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Danube Safety Net Project

Progress Report № 6

I. General Information

Project “Improvement of the transport safety in the common Bulgarian-Romanian stretch of the Danube river through development of the emergency response by cross-border cooperation”, e-MS code: ROBG-522 - the Danube Safety Net Project was launched in line with the principles of the EU 2020 Strategy of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and in direct response to one of the main priorities of the EU funded INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme for increasing the transport safety on waterways and maritime transport routes.

The project was approved for financing within the Third Call for project proposals, under Priority Axis 1 “A well connected region” of the INTERREG V-A Program and is classified as “Hard” project. Its duration is **49 months** with **starting date - the 15th of September, 2018**. The project will be implemented by two partners - the Bulgarian Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” (EAMA) which is the Lead Partner and the Romanian Naval Authority (ANR).

The overall budget of the Danube Safety Net Project is **5,699,612.87 euro** as the Contribution from the European Regional Development Fund is 85% or **4,844,670.93 euro**.

The overall objective of the Danube Safety Net project is: To improve the safety of river Danube navigability for the whole length of the common stretch between Romania and Bulgaria, through the following measures:

- ✓ Establishment of Emergency Response centers (ERC) in Romania in the town of Turnu Magurele) and Bulgaria in the towns of Ruse and Lom;
- ✓ Supply, development and integration of a common Geographic Information System for Emergency Response;
- ✓ Supply of specialized crafts carrying emergency response equipment for the two partners;
- ✓ Development of a Common Action Plan for reaction in situations related to transport safety on the common stretch of the Danube river.



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The implementation of the project is structured in four Work Packages:

- **Work Package P “Project Preparation”** covered the project preparation phase during which the two Partners jointly established the project goals, planned the overall implementation and submitted the project proposal;
- **Work Package M “Project Management”** is dedicated to the administrative, financial and operative management of the project and together with **Work Package C “Communication”** will support the implementation of the activities for the whole duration of the project.
- **Work Package T1 “Measures for Improvement of River Transport Safety”** is the core and most important Work Package of the project and includes five logically interconnected activities.

II. State of Implementation (February, 2022 - October, 2022) - Summary

During the reporting period, which covers the final months of the project implementation, the project activities were carried out in accordance with the Application form and completed successfully within the project timeframe.

In August 2022 the Project Partners and the Managing Authority of the INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme signed Addendum № 6 to the Subsidy and Co-financing contracts for Project Danube Safety Net, ROBG-522, introducing changes in the organization of the remaining events under the project.

The implementation of Work Package T1 “Measures for improvement of river transport safety” was completed and all its activities were finalized, delivering the key results of the project implementation.

At the same time, under Work Package C “Communication”, the final and most effective public events under the project were organized by the two partners and together with the other methods of communication and dissemination, introduced the deliverables of the project.

1. Work Package M “Project Management”

Within the reporting period, the two Project Partners coordinated the day-to-day implementation of the activities, provided sound financial and technical management of the project.



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The partnership maintained regular communication with the Joint Secretariat and the Managing Authority of the INTERREG V-A RO-BG Programme regarding the reporting of the project implementation, notifications to the Subsidy and Co-financing contracts and reimbursement of certified expenditures. The two Partners have been strictly supervising and monitoring the achievement of the project's results and indicators, as set out in the approved Application form. In this regard, two Regular team meetings between the project implementation teams were held in May and July 2022.

One significant administrative procedure was carried out during the observed period. In August 2022 the Project Partners and the Managing Authority of the INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme signed Addendum № 6 to the Subsidy and Co-financing contracts for Project Danube Safety Net, ROBG-522, introducing changes in the organization of the remaining events under the project. The approved changes were proposed in the context of the complications, caused by the global COVID-19 outbreak in the past two years and the need of a flexible approach towards a better communication and dissemination of the project results among the stakeholders and general public.

2. Work Package C “Communication”

The Project Partners organized two public events for presentation of the delivered vessels in Bulgaria and Romania.

Public event for the presentation of the barges, delivered to EAMA and a press conference took place in the period 11-12 of May 2022 in Ruse, Bulgaria. The organized by EAMA events were attended by 54 representatives of the stakeholders, local authorities, media and the Project Partners. The presentation of the barges raised high interest among the public and was widely covered by the local and national media. Promotional materials elaborated by both Partners were disseminated among the participants in the above-mentioned public events.

In the period 4-6 July 2022 in Mehedinti, Romania, the Project Partner held a Public event for the presentation of the delivered to RNA vessels and a press conference

In the final weeks of the project implementation, EAMA elaborated the final promotional flyer of the project and on the 6th and 7th of October 2022 organized a Wrap-up meeting and a press conference in Ruse, which symbolically marked the end of the successful project implementation and fruitful cooperation between the two institutions.

On 12th October 2022 RNA organised the final event of the project, namely Press conference on project completion. The event was highly attended by 40 representatives of the stakeholders, local authorities, media and interested parties as well as project



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partners. Also, promotional materials were distributed (flyers/memory sticks, calendars, pens)

3. Work Package T1 “Measures for improvement of river transport safety”

Work Package T1 is the core work package of the project and includes five logically interconnected activities. Its implementation started in August 2019 and was successfully completed within the timeframe of the project.

During the reporting period, daily tests of the DTSGIS and periodic actualization were being performed. The integration process between the Romanian and Bulgarian systems was completed successfully.

Although some delays were observed, the implementation of the two awarded by EAMA contracts for the supply of two barges under WP T1, has been completed within the project deadline.

In the final months of the project implementation, the Partners finalized the preparation of the *Common Action Plan for Joint Emergency and Rescue Operations Between Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” and the Romanian Naval Authority in the Common Bulgarian-Romanian Stretch of the Danube River* and the document was approved by the heads of the partnering institutions.

III. Project results

As a direct and immediate effect from the implementation of the project, which ended on 14th of October 2022, the following **project results** were achieved:

- ✓ Established **Emergency Response Centers (ERC) Ruse, Lom and Constanta**, supplied with the needed equipment to host the provided by the project IT tool;
- ✓ Supplied, developed and integrated **Danube Transport Safety Geographic Information System (DTSGIS)**. The system is developed in parallel in Bulgaria and Romania under common technical specification, jointly developed by the two Partners. The DTSGIS is unique for the region and extremely useful tool in planning and managing various emergency situations.
- ✓ **Delivered to EAMA two multipurpose non-self-propelled crafts (barges) for emergency and rescue activities on the Danube River**. The specialized vessels are located in the ports of Ruse and Lom





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PROJECT DANUBE
SAFETY NET

and carry specialized equipment, which will increase significantly the adequacy of reaction in variety of calamity and disaster events in the common Bulgarian-Romanian stretch of the river.



- ✓ **Delivered to RNA two multipurpose vessels, which will be used in emergency interventions.** The vessels, which are located in Giurgiu and Bechet, carry specialized equipment and will provide timely reaction in the common Bulgarian-Romanian stretch of the river, when needed.
- ✓ **Prepared Common Action Plan for Joint Emergency and Rescue Operations Between Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” and the Romanian Naval Authority in the Common Bulgarian-Romanian Stretch of the Danube River.** The Common Action Plan addresses specific incidents occurred in the common Bulgarian-Romanian stretch of the Danube River, which require joint actions with the use of the delivered under the project barges to EAMA, multipurpose self-propelled crafts to RNA and DTSGIS.

IV. What's next?

In the upcoming months after the project completion, both Partners will carry out final administrative and financial reporting of the project implementation.

Executive Agency “Maritime Administration” and the Romanian Naval Authority have stated their readiness to continue the successful line of cooperation between the two institutions, by joining efforts towards the improvement of the overall safety of the navigation on the Danube in the future.