LIFE12 ENV/SI/000443

RusaLCA "Nanoremediation of water from small waste water treatment plants and reuse of water and solid remains for local needs"

Periodical report about dissemination

Reporting Date
30/06/2014

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1 Background

This report is related to Action D.1 Communication and dissemination of knowledge. The leader of this activity is the Municipality of Šentrupert, but all the other partners are actively involved in dissemination activities.
In the RusaLCA project, great emphasis has been laid on the dissemination of knowledge and information, and raising awareness of the positive effects of the recycling of waste water from both the environmental and the sociologically-economic perspective. It is therefore crucial that constant communication takes place with the essential interested parties at the local, regional, and national levels, in particular through the already established and newly-formed communication channels and contacts established by the project partners. Communication with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment, and with the Slovenian Environment Agency, is also considered to be of key importance, especially in the field of the foreseen changes to the current relevant national legislation. Networking and communication at the international level is also recognized as important.
However, the most efficient communication has to take place at the local level, i.e. at the Municipality of Šentrupert. **People have to recognize that the outcomes of the project will be economically and environmentally beneficial, and will pose no threat to their health.**

2 Planning of the activities and their coordination

A detailed plan for the implementation of the required activities within the framework of the specified timeline and schedule was prepared, as well as the protocols for information flow and exchange between the coordinator and the associated beneficiaries.
At the project group meetings individual activities were discussed, and also agreed with all the beneficiaries. Furthermore, the beneficiaries have been acquainted with the requirements regarding the communication during different phases of the project. Here, on the one hand, the requirements set by the agreement with the EC have been emphasized, and on the other hand the content of the communication activities during the different phases of the project.
The planned activities in action D1 cover the following fields and the preparation of hand-outs (already performed activities or those now in action are highlighted):

D1.1 – the round table discussion with local beneficiaries

D1.2 – dissemination at the regional level (2x)

D1.3 – publications and published articles (30)

D1.4 – the official web page

D1.5 – various promotion items: on-site information panels, roll-ups, flags, labels, posters

D1.6 – the layman report

D1.7 – the project presentation brochure

The statement: "The main aim of the project is the reduction of the consumption of drinking water by 30 %" was selected as the leading message of the project, and the following

statement was also emphasised: "The innovative technology of small wastewater treatment plants is the sustainable alternative for areas with dispersed settlement." In all communication activities the competence and proficiency of the project beneficiaries is emphasized since knowledge and development are important for the general public as an integral part of the project.

3 Performed activities in the first year of the project

During the period between the start of the project and the end of June 2014, all the scheduled activities according to the project plan for action D1 were performed.

3.1 D1.4 – The official webpage

The official web site (www.rusalca.si) of the project was released on the World Wide Web on October 25th 2013. It has been contemporarily designed, and is a technically advanced web site which includes all available actual data about the project:

- General information about the project
- List of the Partners
- The coordinating beneficiary's contact details
- Description of the cleaning technology
- Appropriate references on all pages with links to the LIFE program web page.

The web pages were created in so-called responsive design. That means they can adapt to different electronic devices (computer desktops, tablets, and smart phones). An integral part of the web site is its content management. It is designed in such a way that the content and structure can be modified during the implementation of the next phases of the project.

In February 2014 the web pages were updated with a corresponding English version and with new information about the progress of the project. The first (home) page of the web site is shown in Figure 1.

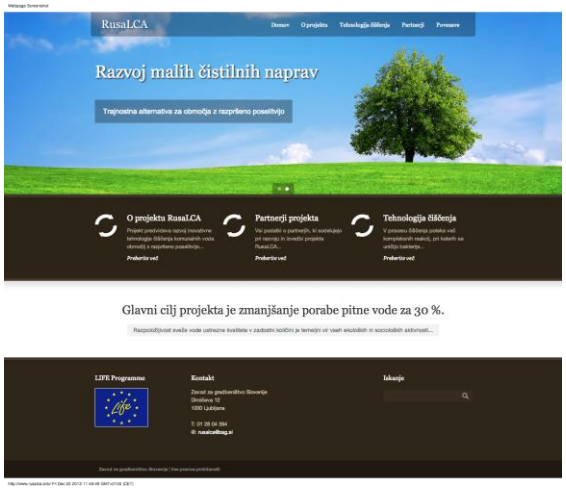

Figure 1: the home (entry) page of the site: www.rusalca.si

3.2 D1.5 – various promotion items: on-site information panels, roll-ups, flags, labels, posters

The promotion posters for the project beneficiaries

For the needs of promotion of the project information boards, in B2 format, were designed for the project beneficiaries. They were delivered to all the beneficiaries of the project. For special communication usage cases (conferences, networking, and dissemination activities) a roll-up standing board of size 220 x 80 cm was designed. These printed materials include all the necessary elements for project promotion, and EC co-funding is suitably indicated. An example of a RusaLCA information board is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: A RusaLCA information board

Also small fags and labels as additional communication elements were prepared and handed out to the project beneficiaries, according to their needs. In Figure 3 the printed promotion items are presented. The information boards at beneficiaries are shown in Figure 4. The roll-up board which stands in ZAG's entrance hall is shown in Figure 5.

Small flag

Label

Figure 3: Two examples of the printed promotion items

IJS

Structum

NLZOH

Municipality Šentrupert

Vekton

Esplanada

Figure 4: The information boards at beneficiaries

Figure 5: The roll-up board which stands in ZAG's entrance hall

3.3 D1.3 – Publications and published articles

Press Releases

For the media an official release was prepared and presented by the Municipality of Šentrupert, as an associated beneficiary, on 17.12.2013. On the basis of this press release at least five other posts were recorded in the public media. A scientific article by researchers from ZAG and IJS has been published in "Science of the Total Environment" (476–477, 2014, pp 20–28).
An article about the RusaLCA project has also been published in the newsletter of the Municipality of Šentrupert.

On the official web pages of the municipalities of Slovenia (www.Mojaobcina.si) some information was published about the acquired building permit for the pilot system, as well as some basic information about the project. This was published on 14.4.2014.
New releases in the public media are expected during the implementation of the next phases of the project. This is when the construction of the pilot wastewater treatment plant will begin, and when more detailed information regarding the water purification technology will become known. This will enable suitable promotion of the achievements and results of the project.

3.4 D1.1 – The round table discussion with local beneficiaries

On 12.3.2014 a meeting took place at the municipality of Šentrupert, during which the local inhabitants and the project beneficiaries were acquainted with the project and its aims, including a description of the structures which are connected to the pilot wastewater treatment system. A group of experts working on the RusaLCA project presented the innovative technology of wastewater remediation with nanoparticles that will be used. The importance of the project for the local inhabitants as well as for the region was also emphasised.

Dr. Ana Mladenovič, from the Slovenian National Building and Civil Engineering Institute, presented the trends in environment engineering which dictate the implementation of the new

methods of water management which will be demonstrated in this project with the concept of a pilot wastewater treatment system. During the presentations by experts working on the RusaLCA project, there was a useful debate about the project, which was beneficial for the local inhabitants and for the beneficiaries working on the project. Answers were given to questions regarding the pilot system management and its use.

At the end of the meeting participants filled out a brief questionnaire about water sources management and their relationship to wastewater remediation. The data acquired from this survey will be used for future development of the RusaLCA project. An analysis of the data thus obtained has shown that the so far organized communication activities have contributed positively to the understanding of the project by the local inhabitants. A high awareness about environmental issues among these inhabitants was also observed. A photograph taken during the round table is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 6: meeting with the local beneficiaries, on March 12th, 2014

4 Contact with the local community

The staff of the municipality of Šentrupert are in daily contact with the local community. In this way they have tried to comprehensively present the project RusaLCA. They have also assembled information about the attitude of local inhabitants to the project. Personal contacts with people are especially important for the effective dissemination of information to the local beneficiaries about the aims, benefits, purposes, and local / regional impacts of the project.

4.1 Evaluation of public opinion

From contacts between the local authorities and the inhabitants it has been learnt that people want to have as much information as possible about the implementation of the project. Many additional questions were raised regarding the safety of the proposed nanotechnology safety and about the possible impacts of the pilot system on the environment. In the project set-up it was foreseen that communication activities within the field of nanotechnology safety would be very important. This is especially problematic because people are, in general, unfamiliar, with the properties of this technology.

The problem of possible questions from the general public about the safety of nanotechnology was emphasized early enough. Accordingly the content of the communication activities was adapted, and the project beneficiaries were notified about this. An appropriate response within the scope of public communication has thus been ensured, and all the project beneficiaries use the same messages for public communication. Here arguments about the safety of the technology to be used will need to focus on two fields:

- The high expertise of the project beneficiaries (ZAG, the Jožef Stefan Institute, the National Laboratory for Health, Environment and Food) which are involved in the pilot system development needs to be emphasized.
- The technological benefits of the use of nanotechnology need to be highlighted and presented in a lay way.

According to the public response so far noted, it can be assumed that the above-described approach is sufficient, and has helped to achieve the desired results in public opinion.

5 Continuation of the planned activities

The activities taking place in 2014, which are currently in the preparation phase, include:

- Intensified communication within the local community
- Web page updates with additional data from the project development
- Preparation of public releases at key achievements of the project and the release of publications for both experts and the general public
- The construction of information boards at the location of the pilot system.

The dissemination activities will be intensified during the construction of the pilot system and after the trial operation of the waste water treatment plant, when cleaned water will become available.

At present no addition obstacles are foreseen which might hinder the implementation of the planned communication activities.