

DANTE - Improving Administrative Procedures and Processes for Danube IWT



Facilitation and Monitoring Platform

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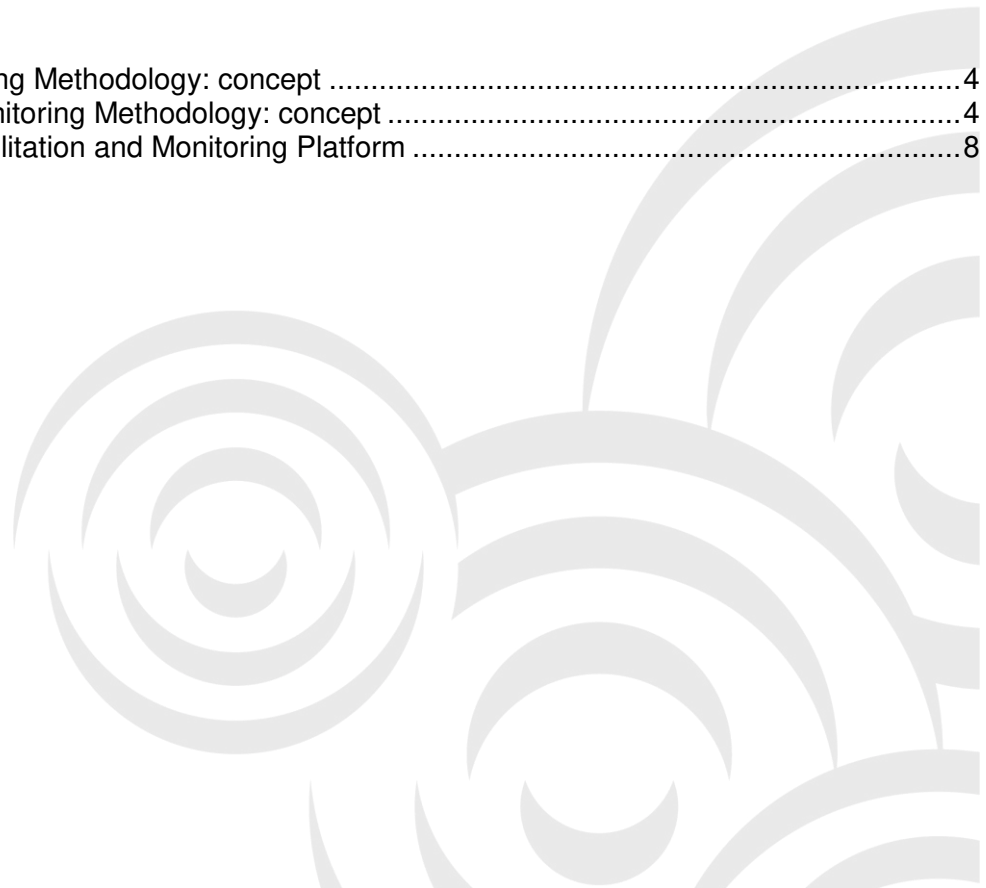
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1 Introduction

Projects funded by the European Union usually come to an end after a certain, well defined period of time. As foreseen in the application form, the DANTE project will cease to exist on 30 June 2019. Nevertheless, unlike other projects funded through the Danube Transnational Programme, DANTE will, under the auspices of the Danube Commission or EUSDR PA1A, continue to exist in the form of the DANTE Facilitation and Monitoring Platform.

The aim of the Monitoring Methodology is to reduce unnecessary burdens created by bureaucracy and uncertainty. Its final objective is to promote the development of IWT on the Danube as an environmental friendly, less energy-consuming and sustainable mode of transport.

Most of the barriers identified in the framework of the DANTE project are found in countries that administer the lower sections of the Danube, which may lead to the assumption that these similarities allow similar approaches to try to overcome them. Nevertheless, when discussing and proposing concrete policy options, it is of outmost importance to bear in mind that each country should develop its own approach according to its specific national political and administrative prerequisites while getting inspired by examples of good practices from other regions and modes of transport. Consequently, in order to achieve a successful administrative simplification and procedural harmonisation process along the Danube and its navigable tributaries, disseminating knowledge among the partner countries provides the necessary ground to further develop successful initiatives that efficiently promote the development of IWT as a feasible alternative to road transport. The Monitoring Methodology will, after the lifespan of the projects ends, play a prominent role in this sense.

2 Defining the Monitoring Methodology

In order to provide the necessary preconditions for DANTE to produce tangible results after the lifespan of the project ends, two monitoring methodologies were developed. The first scenario is based on a grant agreement signed between DG Move (European Commission) and the Danube Commission. The alternative scenario foresees a monitoring platform in the framework of EUSDR PA1A, with a special focus on Working Group 6 – Administrative Processes. The aim of both methodologies is to provide the necessary framework to further tackle and abolish administrative barriers on the Danube and its navigable tributaries.

Abolishing administrative burdens and barriers is a rather long-term process, since the approach to harmonise bureaucratic requirements has to take the particularities of national administrations into consideration. Therefore, in order to monitor the implementation of harmonised measures in the whole Danube Region and as such to efficiently implement the "Same River, Same Rules" principle, a tailored methodology was set up.

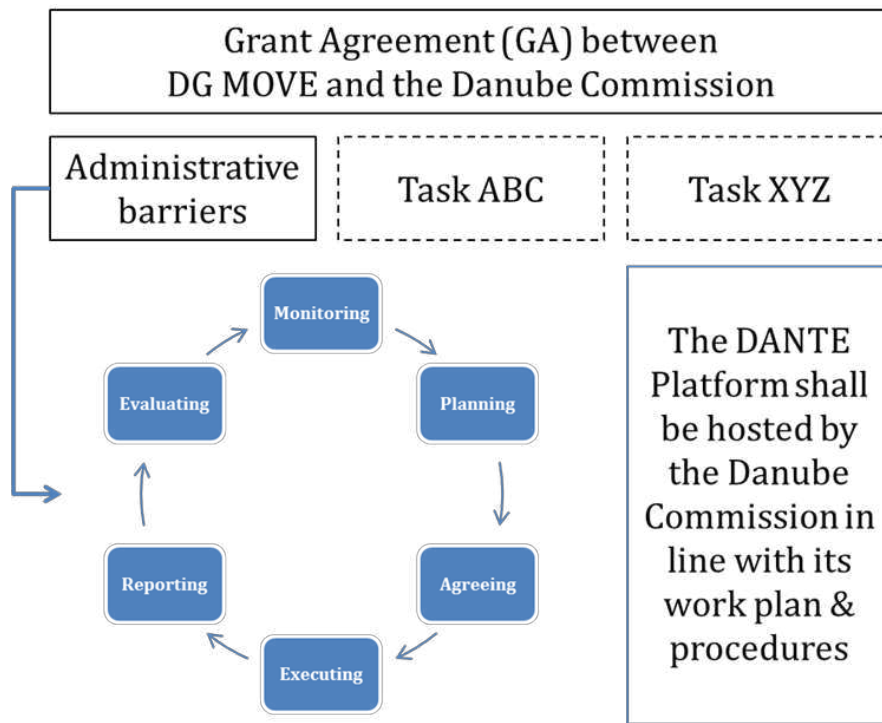


Figure 1: DC Monitoring Methodology: concept

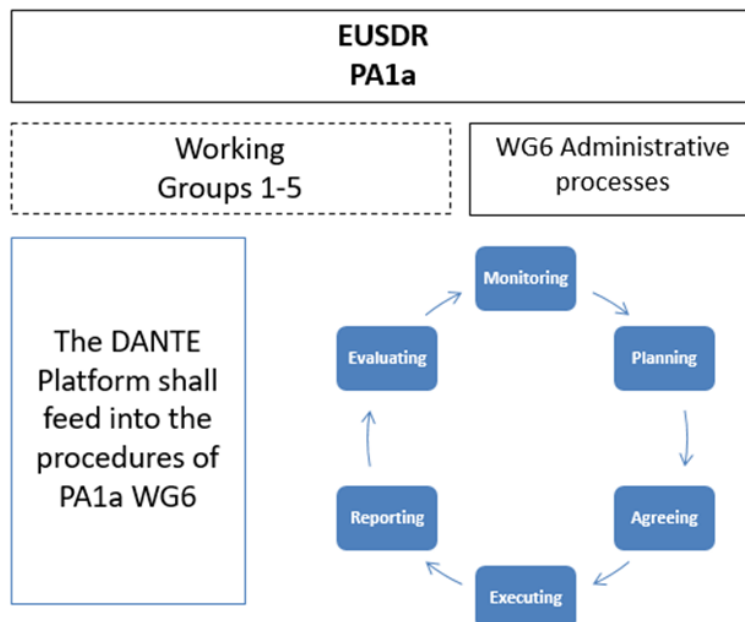


Figure 2: EUSDR Monitoring Methodology: concept

Both methodologies were developed to have an effective system to monitor the implementation of the identified solutions, to foresee their concrete impact on the complex process of administrative harmonisation and simplification process along different sections

of the Danube and finally yet importantly, to gain a comprehensive overview of what was done and what could have been done better.

2.1 Addressing the identified administrative bottlenecks

In order to facilitate a smooth preparation of the period after the official closure of the project, a monitoring methodology has been prepared. No matter if it will function under the auspices of the Danube Commission or EUSDR PA1A this monitoring methodology is built up of several steps.

After consulting the experts taking part in the elaboration of the Good Navigation Status (GNS) study, the DANTE Monitoring Methodology uses a similar approach as defined for GNS. The similar approach might enable the stakeholders to handle the IWT-related proceedings in a complex manner.

The first step consists of the **monitoring** of administrative barriers and bottlenecks all over the Danube. As such, the Transnational IWT Barrier Reporting Tool will continue to be available on the official websites of [Pro Danube International](#) and of the [DTP](#) after the lifespan of the project ends. This innovative online tool was created in the framework of the DANTE project to ensure a comprehensive gathering of primary data concerning administrative barriers received directly from the businesses that operate in the IWT sector on the Danube. The tool is available in English and in the languages of the Danube region – German, Slovak, Hungarian, Croatian, Serbian, Romanian and Bulgarian – enabling the stakeholders to report on administrative barriers in the language they are the most comfortable with. As the reporting tool will continue to exist after the project ends, it will be possible to easily have an overview on the administrative burdens that stakeholders still have to cope with, while at the same time giving the opportunity to analyse the decisions that were already taken to overcome these barriers. It is foreseen that the analysis of the inputs made by the stakeholders is made twice a month.

The second step, **planning**, deals, among other things, with the analysis of the inputs made by the stakeholders. In this phase it is important to ensure a thorough ex-ante evaluation in order to assess the effects on IWT when barriers are removed. This way it will be possible to gain a comprehensive overview on the immediate effects of administrative barrier removal. At this point, it is important to differentiate between “quick fixes” and “structural barriers”. While “quick fixes” refer to the direct interaction with the competent authorities, “structural barriers” is a working procedure for barrier elimination that consists of a consultation mechanism, the preparation of a report that contains a proposed action-plan and a concrete strategy to eliminate the administrative bottlenecks that were identified.

The third phase of the methodology refers to **agreeing** i.e. the meeting of the stakeholders with the relevant national and European decision makers. The aim of these meetings is to discuss about the current problems that the Danube businesses are facing on certain sections of the river and to provide the responsible authorities with first hand input that shall enable them to implement feasible, comprehensive and long-term solutions to the problems stakeholders are facing. Furthermore, the involvement of recognized experts from the IWT

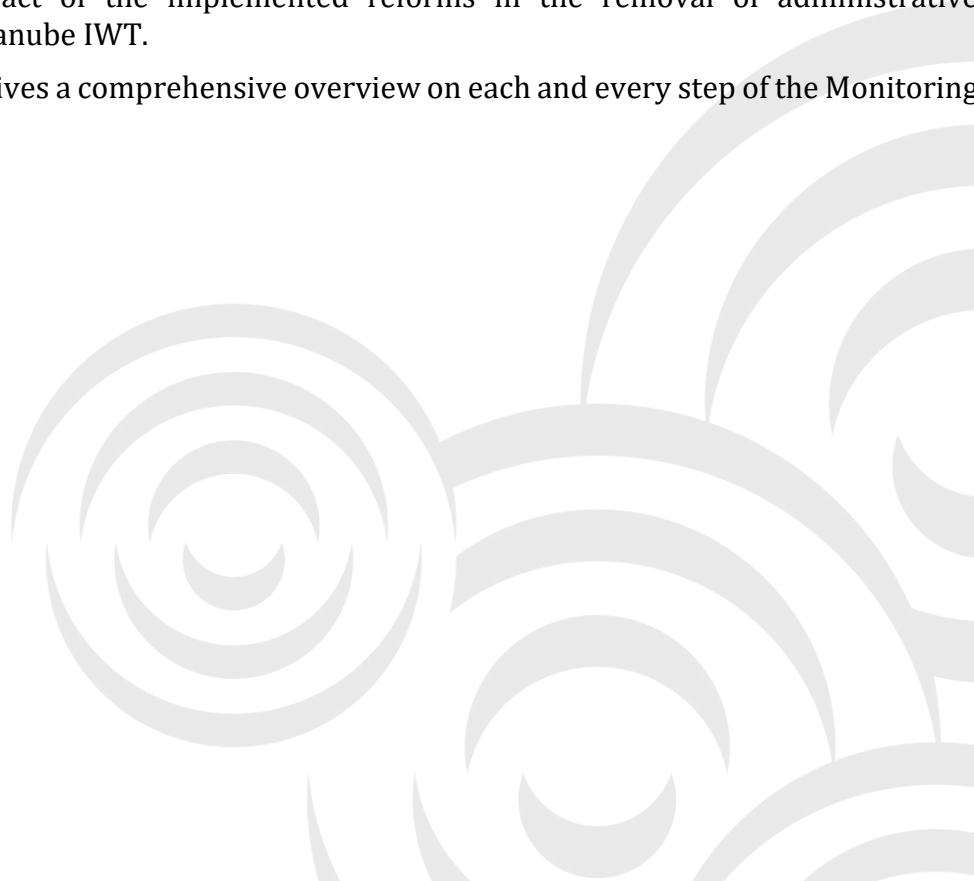
sector will result into a smooth implementation of the proposed and agreed action-plans. The meetings should take place twice a year.

In the framework of the monitoring methodology, **execution** plays a crucial role since it implies the implementation of the solutions that have been identified up until this stage. As a solution is ineffective until it is executed, the responsible authorities, in their ability to implement strategies and action-plans, play at this stage a decisive role. Nevertheless, implementing a solution might not necessarily result in the expected outcome. Therefore, the actual elimination of administrative burdens on IWT requires a well-defined monitoring system. This approach enables to control each step of the implementation process and, where necessary, to offer alternative solutions that will be beneficial for the removal of administrative barriers that hinder the development of IWT as a real alternative to road transport.

Reporting, as the fifth step of the monitoring methodology, will be done in the framework of regular meetings – expert meetings and plenary sessions. Similar to all other phases of the monitoring methodology, representatives of the industry will play an important role, as they can provide experts and decision makers with first-hand information of the problems encountered on different sections of the Danube.

A monitoring methodology would be incomplete without a comprehensive **evaluation** process of what was achieved, what could have been done better and what effects the implementation of the proposed solutions had. In this final step of the methodology, a direct comparison between the results of the ex-ante evaluation and the ex-post benefits allows the analysis of the impact of the implemented reforms in the removal of administrative bottlenecks on the Danube IWT.

The following table gives a comprehensive overview on each and every step of the Monitoring Methodology:



Step	Action
1. Monitoring	a. Continuous use of the Transnational IWT Barrier Reporting Tool (O 3.1) b. Bi-monthly extract of the insert inputs / cases
2. Planning	a. Analysing the inputs / cases extracted from the tool b. Ex-ante evaluation to assess the effects when barriers are removed c. Pre-selection between „Quick fixes“ and „Structural barriers“ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • „Quick fix“ → direct interaction with the competent authorities • „Structural barriers“ → defined working procedure for barrier elimination • Start consultation mechanism • Prepare file report and proposed action • Plan elimination action
3. Agreeing	a. DANTE Platform working meetings (2/year, cooperative level with the DC Secretariat & the industry) b. Expert meetings of the Danube Commission (2/year, transnational level with the authorities & the industry) c. Plenary sessions of the Danube Commission (2/year)
4. Executing	a. Execution of elimination actions by the responsible authority b. Monitored by the DC focal point as part of the DANTE Platform
5. Reporting	a. At the relevant upcoming meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert meetings • Plenary sessions b. Industry c. Public affairs
6. Evaluating	a. Matching ex-ante evaluation with ex-post benefits b. Measuring results

Table 1: Addressing the identified administrative barriers

2.2 Tasks and roles

As can be seen in the graph below, the tasks and roles of those involved in the process of administrative barrier removal are well defined. Regular meetings between the responsible authorities and the stakeholders play a significant role in identifying problems and proposing solutions to overcome these issues.

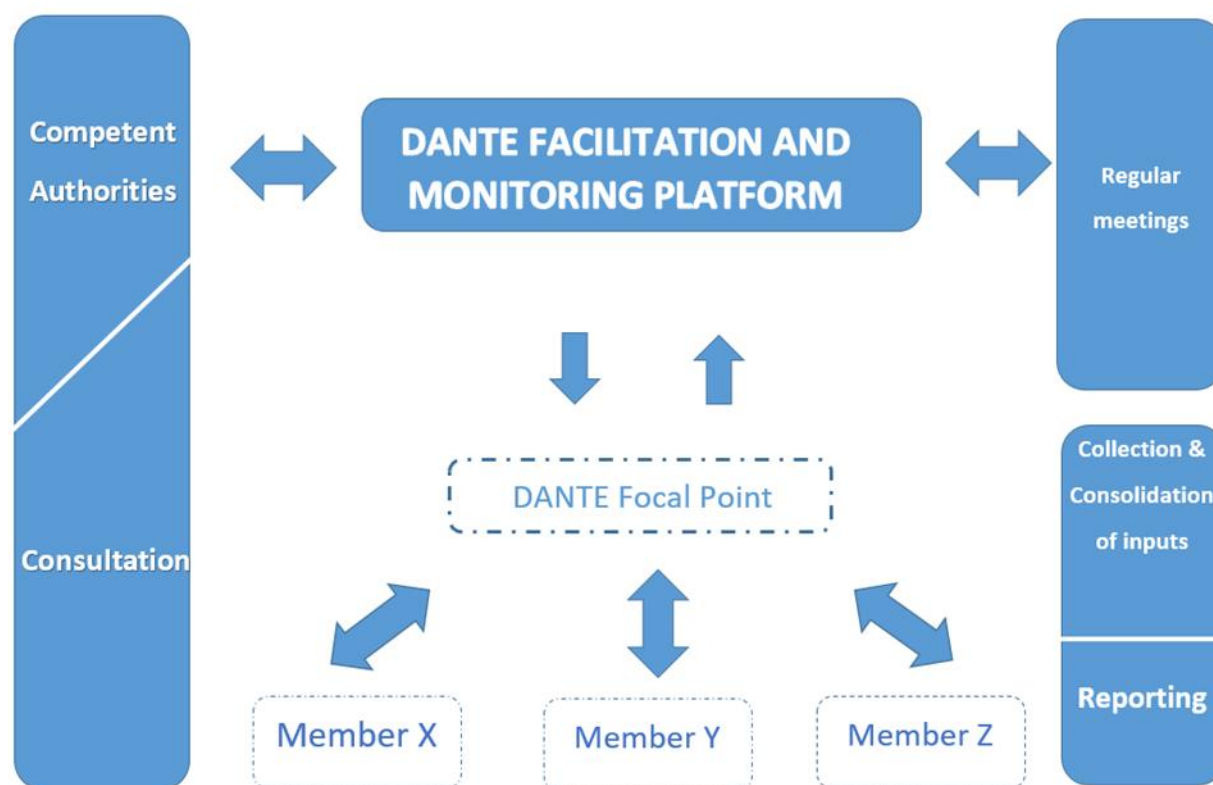


Figure 3: DANTE Facilitation and Monitoring Platform

Administrative barriers and complicated bureaucratic procedures cannot be eliminated in a relatively short period, as was the lifespan of the DANTE project. Nevertheless, political decision makers on the national and European levels are aware of the administrative burdens stakeholders, who operate on the Danube, have to cope with. Making these issues visible and through the innovative reporting tool even tangible to political decision makers on the European and national levels is one of the main achievements of the project. Putting their concerns on the political agenda is a success story of its own.

By taking the decision of creating a permanent platform of the DANTE project under the auspices of the Danube Commission or EUSDR PA1A, the work to eliminate administrative and procedural barriers on the Danube will continue. The reporting tool will remain active on the official website of Pro Danube International, giving stakeholders the opportunity to continue providing their feedback on the developments regarding administrative barrier removal.

The DANTE platform can be regarded as a win-win situation for both the responsible administrations and the private sector. Stakeholders play a significant role in identifying and defining issues, while administrations have the chance to implement decisions based on the consultation of the sector. Through this approach, the general quality of the implemented policy will increase substantially.

3 Conclusions

Simplifying and reducing administrative procedures and barriers would have a positive impact on travel and transport times. This would make IWT more reliable and be a strong argument for emerging industries to switch from road to waterway transport.

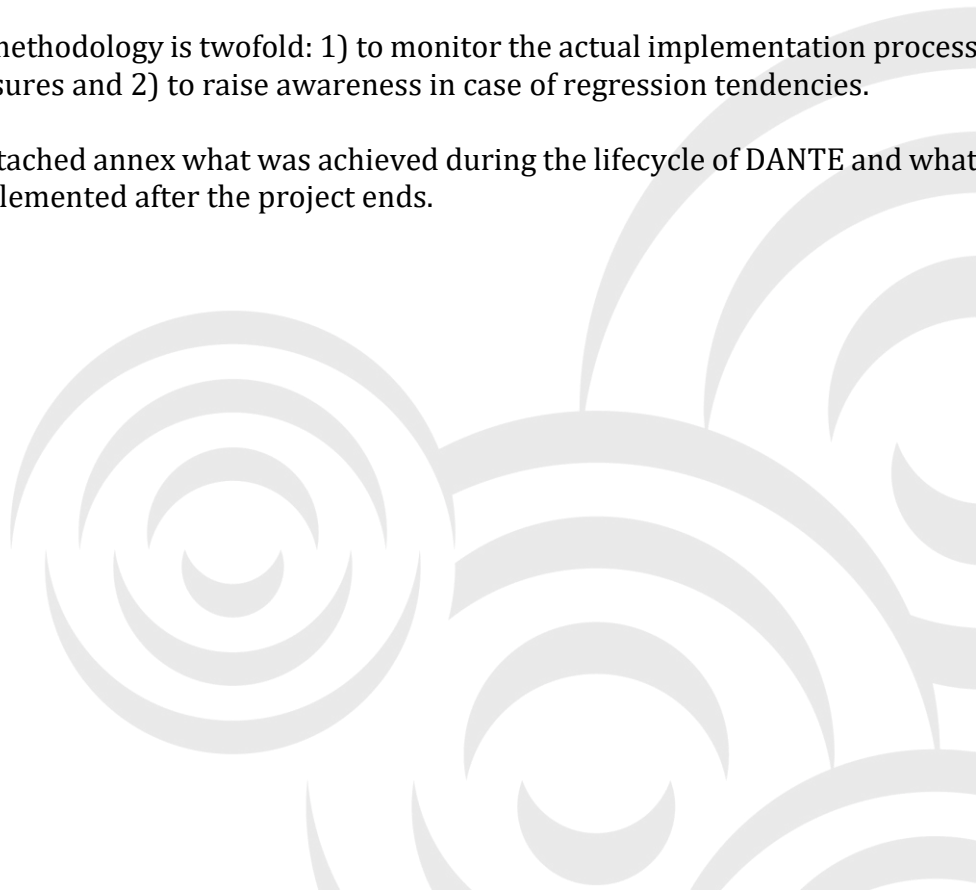
Due to the international character of the Danube IWT, a major step forward in reducing unnecessary administrative procedures would be the implementation of the DAVID (Danube Navigation Standard) Forms. In order to achieve tangible results in the overall harmonisation process of bureaucratic requirements, the work of the PA1a/PA11 should be furthermore strengthened in issues related to health, dangerous goods and nautical controls.

In order to make bureaucratic procedures more efficient and transparent, specific measures would significantly increase the overall attractiveness of IWT:

- Standardised and unified regulations;
- Engagement of qualified and trained staff;
- Improvement of infrastructure and equipment to increase processes;
- Transparent and consistent charging policies among Danube countries;
- Convenient work schedules of relevant institutions;
- Generally accepted working language along the Danube countries.

The objective of the methodology is twofold: 1) to monitor the actual implementation process of the proposed measures and 2) to raise awareness in case of regression tendencies.

You can find in the attached annex what was achieved during the lifecycle of DANTE and what is expected to be implemented after the project ends.



Actions - thematic areas/barriers	Measures done / changes happened during DANTE	Measures expected to be done after DANTE
I. Border police, tax & customs		
1. Set-up of a simplified and harmonised legal framework	HR, RO	HU, SK
2. Standardised and harmonised documents that are accepted in all countries	SK, HR	HU, BG, RO
3. Using state-of-the-art digital tools for reporting	HU, BG, SK, RO	HR
4. Sufficient staff at control authorities with proper infrastructure and equipment		HU, HR, RO, SK
5. Relevant work schedules for customs	RO	HU, BG, HR
6. Generally accepted working language along the Danube countries		BG, SK, HR
II. Navigation authorities (traffic control authorities)		
1. Improve and harmonize the legal framework	SK, HR	HU, RO
2. Using state-of-the-art digital tools to accelerate transport and to support market orientation	HR, RO	HU, SK
3. Harmonised, transparent and consistent charging policies	SK, HR	HU, RO
4. Generally accepted working language along the Danube countries		HR
III. Port authorities (Harbour master) / administrations		
1. Standardised and simplified documents required for Port Authorities		HU, HR, RO, SK
2. Using the state-of-the-art digital tools for reporting and to support interoperability	HR	HU, SK, RO
3. Harmonised, transparent and consistent charging policies	SK, HR	HU, RO
4. Sufficient staff at Port Authority/Harbour Master with proper infrastructure and equipment	HU, RO	BG, SK, HR
5. Relevant work schedules of ports	SK, RO	HU, HR
6. Generally accepted working language along the Danube countries	RO	HU, SK, HR
IV. Waterway and canal administrations		
1. Using state-of-the-art digital tools for safe and efficient transport	BG, HR	HU, SK, RO
2. Sufficient qualified staff and proper infrastructure and equipment	HU, RO	BG, SK, HR
V. Other authorities		
1. Standardised and harmonised documents that are accepted in all countries		
2. Using state-of-the-art digital tools for reporting and to support interoperability		
3. Sufficient staff at control authorities with proper infrastructure and equipment		
4. Harmonised safety and security guidelines		
VI. Other issues		