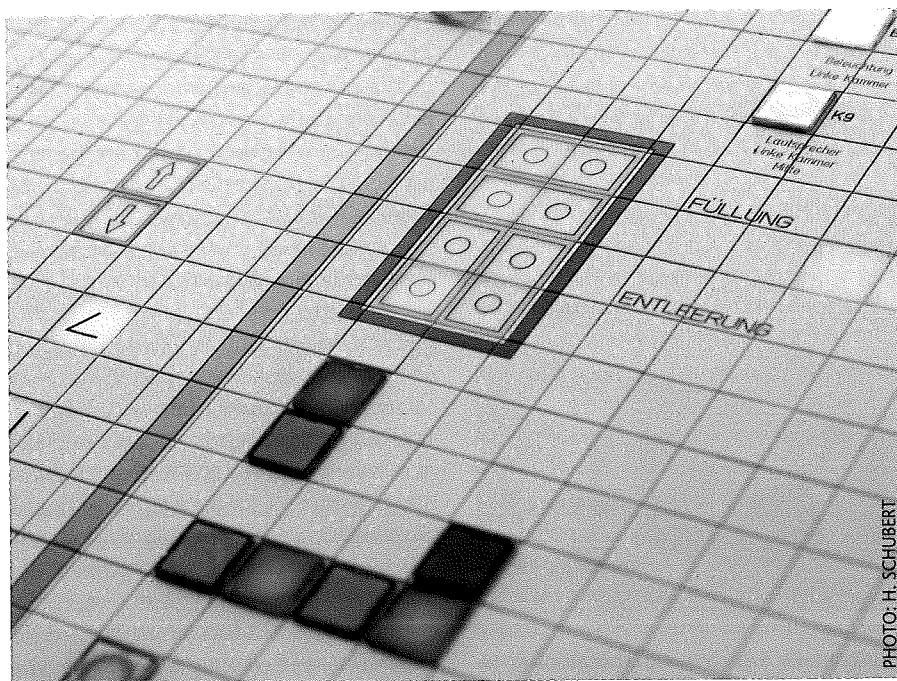


NEWADA: New Network for Shipping Authorities

Daily collaboration of authorities in the Danube Region is still not sufficiently attuned to promote the efficiency and attractiveness of inland navigation. The newly emerging "Network of Danube Waterway Administrations" (NEWADA) seeks to solve this problem.



The project, which was initiated in April 2009 and will be concluded in March 2012, is financed with funds from the 2007 - 2013 EU budget. A total amount of 2,864,546 euros has been allocated for this purpose. 2,224,960 euros are derived from the European Commission's European Regional Development Fund, while 431,182 euros are provided by the project partners. 208,404 euros of IPA funds are available to non-EU members participating in the project.

Developing a feeling for neighbours' needs

Just like previous initiatives, NEWADA intends to highlight the many benefits of inland vessels, increase the efficiency of Corridor VII and foster the region-wide coordination of Danube protection efforts, which are still largely confined to the national level. The case is that measures taken by countries further upstream are bound to affect the countries further downstream. It also happens that individual countries launch their own projects in river sections near the border without telling the neighbouring state. As a result, such measures often don't have the desired effect - or they are unnecessarily duplicated.

To improve the present situation, one important aspect must be to focus on the quality and accessibility of information intended for stakeholders. The primary purpose is to establish a network which allows the project partners to attune their action plans as well as their waterway maintenance, hydrographical and hydrological activities. Much attention is also paid to the exchange of know-how, drawing on best-practice examples. ►

With the adoption of EU Directive 2005/44/EC, one of the most important inland navigation projects in recent years - the harmonisation of river information systems (RIS) - has reached a decisive stage of development. Now it's time to embark on an issue that is just as important: improving the daily collaboration and coordination of shipping authorities in the Pan-European Corridor VII, in which the Danube plays a crucial role. This shall be accomplished through the "Network of Danube Waterway Administrations" (NEWADA), a new project established under the umbrella of the European Commission's South East Europe - Transnational Cooperation Programme (SEE). Ten agencies in eight different Danube states - Austria, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania,

Bulgaria and Ukraine - are participating in NEWADA. Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH - via donau is in charge of the overall coordination.

An administrative board, comprised of the heads of the national waterway directorates, acts as the interface for all NEWADA activities. An advisory board was established in which the relevant ministries (in Austria this is the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology/BMVIT), the Danube and Sava Commissions, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the GIS Forum Danube and other important regional stakeholders are represented. One of the tasks of the ministries is to assure that the project results are forwarded to subordinate national agencies and other stakeholders.

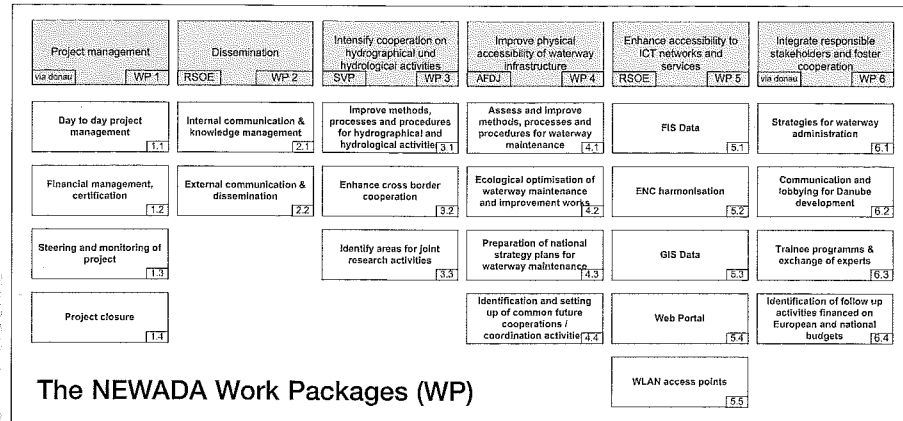
Before these measures can be implemented, however, the relevant quality criteria to which all project participants must adhere need to be defined.

NEWADA is implemented through so-called work packages (WPs). Regular status reports shall be drawn up to keep a record of the progress made; project partners shall inform each other how they feel about certain issues and what they think of specific projects. Once this level of trust has been established, national strategic plans are developed in which the impact of national and regional action plans is also taken into consideration. These plans serve as a basis for implementing uniform guidelines and developing readily implementable bi- or multilateral projects which are eligible for national and EU funding.

What will further facilitate cooperation is the agreement on uniform information and communication technologies (ICT), which shall remain in place once the NEWADA project is completed. It is also important to introduce quality standards that apply to all partners and to gather uniform data material for setting up a joint internet portal. Particular focus will be given to information on special river sections such as locks, ports, or moorings. Another vital harmonisation and optimisation tool is the national electronic navigation card (ENC). These cards shall be developed by incorporating previous projects executed in the framework of the INTERREG III B Programme (e.g. D4D, DANewBE Data). Data collection takes place in compliance with the European RIS Directive 2005/44/EC; all data and related tools are available for free.

Focus on utilisation of synergies

A prior concern is to utilise synergies related to other EU-funded programmes, projects, and initiatives. Such synergies may arise in connection with the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), the Seventh Framework Programme for RTD (FP7), and in particular with the inland navigation promotion programmes NAIADES and PLATINA. These interactions shall also be put to good use in extending the network established by



the shipping authorities also to the users of these transport routes and to the developers of river information systems (RIS). The resulting value added will help to raise the image and attractiveness of inland navigation.

The ecological perspective which is added to NEWADA through collaboration with ICPDR is expected to gain further momentum through the incorporation of the DANUBEPARKS initiative. The aim of DANUBEPARKS, which is also organised under the umbrella of SEE, is to optimise the ecological structure of national parks alongside the river. Needless to say, all waterway optimisation proposals are carefully attuned to the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.

To keep the organisational burden minimal, NEWADA cooperates directly with the decision-making bodies in charge. One exception is Hungary, where the competencies are divided up among several ministries. Another exceptional case is the cooperation with the Romanian Canal Authority (ACN). The latter was chosen as project partner because of its responsibility for the Cernavoda Canal, which links the Danube with the Black Sea.

via donau pays for the expenses of partners from non-EU countries, such as the Ukraine, which incur in connection with meetings. This is facilitated through a special regulation, the so-called "10% flexibility rule".

The initial months following the NEWADA kick-off were filled up with management tasks, such as drawing up work specifications for the project. Two other documents were also released

during this stage: the "Communication Handbook", which regulates work procedures and internal communication, and the "Dissemination Plan", in which external PR activities are defined. In addition to a homepage to which only project partners have access, another website – www.newada.eu – with information and regular updates for the general public was created. Furthermore, a folder with project information and – as is obligatory with all EU-funded projects – numerous PR articles by partner organisations were published.

After the presentation of the project at the 8th Danube Information Services Conference in Linz in October 2009 and a meeting of NEWADA project partners and advisory board members in Budapest (December), the status reports for the first quarter of 2010 are now available. These relate to the hydrological/hydrographical situation and to waterway maintenance and serve as a basis for future activities. Project manager Markus Schedlbauer says: "The NEWADA activities accomplished to date reveal the huge potential of international cooperation between shipping authorities and other stakeholders. Yet it is the responsibility of the individual countries to put the project results to optimal use at national level!"

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