model for fishing, that will ensure livelihoods for future generations.

Eco tourism can provide additional incomes for local communities impacted. Especially, catch and release angling practice can be considered as best method to adapt and which can be considered as sustainable economic model for fishing, that will ensure livelihoods for future generations. Local anglers can be actively engaged in protection and monitoring, since the protection will also have positive impact on their local communities.

E. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism

All projects that trigger a safeguard must provide local communities and other relevant stakeholders with a means to raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank.

This grievance mechanism must include, at a minimum, the following elements.

- Email and telephone contact information for the grantee organization.
- Email and telephone contact information for the CEPF Regional Implementation Team.
- Email and telephone contact information for the local World Bank office.
- The email of the CEPF Executive Director: cepfexecutive@conservation.org
- A statement describing how you will inform stakeholders of the objectives of the project and the existence of the grievance mechanism (e.g., posters, signboards, public notices, public announcements, use of local languages).
- You should include the following text, exactly, in any grievance mechanism: “We will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.”

Following the guidance above, describe the grievance mechanism that you will use.

Grievance mechanism:

WWF Adria, Deni Porej, CEO, dporej@wwfadria.org, +381 63 1052050

Liz Smith, CEPF;Regional Implementation Team Manager, liz.smith@birdlife.org;

World Bank, Croatia Country Office, +385 1 2357 222, vfrajtic@worldbank.org

We will share all grievances – and a proposed response – with the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days. If the claimant is not satisfied following the response, they may submit the grievance directly to the CEPF Executive Director Olivier Langrand at cepfexecutive@conservation.org or by surface mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Executive Director, they may submit the grievance to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.”

F. Implementation Arrangements

All efforts will be made so as to include all of the potentially affected persons in the developed action plans. HDBI and WWF will provide the necessary contacts and information to the experts.

Prior to the development of the final conservation plan, affected people (if any) will be consulted during the drafting of the actions relevant to them through public discussion. All points discussed during the meetings will be formulated in “minutes of meetings”. When clear actions are agreed upon, the final plan will be developed, integrating the needs of affected people as well as the agreed upon actions.

The above will be reported regularly to CEPF as part of the semi-annual performance reports. Constant communication will be kept with Marijana Demajo, Small Grant Coordinator for Balkans through e-mail and telephone communication, as well as with online meetings.