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Danube Transnational Programme DAPhNE

D 6.3.2 Danube Ports Network yearly plan

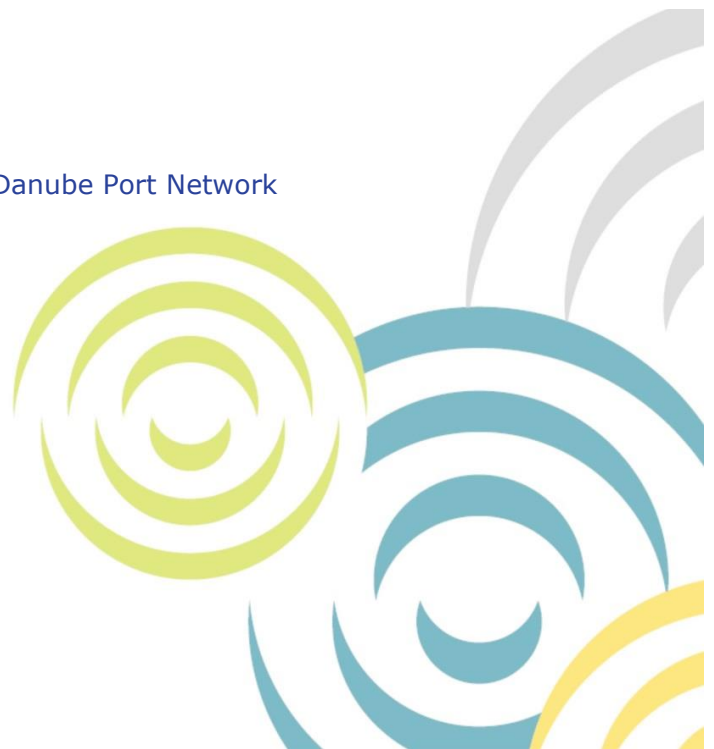
Work Package 6

Activity 6.3 Pilot operation of the Danube Port Network

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1 Introduction

Setting-up a regional port cooperation network, takes a lot of effort from all the actors involved in the process – in part due to the considerable investment of time to build the quality working relationships that underpin effective collaborations, as well as to build the capacity to deliver a useful programme of work benefiting all partners.

2 Focus of the yearly plan of the Danube Ports Network

The main focus of the Yearly Plan of the Danube Ports Network covering the pilot phase of the network (01/07/18 – 30/06/2019) shall be on:

- a) Building and consolidating the capacity of the network;
- b) Managing and sustaining the network;
- c) Reviewing and revising the network structure and its activities;
- d) Carrying out a defined set of activities.

Accordingly, for the first-year (start-up phase) of the network, a series of shorter-term activities which shall demonstrate the added value of the network and contribute to its consolidation and growth the network shall be set out. The proposed activities shall be described indicatively in this document and shall be the baseline for the work of the Technical Secretariat and the network partners. It is important to note that these activities are just a limited part of the initiatives the network will develop throughout the build-up phase of the network.

3 Building and consolidating the Danube Ports Network - key initiatives & activities for 2018-2019

3.1 Identifying the network partners

To ensure that DPN brings together the strongest and more committed partner organisations, it is crucial at this early stage of the network to:

- Identify partner organisations which add value to the network;
- Select the most appropriate partners and secure their active involvement;
- Create an electronic database of the members.

3.2 Mapping and mobilizing resources

- **Financial resources:** Prior to formalizing the network, it is important for the partners to consider what resources will be needed for the agreed work program. Typically, this is worked out in terms of financing requirement, but one of the real benefits of the network is the potential access to a wide range of non-cash resources that the partners can bring to the partnership.

- **Human resources:** Right from the outset, the Technical Secretariat (TS) needs to negotiate with the responsible managers of the partner organizations the scope and areas of involvement in the network. Also, the expertise and knowledge of the delegated employees must be engaged in practical ways in the DPN's initiative(s), either as partners in project related activities or in set-up working groups. Each individual delegate will bring different skills and expectations to the task and managing this diversity at its best it will add considerable value.

3.3 Securing partner commitment

The Danube Ports Network partner commitment shall be recorded in the Cooperation Agreement. The Cooperation Agreement is usually the first step in the process of consolidating the network and in many instances, it may be sufficient to confirm and consolidate the Network medium to long-term. The partnering agreement shall help to avoid later misunderstandings and conflicts as it lays down the principles of functioning and acting of the network. In parallel to the general Cooperation Agreement it may be necessary to create legally binding contracts especially when in the cases when individual partners team up to undertake a large-scale or complex project (application), to handle larger amounts of funding or to register as a new form of legal entity such as a SPV- special purpose vehicle.

3.4 Implementing the governance structure

The DPN will need to have the governance structures in place to ensure that decision-making, management and development arrangements are appropriate, transparent and effective.

The Technical Secretariat (TS) should act as a “stakeholder manager” overseeing and monitoring the whole process of setting up the network with due regard of the diversified interests and needs of the joining partners. Also, the TS shall coordinate and support joint projects and technological innovation and shall play a central role in strategic planning and development.

Notwithstanding, as many partners as possible shall be involved in the action planning process to feel a sense of commitment and ‘ownership’.

Many people will be involved in the network in its different phases, taking on a range of roles as required. It is important to recognize the differences and to understand which roles are needed, at what stage and for what purpose. It is equally important to ensure that the best qualified person is allocated to a particular role. Roles may change during the life cycle of the network.

Among the important first steps for the implementation of the governance structure will be the following actions:

- Establishment of the Technical Secretariat (resource allocation, workspace allocation, working tools, etc.);
- Identification and selection of a collaborative communication tool which shall ensure widest possible involvement of partners with least administrative efforts and costs;
- Assignment of responsible persons being delegated to the working platforms (projects, working groups, governance bodies);
- Creation of an online DPN information service including and events calendar.

3.5 Creating awareness

The Danube Ports Network will be a new player in policy advocacy, lobbying, information service provision as well as in project related activities especially with regard to those which try to retrieve funding from European programs. In its start-up phase, the network has to gain awareness from the internal and external audiences which shall be target groups for various communication activities. Therefore, the structured identification and start of interaction with key stakeholders of the target groups will be a major part of the work of the network and especially for the Technical Secretariat. Target groups which have to be made aware of the new network, its objectives, structures, project ideas, activities, etc. shall be as follows:

a) Target groups belonging to the 'internal' audience

- Partners and staff involved in the governing bodies and their respective delegated managers
- Senior management within the partner organisations
- Selected departments within the partner organisations
- Members of Working Groups set up and managed by the TS
- Partners of projects initiated by the network and its TS
- Senior management within the partner organisations
- Selected departments within the partner organisations

b) Target groups belonging to the 'external' audience

- Policy makers at EU (EC, EP, related agencies) and national level (Ministries of Transport, related authorities, other relevant ministries being responsible for economic and regional development, environment, etc.)
- Bi-lateral, regional or multi-lateral/international actors (EUSDR governance structure, regional administrations, Danube Commission, Sava Commission, UNECE, OSCE-SECI, Cross-border and Transnational Managing Authorities of INTERREG programs, etc.)
- Professional organisations of related sectors (EFIP, ESPO, INE, EBU, ESO, ESC, etc.)

- Potential partners of the network
- Media / general public

Special attention will be paid to the cooperation with the IWT/maritime sector organisations in order to avoid the impression of internal competition to the external stakeholders and in order to maximise the impact of joint concerns and interests.

Among the important first steps for the creation of awareness will be the following actions:

- Building of a professional corporate identity and corporate communication
- Creating communication material and tools such as DPN folder, power-point presentation, web-services
- Feeding content (news, event calendar, statements, etc.) into the information services of the network
- Provision of DPN position papers feeding into the political debate on European
- Creating promotional material and distributing it to the target groups (DAPhNE budget WP2)

4 Managing and sustaining the Danube Ports Network - key initiatives & activities for 2018-2019

4.1 Planning for the longer term

To ensure the networks institutional and financial sustainability, a Financing Model and a Business Plan will be elaborated (covering the next two years of build-up phase and beyond). The DPN's short and mid-term objectives, 5-year outcomes and priorities are to be set out in the DPN Work Programme, including a series of indicators and measures to track progress.

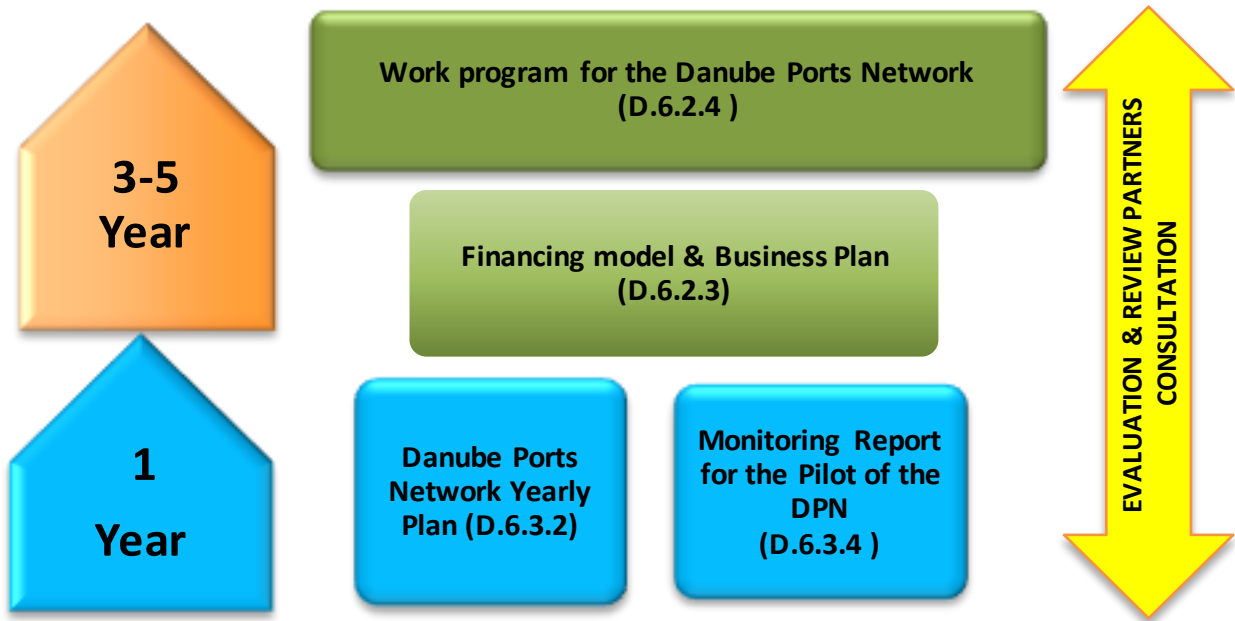
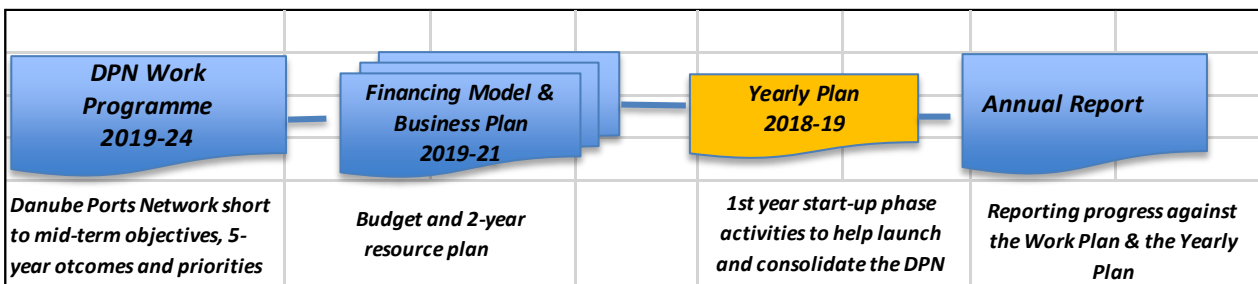


Figure 1: Danube Ports Network integrating planning framework

The progress against the five-year goals as well as the one-year initiatives & services provided by the Technical Secretariat will be shared with the partners as well as with the relevant target groups via an “Annual Report” to be made available on-line in July 2019. The diagram below explains the relationships between the five -year DPN Work Programme, the Financing Model and a Business Plan, the Yearly Plan and the Annual report.



Among the next steps for long-term planning will be the following actions:

- Elaboration of the detailed Financing Model & Business Plan
- Drafting the detailed Work program for the Danube Ports Network, discussion among the partners and its conclusion
- Elaborating monitoring report for the pilot of the Danube Ports Network

4.2 Delivering successful projects – moving from plan to action

Once the network is in place and the Cooperation Agreement is signed, there are new challenges to face. The partners will have to turn their attention to the development of joint projects and joint activities as stipulated in the Work program. This is the network getting down to daily business and marks a significant transition from a focus on network building to project and activity development and implementation.

Major next steps in this phase will include:

- Initiate and implement projects of common interest for the DPN partners
- Identify available financial resources (EU funding, national sources etc.)
- Set-up of port statistics services (data collection, and production) in cooperation with network partners (through the setting -up of dedicated Working Group) and via donau (Danube Ports platform).

4.3 Securing greater engagement from partner organisations and from another potential co-operation partners

There are several other institutions for those the work of the Danube Ports Network may be important and therefore need to better understand and become more engaged with the network partners and especially with the Technical Secretariat in a number of ways. These include:

- **Institutions operating at strategic and policy level** (e.g., European Commission's departments, political parties in the European Parliament and national and regional level, international organisations, the EU Council Presidencies, the EU SDR Presidencies etc.);
- **Organisations at operational level** (e.g. waterborne transport companies, port services providers, port operators, port users, public sector agencies and civil society organisations);
- **Donors** (resource providers external to the Danube Ports Network).

The network partners will need to identify the most relevant non-partner organisations, assess how important each of these different relationships is, either in terms of enabling the network to have more impact, or in terms of being influenced by the network in the way they operate, gain legitimacy etc.

5 Reviewing and revising – key activities for 2018- 2019

Once the network with its structures, projects and activities is up and running, the partners may decide to meet less frequently and, when they do meet, operate more as a review panel. A regular cycle of reporting will need to be in place to ensure the partners are informed of progress (and challenges). These reports, written or verbal, can form the basis of reviews both of the project and the partnership itself.

After the pilot phase of the network, the partners also may want to review the Cooperation Agreement and alter it if necessary to reflect new priorities and aspirations.

Major next steps for this working area will include:

- Define internal and external reporting procedures
- Agree on the type and modality of reporting

The Technical Secretariat will be responsible to draft a reviewing and revising strategy which will be decided by the governance bodies later on.