

Integrated transnational policies and practical solutions
for an environmentally-friendly
Inland Water Transport system in the Danube region



**Output 6.1 Concept of IWT Environmental
Information Centre**

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1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ActL	Activity Leader
AIS	Automatic Identification System
CER	CERONAV – Romanian Maritime Training Centre Romania
CRUP	Inland Navigation Development Centre Ltd.-Croatia
DCC	Danube Competence Center-Serbia
DTP	Danube Transnational Programme
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUSDR	European Strategy for Danube Region
GD	GREEN DANUBE DTP1-1-043-3.1
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of Danube River
ITC	Information and Training Centre
IWT	Inland Waterway Transport
IWT EIC	Inland Waterway Transport Environmental Information Centre
JS	Joint Secretariat-Budapest
LP	Lead Partner
MA	Managing Authority
NELI	Cooperation –Network for logistic and nautical education focusing on IWT in the Danube corridor supported by innovative solutions
HINT	Harmonized Inland Navigation Transport through education and information technology
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
PM	Project Manager
PP	Project Partner
RIS	River Information Services
RSOE	National Association of Radio Distress-Signalling and Info communications
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

2. INTRODUCTION

With the growing need to strengthen the environmental regulatory process for sustainable development, there has been a growing demand for contribution to more effective information sharing to limit impact of inland waterway transport system on the Danube environment by development of specific tools, organization of transnational pilot actions and campaign intended to raise public awareness on Inland Waterway Transport environment protection.

Understanding the growing interest for promotion of IWT sector and for dissemination of information on IWT environmental protection, GREEN DANUBE project aims to develop the concept of Inland Waterway Transport Environmental Information Centre in order to offer further insight into and understanding of the environmental issues in inland waterway sector and increasing environmental awareness at all levels.

The creation of an IWT EIC is exciting permanent challenging process since the centre is never fully completed – it changes with the people who work there and those who attend it and also subject to latest developments in environment protection.

To help enthusiasts move through this process GREEN DANUBE consortium decided to create the concept of IWT EIC – a document summarizing the framework one should consider when creating or managing an Environmental Information Centre.

3. WHAT IS AN IWT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTRE?

“A place where you can go to get information!”

“A place which navigates you to the information!”

IWT Environmental Information Centre is an essential tool for international interest groups organizations involved in Danube environmental protection which contributes to more effective information sharing to limit impact of IWT system on the Danube environment through organization of transnational pilot actions and campaigns intended to raise public awareness on environment protection as well as routine events such as tours, meetings, workshops, symposia, round tables, etc.

At the first sight all environmental information centres may seem to be very similar, yet each and every centre is unique. The uniqueness is determined by several factors:

- the location of the centre;
- the facilities of the centre;
- the ownership of the centre;
- the mobility character of the centre;

4. FORMER INITIATIVES ON INFORMATION AND TRAINING CENTERS

4.1 Lessons learned from the former initiatives (NELI & HINT);

During NELI project eight Master Studies for set up of ITCs - Information and Training Centres in RO, UA, BG, HU, RS, HR, SK and AT were developed by the project partners in the subject countries. All ITCs were basically intended to promote the IWT sector to the general public, especially young people on one hand and support relevant authorities and stakeholders on the other.

The ITCs concepts, developed by NELI partners, adapted experience gained from existing ITCs in Western Europe to realities in their own countries, specific demands of the national industry and education sector, with due consideration of factors such as available locations and financing sources.

All eight Master studies developed during NELI project were consistent with the primary role of future ITCs as ambassadors of inland navigation, yet they each came with specific organization, training versus information role, operation, staffing, marketing and promotion scenarios in line with national policies and the specific activity of each partner.

Promotion of the Danube as source for sustainable development of South East Europe as well as presentation of successful career opportunities in IWT along appropriate guidance and/or training to reach such positions were the basic characteristics which underlined all ITCs concepts regardless of their national particulars.

The main objectives of these ITCs were the following:

- To increase public awareness on the importance of IWT sector, including innovative specific solutions;
- To provide reliable information about IWT;
- To promote IWT activities and encourage development of the entrepreneurial spirit of youngsters;
- To attract and raise the enthusiasm of young people for specific jobs in IWT sector;
- To support and cooperate with relevant IWT stakeholders;
- To act as a facilitator for a better cohesion between port authorities/port and transport operators and potential IWT jobs aspirants.

The four ITCs set up during NELI project were:

1. InfoDanube in Galati- Romania
2. RIS Training Centre in Sisak- Croatia
3. ITCs mobile unit- Dunapromo in Budapest – Hungary
4. Infocenter Danube – Ennshafen – Austria.

InfoDanube in Galati – Romania

InfoDanube, set up on board CERONAV's pontoon located in port of Galati is a multifunctional space offering visitors an insight into all Danube related activities (Danube transport, port operations, navigation, jobs etc.) as well as the possibility to attend training courses or experience real life situations such as steering a vessel, search and rescue operations, anchorage, mooring and route planning and thus meet its triple purpose: information, training and promotion.



(Source: www.neliproject.eu)

RIS Training Centre in Sisak- Croatia

The RIS training centre, set up in Sisak, Croatia, provides hands-on training on vessel Tracking and Tracing, Notice to Skippers, Electronic Reporting, Data Gateway as well as practical use of AIS transponders. In addition to pilot training courses, a training manual has been produced to be used as a training aid as well as practical reference tool for RIS beneficiaries. RIS training is targeted at IWT professionals of both public and private sectors.



(Source: www.neliproject.eu)

Infocenter Danube in Ennshafen- Austria

Infocentre Danube is an additional area of visitor world Ennshafen for the promotion of IWT with a 360° view over the economic driving force Ennshafen. It provides interactive information of the 5th floor of the logistics centre Ennshafen and consists of an event area, information area about the advanced Danube region as well as Navigation Station with mini games and 3D cinema. The aim of this ITC is to increase the information level among population so as to improve the image of water transport mode and the value of inland navigation among the decision makers.



(Source: www.neliproject.eu)

Mobile ITC – DUNAPROMO- Budapest- Hungary

This ITC is a mobile unit with the main aim to promote IWT sector and associated specific jobs and was set up by RSOE.

RSOE executed several mobile promotion actions in Hungary and beyond, the success of these actions being largely related to topics related to inland navigation addressed: ports and logistics, vessel types and vessel design.

During HINT project, all ITCs set up in NELI project were equipped with modern multimedia elements with the same aim to provide targeted information concerning IWT sector.



(Source: www.neliproject.eu)

During **HINT project**, all ITCs set up in NELI project were equipped with modern multimedia elements with the same aim to provide targeted information concerning IWT sector.

4.2 Feedback received from authorities and stakeholders

The most important feedback received from relevant authorities and stakeholders was the validation of the ITC concepts which consisted mainly in the acknowledgement of the appropriate decision makers of their validity and capacity to yield estimated results. The ultimate success of ITCs depends on the consolidated efforts of the competent central and local authorities and decision makers which were invited to cooperate in offering the required support in accordance with appropriate legal framework.

Endorsement of the Master Studies developed in NELI project by applicable national authorities as well as inclusion of need for development of ITCs in national and transnational action plans created the framework for future erection of new similar centres in strategic locations in Danube riparian countries.

NELI has put in place an example of successful development and operation of ITCs. Promotion of NELI ITCs, the various events involving national and international audience organized in Galati, Ennshafen and Sisak within InfoDanube, Infocentre Danube, RIS Sisak Centre and Dunapromo mobile unit, respectively, have raised the interest of countless stakeholders and have increased the motivation of remaining NELI partners to build such an ITC in their own countries. To this end, they included realistic proposals in HINT project (NELI follow up project) for continuing the development of these ITCs, proposals which have been brought to life during HINT project lifetime.

Coverage of all important IWT topics, supported by successful cooperation actions with relevant organizations and exchanges between all ITCs should mark a consistent step in implementation of EU desiderates as formulated in EUSDR- EU Strategy for Danube Region.

5. PLANNING AN IWT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTRE

5.1 Objectives

An IWT EIC has the following objectives:

- to provide to the target group from EU and non EU countries an IWT Environmental information source;
- to provide targeted information;
- to enhance the protection of IWT environment dialogue;
- to inform IWT Environmental organizations about European initiatives of relevance for this sector;
- to support and cooperate with relevant stakeholders;
- to act as a facilitator for a better cohesion between relevant authorities, organizations in this field.
- to contribute to gain back trust for the Danube IWT in order to get IWT's optimal share in the modal split;
- promoting the reliable environmental information;
- promoting the environmentally friendly behaviour;
- promoting the nature conservation, the protected area, intermediate the local, regional, national or transboundary cooperation in nature conservation;
- marketing a tourist destination - i.e. environmentally friendly tours/cruises on Danube River etc.);

5.2 Need and opportunity

Discussions about Europe's rivers, and particularly the Danube, have intensified in recent years.

Riverine ecosystems and natural landscapes need protection and in many cases improvement of the environmental conditions. Rivers however are multi-use resource areas – providing waterways, energy and drinking water sources, recreation and tourism areas and flood and sewage discharge channels – all of which need sustainable development.

Historically, coordination between the transport sector and environmental authorities was insufficient or has functioned poorly. Increasingly, however, there is a greater understanding of the need to raise awareness of the policy decision makers and of the interest target groups on the importance of the protection of the environment in the Danube macro region. The Danube River offers an example of this sort of reconciliation. In 2007, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR, Vienna), together with the Danube Commission (DC, Budapest) and the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC, Zagreb), initiated an international dialogue to create a basis for improving navigation while at the same time protecting and improving the natural landscape and water quality of the Danube. An intensive one-year discussion process resulted in an agreement called the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin. The Joint Statement was endorsed by the ICPDR, DC and ISRBC in 2008 and provides guiding principles and criteria for the planning and implementation of waterway projects that bring together the sometimes conflicting interests of navigation and the environment.

Awareness on environmental protection, in general, has increased in the last few decades but is still a lot of work to be done because of the lack of information of this important sector of inland waterway transport which is inadequately promoted at European level.

The inadequate promotion of IWT is largely dependent on the lack of information of this important transport sector, situation underlined in EC documents (e.g. Europe 2020 Strategy, White Paper 2011, NAIADES II, EUSDR).

The development of IWT Environmental Information Centre offers further insight into and understanding of the environmental issues in inland waterway sector and increasing environmental awareness at all levels by utilizing the existing ITC – InfoDanube developed in NELI project, extended in HINT project and reconsidered and equipped for environmental issues in GREEN DANUBE project.

It has also revealed various possibilities of improving its existing capabilities so as to increase both public awareness and its transnational character and make possible future cooperation actions with larger area coverage and dissemination impact.

5.3 Mission and goals

The primary purpose of the IWT EIC is to contribute to more effective information sharing to limit impact of IWT system on the Danube region environment by development of specific tools and organization of specific information sharing events in

order to provide access to everyone interested in this information and to provide also learning experiences focused on the protection of Danube macro-region which connect people to the natural world and empower them to positively impact their local environments.

At the same time the EICs can provide the EU, its citizens, institutions, companies and other target groups an information source regarding protection of environment in the IWT sector and factual overview about status and ongoing trends on this important issue. The EICs provide information that covers a wide range of knowledge concerning the environment in IWT sector, especially in the Danube sector and also regarding the prevention of environment pollution caused by emissions from inland vessels.

5.4 Target audiences

The concept of the IWT EICs themselves, its inherent objectives and aims dictate following categories of target groups:

- General public;
- Pupils from secondary/vocational schools and college and their parents;
- Students from universities specializing in IWT and Environment protection and related studies;
- Teaching staff from appropriate education and training institutions;
- Port and transport operators;
- River/port administrations personnel;
- Organizations for monitoring the environment protection;
- Organizations for monitoring the quality of air and water;
- Organizations for monitoring the protected areas;
- Tourists;
- EC experts involved in IWT strategy & policy decision making;
- Authority stakeholders that can act to assign financial resources to further greening the Danube IWT;
- NGOs active in striving for better conditions for Danube IWT to green the fleet;
- Staff from NGOs active in protection of environment;
- Other professional associations and organizations.

5.5 Main services and activities

The main services provided by IWT EICs shall be, at least:

One stop information service:

- General basic information, using multiple languages and multiple media elements;
- Targeted information, on request, to EU institutions and member states;
- Media services;
- Information campaigns.

Dialogue actions:

- Exhibition campaigns;
- Schools and education activities;
- Discussion forums;
- Organization of events (meetings, workshops, symposia, round tables etc.).

Environmental information

- Air and water quality in IWT sector;
- Pollution events in IWT sector;
- Contingency plans for prevention of IWT pollution;
- Air quality in the urban, rural and/or protected areas located near the Inland waterways;
- European strategies and programs in the field.
- How low the pollution of IWT is and it can still be lowered by using green technologies etc.

Getting the message across

- On site distribution of information and centralized development of promotion materials;
- Visual advertising outside centre;
- Assure sustainability of the activities after the end of the project.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW IWT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTRES

6.1 IWT Environmental Information Centre in ROMANIA

Name: InfoDanube EIC

Location: on board of the School pontoon PS 928 – InfoDanube – upper deck, berthed at pier 17/18. Port of registration: Galati – Romania

Type: Information centre located on the water and in one of main maritime and inland traffic vessels ports on the maritime sector of the Danube

Legal status: single ownership of CERONAV

Prospective partners: authorities, agencies, administrations, NGOs, public institutions, clusters etc. involved in Danube environmental protection activities.

The main facilities of IWT EIC are:

6.1.1 Particulars of the place

IWT EIC RO will be located in Galati – a Danube port, which is the largest port in Romania and is designated a core TEN-T port. Galati port is the biggest river-maritime harbour in Romania, is the second maritime gate of access from the Black Sea, it is located on the Eastern border of the EU next to the Republic of Moldova and is the only border crossing transiting Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

These important issues related to its location will provide EIC all tangible and intangible resources needed for information campaign and transnational pilot actions and other events focused on the environmental protection of the Danube River.

Infrastructure

School pontoon PS 928- InfoDanube is a non-propelled vessel, in the ownership of CERONAV. It can be operated either moored at quay or towed along inland waterways subject to specific navigation conditions of Zone 3.

The main characteristics of the vessel:

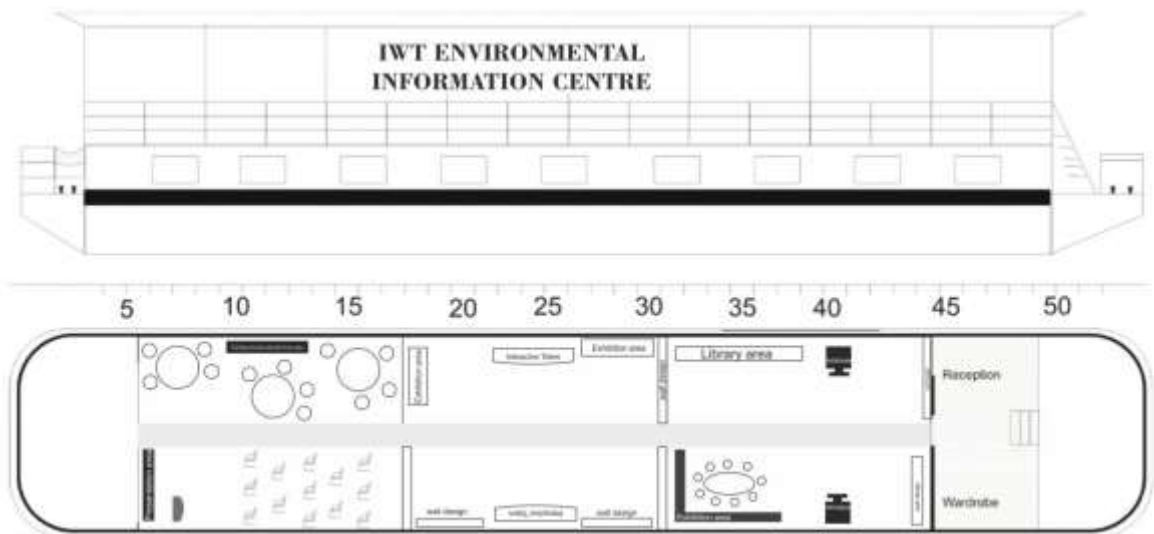
Length: 28.16 m

Breadth: 5.16 m

Depth: 1.50 m
 Freeboard: 0.95 m
 Lightweight draft: 0.45 m
 Maximum draft: 0.55 m
 Full load displacement: 72 t

The school pontoon is presently used as ITC- InfoDanube which is established on the main deck.

EIC will be developed on the superstructure deck of the school pontoon which will be covered and refurbished specifically for this purpose. These specific works will be performed in order to optimize existing facilities and functions of the vessel and make it suitable for operation as an EIC.



6.1.2 Equipment and multimedia elements



InfoKiosk



Interactive presentation system



Totem

6.1.3 Interior design

In this stage the interior space dedicated for EIC will be arranged according to the destination and main purpose of this centre.



6.1.4 Resources

Costs for the interior design arrangements and purchase of specific equipment will be financed by GREEN DANUBE project budget.

Determination of costs

Total costs will consist of the expenditures related to the interior design of EIC and the purchase of equipment.

6.1.5 Getting the message across

Adequate and efficient promotion of IWT EIC is an issue of highest importance, an essential key factor in the future success of the centre and it has been as such extensively analysed in relation to its main objectives and basic target groups addressed. There is a number of ways to promote the centre and what it does, such as: press releases, presentations, posters, newspaper columns, blogs and many others.

As regarding the **mass media** the best tool to communicate is the newspaper - local, regional or one produced by the centre itself.

In terms of social media, more and more people are using alternative sources for getting information- Twitter, Facebook.

Facebook's most common use is to keep people informed of what's happening. It's like a book/diary, where you publish all important moments of the centre.

6.1.6 Durability

IWT EIC developed during GREEN DANUBE project will run after the completion of the project with the same focus on raising awareness of the general public and of national public authorities, international organizations and associations on the environment protection of Danube ecosystem.

6.1.7 Assessment methods

When running the centre and having visitors, information campaign, seminars, etc. very often it is hard to stop and reflect on what and how you are doing. But without reflection and evaluation it is hard to understand whether you are successful and activities you are running reach the objectives you have set.

The first evaluation is done during the planning process when the needs of target groups, their wishes and motivations are assessed.

The information campaigns and transnational pilot actions and any other events focused on environmental protection activities will require another type of evaluation. The most popular evaluation methods are questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, peer reviews.

In order to get a professional opinion about your activities it is important to rely on the transfer of best practices from the existing environmental protection centres.

Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses, and combination of methods usually gives the best results.

6.2 IWT Environmental Information Centre in CROATIA

Name: RIS EIC Training Centre

Location: located at the Harbour Master's Office Sisak and RIS NCC

Legal status: Owned by Ministry of Transport

Prospective partners: authorities, agencies, administrations, NGOs, public institutions, clusters etc. involved in Danube environmental protection activities.

The main facilities of IWT EIC are:

6.2.1 Particulars of the place

RIS EIC training centre will be located at the Harbour Master's Office Sisak at the address: Rimska 16, 44000 Sisak, Croatia.

Sisak is the administrative centre of the Sisak-Moslavina County. It lays on the main road Zagreb-Hrvatski Sisak-Petrinja (M12.2) and the railroad Zagreb-Sisak-Sunja. It is located at the confluence of the Kupa, Sava, and Odra rivers, 57 km southeast of the Croatian capital city Zagreb.

Type: RIS Training Centre

6.2.2 Equipment and multimedia elements

The RIS Training Centre classroom is equipped with:

- 8 desktop computers;
- computer network equipment in order to connect the 8 desktop computers at the RIS training centre;
- 1 projector and 1 projector screen;
- 2 different types of AIS transponders.
- Website

During the GREEN DANUBE project Centre will be complemented with Touch screen monitors, Interactive Touch Screen System for presentations and laptop computer

6.2.3 Interior design

RIS EIC Centre is equipped as classroom and during the GREEN DANUBE there will be no changes in interior design.



6.2.4 Resources

Costs for purchase of specific equipment will be financed by GREEN DANUBE project budget.

Determination of costs

Total costs will consist of the expenditures related to the purchase of equipment.

6.2.5 Getting the message across

Promotion of RIS EIC Centre is important issue. Several ways of promotion will be conducted, based on experience from former projects NELI and HINT: press releases, presentations, local and regional newspapers, newsletters and finally own web page

developed during HINT project. In terms of social media LinkedIn is network of high importance in business.

6.2.6 Durability

RIS EIC developed during GREEN DANUBE project will run after the completion of the project with the same focus on raising awareness of the general public and of national public authorities, international organizations and associations on the environment protection of Danube and Sava ecosystem.

6.2.7 Assessment methods

Evaluation will be conducted through survey after campaigns and workshops in RIS EIC Centre. Also online web survey will be published on RIS EIC web page so after every event visitors will be invited to fill out survey and leave impressions and comments. The information campaigns and transnational pilot actions and any other events focused on environmental protection activities will require another type of evaluation.

6.3 IWT Environmental Information Centre in HUNGARY

Name: DUNAPROMO Mobile EIC

Location: In Hungary RSOE will set up a mobile IWT EIC based on the equipment and experience of former mobile ITC in SEE projects (NELI and HINT).

6.3.1 Particulars of the place

The mobile EIC will be made up of portable tools and devices so that it can be packed in a normal car which makes it feasible to visit schools and other locations of interest in Hungary. RSOE together with PDM, BDCA and DST will organize a transnational campaign in Hungary, Germany, Austria and Bulgaria.

6.3.2 Equipment and multimedia elements

2 pieces of mobile interactive touch screen displays will be purchased for video and audio presentation.



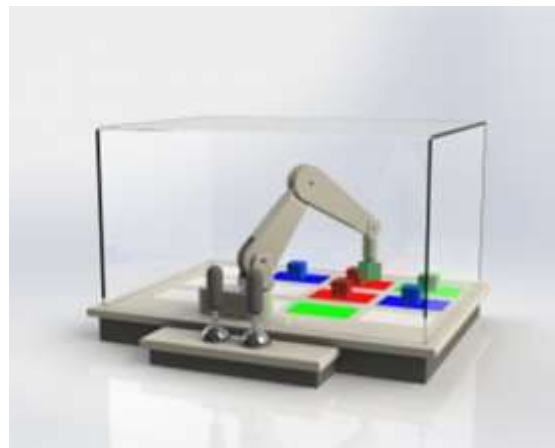
2 pieces of interactive big-size touchscreen display for interactive presentations.



Presentation beamer for project specific presentation on mobile IWT Environmental Information Centre at workshops and meetings.



Interactive games will be installed as our specific target group is the students of secondary schools.



Green navigation and logistics model



6.3.3 Interior design

6.3.4 Resources

All costs related for set up of mobile EIC, including equipment, external expertise for campaigns, travel and related staff cost will be financed by GREEN DANUBE project budget.

Cost of equipment -EUR 11 000

Cost of external expertise – IWT centers arrangement – EUR 12 000

6.3.5 Getting the message across

Through this mobile EIC, pilotage and cooperation actions will be organized at national and Transnational level, mainly, to build capacities of involved national authorities in the environment- related matters, to educate children and young people and for public involvement in decision making in order to strengthen environmentally-friendly, safe and balanced transport system.

6.3.6 Durability

DUNAPROMO ITC has been developed in HINT project and it is still running and will be further developed in GREEN DANUBE project. It will also run after the completion of the project with the same focus on raising awareness of the general public and of national public authorities, international organizations and associations on the environment protection of Danube ecosystem.

6.3.7 Assessment methods

During the preparation of mobile EIC the needs of our target groups will be assessed by consultation with schools, with the transport museum in Budapest, with environmental organisations and their inputs will be incorporated.

During the implementation phase and after each campaign - either national or transnational - questionnaires will be collected from participants.

After information campaigns and transnational pilot actions interviews will be held with the involved stakeholders in order to assess the experience of the events.

6.4 IWT Environmental Information Centre in SERBIA

Name: EIC Djerdap

Location: EIC Djerdap will be part of the National Park Djerdap HQ building located in Donji Milanovac, Kralja Petra I 14a, Serbia.

Legal status: Combined ownership. DCC is providing equipment and producing materials and National Park Djerdap is providing premises and maintenance of the EIC. The National Park Djerdap is a publicly owned company financed from the state budget and own income.

6.4.2 Equipment and multimedia elements



Interactive presentation screens



Wall mounted info tablets



Info Totem

6.4.3 Interior design

The interior space dedicated for EIC will be arranged according to the available space, structural conditions of the space and main purpose/audience of the centre.



6.4.4 Resources

Costs for the interior design arrangements and purchase of specific equipment will be financed by GREEN DANUBE project budget.

Determination of costs

Total costs will consist of the expenditures related to the interior design of EIC, the purchase of equipment. And external expertise necessary for production of materials – interactive games for specific target groups such as elementary school children.

6.4.5 Getting the message across

In order to make EIC as the living location, it is important to efficiently promote it among the stakeholders.

The partners will explore and identify jointly the ways to promote the centre and what it does, such as: presentations, communicating with potential visitors, on-line visibility on partners social media channels, etc.

6.4.6 Durability

IWT EIC developed during GREEN DANUBE project will run after the completion of the project as part of the Interpretation center of NP Djerdap with the same focus on raising awareness of the general public and public authorities, NGOs and associations on the environment protection of Danube ecosystem.

6.4.7 Assessment methods

During the preparation of EIC the needs of the target groups will be assessed by consultation with schools, Institute for Environmental protection, other departments in NP, with environmental organizations and their inputs will be incorporated in creation of the materials to be used in the EIC.

Evaluation will be conducted through survey after campaigns and workshops in EIC Djerdap. Also, online web survey will be published on NP Djerdap web page so after every event visitors will be invited to fill out survey and leave impressions and comments. During the implementation phase and after each campaign - questionnaires will be collected from participants. After information campaigns and transnational pilot actions interviews will be held with the involved stakeholders in order to assess the experience of the events.

7. BEST PRACTICES TRANSFER

7.1 Existing Information Centre in EU

7.1.1 „Haus am Strom“ – Germany

The Information Centre „Haus am Strom“ is funded by the Bavarian Ministry for Environment and Consumer Protection. It is located directly next to the lock and the hydro power station at Jochenstein. The following information and pictures are all taken from the website <http://www.hausamstrom.de>.

The main characteristics and objectives are:

- An established environmental education concept;
- Enabling action-oriented learning;
- Promote education and awareness for the environment through different events and workshops;
- Large spaces (inside and outside) for the implementation of events and workshops;

- Staff participates regularly in different trainings and qualification measures to improve their skills;

Equipment

Exhibition (interactive learning, films, exhibits)

Source: <https://www.hausamstrom.de>



Playground- Source: <https://www.hausamstrom.de>



Interactive adventure park



Insect hotel

Activities and Workshops /Events

There is a large variety of activities that can either be booked individually (for children of different ages, schools, kindergartens, families, health topics or speeches) or planned activities that are listed in a calendar

Examples for individually booked events: guided tours through the exhibition or the hydro power station (also for handicapped people), treasure hunt, special topics such as “forest”, “soil”, “water”, etc. (prices are about 5€ per person, group size about 20)

Examples for planned activities from the calendar: special events on rare animal species or plants, landscape conservation, the Danube, etc. Some of these events are free of charge, some cost a bit (approx. 4-9€ per person)

Information on the Danube region around the information centre

- Trekking routes (links to maps)
- Geography and history (texts on website)
- National park “Donauileiten” (text and picture of rare species on website <http://www.hausamstrom.de/de/donaual/donauleiten/>) people are advised to report sightings of the species

Hydro Power Station



Source: <https://www.hausamstrom.de>

- Guided tours;
- Information centre of the energy sector
- Information on the operating companies
- Hydro power station and environment protection
- Information on the lock and inland navigation

Miscellaneous

- Webcam
- Facebook and Google+ account
- Webshop (posters, postcards, books)
- Meeting room can be rented

(All pictures taken from the „Haus am Strom” Website)

7.1.2 Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies Bucharest - RO

Centre for Environmental Research and Impact Studies (CCMESI) was established in 1993 as a research unit within the University of Bucharest, accredited by the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests and recognised by the National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education (CNCSIS). Although, the Centre for Environmental Research (CCMESI) conducts theoretical and field-based research on issues related to environmental sciences and biodiversity, their results are available for a wide range of both scientific community and non-experts: general public, practitioners public authorities, their reports/publications, research papers, books, technical reports being centre under the concept that environmental approach should be integrated and available for all the stakeholders. The CCMESI team it is composed by researchers – fully employed and collaborators from different fields, project-contract based. Taking into consideration its objectives (to develop solutions for local, regional, and global environmental issues, to promote the concept of sustainable development in Romania, to develop partnerships with universities, industry, local and national authorities and to offer training opportunities to young researchers in the field of environmental sciences) CCMESI is an example of a sustainable actor in increasing the awareness of the environmental impact and also providing tools for capacity building for different environmental information centres in Romania and abroad.

7.3 Existing Environmental Information Centres in the non-EU countries

Ukraine: Regional Centre for Ecological Studies in Odessa (www.crs.org.ua), financed within the project “Inventory, Assessment and Remediation of Anthropogenic Sources of Pollution in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova” (implementation period 2010-2017), Joint Operational Programme Romania – Ukraine – Republic of Moldova 2007 -2013, under the Large Strategic Projects calls.

The Centre, established in December 2016, will act as a focus point of all the environmental protection initiatives in the Odessa Region. As a juridical set up, is an NGO established by the Odessa Regional Council. The scope was to design a concept, a coherent package of resources, that will gather around the expertise of the research centres (partnerships with the environmental research in the area already signed), the knowledge of the environmental NGOs (that will easily cooperate with another NGO as an institution) and the financial sustainability of a public authority (the Centre is financed by the Odessa Regional Council) in order to sustain all the development initiatives in the Region. The Centre is operational in a state-own building, the endowment being provided by the project. The staff of this centre it is composed of: 2 environmental experts, 1 environment legislation experts, 1 public relation expert, 1 accountant and 1 coordinator. The Centre will capitalise the opportunities of a “digital era” therefore different IT tools will be developed: e-learning curricula in different areas of environmental protection, a library of up to date information regarding the environmental status (linked with all the projects done in the region: e.g.: e-EYE platform: <http://www.blacksea.ugal.ro>), national and EU legislation regarding the environment, an mobile applications that will allow alerts for different events (from the citizen) to be send and post it on the Centre web site. Also a data base of all other

institutions/NGOs/organisations that are active in the environmental area will be developed and connected to the Centre web site including data achieved from the established system for long term monitoring and risk assessment of pollution sources affecting soil and waters in the Lower Danube region. The Centre will act as a gathering facility also, the building has spaces for organising different types of events (conferences, workshops, trainings so), an open space will be available for different events that will aim on increasing the community awareness (photo expositions so).

7.4 Successful existing environmental network in the Danube Region

Regional Environmental Centres REC network - <http://www.rec.org>

REC was established in 1990 by the United States of America, the Commission of the European Communities and the Government of Hungary as co-founders. The organisation was founded to assist with the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe and to contribute to environmental democracy building and cooperative problem solving within the environmental sector. Set up through political will as a foundation and mandated as a grant-giving, mission-driven organisation, the REC has evolved during the past 25 years into a fully project-based organisation with a headquarters agreement as well as bilateral host country agreements. The REC has an impressive record in capacity building and policy dialogue with environmental stakeholders, developing and promoting tools and good practices for sustainable development and for public/stakeholder involvement, implementing ministerial mandates and contributing to international processes. The REC has a strong regional presence, the ability to work in local languages and contexts, and established networks of high-level officials and experts. The REC's legal status is based on its Charter with 32 signatories to date, and on the International Agreement that entered into force in 2012. The Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is an international organisation with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues. The REC fulfils this mission by promoting cooperation among governments, non-governmental organisations, businesses and other environmental stakeholders, and by supporting the free exchange of information and public participation in environmental decision making.

The organisation relies on a network of offices and experts in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. Its head office is located in Szentendre, Hungary.

The focus of REC since 2016 is on:

- Strengthened environmental governance:
 - Environmental law reform and increased institutional capacities through targeted legal assistance, workshops and regional exchanges of experience;
 - Participatory governance put into practice in the field of environment and sustainable development by supporting public access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice;
 - Improved environmental planning and its integration in all sectors, improved environmental management. Pilot, small-scale priority environmental investments provided;
 - A targeted capacity-building programme delivered to high-level senior leaders in the fields of politics, public service, business, NGOs and the

media, and, at the same time, partnerships forged between these groups and academia, advanced training offered to young, environmental leaders on organisational development and project management skills.

- Strengthened low-emission development:
 - Facilitating strategies for the transition towards a low-emission, society;
 - Practical tools and assessments provided to enable the transition to a low-energy building sector;
- Enhanced resilience to the impacts of climate change:
 - Innovative technology development and know-how transfer achieved through a variety of mechanisms with an accent on smart cities and mobility;
- Fostered sustainable and healthy lifestyles and improved natural resources management:
 - Increased attention given to water-related issues by embracing a broad selection of stakeholder interests and concerns;
 - Key stakeholders supported at local, national and EU level to enable them to implement legislation on the protection of biodiversity and its integration into planning and economic decision making.

7.5 European cooperation in environment information

7.5.1 European Centre for excellence in the environment

The **European Centre of Excellence for the Environment** (<http://www.ecee.ugal.ro/>), was founded in 1999, as the “Inter-Mediu” Department, being financially supported by the Dutch government (The Matra Programme RO/97/04). In 2001, as a result of a rigorous contest organised by the European Union (the PHARE Programme RO 9706.01.02), the Inter-Mediu Department of the “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați was classified as European Centre of Excellence for the Environment (ECEE), thus becoming the only Romanian Centre classified as such by the European Union. The Centre is providing expertise and information regarding the environment status, especially focused on the Romania - South East Region, fostering also the Regional Centre for Environmental Monitoring and Research (CREDENTIAL). CREDENTIAL is acting as regional catalyst for recognized scientific and technical competence, not only in its specific field of research (environmental protection) but also in the general development of knowledge-based society. As a sustainable resource, CREDENTIAL is acting as a multidisciplinary, competent, pragmatic and sustainable centre, its infrastructure (mobile laboratory and accessories) for developing research and monitoring activities in the field of environment quality (water quality) being completed by experienced staff (employed full time: researchers, PhD students and “on spot” collaborators from different fields: awareness raising, economy) that are developing environmental reports that are used as policy papers by public authorities.

7.5.2 Romanian Centre for Environmental Management – ROCEM

ROCEM is a German –Romanian initiatives financed by the German Ministry of Education (stage I) and Central European Initiative (stage II focused on creating an environmental hub for specialists in Romania and Republic of Moldova. The Centres were created at the level of the Local Administration for environment (Galati) and Ministry of Environment (Chisinau).

The setup of the Centre was built on three pillars:

- Training sessions (different themes such as: sustainable development, air, water, soil pollution, integrated pollution IPPC Directive)
- Good practice exchange
- Wide range of target group (specialists from the environment agencies, public servants, NGO activists)

The innovation part of the centre, was the fact that all the stakeholders were able to attend the trainings sessions together, creating the premises for professional’s network and also interdisciplinary approach. The lecturers were from different areas of expertise: public policy, practitioners, public campaigns communicators and project management specialists.

The sustainability of the centres was assured by the fact that there were established within public bodies. The success was duplicated by creating TUCEM project in Turkey – established at the level of the Marmara public administration.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of IWT EICs in the Danube riparian countries represents an innovative action in order to protect the environment in the Danube Region and will contribute on the one hand to the achievement of specific GREEN DANUBE activities and on the other hand on the improvement the accessibility and efficiency in providing targeted information services .

The versatile character of existing and future developed IWT EICs within the GREEN DANUBE project – multifunctional spaces serving as both exhibition area or location for organizations of various environment protection related events- short training courses, workshops, seminars etc.- can be exploited and further maximized by small investments offering the possibility to use these centres at their high potential and the largest range of objectives, from general promotion of environmental protection to specific purposes such to raising public awareness through contribution to more effective information sharing to limit impact of IWT system on the Danube environment.

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/green-danube>