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Activity 5: Concept for Stakeholders' Coordination

Act. 5.1: SWOT Analysis Related to the Current Coordination

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Abbreviations

Action "FAIRway Danube"	CEF funded Action, 2014-EU-TM-0219-S/2014-EU-TMC-0231-S. www.fairwaydanube.eu (in the document referred as "FAIRway Danube")
Action "Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine Danube Corridor"	CEF funded Action, 2019-EU-TM-0262-S (in the document referred as "Preparing FAIRway 2 works")
Action "High performance green port Giurgiu - Stage II construction"	CEF funded Action, 2014-RO-TMC-0313-W (in the document referred as "High Performance Green Port Giurgiu")
Action "River Information Services Corridor Management Execution (RIS COMEX)"	CEF funded Action, 2015-EU-TM-0038-W (in the document referred as "RIS COMEX")
Action "Upgrade of Gabčíkovo locks"	CEF funded Action, 2015-SK-TM-0151-W
AdCOM	Advisory Committee Meeting (implemented in the frame of FAIRway Danube)
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CINEA (formerly INEA)	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
DC	Danube Commission
EBU	European Barge Union
EFIP	The European Federation of Inland Ports
ESC	European Shippers' Council
ESO	European Skipper's Organisation
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
INE	Inland Navigation Europe
INEA	Innovation and Networks Executive Agency
ISRBC	International Sava River Basin Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NtS	Notices to Skippers
PDI	Pro Danube International
PDA	Pro Danube Austria
SWOT analysis	Strengths/ Weaknesses / Opportunities/ Threats - Analysis
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. Executive Summary

Stakeholders can have a great influence on the successful implementation of a project and on its outcomes. Therefore, the establishment of a positive relationship and the well-structured coordination with stakeholders is essential. For instance, current CEF funded Actions have proven the positive effects of the coordination between the waterway management administrations and industry stakeholders. The benefits of this coordination were twofold:

- Waterway management administrations informed industry stakeholders on the current status of the EU funded Actions
- Industry stakeholders were sharing with the waterway administrations obstacles they face in their daily operations and future needs.

This Activity, under the Action *Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube corridor*, will deliver a concept for stakeholders' coordination in order to further optimise project-related communication activities in future. The Action itself aims to promote the Danube waterway infrastructure in an efficient, sustainable and user-oriented way. The SWOT analysis elaborated in this document is the first deliverable under this Activity.

In a first step, this SWOT analysis (sub-activity 5.1) delivers a report on strengths and weaknesses of stakeholders' coordination activities put in place in the current CEF funded Actions carried out along the Danube, and in particular the CEF funded action *FAIRway Danube*.

In a next step, the outcomes of this report will serve as input for a wider concept for the stakeholders' coordination (sub-activity 5.2) for the Austrian, Croatian and Serbian sections of the Danube. The elaborated methodology and the stakeholders' coordination concept can be applied in the future for the complete Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor.

A special focus within this SWOT analysis is set onto the requirements of the inland waterway transport shipping industry. This target group can greatly benefit from CEF funded Actions, which aim to improve inland waterways infrastructure while promoting sustainable and innovative mobility solutions to further support this transport mode. It is important to consider views, requirements and problems from the shipping industry, but it can be challenging to exchange information with this stakeholder group due to their limited time availability. While the coordination with all stakeholder groups will be analysed in the SWOT analysis report, a special focus will be therefore set on the requirements from the shipping industry.

Methodology-wise, in-depth information on the stakeholders' experiences within current CEF funded Actions and their general views and preferences on coordination activities was gathered in the frame of expert interviews. If an interview was not feasible due to various reasons (e.g. language barrier, time reasons), the interview guideline has been completed digitally as questionnaire and returned via e-mail. This option has been used by 2 persons only, whereas the bulk of data has been gathered in the frame of 27 expert interviews. Thus, 29 expert interviews or questionnaires were conducted in total with relevant stakeholders from

- the shipping industry (including managing directors, operation managers, skippers, ports),
- inland waterway transport industry associations (representing the industry's views and requirements), and
- waterway administrations (as well as other project beneficiaries).

Based on the gathered information, the report summarises the strengths and weaknesses of coordination activities of current CEF funded Actions and concludes with opportunities (and underlying threats) for future communication strategies. The summarised outcomes can be found below:

STRENGTHS

- **Personal exchange** is considered to be very effective to inform stakeholders about the project, while retrieving crucial information and in order to **build the relationship**.
- The early involvement of **relevant stakeholders and key persons, who have an impact on the project**, is very important. This will help to align interests, make them being heard and to gain their trust and approval. Targeted meetings for expert exchange (workshop character) provide a very favourable setting for this purpose.

- **Synergies with other (project) events and working meetings** are seen as an effective method to inform relevant stakeholders about a project.
- The existing **collaboration with industry associations** is very beneficial to inform about project results and to access necessary information from the shipping industry.
- National User Fora are well perceived by participating bodies (majority from public sector).

WEAKNESSES

- **Cooperation** of the shipping industry in **project-related activities** is partly low to moderate.
- **Project benefits** and/or results are **not always visible** to the shipping industry.
- **Non-centrally managed communication activities** have their advantages (e.g.: reaction to national requirements, especially when having many project partners) but they do not achieve the best possible visibility of the project and its results.
- **Danube ports** are insufficiently involved to optimally tackle bottlenecks.
- *FAIRway Danube* National User Fora are not always perfectly fitted to target the needs of the shipping industry (generally, agenda and presented information need to be aligned to the interests of the sector, which can be challenging when having a broad range of participants with different backgrounds).

OPPORTUNITIES

Exploitation of a wider set of communication channels is beneficial to efficiently target the stakeholder groups (focus shipping industry). Following channels enable to increase project visibility and to improve project outcomes:

- Dissemination of concise and result-orientated **newsletters**. Presented topics need to be targeted to the shipping industry or relevant stakeholder group.
- **Personal exchange** (meetings, phone calls) to foster the relationship and to inform about news, services, projects while receiving constructive feedback.
- **Targeted meetings for expert exchange** (Workshops, Webinars) in addition to personal exchange, whenever there is something to discuss or to elaborate in a group.
- **Usage of digital tools** (e.g. hybrid events), whenever the involvement of the shipping industry is required and invitees are internationally wide dispersed.
- Finding the **right mix of international and national events** to present the project, **usage of event synergies** and **involvement of stakeholders before/after an event** is recommended.
- **Involvement of key users** for constructive feedback and active participation.
- **Intensified collaboration with industry associations and national chambers of commerce** to cover the interests of the industry from all stretches along the Rhine-Danube corridor.
- Usage of typically used **social media** platforms to inform industry.
- **Rare intervals for dissemination of surveys/questionnaires** (e.g. once a year).