

Workshop to inform local stakeholders, Tulcea, 01.11.12

SE RDA promotes sustainable transport and tourism along the Danube within a transnational cooperation project

The Danube is the most transnational river in the world and a major European transport axis which travels through the South-East Europe, interlinking on its way to the Black Sea countries that are on its pass, therefore making this Danube Region very important in terms of its cultural and history influence, natural resources, nature attractions, economic links and opportunities, transport networks etc. This region must be protected and developed in a constant and innovative manner.

The Transdanube Project “Sustainable Transport and Tourism along the Danube” is elaborated in the framework of the South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme (SEE Programme) - Priority Axis “Improvement of the accessibility”, Key Area of Intervention “Improve coordination in promoting, planning and operation for primary and secondary transportation networks”, thus contributing to the EU Strategy and the SEE Programme objectives by improvement of accessibility levels and quality of transport services in the Danube Region.

The project duration is 24 months (commencing 1st of October 2012 until 30th of September 2014) and the total budget is 2,371,030.65 Euro.

The Transdanube partnership consists in 14 financing partners from Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Croatia and Serbia, equally distributed among the upper, middle and lower part of the Danube,.

The project partners are regional development agencies, non-profit organisations, regional authorities, the majority of them being responsible for the development of transport and tourism, two essential domains that sustain economic growth in the Danube Region: Environment Agency Austria, Danube Tourist Commission (Austria), Regional Government of Burgenland (Germany), Bratislava Self-Governing Region Department of Strategy and Project Management (Slovakia), West Pannon Regional and Economic Development Nonprofit Ltd (Hungary), Bakony and Balaton Regional Tourism Nonprofit Ltd. (Hungary), Regional Administration of Vidin Region (Bulgaria), Club Sustainable Development of Civil Society (Bulgaria), National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism (Romania), the South-East Regional Development Agency in Romania, Slovak Cycle Club (Slovakia), Danube Office Ltd. (Germany), Danube Competence Center (Serbia), Eastern Serbia Regional Development Agency (Serbia).

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Jointly for our common future

The project is coordinated by the Environment Agency Austria (EEA), a Federal Austrian Government Institution, which provides expertise on the condition of the environment and environmental changes, as well as on measures to avoid or reduce environmental pollution. The EEA is highly experienced in sustainable mobility in tourism regions and in transnational project management, having a good European-wide network.

The main objective of this transnational project is to develop sustainable mobility along the Danube, including environmentally friendly transport (train, bus, bike and shipping) in order to improve the accessibility and facilitate the concept of sustainable tourism in the whole Danube region.

The project specific objectives are:

- to improve accessibility of regions along the Danube through sustainable mobility offers;
- to increase the added value of tourism for regions along the river Danube through mobility and tourism marketing packages;
- to highlight the benefits of sustainable mobility offers for the regions; increase knowledge about tourist flows, access routes, transport offers in the Danube region;
- to increase awareness, knowledge and to promote sustainable mobility in the Danube region
- to extend the cooperation structures between partner regions, tourist destinations and source regions.

With its strong focus on improving accessibility with sustainable transport offers, Transdanube will contribute to further economic development, especially in the tourism sector, therefore strengthening the Danube region as a whole.

The development of sustainable transport offers will stimulate the shift to environmentally friendly mobility systems, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas emissions/pollutants/noise and better transport services for the inhabitants and tourists. This will influence the economic development, therefore the quality of life. Combining the transport and the tourism sector, Transdanube is aiming to improve the transport connections from the Danube to tourist points of interest, therefore contributing to interconnect primary and secondary networks.

The main outputs and results of Transdanube are:

- Transnational State of the Art report on sustainable mobility in the Danube region (including identification of good practices) as a basis for future development of sustainable mobility offers. This output will be achieved until April 2013;
- Common soft mobility vision that will provide guidelines for all interested regions along the Danube and in SEE. This output will be achieved by November 2013;
- Regional action plans, that will provide a implementation plan of sustainable mobility offers in the participating regions beyond lifetime. This output will be achieved until August 2014.

- Concrete sustainable transport offers showing the benefits of sustainable mobility to experts, tourists and the population (developed and demonstrated in cooperation with experts from the transport and the tourism sector). This output will be achieved until August 2014.
- Digital map, presenting information about existing mobility and tourism offers, that will to be integrated in existing known public web-portals. This output will be achieved until August 2014.
- Soft mobility packages and regional marketing plans to promote sustainable mobility and tourism in the Danube regions. These packages will be available starting with August 2014.
 - Raised awareness (inhabitants, tourists, transport operators, tour operators, local/regional/national authorities) of the benefits of sustainable mobility in tourism. This is a permanent activity which will be carried out throughout the entire project duration.
 - Improved cooperation between public authorities, transport operators and tourism experts. This result should be achieved by September 2014.
- Communication at regional level, as well as with the European Union (via transnational partners) that will provide important inputs for the project's visibility. This is a permanent activity which will be carried out throughout the entire project duration.

The South-East Regional Development Agency (SE RDA) is a project partner and the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, a major stakeholder, is an Associated Strategic Partner.

SE RDA's attributions and responsibilities in this project are structured in 6 work packages:

- Project management. This is a continuous activity that will be carried out throughout the entire project duration.
- Communication activities (inputs to communication plan; common endorsement and active participation in annual evaluation; keep in-touch with regional/national/international media -press releases, contacts-; inputs to presentation on the website and in the e-newsletter; participation in other events and dissemination; tight communication with partners). Communication activities are foreseen until the project end date, namely September 2014.
- Transport and tourism system analysis (contribution to the development of the different methodologies, concept, ideas, data; inputs and agreement on common methodology; elaboration of the regional State of the Art analysis based on results/findings of existing studies and data collected at regional level; meetings with stakeholders, SWOT analysis for the Danube area; inputs on draft/final version of transnational report on transport and tourism system analysis; good practices collection). A consolidated version of the Transnational Report on Transport and Tourism Systems in the Danube Region will be available by the end of April 2013.
- Sustainable mobility offers (input for the development of the common vision for sustainable mobility; updating existing regional action plans; participation in the elaboration of cross-border action plans; development of boat connection from Braila through Galati to Tulcea and a fast ship connection to the Danube

Delta; elaboration of a business plan for multi-modal node at Tulcea etc; development of feasibility studies for bike routes inside the Danube Delta; pre-investment studies for new/improved multi-modal transport offers; input to the elaboration of the project specific manuals). These activities will be carried out until August 2014.

- Mobility & tourism marketing (participation in trainings; data inputs and updated digital map; integration of the digital map into existing web-portals; development of soft mobility packages aiming at connecting EuroVelo 6 with Danube attractions; development of an integrated eco-tourism circuit for the capitalization of cultural and natural resources in the Danube Delta, including combining bike trails along the Danube river with ship-bus transport offers being developed to reach Macin Mountains National Park; development/update of regional marketing strategies/tools and other measures to promote soft mobility tourist packages). These activities will be finalized by August 2014.
- Stakeholder involvement, evaluation, follow-up activities (identification and involvement of relevant stakeholders, organisation of meetings with regional stakeholders; participation in the development of follow-up project ideas; integration of project outputs in stakeholders regional/national development and business plans during national/regional workshops; integration of the sustainable mobility concept in regional development plans). These activities should be carried out by September 2014.

For more information on the Transdanube project, a targeted website will be available soon. We will keep you updated with this information.

SE RDA's website has also a section dedicated to international projects in which our organisation is involved as a project leader or project partner.

SE RDA website: www.adrse.ro