

PRESS RELEASE

The SEA Dropie proudly unveils its new wastewater treatment plant and rain garden, made possible through a highly successful project collaboration facilitated by the generous support of Norway grants.

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Since 2021, the Environmental Education Center of the Slovak Environmental Agency – SEV Dropie has been implementing a project from the Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change (SK – Klíma) program. As a part of it, the facility in Zemianska Olča in the south-west of Slovakia is to undergo a revolutionary transformation into a model center for climate change, also called Living Lab Dropie.

The administrator of the SK-Climate Program is the Ministry of the Environment (MŽP SR), the Living Lab Dropie project is implemented in cooperation with Norwegian partners - the Bjercknes Climate Research Center and the Municipality of Trondheim. "The Mid-Term conference aims to bring the residents of the Lower Rye Island region, local stakeholders, representatives of Norwegian partners, representatives of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the media and the professional public closer to the progress in the transformation of the Center for Environmental Education of the Slovak Environmental Agency (SEV SAŽP Dropie) into a center for practical demonstrations of measures of mitigation and climate change adaptation. The project also systematically strengthens access to environmental education and training for various target groups," explained Denis Knotka, Director of the Environmental programs and projects section of the Ministry of the Environment. In two years, more than 600 students, pupils and children graduated from the climate education programme, implemented at SEV Dropie. The employees of the centre explained to these groups the consequences of climate change in the form of drought, heat and various climatic extremes for our country through experiential activities.

A rain garden and recently a wastewater treatment plant were added to the practical outputs of this project cooperation in SEV Dropie, which will contribute to mitigating climate change.

"The impacts of climate change differ across Slovakia's regions; therefore the implemented measures must reflect the specifics of individual regions. The rain garden is a practical example of one of the adaptation measures for mitigating the drought, which affects Dolný Žitný ostrov most significantly. Thanks to it, the water soaks into the soil and effectively cools the microclimate, while evaporation humidifies the air" said Katarína Vajliková, head of SEV Dropie. A rain garden can effectively reduce the content of allergens and dust in the air, thus contributing to cleaner and healthier air.

Students from the local area actively contributed by constructing the garden in collaboration with educators during a specialized workshop for youth last autumn. Through the cultivation of indigenous perennials, they established a haven of biodiversity catering to various pollinator species, thereby fostering an island of thriving ecological diversity.

The management and purification of wastewater near Žitný ostrov have posed longstanding challenges. However, a significant stride towards resolution emerged through the Living Lab Dropie project, which addressed this issue partially by constructing a wastewater treatment facility within the SEV Dropie area.

„ The system will serve to manage sewage and environmentally dispose of wastewater generated by the sanitary container, information center, and buffet on the premises. The treated water will be channelled for irrigation purposes, specifically benefiting the greenery affected by summer droughts and insufficient rainfall. Approval for the treatment plant was granted at the conclusion of October this year, and it presently awaits commencement of its trial operation” added Matej Kerestúr, Director General of SEA. The center will continue its modernization from Norwegian grants. As part of the Living Lab Dropie project, the information center building will be renovated, followed by the implementation of other adaptation and mitigation measures in the area. Heat pumps should be installed later and SEV Dropie will also use photovoltaic energy.

Project „Climate change and environment education centre in Dropie supported for additional demonstration measures and educational programmes“

received a financial contributions 1 200 000€ from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through EEA Grants. The aim of the project is to create a demonstration Eco centre at Dropie with implemented adaptation and mitigation measures, which will serve the general public.

To find out more about programmes and projects funded by the EEA Grants in Slovakia, you are welcome to visit site www.eeagrants.sk.