

# Campaigning for Rivers

Banja Luka, 21st April, 2017



**TRANSITION**  
Transition Promotion Program

# Campaigning generally

Two types of planned, structural activities:

**Campaign** is focused, systematic effort to influence decision-making process. To succeed, you need to change someone else's opinion.

**Project** is focused, systematic effort to implement your intention. Whether you succeed or not, is basically up to you.

# Campaigning generally

Three pillars of campaigning:

- Legal tools
- Scientific and expert arguments / collecting, dissemination
- Work with media and public

Tip: These three tools should be used in balance manner, common mistake is a mistake e.g. focus solely on legal tools and forget to work with media and public opinion.

# Campaign planning

Before you start making a plan:

- Analyze decision making process – what, who, when
- Analyze community – stakeholders, interests, standpoints
- Analyze expert knowledge – what is known, what is needed to know

# Planning campaign

- Goal
- Target
- Specific objectives/tactics
- Allies/opponents/others
- Activities
- What you have/need
- Responsibilities/deadlines

# Planning campaign

## **Goal:**

Most important thing in planning process. Should be clear, measurable, realistic but ambitious.

## Tip:

Spend really enough time to think about this. You should formulate the goal so that at moment you can say, whether you achieved it or not, and that if you achieve the goal, campaign is over }won]. The goal can be changed during the campaign (especially when it is clear, that it cannot be achieved), but rather not too often.

# Planning campaign

## Target:

Target is a person or authority, who is responsible for the decision needed to achieving your goal. You should plan your campaign so that your action influence the target. It could be e.g. minister, regional government, decisive group of members of the parliament etc.

Tip: identifying the target will help you to decide, on which level (national, regional, local) you need to lead your campaign, how to formulate your message for media etc.

# Planning campaign

## **Specific objectives:**

These objectives can apply to different stages of decision-making process. Generally, goal of the campaign should not change during the campaign, while specific objectives can reflect development of the case.



# Planning campaign

- **Allies/Opponents/Neutral groups**
- It is very important to define all groups or people, who will be impacted by the case, and specify their standpoint. Usually, the tactics of the campaign is to keep allies and change opponents into neutral or allies and neutral into allies.
- **Activities**
- Here you specify, what you need to do to achieve specific objectives, influence target, build alliances etc.

# Planning campaign

- **What we have/what we need**
- To run activities, you may need different resources – people, knowledge, arguments, money. If you need something you do not have, you should add actions to get what you need to activities.
- **Responsibilities/Deadlines**
- Less popular but very important part of the planning. Without it, it all will not work. For each activity, you need to assign person responsible for implementation and deadline.

# Introduction to cases / state of the rivers in CZ

## 1) Czech Republic – roof of the Europe

- All big rivers in Czech Republic have a source in the country; all fresh water flowing in the rivers flows to neighbouring countries.

## 2) All big rivers are heavily modified

- Some sections of bigger rivers may be semi-natural; some smaller water courses can be natural or semi-natural. However, there is no big river in Czech Republic we can pronounce as a natural river.

## 3) Dams in Czech Republic

- There are 165 dams in the Czech Republic. Since 1989 – no new dam has been built. The list of potential localities suitable for dams (and protected within land use planning) includes 65 new localities, but clear majority of them are not feasible in foreseeable future.

# Case study: Elbe river campaign

**Goal:** stop all dam projects on Elbe river between Usti nad Labem and border with Germany

**Duration:** 1992 – ?

Intention of the investment: improve navigational conditions

**Why we do not want it:**

The only section of the big river in Czech Republic with strong current and natural regime of seasonal level changes. The only way for migration of salmon.



# Elbe river campaign

History:

- **1992 proposal**
- The first proposal awakened a huge disagreement of scientists, environmentalists and some of the local citizens. Also ministry of environment opposed the project. The EIA study was released in 1994, and after assessment of impacts and response of scientific community and local citizens, encouraged by public campaign led by NGO (Children of the Earth), the project was stopped in 1995.



# Elbe river campaign

- **1998 proposal**
- The new project appeared in 1998. This time, it was less ambitious, the dams changed slightly locations, and were proposed smaller, and movable. This time, the ministry of environment seemed to tend to approve the project, and the resistance of the local people was much weaker, even if the campaign of Children of the Earth and later also Arnika, and other NOGs tried to encourage it. But the important new circumstance was preparation of Natura 2000 network. Elbe canyon fulfilled all scientific criteria to be included in the protection under Natura 2000 network, and was also proposed by ministry of environment. However, after pressure from ministry of transport, relevant part of the river was excluded from the list of proposed Natura 2000 localities. The EIA process started in 1999.



# Elbe river campaign

## 1998 proposal - cont.

The campaign now had two main goals.

Firstly, to influence final conclusions of EIA process to be negative. To achieve this, we encouraged as much as possible of people and institution to send negative standpoints and comments to EIA documentation (very important in that sense was involvement of German institutions, whose comments were taken very seriously by ministry of environment). We also communicated heavily with scientific community collecting arguments against the project and weak spots of EIA documentation.

Secondly, we were fighting to force Czech government to include locality into to the Natura 2000 network, which would make approval of the project much harder. We got the attention of European Commission, but it took many years, before the reaction of the Commission actually brought some impact.

Finally, in 2002, minister of environment issued negative conclusion of EIA process, and the project was again put to sleep.



# Elbe river campaign

## 2006 proposal

Third version of the project appeared in 2006. This time, only one dam was proposed, however, this time also with electric power station. Changes in society and in ministry of environment this time increased the chances of the proposal even more than ever before.

The strategy of the campaign was similar as before. Again, the main activity as to encourage negative comments on EIA documentation. Some development occurred also on the side of Natura 2000. NGOs made complaint to EC about Natura 2000 implementation, including omission of Elbe canyon locality. HGO standpoint was confirmed within so called biogeographical seminars. But the situation repeated almost exactly as before – proposal of MoE included Elbe canyon, but governmental proposal excluded it again. NGO made another complaint, and there was response from the EC, which recommended to include this exact locality in the proposal.

In 2012, MoE issued a statement, that EIA documentation had not sufficient quality, and had to be re-elaborated.





# Elbe river campaign

## Current situation

New EIA was published with minor changes and was commented again. Final statement was not issued yet.

In 2015, EC started an infringement procedure with Czech Republic about Natura 2000 network incompleteness. In 2016, Elbe canyon was finally included officially to Natura 2000 network, but some species and habitat, which can be endangered by proposed dam, were not included into protected phenomena. Thus, NGOs are preparing another complaint to EC.

So, even after 25 years, fate of Elbe dams remains to be seen.



# Elbe river campaign

## Lessons learned

Campaigning against governmental projects may be long-term and exhausting event. Where private investor would surely resign, governmental institutions are happy to get more and more money for project preparation, and do not care much about project's efficiency.

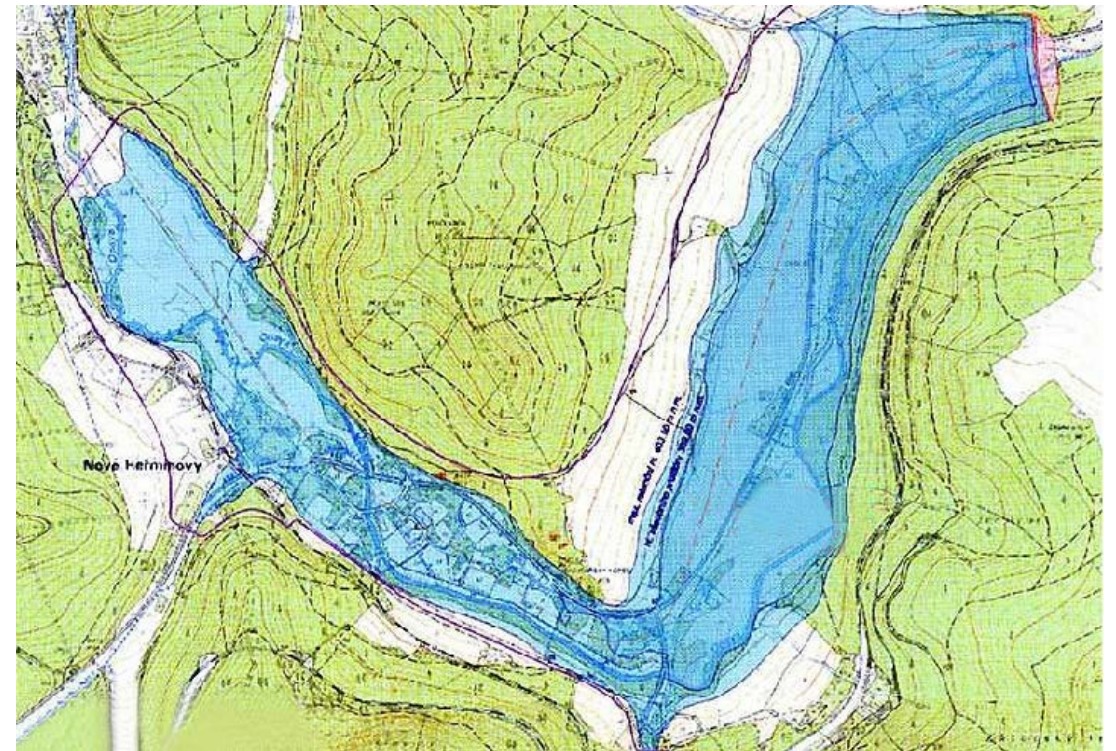
Natura 2000 can be significant tool in the campaign, if you understand basic principles and use all opportunities appropriately. In most cases, it is also long-term commitment.

It is always important to get as many allies as possible. In this campaign, important role played German NGOs and institutions (more environmentally aware than Czech ones) and fishermen association (with 200 000 members).



# Campaign Nové Heřmínovy

- Dam on Opava river in Nové Heřmínovy was proposed after huge flood event in 1997. The construction of the dam would require resettlement of the village with 300 inhabitants and 800 years old history.
- Campaign was led by two NGOs, Arnika and Hnutí Duha (Friends of the Earth), and local authorities (mayor of the village).
- The campaign had two basic directions – firstly, to find alternative solution for flood protection of the cities downstream, and to include locality to Natura 2000 network (because of important occurrence of river lamprey).



# Campaign Nové Heřmínovy

As an alternative solution, it was proposed to increase capacity of river channel in the city of Krnov together with nature friendly measures in the catchment area.

Unfortunately, there was now consensus in scientific community, that this locality really qualified without the doubt to be included in Natura 2000 network, and it did not make it to the scientific proposal even.



# Campaign Nové Heřmínovy

Very important was role of the local authorities, and, in one moment it forced investor (water management institution) to propose a compromise – smaller dam, which would destroy only several buildings. This compromise was supported by ministry of environment as well, and the resistance of the village was also weakening.

Therefore, it was very surprising, when in 2012, investor suddenly came up with study stating that the smaller variant is not effective enough and propose the bigger version of the dam again. This time, NGOs were not able to react fast enough and with sufficient strength and the project got approval of ministry of environment. Some buildings were even bought by investor and demolished. But the dam has still some time ahead before completion – the final project for territorial permit procedure and building permit procedure is now in preparation (should be finished this year).

## **Lessons learned:**

Local authorities can be very strong ally.

Natura 2000 must be understood and used correctly, lot of communication with scientists is necessary (especially in remote areas from capital city – even scientist prefer areas better known to areas which are maybe valuable, but not known well enough to them).

Attention must be paid all the time – do not rely on agreed compromises.