

LIFE16 CCA/HU/000115 LIFE-MICACC project Final report (Summary)

The implementation of LIFE-MICACC project started on 1st September 2017. The partnership managed to close the project successfully on 30th November 2021. (Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we extended the original project end date of 31st August 2021 to 30th November 2021).

The physical implementation of the 5 NWRM prototypes closed by 30th June 2020. We achieved the desired results with the prototypes on the settlements, as new wetlands were created, flora and fauna flourish, wild animals, birds and aquatic plants appear, and the residents learned to appreciate the joy of living together with nature, they feel pioneer and are proud of the implemented solutions. Besides, the new water bodies means better adaptive capacity, less vulnerability and less area affected by flash floods, droughts or floods.

We believe we achieved direct positive change in the behaviour of at least 122 local decision makers and cc. 138 000 residents. However, the indirect affect is much larger, through the dissemination events and field visits on which we informed and welcomed mayors and local stakeholders from other settlements. In addition, during the project we reached cc. 50 farmers. It is a huge result that the risk of droughts is reduced in all the five settlements where local municipalities were partners. Also the local flood security is improved in the settlements of partner municipalities where risk of flood, flash flood or extreme rain events is high. Quantified expressed it means the affected area of the five pilot sites: 20 384 ha.

During the second part of the project we focused on the communication and dissemination of the pilots and other project results. We organized 66 events (pilot site visits, local trips, roadshows and conferences) in order to share the knowledge gained about CCA and NWRMs. Thanks to this active dissemination the partnership managed to raise the attention of a wide-range of stakeholders to these nature-based solutions: residents, pupils, local farmers, neighbouring settlement leaders, other municipalities, the water management sector, and the public administration, too. The colourful partnership ensured that the topic is well disseminated among locals, NGOs, municipal associations, professionals and governmental bodies. Moreover, through the media (we had cc. 280 media appearances) the issue of NWRMs and the MICACC project have been introduced several times, increasing the awareness nation-wide. During the 4 years of the project we uploaded more than 100 articles, published 100 publications on the project website, which were visited by cc. 56 000 people, who wanted to know more about NWRMs and about the LIFE-MICACC project.

Also, there is a high level of interest towards the Life Program and the number of applicant municipalities is expected to increase further, as has already been the case during the MICACC project.

As an important policy impact, thanks to the project the “water retention” is built into the calls of the relevant Hungarian operative programmes (TOP Plus, KEHOP Plus) as an evaluation criteria and a preferable solution. By the way, the LIFE-MICACC project was included into the calls as a good national example. This is extremely important in the long run in financing the NWRMs and also reflects the attitude changing of the governmental decision makers. So the project has a real value and a multi-level positive impact.

The tasks (deliverables, milestones) undertaken in the project were completed by the partnership successfully. The three-month-long project extension was of key importance and helped the effective and successful dissemination activities. Thanks to the uniqueness of the

MICACC project it generated many new ideas, plans, inquiries and even new projects. For example, the LIFE LOGOS 4 WATERS project – coordinated by the MoI – started on 1st October 2021, aiming the national awareness rising, focusing on future and practicing water engineers, design engineers, and the general public. Or an inquiry from a Horizon2020 international partnership who wants to demonstrate solutions to extreme weather events and to urban heat waves.

We briefly summarized what happened in each type of action.

“A” actions

The CCA referents of the 5 pilot sites prepared the vulnerability assessments. Municipalities organized information events regularly to engage and involve local stakeholders. The municipality partners selected the designers and the geodetic surveyors in order to develop the local NWRM solutions and design the prototypes. After obtaining the water and environmental permits, the C1 action could be started. There was a cc. 11-month-delay in the preparatory “A” actions (mainly because of the length of the permitting processes) that significantly affected the implementation.

“C” actions

All partner municipalities finished the construction works by 30th June 2020 (Püspökszilágy completed the field works and the prototype in October 2019) with the involvement of subcontractors. Each of the partner municipalities obtained the operating licenses. The documentation of the five prototypes was completed by 30th September 2020. Due to the delay of the “A” preparatory actions there was a cc. 9-month-delay in implementing the prototypes. The test phase of the prototypes confirmed that these measures could work effectively locally.

We organized two large-scale (2x100 guests) trainings and 7 workshop type hands-on training occasions for municipalities (for the 5 pilot project partners, external municipality partners, catchment level partners) on CCA, NWRMs and preparing VAs. MoI developed the content of the trainings with the involvement of external experts. MoI also developed e-learning modules that are still available for municipalities and other interested parties. We reached cc. 400 training participants and cc. 400 e-learning users during the 4 years.

PANNON developed the runoff modelling on the basis of different water flow levels in order to detect the effects of future climate change in the areas in addition to the current state, thus drawing the attention of local governments and local stakeholders to the importance of land use and water conservation solutions.

During the project we strengthened catchment level partnerships on the area of the 5 pilot sites. Following the involvement of the relevant stakeholders, WWF and municipalities developed shared visions of the catchments and completed the feasibility studies by hiring design engineers. Each of the 5 partner municipalities signed a partnership agreement with the municipalities in their catchments.

For support replication of the tested NWRMs, WWF and GDWM prepared replication plans in case of 5 further municipalities (from the external partners). An evaluation matrix was developed by WWF to identify the 5 replication sites along professional criteria. Partnership agreement was signed with each municipality in order to strengthen the commitment of the local governments. Until the end of the MICACC project we managed to find some options for funding, but we continue to seek further funding opportunities.

PANNON developed the bi-lingual (HUN, ENG) crowdsourcing and networking application that is available from Google Play or the AppStore for free of charge. We organized online roadshow events to promote the app.

The Water Risk Filter using Hungarian high-resolution data was activated in the system, supporting the detection and assessment of water-related risks. WWF prepared a Hungarian version of the detailed online tutorial.

We successfully developed municipality networks at national level as there were several occasions for domestic networking during the project. The members of AoCFM increased to 73. There was capacity building of the AoCFM staff through 5 trainings. AoCFM created 2 thematic working groups dealing with the issues of CCA and organized 4 climate conferences for municipalities.

To support municipalities in joining European networks and to promote networking we organized 5 study trips and visited European NWRM projects. Thanks to the contribution of AoCFM, 70 Hungarian municipalities joined the CoM during the 4 years of the project. AoCFM and MoI welcomed domestic and foreign trainees several times.

At the end of the project we prepared a list of the identified lackings and insufficiencies in the Hungarian legislation we experienced during the project implementation. Based on our findings the aim was to screen the current legal environment and prepare recommendations for the Hungarian Government in which legal act should be reviewed or completed both at national and local level. By 12th November 2021 the report was approved by the Hungarian Government.

“D” actions

In the frame of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the prototype NWRMs, external experts were contracted in order to carry out ecological monitoring. The monitoring team took several pilot site visits in order to collect ecological baseline data and certain measurements were repeated until the monitoring reports were finalized. To monitor the physical impacts of NWRM measures, baseline data was also collected (already existing historical measurements, data from the local water management authorities, from local volunteers) and the comprehensive hydrological monitoring was prepared. Each municipality purchased and installed domestic meteorological stations at its own cost. Local CCA referents were actively involved in the management of the instruments and the measurement of water level data.

The partnership continuously monitored the socio-economic impacts of the project and at the end of the project this was evaluated. The socio-economic impacts of the NWRMs and the MICACC project as a whole (awareness and knowledge of the target groups) were measured by the following methods: written questionnaires, in-depth interviews, final tests, and online survey at national level.

“E” actions

During the project, stakeholders and other interested parties were informed about the project progress and results on a regular basis through events (local meetings, CCA trainings, conferences, field trips) and publications (leaflet, project website, thematic booklets, brochure, electronic newsletters, WWF Magazine). The partnership did continuous and active media work along the commonly-agreed Communication Strategy, arousing the interest of both the regional and national media. The partners emphasized many times the importance of CCA and NWRMs, and their relationship with water management issues. All the project-related media releases were continuously collected by MoI. The partnership communicated and disseminated the LIFE-MICACC project at several national and international conferences and reached not only the Hungarian municipalities, but other stakeholders beyond the borders. The logo, visual identity and the Project Identity Manual of the LIFE-MICACC project has been developed and the project website has been launched at the beginning. The website is still operating with continuously updated contents: <https://vizmegtartomegoldasok.bm.hu/hu>

(HUN) and <https://nwrmbm.hu> (ENG). Information (notice) boards were set up at strategic places at each partner organization.

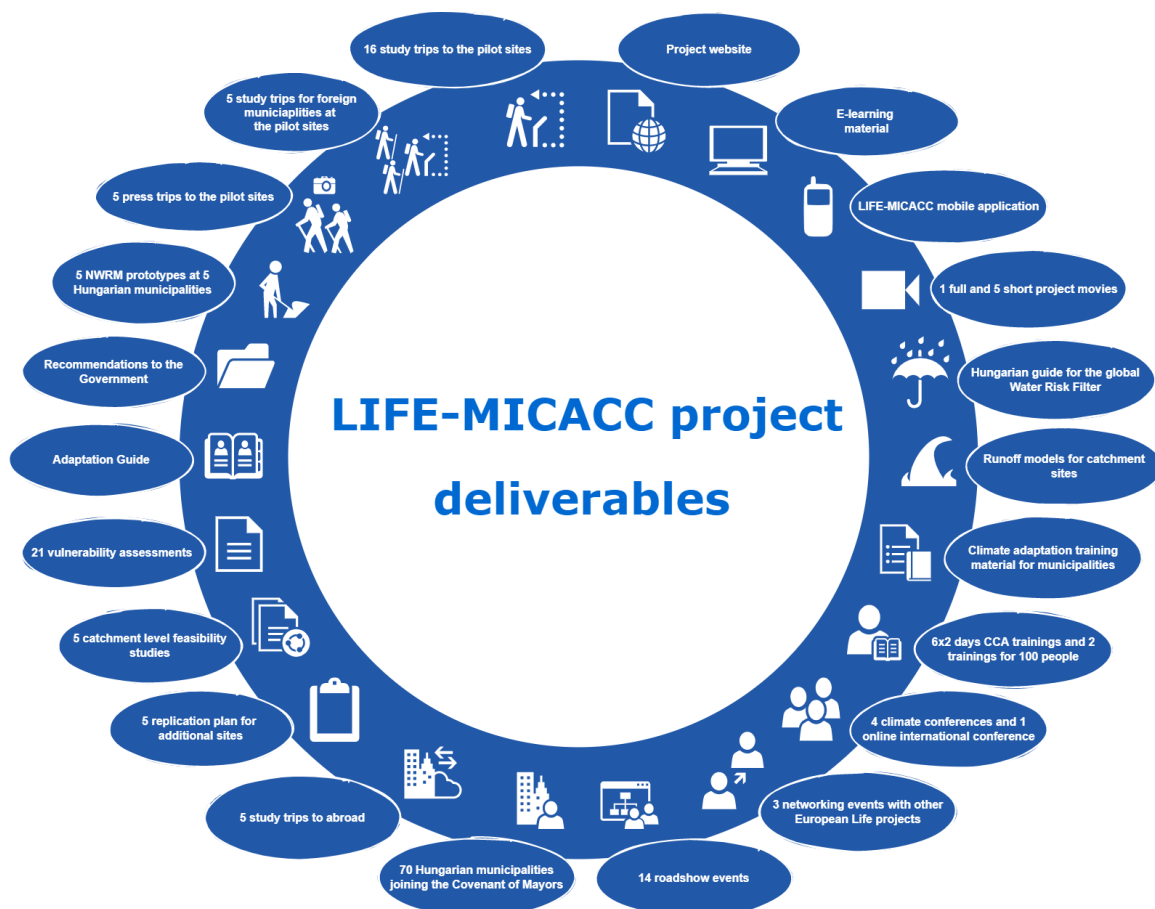
At the end of the project we prepared the Layman’s Report, which serves to inform decision-makers and interested non-professionals on the objectives of the project and the results achieved.

“F” actions

In the context of the overall project management, LIFE teams were set up at all organisations and project work began. Each partner aimed to ensure the effective fulfilment of the project tasks undertaken within their organisation and to replace any leaving staff member as soon as possible. This was continuously monitored by the coordinating beneficiary MoI.

The Partnership Agreement was signed and other basic documents of the project were prepared at the project beginning. The communication between the project partners was continuous through different communication channels. Regular meetings and the constantly updated detailed professional and financial schedule ensured the smooth implementation of the project. The monitoring of the project progress was followed by MoI through monthly and half-year reports completed by the partners. Also regularly reports (summaries) were sent to the NEEMO Monitor.

In the After-LIFE Plan the partnership summarized the conclusions and the results of the project activities, lessons learnt during implementation, and detailed the responsibilities of each project partner to be completed during the 5 year After-LIFE period.



Find more details about the project on the official website: <https://nwrmbm.hu>

If you have any further questions please write us: life@bm.gov.hu