NEWADA

REPORT ON COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR NATIONAL WATERWAY ADMINISTRATIONS
- STATUS QUO REPORT SERBIA -

Document ID:	??	
Activity:	Activity 6.2 Communication and Lobbying for Danube development	
Author / Project Partner:	Date:	Version:
Gilkarov / via donau	02.11.2010	0.1 Draft
Mitrovic / Plovput	08.02.2011	0.1 Draft
Mitrovic / Plovput	05.04.2011	Final

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1   SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of the report comprehensive communication strategies for national waterway administrations is to identify and define target groups and their order of importance for communication and lobbying activities to be performed in order to promote the exploitation of the project results. The purpose is twofold: to identify both stakeholders and target groups to whom the "messages" of inland navigation in the Danube region will be disseminated, to create common actions, messages and images which are part of a toolbox – a synergy with the PLATINA project - for the use of the waterway administrations involved in NEWADA,

This document is foreseen as an output of Activity 6.2 "Communication and Lobbying for Danube Development" within Work Package 6: Integrate responsible stakeholders and foster cooperation. The Communication and Lobbying for Danube Development Work package of NEWADA – and more specifically Activity 6.2 - is in charge of ultimately establishing a coherent and internationally coordinated communication strategy and to create communication action plans for the respective waterway administrations. According to the description of work, 5 partners should report on comprehensive communication strategies for their respective waterway administrations. This document shall thus contain information on the following:

- The status quo of the communication scope of each waterway administration before the start of the series of workshop
- Target groups and stakeholders for the respective waterway administration
- The availability of tools to reach out to those and eventually the creation of new communication channels when necessary
- A case study on the approach to implement the country data in the Internet platform www.danubeports.info
- Cooperations

2   STATUS QUO OF THE COMMUNICATION SCOPE OF EACH WATERWAY ADMINISTRATION BEFORE THE START OF THE SERIES OF WORKSHOPS

Before starting to elaborate the status of PR and communication activities performed by the Directorate for Inland Waterways, I would personally like to point out a few important things which influence these activities. For start, we do not have an organizational unit or person officially in charge for PR and communication activities. In fact, there is an opinion among some policy makers in our country (not in our institution, thank God) that such civil service institutions should not advertise or promote themselves, and that those institutions should not have any kind of promotion. I truly believe that those kinds of opinions belong to persons which are minority, and that common sense on the importance of these activities will prevail, eventually. As I stated, we

do not have organizational unit or person in charge for it, but it doesn't mean that we do not perform those activities. On the contrary, we believe that we are performing it in a quite professional way, having in mind resources that we have for those purposes. This brings me to the second aspect of my elaboration – the number of employees in Plovput. At the end of 2009, the Law on maximum number of employees in all civil service institutions in Serbia was adopted. According to that law, the number of employees per institution was limited to the certain number. For Plovput, that number was and still is 101. Before it, we had 133 employees. So, in the summer of 2010, we had to "let go" 32 persons (I like this let go phrase, it sounds so diplomatic). In those circumstances, it would be inappropriate to establish a new unit for PR and communication, which would require us to let go a few more persons. So, we didn't do it. The mentioned law is still in power, so our hands are tied for now. Hopefully, it will be changed, same day, perhaps in the current decade. The fact is that we are short with staff in a few fields, and PR and communication is just one of them, and I must say not the most important one, even though I am a truly marketing oriented person. That brings me to the next issue, which is the most important thing for any kind of marketing, PR, and communication. And that is the name of our institution. As you know, we are quite known under the name Plovput. It is a very nice name – short, easy to remember, quite easy to pronounce in all languages. But, somebody among our policy makers has the opinion that special organizations of the Government of the Republic of Serbia cannot have a special name along with the name that specifies its field of work. This was quite surprising; especially having in mind that the name "Directorate for Inland Waterway Plovput" was established under the Law on Ministries from 2007, and confirmed under the Law on Ministries from 2008 (until 2007, we were defined under the name "Public institution for maintenance and development of inland waterways in Serbia - Plovput"). In 2010, after more than 20 years, the new Law on Navigation and Ports on Inland Waterways was adopted (in compliance with EU standards; it, among other things, clearly specifies responsibilities of Plovput). Under this Law, we are defined as the Directorate for Inland Waterways (without Plovput). As I stated earlier, the explanation was that special organizations of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (which Plovput became in 2007 with the Law on Ministries) cannot have a special name, and that Plovput is considered to be just that, a special name. Quite surprising, having in mind that every name is specific, somehow (in spite Shakespeare and his famous "What's in a name? that which we call a rose. By any other name would smell as sweet…"). The purpose of every name is to differentiate one entity from the bunch of others. My request to see the exact legislation which prohibits this special naming was denied. To be honest, I am quite sure that such legislation does not exist. The most interesting thing is that the Law on Ministries from 2008 is still in power, so we have two laws in power under which we are defined under different names: one with Plovput and one without it. So, I guess that we are no longer Plovput, even though everybody still refers to us as Plovput. Nevertheless, we are left in a quite occurred position, without basic marketing tool. Not to mention that changing the name is practicing (in almost every theory and practice) only when you want to hide or erase the past, and start something all over again. But we do not want to hide our almost 50 years long history, we are proud of it, and have every reason to be. So, we are continuing to unofficially use the name Plovput, wherever and whenever we can. Not on our

memos, but almost in all other cases. It is hard to say until when. In fact, marketing and communication are not always under our control. You cannot control the perception of others, at least not directly. It takes time to change somebody's perception, and in some cases you can't do it at all. But, that is the beauty of marketing, because it has so many parameters which can't be directly controlled (no matter how hard you would like to control it), and especially not by any kind of law.

3 TARGET GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

3.1.1 Target groups

We define target groups as entities which are influenced by our work, which are targeted by that work, and which are being directly positively affected by that work. In scope of our line of business and responsibilities, major target groups include: shipping companies, ports and navigation locks operators, as well as governmental institutions (port authorities - kapetanija, customs, and river police). These three groups of target groups are equally relevant for us. Communication strategy for this group of entities needs to be direct, as they need to be instantly informed on availability and benefits of using our services and products.

Shipping companies are major direct users of inland waterways. These companies directly benefit from our activities, and are direct users of our products and services, such as RIS (river information services), paper navigation charts, marking plans, etc. We closely cooperate with Serbian Shipping Association, which gathers the majority of shipping companies.

Ports and navigation locks are basic infrastructure components on inland waterways. There are 9 international ports on the Danube River in Serbia (Apatin, Bogojevo, Backa Palanka, Beocin, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Pancevo, Smederevo, and Prahovo), as well as two navigation locks - Iron Gate I and Iron Gate II (Illustration 1). Eight out of nine ports are operated by private companies, except the one in Novi Sad, which is state owned. HENS (Hydroelectric and Navigation System) Djerdap (Iron Gate) is a public body responsible for two navigation locks on the Danube River (Iron Gate I and Iron Gate II). We provide port and lock operators with the number of services, namely RIS, IWW marking, hydrographic survey services. Sometimes, we are creating completely new services under research and innovation programmes, such as navigation lock availability and reservation service (which is being developed with in the RISING project, funded under FP7 Programme of the EU). In general, we have very good cooperation with HENS Djerdap, since they were the first user of RIS in Serbia (since 2007), while RIS implementation in Serbia was still in the piloting phase.
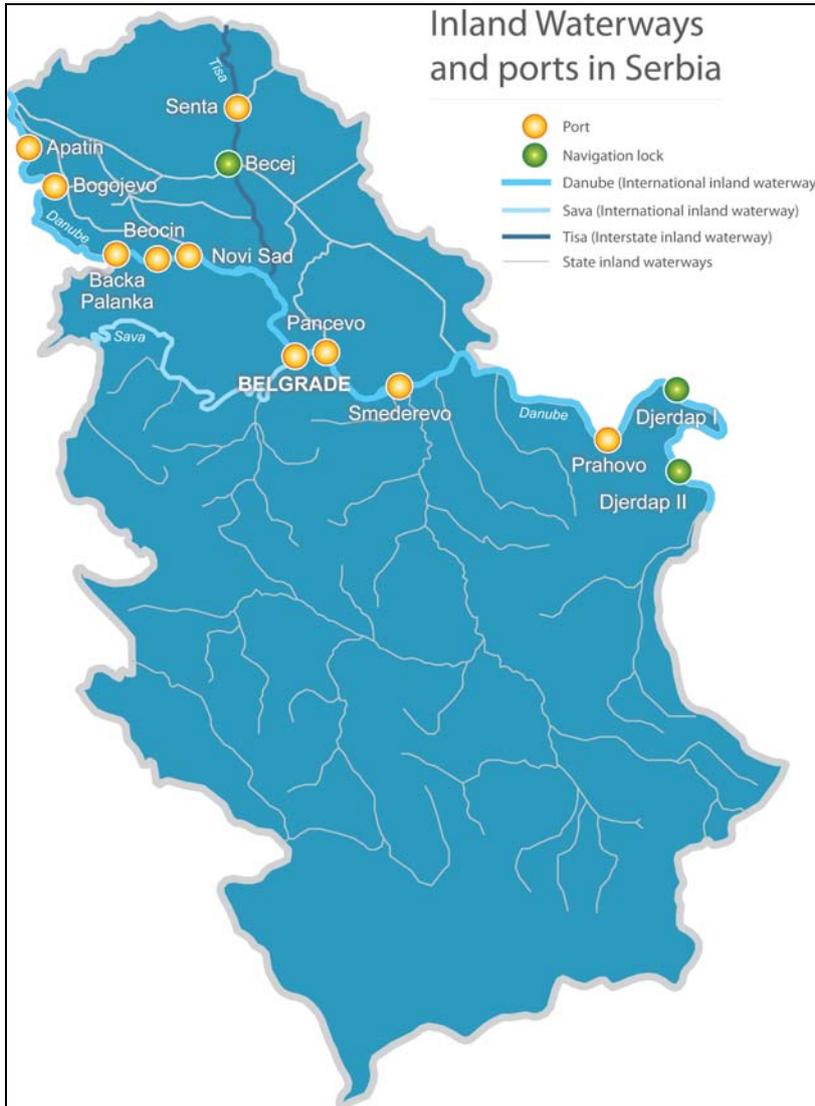
Illustration 1: Inland Waterways, ports and navigation locks in the Republic of Serbia

Governmental institutions are users of our services, mainly RIS. Port authorities (Kapetanije) are regional offices of the Ministry of Infrastructure. Port Authorities perform administrative and other professional tasks in the field of inland waterway traffic ensuring the safety of navigation along the respective river sector within their responsibility. There are 9 Port Authority Offices along the Danube, located in Bezdan, Apatin, Novi Sad, Beograd, Pancevo, Smederevo, Veliko Gradiste, Kladovo and Prahovo. They are to become important users of RIS in a short period of time. Customs and river police are already users of RIS in Serbia.

3.1.2 *Stakeholders*

We define stakeholders as entities which are influenced by our work in a longer perspective, and which will benefit from that work in the long term, at the level of the society or sector. This influence does not have to be instant, but should be visible and tangible in the future. Communication strategy for this group of entities can

be slightly different in comparison to the communication with target groups. In this case, a longer perspective is in focus, so different PR and communication tools could be used, as the indirect communication tools could apply. Besides earlier identified target groups, our stakeholders include: policy makers, educational institutions, NGOs and general public.

Policy makers, which are relevant for inland waterways, include: Ministry of Infrastructure (responsible for strategy development and enforcement concerning transportation and traffic infrastructure, including IWW transportation), Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (responsible for strategy and policy development and enforcement concerning, among other things, construction, protection of nature, protection of natural resources, approving EIAs, control and supervision, etc), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (responsible for strategy and policy development and enforcement concerning, among other things, protection of water resources). We closely cooperate with these institutions, since they make proposals and implement policies which directly of indirectly influence or could influence inland waterways and inland navigation.

Educational institutions relevant for inland waterways are: Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, as well as School of shipping, shipbuilding and hydro-building. These are important stakeholders for us, since in a longer perspective some of these students are going to be actively involved in the filed of inland waterways and inland navigation in Serbia.

NGOs and general public are rightful stakeholders in every field of human activity, and so are in the inland waterways and inland navigation. We try to cooperate with relevant NGOs, by including them in thematic workshops and public discussions, in order to hear their voice.

4   PR TOOLS

At this moment, the Directorate for Inland Waterways uses the following communication tools: events, PR items, e-newsletters, and web site.

4.1.1   Events

Directorate for Inland Waterways uses two types of events as communication tool. The first one is organization of events by itself, and the other one is participation at events organized by others.

We are organizing several kinds of events for our stakeholders and target groups:
- Thematic events (such as ceremonial opening of the test RIS center)
- Expert groups (GIS Forum, ISRBC expert groups, etc)
- Workshops within certain projects (NEWADA, WANDA, RISING)

- Info days for students (from Faculty of Civil Engineering, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering)
- Presentations and trainings (for the RIS users).

Illustration 2: NEWADA stakeholders' workshop, Belgrade, 24th of June 2010

Illustration 3: WANDA stakeholders' workshop, Belgrade, 27th of April 2010

Illustration 4: Presentation for students, Belgrade, 28th of May 2010

Illustration 5: Field trip for students, Belgrade, 14th of May 2008

Illustration 6: Ceremonial opening of the RIS center, Belgrade, 23rd of January 2008

Illustration 7: ISRBC and USACE meeting, Belgrade, 21st of October 2008

These events are good opportunity to promote our institution, to inform on latest developments in IWW sector, to present project outputs, etc. In average, we organize 5-6 such events per year, mostly in our headquarters in Belgrade. Info day for students occasionally take place on one of our vessels, and it includes field trip along the Danube and Sava River in Belgrade.

In addition, representatives of Directorate for Inland Waterways frequently participate at events organized by different institutions and organizations, as these events are also good opportunity to promote our institution and the services that we are developing and providing. These include workshops, expert groups, info days, conferences, lectures, etc. Our representatives use such opportunities to give presentations, but also to distribute promotional materials, such as flyers and other PR items, in order to improve visibility of our institution. In average, we participate and give presentations on 25-30 different events per year.

Information on organization and attendance of all events are being published on our web site, in section news, as well as in our monthly newsletters.

Events can be useful communication tool. The costs of their preparation or attendance can be high, but not necessarily. They can get together a limited number of stakeholders. A channel for possible feedback from participants exists, and should be stimulated when ever possible. Oral presentations can be very effective, and the messages communicated this way can be mind-printed for a long time.

4.1.2 Folders and brochures

Directorate for Inland Waterways does not have an organizational unit dealing with marketing and PR. However, it has a team of people in charge for all marketing and communication issues, including preparation of promotional items, brochures, folders, etc. The design for all items is being prepared internally within the institution, and it has never been outsourced (Illustration 8). This is being performed in compliance to the Graphic standards manual, developed internally in August 2007.
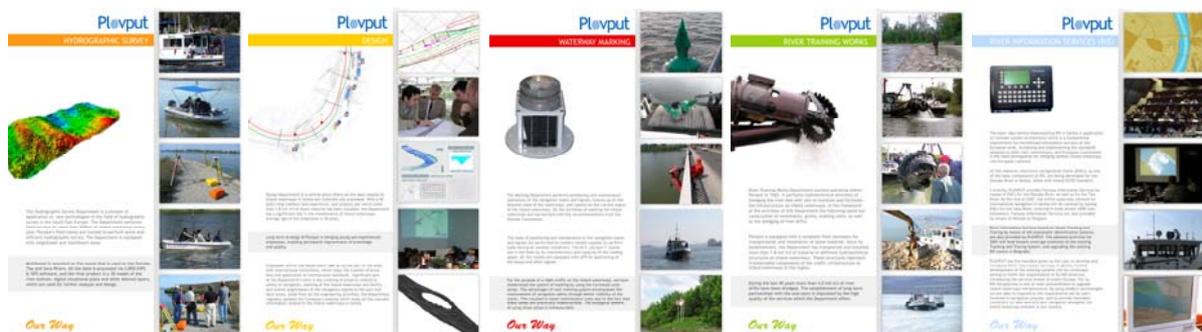

Illustration 8: Examples of brochures

In 2011, it is planned to prepare several new brochures, including one on RIS in Serbian language. Also, we are planning to prepare and publish publication titled "50 Years of Plvoput" in 2013. It would be a good opportunity to summarize our not so short history, and to give a clean perspective on the objectives for the next period.

The costs of the preparation of folders and brochures are acceptable. They can be prepared in such a way to address the specific target groups. A clean channel for possible feedback from target groups does not exist. Written texts can be very effective, if the messages communicated this way are clear and comprehensible.

4.1.3 Press releases

We do not practice to use press releases as communication tool. Instead, occasionally we practice to prepare thematic texts for magazines, and to give interviews. This is only been done when there is some major development in our scope of work, and is not a common practice.

On our web site, we have section called Media centre, in which there is a subsection named news. It also contains photo and video gallery.

The usage of this PR tool could be improved in the following years, since it is the best way to include some stakeholders, such as general public.

4.1.4 E-Newsletters

Plovput started to distribute e-newsletters in June 2007. So far, 37 editions were published and distributed among our stakeholders (Illustration 9). It is being prepared in Serbian and English language, since it is being distributed both in Serbia and abroad. In average, we prepare 10-11 newsletters per year, which is near to 1 edition per month. The form is two side A4 paper, and it usually contains 4-5 texts on developments of projects, IWW related events, publications, legislation, etc.

Illustration 9: Monthly newsletters

Our stakeholders have very positive reactions regarding the form, the content and the frequency of our newsletters. It is not a rare case that we receive feedback, asking some additional questions related to the information provided in newsletter, remarks and corrections regarding some information, etc. We receive the new subscriptions every month, usually based on recommendations from earlier subscribers.

The procedure for subscription is very easy, and is being performed by filling a simple form on our web site. Only e-mail address is required (Illustration 10). The cancelation of the subscription is available and is as simple. The subscription is free of charge, of course. In addition to this, we manually update our newsletter mailing list, based on direct requests of our stakeholders. In total, we have more than 300 subscribers for newsletter. In addition, our stakeholders' database contains more that 100 institutions and organizations, and more that 600 names, and is being updated regularly. All previous editions of newsletter are available at the same section of our web site.

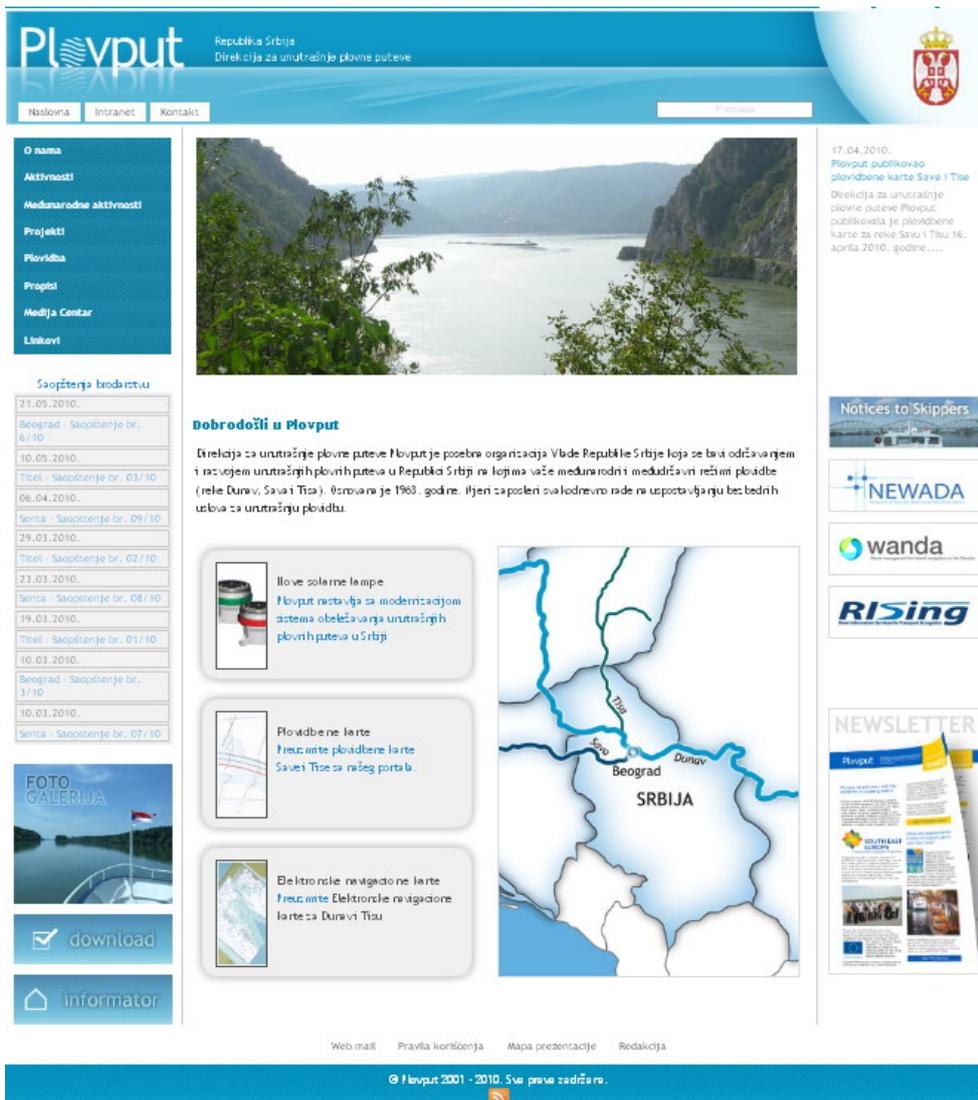**Illustration 10: Newsletter subscription page on our web site**

Besides monthly newsletters, Directorate for Inland Waterways is planning to launch another frequent publication, named "Plovput Navigation Bulletin". It will contain certain information relevant for navigation, such as approved locations for dredging activities and other river training works in the fairway, bottlenecks, as well as statistical data regarding quantities of goods imported and exported via waterways, type of goods, countries of origin, number of vessels transiting through Serbia, etc. This publication will be supported by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Our institution used to publish this type of publication during the

1990s, when more than 50 editions were distributed among relevant stakeholders. The main reason for the revival of this publication is a very good respond of our stakeholders to our newsletter.

In general, newsletters can be very useful communication tool. The costs of their preparation and distribution are low. They can reach a large number of stakeholders at the same time. A channel for possible feedback from target groups exists, and it is very user friendly. Its' frequent distribution gives sense of movement, that something is going on.

4.1.5 Website

The first web site of Plovput was lunched in 2001. The domain name (www.plovput.rs) has not been changed since. During the previous decade, it has been redesigned twice, last time at the end of 2009 (Illustration 11).

Illustration 11: Web site of the Directorate for Inland Waterways (www.plovput.rs)

The main menu contains the following sections:

- About us
  - Mission statement
  - Social responsibility
  - Organizational structure
  - History
- Activities
  - Hydrographic survey
  - Fairway design
  - Prefeasibility conditions, opinions and approvals
  - IWW marking
  - River training works
  - River information services (RIS)
- International activities
  - Danube Commission
  - The Sava River Basin Commission
  - PIANC
  - IHO
  - UNECE
  - ICPDR
- Projects
  - Implementation of RIS on the Danube River
  - Implementation of RIS on the Sava River
  - NEWADA
  - WANDA
  - RISING
  - IRIS EUROPE II
- Navigation
  - International IWWs in Serbia
  - Port authorities
  - Notices to skippers
  - IWW marking plan
  - ENCs
  - Paper navigational charts
- Legislation
  - Inland navigation

- o Strategic documents
- o International conventions and agreements
- Media centre
  - o News
  - o Newsletter
  - o Event calendar
  - o Photo gallery
  - o Video gallery
  - o Logo
  - o Flyers
  - o Media on us
- Links.

The secondary menu contains the following sections:

- Front page
- Intranet
- Contact

The tertiary menu contains the following sections:

- Web mail
- Terms of use
- Site map
- Editorial board

Front page contains separate download section.

The web site is being upgraded with new sections, based on market research activities and requests from our users. Usage statistics are being monitored and analyzed every month, especially the number of hits and visits, the most popular pages, as well as usage by countries (Table 1). The web site is being updated with latest news, at least twice a month.

			Visits per country	
Total hits per month	112.526		**Visits per country**	
Total visits per month	4.840		Serbia	72.61%
Total Unique URLs	594		Croatia	1.48%
Hits per day (average)	3.629		Russia	1.37%
Visits per day (average)	156		Slovak Republic	0.91%
			Romania	0.87%
Most popular pages			Hungary	0.75%
Paper navigation chart for Sava			Germany	0.37%
Paper navigation chart for Tisza			Austria	0.36%
ENC Danube			Ukraine	0.23%
Work report			Bulgaria	0.06%

Table 1: Monthly usage statistics for January 2011

The English version of the web site is under construction. It is planned to be finished and lunched during 2011.

The domain name Plovput will not be changed. However, we will have to adjust our internet address to www.plovput.gov.rs until May 2011, as it is a requirement of the Government for all civil service institutions in the Republic of Serbia. In addition, we will keep the existing address www.plovput.rs as well, and make automatic redirection to the www.plovput.gov.rs, so our stakeholders will not notice a thing.

Measures to improve visibility and exposure:

- Lunching English version of the web site
- Cross referencing (exchange of links among different Danube waterway administrations and other IWW related institutions and organizations).

5 MATCHING PR TOOLS TO COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

From my point of view, it is not easy to precisely define purpose of different dissemination tools, and besides that, to attribute it to the different types of target groups. As I see it, the dominant function of different dissemination tools is as follows:

- To raise awareness - mainly article, but folder, newsletter, web site and presentation can be used as well
- To engage - mainly article, but folder, newsletter, web site and presentations can be used, also
- To inform - mainly newsletter and web site, but folder, article and presentation can be used as well
- To promote - mainly presentation and web site, but other tools can be useful as well

Now, we should allocate the different tools to different types of target groups. In general, we do not practice to set a clear distinction between different target groups and the set of dissemination tools that would address only them. For example, our newsletters and folders are being distributed to all of our stakeholders. Our web site contains different sections which are of interest for different target groups. Regarding articles and presentations, they are more focused on specific target groups, due to a several reasons. Mainly, you can not make everybody to read some paper, and you can hardly place all interested party in the same room at the same time. So, these tools are, by their nature, more focused than others, so targeting is required. For example, we are organizing presentations of RIS for their potential users, namely shipping companies, ports and navigation locks operators, customs, and river police. In other words, we are targeting them.

PR tools are used for the following:

- *raise awareness* – communicate new messages and change perceptions,

- *inform* – let others know about our ongoing projects, activities, objectives, and their relevance,

- *engage* – get input/feedback from the community, challenge the community,

- *promote* – 'sell' the project outputs and results.

Dissemination tools:		Folder	Article	Newsletter	Website	Presentation
TARGET GROUPS & STAKEHOLDERS	NGO's		engage		inform	
	The media		engage		inform	
	General Public		engage		inform	
	Shipping companies	raise awareness		inform	inform	promote
	Logistics companies	raise awareness		inform	inform	
	Ports and terminal operators (and navigation locks)	raise awareness		inform	inform	promote
	Port authorities	raise awareness			inform	promote
	Policy makers	raise awareness			inform	promote
	Educational institutions	raise awareness	engage		inform	

raise awareness	engage	inform	promote

To recap, every tool could be used for more that one purposes, and all tools could be used to address different types of target groups. In fact, I am quite sure that use of different tools in necessary. It is just a question of time when you apply one, and when another tool. The perfect way would be for somebody to read an article on something and to get interested in the issue. After that, to google the issue a little bit (hopefully on our web site), than to give us a call and to ask for the meeting. Then, we would make presentation and provide her/him with folder and other publications, and put her/him on our newsletter mailing list.

At this moment, our stakeholders and different target groups are pretty good informed on our work, including services we are providing. No major gaps are identified.

Having in mind resources (human and financial) that we have at our disposal for those actions, no major corrective measures are possible. Some improvements are both desirable and feasible, of course. These should include:

- preparation and distribution of specific, thematic folders;
- pay more attention to articles, they can be useful;
- introduce Plovput navigation bulletin, as such publication does not exist;
- launch English version of the web site (if possible in this decade),
- investigate the possibility to introduce press section on the web site; and
- organize more specific and less general presentations;

- employ at least one person (organizational unit is not a realistic option) which will be completely dedicated for PR and communication activities, if possible in this decade, of course.

Besides these foreseen corrective actions, we are open and eager to hear suggestions from other partners, and we are willing to put them into practice, if our internal capacities are allowing us to perform so.

6 CASE STUDY: INTERNET PLATFORM OF THE DANUBE PORTS

The Directorate for Inland Waterways is not responsible for port management in the Republic of Serbia. According to the new adopted Law on navigation and ports on inland waterways (2010), a new governmental institution is to be established, named Agency for port management. It will be responsible, among other things, for marketing and promotion of ports. This agency is not yet established, and I can't tell when that will happen. In the mean time, as we consider port operators and ports for our relevant stakeholders, we will try to fill this gap. Internet platform for Danube ports can be a very useful tool for inland navigation on the Danube River in general. So, we will try to give contribution to this portal. In accordance to this, we are planning to organize one workshop in 2011 which will target only port operators in Serbia. One of the items in the agenda will be the Internet platform for Danube ports. Hopefully, we will have a positive feedback, and specific follow up list which will include procedure for updating information on ports on this portal.

7 OTHER COOPERATION PROJECTS YOU ARE INVOLVED IN ON PR LEVEL

Besides the NEWADA project, we are currently participating in some other projects, like WANDA (Waste management for Inland Navigation of the Danube) and RISING (RIS services for improving the integration of inland waterway transports into intermodal chains), and we are involved in the work packages dealing with the communication and dissemination of the results of these projects. In addition, we were involved in the Serbian delegation dealing with the preparation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, and surely we will be implementing bodies for some of the future projects regarding implementation of this strategy.

8 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

In our opinion, further cooperation in the field of PR and communication between Danube waterway administrations is desirable. We still don't have communication strategy and goals set. When we draft it, we will be able to judge upon it, regarding if they are realistic. As for our institution, we always tend to set high goals, and look ahead, sometimes far ahead. But, my team and me honestly kind of enjoy in doing so.

As possible fields for future cooperation between Danube waterway administrations, a few ideas are on my mind:

- Investigate the possibility of joint market research activities and data exchange
- Analyze availability and comparability of statistical data per country; maybe there is a need to establish some sort of cooperation with statistical offices, we already done so in order to be able to start preparation and publication of the navigation bulletin;
- Make the list of relevant trigger information and circulate it among PR managers on regular basis
- Try to make synergies with other projects, but to avoid overlapping

End of Document