

# Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor

Twinned Actions (2019-EU-TM-0262-S/2019-HR-TMC-0263-S)

## MINUTES (Final)

### Stakeholders' Forum Meeting 03 (SHFM03)

Date	15.10.2021
Time	09:30-12:30
Place	online ( <i>GoToMeeting</i> )
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Croatian Society for Birds and Nature Protection: Tibor Mikuška</li><li>- Danube Commission: Dejan Trifunović, Marijana Cindrić</li><li>- Environmental Agency Austria: Alexander Zinke, Daniel Trauner, Kudrnovsky Helmut</li><li>- Fluvius, on behalf on WWF Austria: Ulrich Schwarz</li><li>- independent: Georg Rast</li><li>- Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina: Laslo Galamboš</li><li>- International Sava River Basin Commission: Duško Isaković</li><li>- Kopački Rit Nature Park: Marija Vereš</li><li>- MCTI - Directorate for Inland Waterways (SRB): Ivan Mitrović</li><li>- MMPI (HRV): Lana Deraković-Rakas, Lidija Hubalek, Andrija Spaić</li><li>- Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (HRV): Neven Trenc</li><li>- viadonau: Andreas Baeck, Iris Marstaller, Lucia Karpatyova</li><li>- WWF Adria: Branka Španiček</li><li>- WWF Austria: Arno Mohl, Kerstin Boeck</li></ul>
For the minutes	Iris Marstaller, Ivan Mitrović
Documents attached	Agenda List of Participants Evaluation Results General concept for hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common Serbian-Croatian stretch of the Danube River, draft ver0.3

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## Welcome note, introduction of participants, organizational issues

Mr. Mitrović (MCTI) opened the third Stakeholders' Forum meeting (SHFM) and welcomed participants. All participants introduced themselves. After the *tour the table*, Mr. Mitrović reminded participants on the organizational issues: basic principles of video conferencing via *GoToMeeting* tool, methods of asking for the floor, logging in by name and surname, usage of the chat box, usage of the camera, keeping the sound muted unless given floor, and privacy protection rules. All participants acknowledged stipulated organizational guidelines and commonly agreed on them.

## Results of the evaluation of the SHFM01

Mr. Mitrović reported on the evaluation results. He kindly asked participants to make an effort and submit filled-in online questionnaires after the SHFM03, so that the performance of the SHF could be monitored in a methodologically consistent manner.

## SHF Members list

Mr. Mitrović reported that no changes to the SHF members list have occurred. List of members and List of observers are available at the SHF webpage.

## Monitoring plan for navigational and environmental characteristics of the Croatian/Serbian common stretch of the Danube River – Summary of steps and the Final Monitoring plan

Ms. Hubalek gave a brief overview of the process of drafting the accepted Monitoring Plan, including contacted parties and steps in the run of the harmonization of the document. With regards to the current status, she reported that the public procurement procedure is slightly delayed for administrative reasons.

Mr. Trenc expressed appreciation towards the scope and the quality of the agreed monitoring plan. He confirmed that the monitoring plan is in line with NATURA 2000.

## Reflection to the Monitoring plan for navigational and environmental characteristics of the Croatian/Serbian common stretch of the Danube River – Environmental Agency Austria

Mr. Zinke gave a presentation on the Environment Agency Austria's (EAA) observations regarding the agreement process of the Monitoring plan for navigational and environmental characteristics of the Croatian/Serbian common stretch of the Danube River. He renewed concerns regarding the involvement of all responsible public bodies (ZZOP and Croatian Waters in Croatia; Waters Directorate, Vode Vojvodine and Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina in Serbia) in the preparation of the monitoring activities, and the need to ensure relevance of collected ecological data for the interpretation of existing and possible future impacts.

Ms. Hubalek stated that the Monitoring Plan and the Terms of Reference have been communicated with all relevant parties, and their suggestions were incorporated into the documents. She added that the future contractors will perform tasks in close consultations with the SHF Members.

Mr. Zinke stressed that most communication in Croatia was only recently after repeated requests from the EAA to involve all responsible organisations. He recommended for "Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor" planning safety to get in writing their confirmation about this monitoring's compliance with relevant EU directives and Serbian law. Ms. Hubalek repeated that relevant authorities and NGOs have been addressed, and that the future contractors will have to follow the relevant legal framework. Mr Trenc stated that ZZOP had insight in ToR recently. ToR by his opinion is well prepared and monitoring methodology is in line with Croatian regulations.

Mr. Galamboš said that the Institute for Nature Protection of Vojvodina (PZZP) provided in spring 2021 feedback to the Monitoring Plan. He pointed out certain Serbian specifics related to the required procedure and permits from relevant authorities (upon selection of the contractors) for performing monitoring activities, and that this process absorbs certain time which should be planned in advance.

Mr. Mikuška suggested one more official round of consultation with relevant authorities once the Terms of Reference are finalised, and Ms. Hubalek agreed and confirmed that public consultations will be performed before official launch of the tender.

Mr. Rast asked if changes of the Terms of Reference can be made in case that a lot of questions and requests arise from the interested parties, and Ms. Hubalek responded that it is possible to make changes. Mr. Rast also advised that the tender dossier should contain information about procedures/requirements to receive permits for monitoring actions in the field in both countries.

## Hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common SRB-HRV stretch of the Danube River – updated general concept

On behalf of the MCTI, Mr. Mitrović gave an overview of the comments from stakeholders' received to the draft General concept for hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common Serbian-Croatian stretch of the Danube River.

Most of the comments and suggestions have been incorporated into the updated general concept. The only suggestion which was not incorporated into the updated general concept is related to the usage of 2D modelling for the whole SRB-HRV stretch of the River, due to limited finances, limited time for modelling. Instead, the 1D hydraulic modelling is planned for the whole stretch, while the 2D modelling will be applied for selected smaller stretches of common interest. Mr. Rast gave his opinion that such an approach is methodologically acceptable and used in most of projects in different countries. Mr. Rast also made remark on need to use data to identify potential riverbed incision, and to use models to predict potential changes in the future, with and without different river training structures.

Mr. Zinke asked how will the data from the monitoring activities be used in the modelling, and if the habitat modelling is planned. Mr. Mitrović responded that there are 3 groups of monitoring data: hydromorphology, sediment and water quality, and biology. For the modelling, the most important data are hydromorphology, including morphological surveys, hydrological data, sediment sampling and grain size distribution. Regarding the biological monitoring data, those data will be used and interpreted by the experts, having in mind their relation to the hydromorphological data. Mr. Mitrović added that all available (primary and secondary) monitoring data and all results of the modelling will be used for the Multi-criteria analysis and evaluation of different options. He also confirmed that a contingency budget is planned in the contract for the modelling, in order to fulfil potential gaps in the availability of data and ensure flexibility during the implementation.

Mr. Mitrović said that the updated draft General concept for hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common Serbian-Croatian stretch of the Danube River will be distributed together with the draft MMs of the SHFM03, for additional round of comments.

## 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube: achievement, stakeholders' involvement and synergies with on-going/future projects, next steps

On behalf of WWF Austria as well as the Austrian MaB National Committee Mr. Mohl gave an extensive presentation on the recently proclaimed 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube, including achievements, goals and expectations of the reserve, stakeholders' involvement and synergies with on-going/future projects.

One of the key goals of the reserve agreed by the five countries, in respect of the potential future interventions, is to *"promote preservation, and wherever possible, restoration of natural water regime and hydro-morphological processes implementing common transboundary river and floodplain restoration programmes"* including amongst others to *"Strive to prevent further embankments and other structures along intact riverbanks and promote the removal of existing, non-functioning river training structures and enlarge floodplain areas by reallocating dikes where possible"* as well as to *"Advocate ban on further sediment extractions from the living rivers"*.

One of the issues raised during the discussion is harmonization between countries regarding the zones of the biosphere reserve, in the sense that some parts are core zones, and some parts are buffer zones, depending on the national classifications. Mr. Trenc pointed out that core zones are differently defined in different areas (in Croatia it includes whole river area, in Serbia not), but the general idea is to ensure the protection of nature and environment as much as it is possible. Mr. Mohl stated that one of the major goals is international harmonization between these five countries.

Mr. Rast asked if some kind of technical secretariat is or will be established, and if the institutional setup is organized on the national or international level. Mr. Mohl responded that management is organized on the national level for national biosphere reserves. According to the nomination, on international level a Steering

Committee as well as coordinating management body will be established, which will work as a rotation system between the countries.

Mr. Mitrović asked in which way involvement of stakeholders will be enabled, and if stakeholders from the inland waterway transport administration can be included as well. Mr. Mohl answered that observers are foreseen in the structure and he will ask on next meeting, as WWF is observer, how to achieve info flow and potential participation of other stakeholders in future. Ms. Boeck added that the topic of stakeholders' involvement is also addressed within the lifeline project Ms. Boeck added that stakeholders' involvement is also planned within the lifeline project (lifelineMDD: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/lifelinemdd>).

Mr Mohl concluded in his presentation that TBR MDD aims to protect and restore river dynamics, that ongoing EU projects support TBR implementation and provide input for the project "Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor", that "Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor" needs to comply with the goals of TBR MDD and therefore close coordination between "Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor" and TBR MDD management is needed.

## River training structures in the Danube as mapped for the lifelineMDD project

Mr. Schwarz gave an overview on River training structures in the Danube as mapped for the lifelineMDD project, focusing on the SRB-HRV common stretch of the Danube River. The presentation included results of investigation in the sense of the number of structures, as well as their type and condition.

Mr. Mitrović asked how the data on river training structures has been collected. Mr. Schwarz responded that no field investigations have been made, but desk research was applied and different maps have been used. Mr. Mitrović showed example of presentation of river training structures in Inland ENCs, which is publically available and free of charge in every Danube riparian country, and suggested that those charts can be used to check and possibly update the list of river training structures within the LifelineMDD project.

## Next steps, action points list, next meeting

Mr. Mitrović reflected on the next steps and summarised action points from the meeting. Tentative dates for the SHF meetings for 2022 have been agreed for 15.03.2022, 14.06.2022, and 11.10.2022, subject to the prior announcement and confirmation.

## AOB

No other business has been raised at the meeting.

Mr. Mitrovic thanked all participants for their active participation and wished them all the best until the next meeting.

## Action Points List

AP code	Task	Responsible	Deadline
SHFM03-01	Provision of the updated General concept for hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common Serbian-Croatian stretch of the Danube River, draft ver0.2	IMI	22.10.2021
SHFM03-02	Distribution of the link for online evaluation questionnaire	IMI	22.10.2021
SHFM03-03	Distribution of the draft Meeting Minutes	IMI	22.10.2021

AP code	Task	Responsible	Deadline
SHFM03-04	Feedback to the updated General concept for hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common Serbian-Croatian stretch of the Danube River, draft ver0.2	All	30.10.2021
SHFM03-05	Feedback on the draft Meeting Minutes	All	30.10.2021
SHFM03-06	Distribution of the final Meeting Minutes	All	05.11.2021
SHFM03-07	Publication of meeting documents, including presentations, from the SHFM03 on the SHF webpage	IMA	05.11.2021
SHFM03-08	Prior announcement of the SHFM04	IMI	11.02.2022
SHFM03-09	Invitation to the SHFM04	IMI	04.03.2022

## Upcoming Meetings

Meeting	date	time	place
SHFM04	Tue, 15.03.2022*	09:30-12:30	GoToMeeting
SHFM05	Tue, 14.06.2022*	09:30-12:30	GoToMeeting
SHFM06	Tue, 11.10.2022*	09:30-12:30	GoToMeeting

\* Tentative days, subject to prior announcement and confirmation

## Attachments

- SHFM03 Agenda
- SHFM03 List of Participants
- SHFM03 Evaluation Results
- Updated General concept for hydraulic and morphological modelling of the common Serbian-Croatian stretch of the Danube River, draft ver0.3

## Photos

