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Danube WILDisland Ramsar Regional Initiative

# Communication Strategy

DANUBEPARKS – Danube River Network of protected Areas  
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Danube WILDisland Ramsar Regional Initiative (RRI) operates in a complex transnational context, encompassing diverse ecological, institutional, and socio-economic settings across the Danube River Basin. As a regional mechanism under the Ramsar Convention, the Initiative aims to support the conservation and wise use of wetlands and wild islands through coordinated action, knowledge exchange, and stakeholder engagement.

Effective communication plays a central role in achieving these objectives. It enables the Initiative to raise awareness of wetland values, strengthen cooperation among partners, engage decision-makers and donors, and support the implementation of Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) activities in line with Ramsar principles.

This Communication Strategy provides a structured framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating communication activities related to the Danube WILDisland RRI. It is designed as both a strategic reference and a practical tool for the DANUBEPARKS Association and its members, supporting coherent messaging, increased visibility, and long-term engagement of key target audiences at national, regional, and international levels.

This communication strategy is aligned with the CEPA Programme of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, ensuring that all activities contribute to international efforts for wetland conservation, education, and stakeholder engagement.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Communication strategy is to enhance awareness and understanding of the Danube WILDisland Ramsar Regional Initiative among key stakeholders at the international level, with a particular focus on the Danube-wide region.

The strategy is designed to support stakeholder engagement, foster strategic partnerships, and mobilize both financial and logistical support necessary for the effective implementation of the Initiative.

This objective will be achieved through the structured definition of the following components:

- Updating and expanding the mission and vision
- Defining communication objectives and methods for measuring their achievement
- Identification of key target audiences and the development of tailored key messages for each group

- Selection of appropriate communication channels to effectively reach each target audience
- Implementation of targeted communication activities aligned with the overall objectives of the Initiative
- Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of communication efforts
- Definition of roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms within the communication team

This strategy will serve as a guiding framework to ensure coherent, transparent, and effective communication across all levels. It will contribute to increased visibility of the Initiative, facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation, and support the achievement of long-term conservation and management goals within the Danube River Basin and beyond.

## 2.1 Establishing the communication strategy

The communication strategy represents a comprehensive strategic document designed to establish the foundations for achieving the goals outlined in the corresponding project proposal. It serves as a guiding framework for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of communication activities that will support the overall success of the project.

To facilitate the implementation of effective and coherent communication measures, this document will provide a detailed structure by defining the following key elements:

- General communication goal
- Specific communication goals
- Target audiences
- Communication channels
- Key messages and tone of communication
- Monitoring and evaluation methods

In addition to supporting the achievement of project-specific goals, the communication strategy also aims to strengthen the overall visibility, recognition, and identity of the DANUBEPARKS association and DANUBEPARKS WILDIsland Initiative, as a transnational brand. For this purpose, the strategy will include:

- A redefinition of the mission and vision to reflect current priorities and future aspirations;

- A refresh and consolidation of the visual identity, ensuring coherence across all communication materials and platforms.

To ensure consistent and high-quality implementation of communication activities, the strategy will offer specific guidelines and recommendations for action across various communication areas, including:

- Strategic use of social media platforms to increase engagement and visibility;
- Enhancement and regular updating of the official website
- Planning and organization of public events
- Management of public relations
- Communication with national focal points
- Design and dissemination of promotional materials

All proposed communication activities will be incorporated into a detailed implementation plan, which will provide a timeline and operational framework for each action, ensuring their timely and coordinated execution.

Furthermore, in order to systematically track the success of communication efforts, the strategy will define quantitative performance indicators, such as reach, engagement, and conversion metrics. These indicators will form the foundation for the final evaluation, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of communication efforts and the extent to which strategic goals have been met.

## 2.2 Communication goals

The starting point for defining communication goals arising from the communication strategy developed within the EURENI project are the goals outlined in the project brief.

*„The primary goal of the Communication Strategy of Danube WILDIsland Ramsar Regional Initiative is to increase awareness of the Danube WILDIsland Ramsar Regional Initiative foremost in the Danube wide Region and also worldwide and to effectively inform and engage various types of stakeholders in the mentioned geographic locations in order to facilitate collaboration and financial support.”*

Following this, the general objective can be defined as:

**Empowering the capacity of the DANUBE PARKS association to carry out effective communication activities targeted at selected audiences.**

Furthermore, the specific objectives in this case are:

- Specific goal 1: Development of a strategic framework for communication activities

The establishment of a strategic framework in the form of a communication strategy will define the activities, working methods, and success measurement methodology. While this document will primarily serve as a guideline during the implementation period of the EURENI project, the principles outlined within the communication strategy will also be applicable to other activities and will remain relevant beyond the project's duration.

- Specific goal 2: Enhancing the international visibility of the Danube WILDIsland Ramsar Regional Initiative and project

The implementation of a series of communication activities defined by the action plan will lead to an increased reach across all communication channels used to convey messages to the wider public.

- Specific goal 3: Raising awareness of the importance of wetland conservation

Through the implementation of a series of communication activities defined by the action plan, awareness of the importance of wetland conservation and specific sites within the project area will be increased, thereby indirectly encouraging desirable behaviors aimed at promoting and protecting these areas.

- Specific goal 4: Intensifying partnership collaboration and networking

Communication activities will serve to strengthen the organization's capacity for networking with organizations, partners, and institutions that share similar goals and values, by establishing points of contact through collaborations, joint initiatives, meetings, workshops, and shared events.

- Specific goal 5: Enhancing support from the public sector and increasing financial contributions and donations

The objective of the project is to strengthen the organization's relationship with the public sector, with the aim of encouraging greater engagement in the association's activities. Additionally, the initiative seeks to increase financing, subsidies, and logistical support provided to the organization.

In accordance with the Ramsar Convention, CEPA activities are clearly defined to support communication, education, participation and awareness related to wetland conservation. This

Strategy is implemented to further develop and enhance these activities, ensuring their effective contribution to conservation and sustainable use objectives.

### 2.3 Mission

Mission can be defined as the fundamental purpose and reason for the existence of an organization, project, or campaign.

On its website, the DANUBE PARKS Association highlighted that its mission is to preserve, develop and restore the Danube River, its main tributaries, and surrounding wetlands.

In the context of the EURENI projects, the mission needs to be expanded to include the aspect of knowledge dissemination and stakeholder engagement through the Danube WILDIsland Ramsar Regional Initiative (RRI).

Taking into account the objectives of the Initiative, the mission can be redefined as:

**„Our mission is to protect the Danube River, its main tributaries, and surrounding wetlands and wild islands by spreading knowledge, engaging all relevant stakeholders, and raising awareness among the general public.”**

In the context of CEPA activities, defined by RAMSAR Convention, the mission is closely aligned with activities encompassing communication, education, participation, and awareness-raising.

### 2.4 Vision

Vision can be defined as the long-term aspirations and desired future state, which outlines what the organization aims to achieve and the impact it hopes to have on the community or the world.

In accordance with the goals and mission of the association, the vision of the DANUBE PARKS

Association can be defined as:

**„Our vision is to lead the way in ensuring the long-term protection and restoration of the Danube River, its wetlands and wild islands, ecosystems, natural beauty, and biodiversity for present and future generations.”**

Considering the objectives of the Initiative, the vision can be redefined as: "Our vision is to lead the way in ensuring the long-term protection and restoration of the Danube River, its ecosystems, natural beauty, and biodiversity for present and future generations by empowering communities, raising awareness, and actively engaging all stakeholders in collective action and shared responsibility."

In the context of CEPA activities, the vision is closely aligned with activities encompassing communication, education, participation, and awareness-raising.

## 2.5 Identifying the target audience

Considering the goals, mission, and vision of the project and the existence of the organization, it is possible to identify four main groups of communication activities.

These groups differ in terms of demographic characteristics, the level of awareness regarding the topics that are the focus of the organizations, and the expected level of engagement.

### 2.5.1. Target group description

#### 2.5.1.1. General audience

The general public consists of people with heterogeneous characteristics (individuals of various age groups, different levels of education, employment status, places of residence, and levels of awareness about environmental issues).

Communication targeting this group is essential, as it is important to raise individual awareness about the importance of wetland conservation.

It is also important to encourage desirable behaviors aimed at environmental protection, as well as to foster support for the organization's initiatives.

This target group is expected to demonstrate support through engagement on social media, participation in public outreach events, and by taking small yet meaningful actions that contribute to environmental conservation.

#### 2.5.1.2. Nature protection enthusiasts

The target group of nature protection enthusiasts consists mainly of individuals of younger and middle age, often with higher levels of education, who are either employed or in the process of education and typically come from urban areas. These individuals possess knowledge and awareness about the importance of preserving wetlands and the environment in general, as well as about organizations that advocate for these issues. It is important to communicate with this target group, as they often act as advocates and promoters for topics that are important and close to them.

Nature protection enthusiasts actively follow social media and often not only "like" content but also comment on and share posts, thereby contributing to greater reach. They are also likely

to show interest in website content and, if given the option, subscribe to newsletters to stay informed about the topics that interest them. Additionally, they are willing to participate in project events, whether of a general or more specific nature.

#### 2.5.1.3 Professionals and practitioners in nature protection and project management

This target group consists of individuals of younger or middle age, predominantly employed or seeking new professional challenges, and who are currently engaged in education or skills development. By profession or qualification, these are predominantly individuals educated in the field of natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics, ecology, etc.) who, in addition to work experience in these areas, also have experience in project implementation.

This group will be involved in communication activities as part of their professional roles, partly due to their interest in the topic, but also due to the potential for networking and establishing new business and partnership collaborations.

Feedback communication is expected from this target group in the form of knowledge and practice exchange, planning of joint activities, participation in events and conferences, and providing expert opinions. This part of the communication, in addition to individuals, may also be directed towards other associations or organizations.

#### 2.5.1.4 Decision makers, donors and focal points

The target audience comprises public administration institutions and policymakers at both national and regional levels, along with prospective donors supporting the organization's projects and international level operations.

The communication objectives towards this target group are to increase the support of relevant institutions such as regional and local government units, state institutions, and ministries responsible for environmental protection and wetland areas.

An important aspect of communication with decision-makers is also to present one's views and positions on key issues, including proposing initiatives and changes to regulations and laws that impact environmental protection. Communication can have a preventive effect by proactively contacting decision-makers with proposals, or a corrective one, in cases where there is a need to respond to actions that could have a negative impact on environmental protection.

Communication with potential donors and project financiers is essential due to the need to secure financial resources that will enable the organization's operations and the

implementation of its initiatives. This communication should focus on previously successfully implemented projects and the benefits they have brought to the community. It is important to include clear quantitative indicators of success during this communication. Additionally, the communication should emphasize the specific benefits that donors will gain by supporting the projects, such as enhanced visibility, positive public image, or alignment with their corporate social responsibility goals.

Communication with the focal points designated in accordance with the Ramsar Convention can be considered a key step toward successful engagement with national decision-makers and potential donors. It is equally important to engage these focal points as strategic partners for the exchange of relevant information, effective reporting, and the implementation of activities aimed at communicating key messages and raising awareness.

## 2.6 Defining key communication message

Creating a message for the target audience is one of the key elements of successful communication.

A message directed at the reader is an opportunity to communicate:

- The core values of the DANUBEPARKS association and wild islands initiative which should align with those of the message recipient (e.g., a shared commitment to environmental protection);
- New ideas that may shift the recipient's perspective (e.g., preserving wetlands and wild islands is essential to maintaining a comfortable climate in your area);
- Solutions to existing problems the recipient may face, or prevention of potential issues (e.g., the initiative we are implementing will help prevent air pollution in your city);
- Emotions, both positive and negative, that can influence the recipient to adopt desired behaviors or avoid harmful ones (e.g., irresponsible behavior in nature destroys the habitat of an endangered species);
- A sense of belonging to a group (e.g., protect nature and become part of the community working for a better tomorrow);
- Motivation to take the action (e.g., take the lead and make your region even more beautiful)
- The need for inclusive and participatory experts and stakeholder engagement in order to support the conservation and wise use of wetland ecosystems

### 2.6.1 Target group: General audience

Key messages that will be communicated to this group are:

- Each individual is part of the ecological problem, but also of the solution.
- The issue of preserving the Danube and its associated wetlands is much more important than it might initially seem.
- In your area, there is an organization working to preserve the Danube, which has a positive impact on the population living in its basin.

Proposal for messages that will be communicated to this group:

- *"Look at these wonderful animals that live in our wetlands and on wild islands. We believe you care about preserving their only home."*
- *"Did you know that wetlands are nature's very own oxygen factories? It's easier to breathe knowing someone is working hard to produce clean air for you."*
- *"The Danube River Basin stretches across 19 countries and is home to nearly 83 million people. The Danube is our shared home—let's all take responsibility for protecting it."*
- *"Just a few kilometers away from you lies a hidden gem—a true paradise on Earth (one of the DANUBE PARKS sites). Value this natural treasure and protect the delicate balance of this perfect ecosystem."*
- *"For over 10 years, the DANUBE PARKS Association has been leading efforts to preserve, develop, and restore the Danube River and its wetlands and wild islands. Support our mission—be part of the movement for a greener, cleaner, and bluer Danube."*

### 2.6.2 Target group: Nature protection enthusiasts

Key messages that will be communicated to this group are:

- Become an ambassador for the protection of the Danube and its connected wetlands
- We know you have ideas on how to contribute to environmental protection – and we want to hear them!
- Get involved in our project activities and connect with others who share your vision.

Proposal for messages that will be communicated to this group:

- *"We know you care about protecting the Danube just as much as we do. Join our initiative—together, we can achieve more!"*

- *"The natural habitats of many plant and animal species are more threatened than ever. Share this post and encourage your friends to think about how they can help protect our wetlands!"*
- *"We're sure you know that everyone can contribute to environmental protection. Share your ideas with us and help us achieve our mission!"*
- *"Share with us your small but meaningful steps to protect wetland areas. Let your passion for nature conservation inspire others to do the same."*
- *"The plants and animals in wetlands and on wild islands cannot speak—but you can! Be their voice and speak out loudly against the destruction of natural habitats."*
- *"Be part of the research that will help us create even more effective initiatives for wetland and wild island protection. Your opinion matters!"*
- *"Join the XY event as part of the initiative and connect with others who care about the environment just like you do. Together, we are stronger!"*

### 2.6.3 Professionals and practitioners in nature protection and project management

Key messages that will be communicated to this group:

- The exchange of knowledge and experience can foster innovative solutions for nature conservation
- Engage in an international initiative and acquire valuable professional and organizational expertise
- Become part of our project and contribute to a significant, long-term impact

Proposal for messages that will be communicated to this group:

- „You are an expert in biology, chemistry, or ecology? Your expertise is exactly what we need to help develop a strategy for preserving the Danube and its vital wetland ecosystems!”
- „Would you like to enhance your CV with relevant experience? By participating in our workshops, you will gain professional knowledge and skills that will distinguish you in the job market!”
- „Do you have experience in managing publicly funded projects? We invite you to share your insights on project implementation and engage in mutual learning to enhance our collective expertise!”
- „Your expertise in the field of XY is precisely what is needed to develop an effective solution for XY. We kindly invite you to join our initiative, which has the potential to make significant advancements in the conservation of plant species within wetland

habitats.”

- „We are familiar with your achievements in the field of XY. We kindly invite you to join our event as a speaker and share your story, from which young professionals can gain valuable insights.”

#### 2.6.4 Decision makers, donors and focal points

Key messages that will be communicated to this group:

- The preservation of the Danube and its wetlands is a highly important topic for a significant portion of your voters.
- If you are looking for a reliable partner in shaping environmental protection policies, the DANUBE PARKS Association is at your disposal.
- Investing in environmental protection projects will lead to better solutions, as they will be designed by experts with in-depth knowledge and experience in the field.

Proposal for messages that will be communicated to this group:

- “The preservation of wetlands and dynamic river systems is our daily mission and our passion. Allow us to share with you our field-based insights, which can be of great value in shaping new laws and regulations.”
- “Citizens in the XY area are deeply concerned about recent events that have led to environmental degradation in their surroundings. We kindly ask you to listen to their concerns, as well as the solutions we, as experts in the field of natural sciences with extensive experience in environmental protection, are proposing based on thorough analysis.”
- “In light of the upcoming elections, we would like to know whether your electoral program includes measures related to environmental protection in the XY area. If not, we are willing to suggest a set of actions developed within the framework of the XY project, in cooperation with leading experts and tailored to the identified needs of the local population.”
- “The DANUBE Parks Association is currently in the process of designing a new initiative aimed at making significant strides in the protection of native plant and animal species. To make this initiative a success, we require financial support to fund vital field research. We kindly ask for your assistance according to your financial capabilities, thereby contributing to meaningful improvements in the quality of life for the residents of XY.”

- „By signing the Ramsar Convention, our country committed to promoting the conservation of wetlands within its territory, with particular attention given to designated Ramsar Sites. Beyond site protection, effective wetland conservation requires strong management frameworks, transparent reporting, and the integration of wetland protection into strategic and policy documents, reflecting the important role wetlands play in the regions they support.

Communicating about wetland conservation, raising awareness of the vital role wetlands play in ecosystems, engaging stakeholders in the co-creation of conservation solutions, and encouraging behaviours that support wetland protection go far beyond formal international obligations. These activities represent a powerful set of tools, a wide and diverse network of partners, a shared commitment, and, above all, a foundation for a sustainable and resilient future.

Investing financial, professional, and administrative resources in wetland conservation is an investment in a healthy environment and in the preservation of natural resources for future generations.’

## 2.7 Defining key communication channels

Choosing a communication channel allows the intended message to be delivered to the selected target audience using means that ensure it is received appropriately.

When selecting a communication channel, it is important to ask yourself the following questions:

- What message do we want to send? What is the tone and context of the message?
- What reaction should the message provoke in the recipient? Should it be purely informative, or should it encourage the recipient to take further action?
- Who are we primarily addressing with the message? Who is the target audience?
- How does the intended recipient receive information? What communication tools do they use for receiving different types of information?
- What is the desired reach of the message?

After analyzing the message itself, its intended effects, the target audience, and the way they receive messages, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration:

- Messages that contain general information, should preferably be sent through more informal communication channels in order to achieve greater reach

- Messages that contain more specific information about a topic or field should be directed toward individuals who have shown a certain level of interest in them, using communication tools designed for narrower target groups
- Messages that contain specific information and aim to receive feedback or a reaction from a narrower group of people—who are more homogeneous in terms of education, familiarity with the topic, or interests—should be sent via channels that allow targeted reach of the desired group.
- Messages that require a more concrete action from the recipient—such as a donation, collaboration, or participation in activities—should be delivered through communication channels that create a sense of personal interaction, such as face-to-face or direct communication.

<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Recommended channel</b>
General audience	Social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok) Media (local portals and newspapers)
Nature protection enthusiasts	Social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, X, LinkedIn) Media (local portals and newspapers) Web site Project newsletter Promotional events (Open days)
Professionals and practitioners in nature protection and project management	Social networks (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn) Direct emails Newsletters Project conferences, workshops, networking and promotional events
Decision makers, potential donors and focal points	Social networks (X, LinkedIn) Direct emails and mail Project conferences

## 2.8 Developing tools to monitor the effectiveness of the communication strategy

In order to monitor the effectiveness of a communication strategy, it is necessary to define, monitor and analyze indicators of success and proof of execution.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Indicator of success</b>	<b>Proof of execution</b>
Development of a strategic framework for communication activities	Approved communication strategy	The association has formally confirmed the communication strategy—by signing the document—as officially adopted and ready for implementation in future activities.
Enhancing the international visibility of the Danube WILDisland Ramsar Regional Initiative	<p>Comparison of the total annual outreach of all communication activities in the year prior to the start of the project implementation with each of the years during the implementation period.</p> <p>Regular and up-to-date recording of reach data for each communication activity in the recommended tables is advised.</p> <p>Analyzing this data is essential to determine which activities yield the highest reach, providing valuable insight into which channels warrant further investment and development.</p> <p>A month-by-month comparison of activity reach over the years of project implementation can help determine whether the intended reach is being met and reveal the scale of growth over time.</p>	The communications team will systematically monitor and document the reach of all communication efforts. The primary success indicator is year-over-year growth in the reach of each activity.

<p>Raising awareness of the importance of wetland conservation</p>	<p>An increase in respondents' awareness, as demonstrated by the survey results, will serve as an indicator of the project's success.</p>	<p>As part of the project, a survey will be developed with the aim of assessing respondents' awareness of the work of DANUBEPARKS Association, its member sites, and topics related to wetland conservation and environmental protection in general.</p> <p>Regular analysis of survey responses will provide insights into the level of public awareness regarding DANUBEPARKS Association, its member sites, and key topics such as wetland and environmental protection.</p>
<p>Intensifying partnership collaboration and networking</p>	<p>Comparison of the total annual outreach of communication activities in the year prior to the start of the project implementation with each of the years during the implementation period.</p>	<p>Annual increase in the number of newly established partnership collaborations and networking</p>
<p>Enhancing support from the public sector and increasing financial contributions and donations</p>	<p>Comparison of the total number of activities and its participants in the year prior to the start of the project implementation with each of the years during the implementation period.</p>	<p>An annual increase in the number of initiatives supported by the public sector, as well as a rise in financial contributions and donations</p>

## 2.9 Alignment with CEPA Goals and Priorities

To enhance transparency, accountability, and strategic relevance, all communication activities implemented under this project will be explicitly aligned with the CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness) Programme of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

### 2.9.1 Objectives of CEPA Alignment

- Ensure that communication actions contribute to global wetland conservation priorities
- Strengthen the link between local activities and international frameworks
- Facilitate structured reporting and evaluation of communication impact
- Demonstrate the contribution of RRI initiatives to the implementation of the Convention

### 2.9.2 Key CEPA Priorities Addressed

Communication activities will be designed to support the following CEPA priority areas:

- Awareness raising – Increasing public understanding of wetland values and ecosystem services
- Education and capacity building – Enhancing knowledge among youth, professionals, and stakeholders
- Stakeholder participation – Promoting active engagement of local communities and volunteers
- Knowledge exchange – Supporting collaboration between practitioners, experts, and institutions
- Policy support – Informing decision-makers and encouraging evidence-based action

## 3. ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

A review of the websites and social media channels of protected areas was conducted in order to assess the overall level of visibility of the DANUBE PARKS initiative, their connection to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the extent to which activities related to communication, education, participation and awareness are being implemented.

- DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The members' website contains a wide range of interesting and relevant content; however, there is a clear need for improved organization in order to enhance overall attractiveness and user experience. The RAMSAR logo is visible on the homepage, while the DANUBE PARKS logo is not. The website content covers topics ranging from nature conservation to activities that contribute to project visibility and awareness-raising.

A more modern and responsive website design, as well as the availability of content in English, would significantly elevate the level of communication activities.

The Facebook page features engaging and diverse content that raises awareness about protected species and the member's activities. The establishment of an official Instagram account is also recommended in order to reach target groups that are less active on Facebook.

- LOWER PRUT NATIONAL PARK

The website is dominated by pleasant green tones. Although it is logically structured, a different visual design and layout would significantly improve its attractiveness.

While the website offers a wealth of interesting content in Moldovan, updating and expanding the English-language content would be beneficial for improved international positioning.

The RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos are not visible on the website, nor are links to social media platforms. The establishment of social media channels is considered beneficial for improving communication with target audiences.

- RUSENSKI LOM NATURE PARK

The member's website is not active, and no official social media channels could be identified. Activation of the website and the establishment of social media profiles are strongly recommended in order to communicate with target audiences and improve visibility at all levels.

- PERSINA NATURE PARK

Persina Nature Park has a modern website characterized by pleasant colors and attractive photography. The content is logically structured, and the layout contributes to good readability. However, content updates and the regular publication of news are needed to ensure the website fully serves its purpose. International visibility is enhanced through the availability of an English-language version.

It is recommended to add the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos to the website.

The Facebook page should be updated more frequently, and the creation of an Instagram profile is also recommended.

- IRON GATES NATURE PARK

A comprehensive website redesign is recommended in order to improve visitor appeal. While existing content can be retained, it should be presented through a completely new visual

design and layout. The introduction of an English-language version would further enhance international visibility.

The prominent display of the RAMSAR logo is commendable; however, the addition of the DANUBE PARKS logo is also recommended.

Although the website offers an interesting 3D virtual tour, maintaining an up-to-date website and Facebook presence would be of greater overall benefit.

- KOPAČKI RIT NATURE PARK

The website features a modern and visually appealing design, with well-structured and logically arranged elements. The use of high-quality photographs and videos on the homepage significantly enhances its attractiveness. While the content is primarily oriented toward tourism—and does so effectively—it also highlights other important topics.

Sections addressing natural heritage, habitat significance, and project participation provide educational value for readers and highly informative content for potential donors.

The inclusion of the DANUBE PARKS logo on the website is recommended.

Both Facebook and Instagram profiles are regularly updated and maintain an optimal balance between promotional and educational content.

- GORNJE PODUNAVLJE NATURE RESERVE

As the reserve does not currently have its own website or social media channels, their establishment is recommended in the near future.

As an interim solution, the creation of a dedicated subpage on <https://www.vojvodinasume.rs/> could be considered.

- DUNA–DRÁVA NATIONAL PARK

To enhance attractiveness for visitors and donors, a comprehensive website redesign is recommended. Existing content may be retained, but significant changes to visual design and layout are needed.

Improved visibility of social media links, as well as clearer presentation of the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos, is also recommended.

Social media content is diverse and regularly updated.

- DUNA–IPOLY NATIONAL PARK

The website features interesting and educational content; however, a comprehensive redesign would allow this content to stand out more effectively. The option to subscribe to a newsletter is a positive feature.

Improved visibility of social media links, as well as the RAMSAR and DANUBEPARKS logos, is recommended.

Social media content is diverse and regularly updated.

- SZIGETKÖZ LANDSCAPE PROTECTION AREA

The website is well structured, visually appealing, and divided into clear thematic sections. The newsletter subscription option is prominently displayed; however, links to social media platforms are missing.

Adding the RAMSAR and DANUBEPARKS logos to the website would be highly beneficial.

The Facebook page is dynamic and engaging, while the creation of an Instagram account is recommended to reach additional target groups.

- DUNAJSKÉ LUHY PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREA

The website is visually attractive, particularly due to its dynamic homepage elements. The thematic categorization of news is a strong feature. Highlighting the ecological importance of the site more prominently would further improve content quality.

The inclusion of a donation call-to-action is commendable, though it should be displayed more prominently to increase visibility.

Multilingual content represents another strength; however, links to social media platforms are missing.

The addition of the RAMSAR logo is recommended.

- ZÁHORIE PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREA

The website contains diverse and informative textual content, which would benefit from improved organization to enhance visual appeal.

Multilingual content is recommended to attract tourists and donors, alongside better visibility of social media links and the inclusion of the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos.

Facebook and Instagram profiles are engaging and dynamic, and the presence of an active YouTube channel is particularly commendable.

- DONAU-AUEN NATIONAL PARK

The website features an exceptionally attractive design, with visual elements effectively symbolizing water. Content is clearly structured into logical sections, offering useful information for tourists, habitat and ecological context, and organizational details. Multilingualism further enhances the quality and attractiveness of the site.

The addition of the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos is recommended.

Social media content is diverse and regularly updated.

- WACHAU PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREA

The website is pleasant and easy to navigate; however, it lacks content related to site-specific information, habitat importance, projects, and news updates.

The establishment of social media channels, as well as the inclusion of the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos, is recommended.

- NARROW VALLEY OF THE DANUBE IN THE PASSAU DISTRICT

As there is no dedicated website, the creation of one is recommended. As an interim solution, a dedicated subpage on the district's official website could be established.

- DONAU AUWALD NEUBURG–INGOLSTADT

The website is simple and clear, and the visibility of the DANUBE PARKS affiliation is commendable. It is recommended to add content highlighting the biological importance of the site and environmental protection efforts, as well as the RAMSAR logo.

The establishment and active use of social media channels would further enhance communication activities.

- REGIONAL PARK MURA–DRAVA

The creation of a dedicated website and social media channels is recommended.

- LONJSKO POLJE NATURE PARK

The website offers a wealth of interesting content, well organized into logical sections.

The prominent display of the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos on the homepage is commendable.

The primary area for improvement relates to clearer visibility of social media links, given that existing social media content is dynamic and informative.

- COMANA NATURE PARK

The creation of a dedicated website and social media channels is recommended.

- ĐERDAP NATIONAL PARK

The website is visually attractive, supported by high-quality photography and a well-balanced layout. Statistical data on surface area and species numbers are presented in an engaging manner. While the website offers valuable content primarily aimed at tourists, it is essential to add content emphasizing the ecological importance of the site.

The inclusion of the RAMSAR and DANUBE PARKS logos is recommended, along with the establishment and prominent display of social media channels.

#### 4. SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB SITE

Social media and the website are key tools for public presentation and awareness-raising on environmental issues. They should function as professional platforms for publishing high-quality and visually consistent content, while regular communication ensures clear delivery of key messages and builds credibility with potential partners, collaborators, and donors.

##### 4.1. Facebook

Promotion on the social network Facebook remains one of the most important digital tools in 2025. Although it is not experiencing growth at the same rate as other platforms like TikTok and Instagram, Facebook, with 3 billion users worldwide, is still the most widespread social network.

The most represented age group on Facebook consists of individuals aged 25 to 34, with a significant share of users aged 35 to 44 and 45 to 54. In addition, there has been a growing

number of users over the age of 55. The least represented—but still notable—group includes users aged 15 to 24.

Facebook is suitable for a wide range of activities, including the promotion of project partners' activities, events, websites, and the publication of educational content.

#### 4.1.1. Guidelines for effective communication promotion on Facebook

- *Create quality content:* Since a large amount of content is published daily on Facebook, it's important to stand out through quality. High-quality photos and videos, accompanied by well-written captions of optimal length and tone, can significantly increase the visibility of your posts, as well as reach and user engagement.
- *Post regularly and when your audience is active:* To achieve good reach, it's important to post regularly—at least 3 to 4 times per week. Use the built-in tools in the Meta Ads interface to identify when your audience is most active, and schedule your posts accordingly.
- *Focus on content favored by the algorithm:* Research shows that videos and Facebook Stories deliver the best reach and engagement. Among video content, short videos up to 1 minute long, optimized for mobile devices and in decent resolution, perform best. Facebook Stories are great for sharing photos and tend to achieve better reach and engagement compared to static images posted on the Facebook feed.
- *Encourage user engagement:* In addition to creating quality content, encouraging users to engage is key to achieving good interaction. Beyond the usual content with a "greater purpose" (e.g. "By sharing this post, you help raise awareness about the importance of protecting natural habitats"), it's also important to ask questions and invite users to share their opinions. It's useful to highlight that posts can be quickly and easily shared via WhatsApp as well. Quizzes are another effective way to attract users—allowing them to test their knowledge and express their views on specific topics. Lastly, responding promptly to comments under posts is crucial, as it further boosts reach and encourages continued engagement.
- *Facebook advertising:* Facebook advertising can be highly effective when there is a need to further promote posts with particularly important content or simply to increase the number of followers. Given the age structure of Facebook users, it's important to keep in mind that you're addressing a somewhat more mature audience, typically with greater purchasing power. Facebook ads allow you to target specific audiences based on age, location, interests, and behavior. Ads created through Meta Business Suite generally perform better than simply boosting existing posts. Additionally, there are tools available that allow you to test and optimize your ads for improved results.

#### 4.1.2. Content proposal for Facebook

High-quality content is the foundation of effective communication. Creating such content requires time, planning, and creative thinking. While part of the content should focus on current activities—such as workshops, ongoing projects, field actions, and project events—additional educational and awareness-raising content is essential to further inform audiences and deepen their understanding of key environmental topics.

Engaging and educational content can be organized into the following logical content pillars.

- *Motivation Monday*

The objective of Motivation Monday is to communicate ideas and messages that raise awareness among followers about existing environmental challenges, while simultaneously motivating them to adopt behaviors that contribute to environmental protection. Content published under this theme may include thought-provoking quotes related to nature conservation, encouraging reflection and a shift in perspective, as well as practical tips for small everyday actions that have a positive environmental impact or promote changes in daily habits. Where relevant, the connection between these actions and the objectives of the DANUBE PARKS network or the RAMSAR Convention can be further highlighted. For this type of content, feed posts are recommended.

- *Test your knowledge Tuesday*

Test Your Knowledge Tuesday is a concept in which followers respond to A, B, C, or D multiple-choice questions presented in a story format. The quiz-based approach is engaging and interactive, while also providing insight into the audience's level of awareness and knowledge regarding topics related to plant and animal species or DANUBE PARKS members. Whenever possible, questions should be linked to topics that have been recently covered through feed posts.

- *Wild island Wednesday*

Wild Island Wednesday focuses on presenting Danube islands by highlighting their location, characteristics, and unique ecological features. Each post should emphasize the ecological importance of these islands, explaining their role within the wider ecosystem and why they are valuable and worth protecting. The aim of this concept is to introduce followers to interesting facts about Danube islands while encouraging reflection on their significance for biodiversity, habitat connectivity, and overall ecosystem health.

Each post should additionally highlight the role of the DANUBE PARKS network and the RRI Wild Island initiative in supporting the protection and conservation of Danube islands.

- *Throwback Thursday*

The objective of these posts is to present the population status of plant and animal species in the past and today. Historical data should clearly illustrate the drastic decline in species numbers, thereby raising awareness among followers about environmental issues.

- *Flora and Fauna Friday*

This concept focuses on presenting plant and animal species found in Danube ecosystems, highlighting their ecological role, conservation status, and the importance of their protection. Through engaging visuals and informative content, posts aim to increase awareness of biodiversity, illustrate the interconnectedness of species and habitats, and emphasize the role of conservation efforts in maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems along the Danube.

- *Shoutout Saturday*

This concept is dedicated to highlighting achievements and successes across the network. This may include field activities, the implementation of project actions, the celebration of key milestones, the establishment of partnerships, participation in conferences, or other initiatives that demonstrate active engagement and progress toward achieving the shared vision, mission, and objectives.

- *Celebration of international days*

This content concept focuses on marking relevant environmental awareness days and international observances related to nature conservation and environmental protection. Posts should explain when and why a specific day is celebrated, providing historical context and outlining its significance for biodiversity and ecosystem protection. In addition, the content should encourage active participation by suggesting concrete actions that followers can take to mark the day, such as adopting environmentally responsible behaviors, supporting conservation initiatives, or sharing the message within their communities. The overall aim is to raise awareness, provide meaningful context, and inspire engagement that contributes to long-term environmental protection goals.

Days that should be mentioned throughout the year are:

- International day for environmental education (January 26)
- World wetlands day (February 2)

- World migratory bird day (February 2)
- World wildlife day (March 3)
- International Day of Forests (March 3)
- World water day (March 22)
- Earth hour (Last Saturday of march)
- Earth day (April 22)
- World frog day (April 28)
- International biodiversity day (May 22)
- World environment day (June 5)
- World day to combat desertification and drought (June 17)
- International Danube day (June 29)
- World ozone day (September 16)
- World river day (Last Sunday of September)
- World animal day (October 4)
- World soil day (December 5)

## 4.2 Instagram

In 2025, Instagram has over 2,5 billion active users. The most represented user group on Instagram consists of individuals aged 18 to 24, who primarily use the platform to browse content.

In addition, people aged 25 to 44 also use Instagram extensively for both personal and professional purposes. The number of users over the age of 45 is also significant and should not be overlooked.

Instagram is best suited for sharing aesthetically appealing photos and more engaging video content.

Due to the platform's structure and user characteristics, Instagram has recently been seeing significantly higher engagement than Facebook—through active liking, commenting, sharing, and saving of content.

### 4.2.1 Guidelines for promotion on Instagram

Due to the algorithmic similarities between platforms, many of the rules for success on Facebook also apply to Instagram. High-quality content, published at the right time and paired with a clear call to action, will positively influence reach and engagement.

However, Instagram has its own unique features that can further enhance content quality and profile clarity:

- *Reels format*

Reels is a format that works best on Instagram, where it was originally introduced. Short videos of up to 30 seconds, delivering educational or entertaining content, can not only reach a broad audience but also generate strong engagement within your target group.

- *Showcasing social media links and website:*

To improve visual organization, it is recommended to use Linktree or similar tools, which allow you to present all your organization's relevant links (social media profiles, website, etc.) in a clear and user-friendly way on your Instagram bio.

- *Highlighting stories*

As on Facebook, Instagram Stories tend to perform well in terms of organic reach. What makes Instagram unique is the ability to highlight Stories after the standard 24-hour period. Organizing these highlights into logically themed categories (displayed on your profile) makes them easily accessible to users who want to revisit specific content or are particularly interested in certain topics.

- *Using hashtags*

A combination of general hashtags (related to environmental protection or geographic regions) and specific hashtags (project name, partner organization, or campaign title) can significantly boost the visibility of your posts. It's recommended to use between 5 and 10 hashtags per post for optimal effect.

- *Instagram advertising*

Like Facebook, Instagram allows for precise targeting of advertising audiences. Additionally, you can run ads simultaneously on both platforms, allowing for broader reach and consistent messaging across your digital channels.

- *Instagram feed design*

The strategic design of an Instagram feed layout can enhance the visual appeal of an Instagram page and support audience growth. The use of transitions, collages, structured alternation between text and visual content, and horizontal or vertical visual alignment serves to improve content presentation, recognition, and memorability.

#### 4.2.2. Content proposal

The content concepts initially proposed for Facebook can be seamlessly adapted for Instagram. When creating feed posts, it is essential to use platform-optimized formats

(1320x1080px) to ensure visual impact. Moreover, prioritizing video reels over static posts is strongly recommended, as reels typically generate higher reach, engagement, and shareability.

#### 4.3. X (Twitter)

Although used less frequently compared to Facebook and Instagram, X can be an excellent platform for reaching a targeted audience, as it combines casual user conversations with the discussion of important and serious topics.

The largest user groups on X are individuals aged 35 to 45 and 25 to 34, who use the platform for both entertainment and professional purposes.

X is also widely used by journalists, politicians, and other public figures, making it a valuable tool for networking and for achieving both specific and general goals within project communication.

#### Guidelines for effective promotion on X (Twitter)

- *Start engaging early:* Even before launching your X profile, identify key individuals and organizations you want to connect with. Once your profile is active, follow them so they're aware of your presence on the platform. For individuals you consider especially important, send a direct message briefly introducing yourself and your organization, expressing your interest in networking and your hope for future communication.
- *Follow relevant hashtags:* Alongside identifying key people, determine which hashtags you want to follow. This will allow you to join discussions on important topics and increase your visibility among users who are already engaging with those themes.
- *Encourage and participate in discussions:* Due to a higher level of anonymity and a more informal tone of communication, X users are generally more open to commenting and sharing opinions. This means that it often takes less prompting to spark conversation—an advantage when it comes to visibility and reach. It's equally important to actively comment on posts you find relevant, helping you initiate interaction with users and organizations you're interested in connecting with.
- *Use hashtags strategically:* Hashtags are key to making your content discoverable by users genuinely interested in your topic. In addition to standard and project-specific hashtags, monitor trending hashtags on the platform. These can help your posts gain traction not only with users but also with journalists and media outlets.

- *Use the threads feature:* Individual posts on X (free version) are limited to 280 characters, but the threads feature allows you to link multiple tweets together. Using a thread on X allows for the effective communication of longer or more nuanced content, such as outlining the course of a press conference or transmitting multiple messages articulated by a speaker in a clear and coherent manner.
- *Communicate directly:* Twitter (X) is a social media platform that is often managed directly by influential individuals, including politicians and key decision-makers with the capacity to shape public discourse and influence policy processes. This makes the platform particularly effective for environmental advocacy, as it enables the direct highlighting of environmental issues, encourages engagement in public and policy-related discussions, and facilitates initial contact that can evolve into sustained advocacy and stakeholder engagement efforts.

#### 4.4. TIKTOK

In 2025, TikTok is becoming an increasingly important platform for digital marketing, with approximately 1.8 billion active users worldwide. It plays a crucial role in reaching younger audiences.

In the context of this project, TikTok can be used to share short videos featuring interesting facts about specific sites (1 video = 1 piece of information), as well as content that raises awareness about environmental protection.

It's also important to recognize and participate in trending formats and challenges, adapting them to the Initiative's context and capabilities in a creative and relevant way.

#### 4.5 LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the world's leading professional network, with over 1 billion users.

In the context of this project, it can be a valuable tool for networking, presenting activities, and reaching influential individuals. Engaging and relevant posts can reach a large audience organically (without paid promotion).

The most active users on LinkedIn are employed or self-employed individuals aged 25 to 44.

When setting up a profile, be sure to include:

- Organization name
- Brief description of the organization (mission summary)
- Profile picture (organization logo)

- Cover photo (image showing the team in action or a project-related location)
- Organization overview (short history, mission, vision, and areas of activity/projects)
- Links to the website and other social media platforms

#### 4.5.1 Guidelines for successful promotion on LinkedIn

- Post 2 to 3 times per week, depending on the stage of project activities.
- Maintain a professional tone, but emphasize the broader social value of your work.
- Place the key sentence at the beginning of your post to catch the reader's attention and encourage them to click "See more."
- End the post with a question to prompt interaction and invite others to share their thoughts.
- Add 3 to 5 hashtags per post to improve visibility among users interested in the topic.
- To boost engagement, tag people involved in the topic and actively comment on and share other people's posts.

#### Examples of effective LinkedIn content:

- Project meetings and updates
- Introductions of project team members (their roles and experience)
- Behind-the-scenes work on specific project activities
- Project outputs and results
- Posts about the importance of habitat protection and the actions being taken to ensure it

By consistently sharing thoughtful, relevant content and interacting with others on the platform, LinkedIn can become a powerful tool for increasing your project's credibility, reach, and professional impact.

#### 4.5.2 Guidelines for using LinkedIn as a platform for advocacy and securing institutional and financial support

LinkedIn is not only a platform where an organization can showcase itself, its projects, and achievements in the best possible light. As the leading professional networking platform, LinkedIn offers the opportunity to connect with key and influential individuals, including politicians, government officials, representatives of NGOs, business leaders, as well as influencers with significant advocacy potential.

Since individuals often manage their LinkedIn accounts personally, it is possible to reach out directly, with a higher likelihood of success compared to traditional email communication, as LinkedIn messages are perceived as more personal and engaging. The effectiveness of these communication efforts can be enhanced through careful preparation, which includes compiling a list of relevant individuals with whom establishing a connection is strategic, and crafting persuasive messages tailored to the recipient.

On this social media platform, it is also important—ideally on a daily basis—to comment on current topics and discussions, thereby increasing profile visibility, expanding reach, and growing the network of connections.

#### 4.6 YouTube

In 2025, YouTube remains one of the two most visited websites globally, with over 2 billion users.

YouTube offers the possibility to publish both classic videos (longer videos in horizontal format) and shorts (vertical videos up to 30 seconds long), enabling effective reach to users with different preferences.

Videos are a powerful tool for delivering important messages as they combine visuals and sound. Unlike videos on social media platforms, YouTube videos remain easily accessible over time, especially when organized into playlists.

Once published, YouTube videos can be easily shared on websites or Facebook pages—though sharing directly on Facebook is not recommended due to algorithm limitations.

Suggested content for YouTube:

- Video presentations of individual protected areas
- Interviews with experts or project team members
- Coverage of project activities (operational tasks or project conferences)

YouTube's combination of accessibility, video formats, and content organization makes it an ideal platform for long-term, impactful project communication.

#### 4.7 Social media graphic design guidelines

- Follow the brand standards - colors, fonts, and graphic elements must be applied consistently to ensure strong visual recognition across all posts.

- Use high-quality photographs that clearly illustrate the topic of the post. High-quality visuals significantly enhance content visibility and overall impact.
- Avoid placing excessive text on a single visual. If a topic requires more detailed information, it is recommended to distribute the content across multiple separate graphics.
- Highlight the main message or theme of the visual using the largest font size, while secondary information should be presented in smaller fonts. Ensure readability by using appropriate line spacing. Text and other elements should not be placed too close to the edges of the visual.
- Adapt formats to each social media platform. For Facebook, the recommended formats are 1080x1080 px, while for Instagram the preferred format is 1320x1080 px.
- Use icons to enhance visual interest and support content clarity.
- Groups of visuals can be further categorized using a visual tag that indicates the broader theme of the content (e.g., *International days*). Tags may vary in color to improve the visibility and differentiation of individual themes.

#### 4.8 Web site

The website is a key communication and marketing tool, serving as a central platform to showcase the members of the DANUBE PARKS Association and their capacities, while also promoting engaging content on the conservation of the Danube as a whole, including its wetlands and wild islands. Through inspiring stories, visual content, and clear messaging, the website has the potential to strengthen the visibility of the network and highlight the Danube as a shared natural heritage worth protecting.

The current website concept is clear and user-friendly, providing logical and intuitive access to all key information. It encourages interaction with visitors and offers the option to subscribe to the newsletter, supporting ongoing engagement with the audience.

##### 4.8.1 Guidelines for the improvement of the web site

- On the homepage, numerical data should be presented in a more visually engaging way, for example using tiles and icons to highlight key figures.
- It is recommended to apply consistent use of contrasting colors for text and background, as some sections currently combine orange and white in a way that reduces readability.

- Links to social media channels should be added to the footer of the site, along with basic contact information, to improve accessibility and user engagement.
- The “Team” section should be enhanced with a brief summary of each person’s professional experience. This will reinforce the perception of expertise and contribute to the overall credibility and professionalism of the initiative.
- It is recommended to include a sentence summarizing the specific actions and objectives associated with each of the listed areas, providing a clear link between planned activities and their intended impact.
- In the “DANUBE PARKS – More Info” section, it is recommended to add links to social media channels to increase visibility and engagement. Additionally, numerical data should be presented in a more visually appealing way, for example through simple tiles or infographic elements, rather than as plain numbers.
- To improve the presentation of content in the “Downloads” section, it is recommended to organize it in the form of tiles. Each tile should display the document title, and clicking on a tile should lead directly to the corresponding document link.
- In the “Projects” section, it is also recommended to present numerical data in a more visually engaging format. Additionally, the inclusion of the funder’s logo and the project logo, where available, is suggested. A photo gallery should also be added to enhance visual appeal and provide a more engaging overview of project activities.
- In the newsletter subscription call-to-action section, it would be useful to clarify how frequently the newsletter is sent and provide a brief overview of its typical content. This helps set clear expectations for subscribers and can increase sign-up rates.

## 5. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations (PR) activities are important for the success of project because they ensure the project is visible and supported by the media, its target audience and stakeholders

Public relations activities must be implemented in a timely and structured manner to achieve optimal impact. Depending on the target audience, they can be divided into three main subcategories:

1. Media visibility activities
2. Stakeholder oriented activities
3. Decision maker and donor-oriented activities
4. Focal points-oriented activities

## 5.1 Media visibility activities

To ensure media coverage, it is essential to regularly send press releases to media outlets that are most relevant to the topic and geographic scope of the announcement.

Press release consists of:

- *Headline:* It should be short, clear, and entice the reader to want to read the article.
- *Lead Paragraph:* This section answers the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?
- *Body of the Text:* Here, the information from the lead paragraph is expanded with additional context, purpose, and impact. The text should be structured in a way that highlights the most important information first, which serves as the reason for sending the article. It then expands with more details that provide context and explain why the news is important for the reader and the community. To make the news more memorable, it's recommended to include a notable numerical fact.
- *Quotes:* It is advisable to include quotes from relevant individuals, such as representatives from organizations, participants in scientific workshops, partners, or local and public authorities.
- *Call to action:* The press release should end with a call to action (e.g., participating in the event, sharing ideas and suggestions, following social media).
- *Project information*  
For articles resulting from project events, it is highly recommended to include a section about the project (summary of the project in one sentence, project beneficiaries, partners, project value, and duration, and the source of funding).

**Sender description:** To achieve better visibility for the organization, it's advisable to include a one-sentence description of the organization at the end of the article, along with contact information and links to the website and social media.

Additional guidelines:

- The recommended length of a press release is between 1 and 1.5 pages (shorter texts may miss important information, while longer texts might discourage reading).
- The same font should be used throughout the text. The most important information can be highlighted in bold, and quotes should be italicized.
- If forms, websites, or social media are mentioned in the text, markdown links should be included.

The press release should be sent in Word format, and photos of appropriate quality should be sent separately.

## 5.2 Professional experts-oriented activities

Establishing relationships with individuals and organizations that are interesting for networking and with whom one aims to build a high-quality and long-term collaboration is a process that, with good preparation, can yield very satisfying results.

Steps to be taken in this process include:

1. *Identifying associations and individuals with whom collaboration is desired:* At the very beginning, it is necessary to determine with whom potential cooperation is meaningful, beneficial, and feasible at a given moment. Although some partnerships may initially seem like an excellent move, it is important to confirm whether you share the same goals and values, whether joint initiatives will result in something beneficial for both parties and for society as a whole, and whether there is currently enough time and capacity to carry it out effectively.
2. *Analysis of potential partners:* A detailed analysis of each potential partner is extremely important, both for assessing the viability of the collaboration and for preparing effective communication strategies. If collaboration with a particular organization is desired, it is essential to study their goals, mission and vision, core values, and methods of operation, as well as to become familiar with their past work and initiatives. It is also important to identify the key individuals for communication and the channels through which they can be reached. In addition, it can be useful to examine which other organizations they have previously partnered with, in order to identify potential mutual contacts who could facilitate access to the key people.
3. *Preparing a collaboration proposal:* A well-prepared collaboration proposal is essential for making a good impression and can significantly increase the chances of a positive response. The proposal itself should be structured in a way that clearly demonstrates why the collaboration is a good idea for both parties.

The collaboration proposal should include:

- A brief introduction of the DANUBE PARKS and RRI association, highlighting its areas of activity and core values.
- A clear explanation of the reason for making contact, expressing the desire for collaboration and explaining why this particular organization is being approached as a

potential partner. In this section, it is also useful to reference their past initiatives that are related to the focus of the proposed collaboration.

- A detailed description of the proposed collaboration, clearly outlining the goals and expected outcomes, the positive changes that the collaboration aims to bring about, as well as the specific roles and responsibilities of each project partner. This part should also include the resources expected from each party and a clear definition of how the collaboration would be implemented.
- An overview of your own previous initiatives in the field relevant to the proposed partnership, along with an explanation of why their contribution would be essential in achieving greater common goals.
- A request for feedback regarding the possibilities of collaboration, and an invitation to share any questions or seek clarifications, if needed.

### 5.2.1 Sending the collaboration proposal

Considering that the DANUBE PARKS Association operates across a wide geographical area covering 9 countries, it is recommended that initial proposals for collaboration be sent via email. Email is a fast and cost-effective method that also allows the inclusion of attachments and links to other relevant resources.

When sending the email, it's important to pay attention to the size of the attachments, as large files may prevent successful delivery. Additionally, the timing of the email is important. It is recommended to send this type of message on working days, preferably between Tuesday and Thursday, during the recipient's regular office hours.

The body of the email should briefly summarize the collaboration proposal and include a polite request for feedback regarding the possibility of cooperation.

### 5.3 Decision maker and donor-oriented activities

Communication with decision makers and donors is of utmost importance. It often makes the difference between an idea and its successful execution. This type of communication requires a thoughtful approach, taking the necessary time for preparation and precise execution. Effective communication not only builds trust but also lays the foundation for long-term collaboration. When done successfully, it strengthens relationships, ensures alignment with strategic goals, and drives positive outcomes. A clear, well-structured message can inspire action, secure support, and open doors to new opportunities, ultimately turning plans into tangible results.

### 5.3.1 Identification of key decision-makers and donors

Marketing activities targeting decision makers should begin with detailed research to identify all institutions responsible for areas related to the protection of wetlands and the environment in general, as well as all potential sources of funding.

Institutions that are assessed as potentially relevant should then be analyzed in more detail. This should be done by listing them in a table indicating the specific segment in which they operate. If the institution has a complex organizational structure, it is necessary to define the exact organizational unit relevant to the communication topic. Additionally, if possible, it is useful to identify a specific person to whom communication efforts should be directed.

### 5.3.2 Detailed profiling of decision-makers

Once the decision-makers to whom communication efforts should be directed have been identified, it is necessary to conduct a more detailed analysis of the specific aspects of their work related to environmental protection.

Based on the areas of responsibility of public institutions, it is possible to classify institutions according to the following segments:

- Legislative matters: Including the adoption of laws, regulations, and bylaws; alignment with international standards and regulations; oversight of legal compliance; and sanctioning of violations.
- Spatial planning: Such as the designation of wetlands as protected areas and the management of spatial development plans in surrounding areas.
- Financial matters: Including budget planning for environmental and wetland protection, and the promotion of co-financing mechanisms for activities and projects aimed at conservation.
- Management and development matters: Involving official support for initiatives and participation in projects aimed at improving the protection of the environment and wetlands.

Once the specific area of activity has been clearly defined, it is essential to thoroughly review all relevant documentation—such as laws, regulations, and guidelines—as well as institutional plans and operational procedures. This preparation is crucial for drafting and sending well-informed and targeted communication.

### 5.2.3 Preparation of a formal collaboration proposal

After a detailed assessment of the decision-makers, the next step is the preparation of a formal letter to be addressed to them. The objective of this letter is for the organization to clearly present its identity, explain the rationale for addressing that specific decision-maker, outline its expectations, and highlight the concrete benefits that would result from a positive response to the proposed initiatives.

The letter addressed to decision-makers should include the following components:

1. **Brief Introduction of the DANUBEPARKS Association:** Similar to the approach used when addressing professional experts, a letter addressed to decision-makers should begin with a short introduction of the DANUBEPARKS Association. This introduction should include the association's mission, core objectives, and areas of common interest with the recipient institution.
2. **Clarifying the Purpose of Communication:** Following the introduction, it is necessary to clearly and professionally state the purpose of the communication. This part should demonstrate a strong understanding of the decision-maker's specific area of responsibility and reference key strategic documents or instruments through which the institution influences environmental and wetland protection. This demonstrates that the message is targeted, informed, and relevant.
3. **Detailed Explanation of the Proposal or Initiative:** The central part of the letter should provide a comprehensive explanation of the proposal, initiative, or idea that is the subject of the communication which should include:
  - A proposal or amendment to relevant laws, regulations, or bylaws;
  - Encouragement to engage in international initiatives;
  - Highlighting good practices from other regions or sectors and suggesting how similar approaches can be adapted and implemented in the recipient's specific area;
  - Requesting logistical or financial support for the implementation of projects and initiatives led by the association;
  - Involving stakeholder representatives in the association's activities.

The subject of the letter may also include pointing out identified issues, missed opportunities, and offering solutions aimed at improving environmental protection, particularly in the context of wetlands and biodiversity conservation.

When presenting the idea, it is essential to use professional and technical language, supported by clear arguments based on concrete data, research findings, scientific knowledge, and the expertise of relevant professionals. This ensures that the idea is perceived as credible, realistic, and thoughtfully developed.

If there are other institutions, stakeholders, or initiatives that support or endorse the proposal, it is advisable to include this information in the letter in order to further reinforce the strength and relevance of the proposal.

In addition, it is important to clearly explain to the decision-maker what is specifically expected from them, so that they understand the actions they need to take if they wish to respond positively. The letter should also clarify why their support is particularly important, and outline the positive outcomes of such support (e.g., enhanced environmental impact, alignment with strategic goals, institutional recognition), as well as the potential negative consequences of ignoring or rejecting the proposal.

Finally, the idea should be contextualized within the decision-maker's role and responsibilities within the community or governance system. It is important to emphasize that a proactive response and engagement can have a positive impact on the institution's public image and credibility in the eyes of the public and relevant stakeholders.

### 5.3.2 Sending the collaboration proposal

Choosing the appropriate channel to send the letter is an important step, as it can encourage the recipient to read it within the desired timeframe and respond accordingly.

If the communication is being initiated for the first time, it is advisable to send the letter via email to ensure a quick and efficient delivery to the recipient. However, if the subject matter of the letter is of great importance and the recipient is known by name and surname, it is recommended to send the letter via registered mail with a return receipt to obtain confirmation of delivery.

Additionally, if the institution has a LinkedIn profile or if the recipient's name is known, the letter may also be sent through this platform.

### 5.3.4 Additional guidelines for creation of proposal:

- Study relevant tax laws: Examine the tax regulations of each country. Highlight potential benefits for donors (donations are considered business expenses, which reduces taxable profit). For in-kind donations, VAT deductions may also apply. Not

only does this inform potential donors that they can gain a financial advantage from contributing, but it also conveys the impression of a serious organization that understands tax law.

- Monitor corporate grant opportunities: Companies, both private and public, periodically open calls for project funding. Track these opportunities and prepare a general project idea in advance, which can later be tailored to specific calls. It is important to maintain a list of companies that have previously offered grants, so you can follow trends and anticipate future opportunities.
- Research potential corporate donors: Identify companies in your environment that could become donors. Take the time to study their financial data as well as their mission, vision, and environmental policies. Adjust the requested donation amount according to their available resources to increase the likelihood of success. Use elements such as their mission, vision, or environmental policies as arguments for your request. Demonstrate that you have researched their website and tailor your proposal to align your goals with theirs, showing that you are fighting for the same cause.
- Quantify the impact of the donation: In addition to specifying the donation amount, clearly indicate how the funds will be used. Quantify all data you can: the number of workshops to be conducted, the number of participants in educational programs, etc. Offer documentation demonstrating that the funds were used as intended, ensuring transparency and building donor trust.
- Create a clear but attractive presentation: The presentation should maintain a professional and visually appealing design to effectively attract attention and engage the reader. It is recommended to develop a standardized presentation template that includes core information about the initiative and its previous achievements, clearly conveying the credibility and long-term value of the initiative. Each donation proposal should be prepared individually and tailored to the specific donor. At a minimum, it should outline the requested amount, the intended use and timeline of the funds, the expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes, and the benefits the donor may derive from supporting the initiative.

#### 5.4 Communication with national focal points

Effective communication with national CEPA Focal Points is a key component of the CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness) framework under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

This cooperation aims to ensure alignment with national wetland communication priorities, facilitate the dissemination of project results, support knowledge exchange and replication of good practices, and strengthen the overall visibility and impact of communication activities.

Collaboration with focal points is implemented through regular information exchange, involvement in key events and initiatives, and contribution to national and international CEPA-related processes.

The effectiveness of CEPA activities largely depends on well-established and consistent communication with national focal points—officially designated representatives whose role is to ensure the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at the national level. National focal points play a crucial role, as they serve as the primary link between Ramsar secretariat and national-level decision-makers.

The scope of communication between the coordinating/intermediary body and National Focal Points may include the following thematic areas:

- Status of Ramsar sites within a contracting party: Regular communication covering management plans, habitat data, monitoring and reporting results, and on-the-ground changes affecting designated sites.
- Ecological changes: Often involving crisis communication that requires immediate attention, prompt response, and, where necessary, urgent intervention due to potential or observed threats and environmental pressures.
- Information Exchange: Requests for data and information required for research purposes, expert consultations for studies, preparation of project documentation, and the drafting of official reports.
- Project Development and International Cooperation: Presentation of project concepts related to wetland ecosystems, solicitation of partnership expressions and institutional support, encouragement of participation in project activities, and identification of needs for projects in specific thematic or geographic areas.
- CEPA Activities (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness): Encompassing the dissemination of information on the importance of wetlands and the role of the Ramsar Convention in their conservation and sustainable use; the use of media and educational tools; capacity-building and awareness-raising among diverse target groups—from children and technical experts to policymakers; mechanisms for engaging local communities in conservation initiatives; and the implementation of public awareness campaigns on wetland conservation issues

- Exchange of Best Practices: Sharing examples of effective wetland management practices from other Contracting Parties, with the aim of assessing their potential applicability at the national level.

National focal points responsible for all aspects of Ramsar-related communication at the national level may be hosted within government agencies, non-governmental organizations, or research institutions possessing relevant expertise in environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, or natural resource management.

When considered as a target group, National Focal Points can be characterized by the following attributes:

- A high level of education, most commonly in the natural sciences
- Strong knowledge of ecological systems, including wetland ecosystems  
Familiarity with international agreements and obligations, including those arising from the Ramsar Convention
- Knowledge of national environmental legislation and regulatory frameworks, including provisions related to wetland protection
- Well-developed communication and management skills
- Access to and maintenance of extensive professional networks at both national and international levels

Key challenges in communication with National Focal Points include:

- Limited focus on wetland conservation topics, often resulting from the performance of multiple parallel duties that are perceived as higher priority within their institutional roles
- Insufficient motivation for additional engagement in activities and initiatives stemming from Ramsar Convention obligations
- Frequent institutional and personnel changes, including the appointment of new National Focal Points, which may lead to misdirected communication and necessitate additional efforts for capacity transfer and institutional memory building
- Internal administrative procedures, whereby National Focal Points are required to await information or formal approval within their own institutions, thereby complicating and slowing communication with the Ramsar Initiative

Strategies to reduce communication issues

- Communicate expectations and responsibilities clearly: Individuals appointed as focal points should be informed in advance about what is expected of them, the scope of their responsibilities, and the anticipated time commitment. Effective initial communication and preparation of materials can enhance their efficiency and willingness to collaborate.
- Clarify the purpose of the desired action: Since focal point individuals are often engaged with other tasks arising from their primary roles, it is crucial to clearly explain the purpose of the activity, as well as its timeframe and level of priority. Communicating this information effectively can motivate the individual, increasing the likelihood that the desired action will be completed within the specified timeframe.
- Clarify the Importance of the Desired Action: Beyond the purpose of their task, it is advisable to clearly communicate the significance of the action for the overall process. Therefore, it is important to explain why the action is necessary and what the outcomes will be if the action is taken—or not taken.
- Prepare for Transitions: If it is observed that focal point assignments often change, it is important to prepare in a way that facilitates understanding and assuming new responsibilities. This includes organizing relevant work documents as well as any supplementary materials that will aid comprehension and execution of duties.
- Readiness to collaborate: While focal points are central individuals to whom communication is directed and from whom certain actions are expected, it is important to be understanding in situations where they cannot fully complete a task independently. Support in communicating with third parties can be crucial to ensuring that the desired action is successfully carried out. Preparing additional emails and accompanying texts for forwarding to the final recipient can significantly facilitate the process while also creating an impression of collaborative partnership.
- Prepare a backup plan: To ensure effective communication, it is important to have a contingency plan that can be used in situations when things do not go as expected. In cases where necessary actions are not taken or communication is inadequate, it is important to have prepared responses that will encourage behavior in the desired direction.

#### 5.4.1 Communication activities database – purpose and description

For the purpose of analyzing communication with focal points, it is necessary to create a database in which details of communication activities undertaken within a specific time period will be recorded.

This type of database is useful because, based on the recorded communication data related to focal points, meaningful conclusions can be drawn that can help improve the effectiveness and flow of communication activities in the future.

The communication activities database should, at a minimum, contain the following information:

- First name, last name, and position/title of the person being contacted
- First and last name of the person who initiated the communication
- Communication topic: name of a location, event, project or communication activity, or another logical unit identified as relevant
- Purpose of communication: refers to the action we expect the recipient to take, e.g. delivery of statistical data or studies, request for project cooperation, inclusion in communication activities, participation in key conferences or project events, request for (co-)financing, etc.)
- Level of importance: how important is the recipient's action for the completion of the organization's tasks?
- Level of time priority: how urgent is the execution of the action?
- Need for escalation / involvement of third parties
- Communication start date
- Case closure date
- Communication flow: A summarized overview of the communication process, including the recipient's response, whether additional questions were raised or further information requested, deadlines promised for actions or deliverables, etc.
- Communication challenges: Information on issues encountered during communication (e.g. inability or reluctance to provide information or cooperate, need for escalation, delays, etc.)

Communication data should be analyzed periodically in order to identify potential communication issues. These issues may relate to reluctance to cooperate on certain topics or types of tasks, delays in cases involving third parties, or similar challenges.

Through thorough analysis, problematic areas can be identified, as well as opportunities for improving communication activities and processes.

## 5.4.2 Key recommendations for communicating with focal points

### 5.4.2.1. Preparatory phase

- Prepare expert/background documents that will enable the new person to become thoroughly familiar with the Ramsar Initiative within a short period of time.
- Prepare working documents that will introduce the new person to the ways of working (scope of work, areas of responsibility, expected tasks in the coming period, and the estimated time required for work tasks). If possible, also create a timeline showing what can be expected from the person in the upcoming period.
- Prepare a document that records the history of communication with the person who previously served as the focal point. This will provide good insight into past developments and facilitate future work. Having information available in one place conveys a sense of good organization, which can positively influence willingness for future cooperation. It is also useful to provide a preliminary activity plan, which will help the person better organize and plan their activities in the coming period

### 5.4.2.2 Communication regarding tasks

The implementation of actions by focal points is of critical importance for the initiative, as is their willingness to cooperate.

For this purpose, communication via email is recommended. The primary reasons for choosing this communication channel are its speed and clarity. When assigning tasks, the following elements should be clearly communicated: what is expected from the recipient, why the task needs to be performed, the broader context in which the task is situated, and the consequences of both its completion and non-completion. In addition, it is essential to clearly specify the deadline, as well as the required format and method for submitting information or documents.

If the subject of communication is participation in events or conferences, it is important to express appreciation for the time allocated, while also clearly explaining the importance of such participation. This may include the visibility of ministerial support during the event, the need to achieve sufficient attendance or quorum where required, or the opportunity to become acquainted with key information that contributes to a better understanding of the relevant scope of work.

#### 5.4.2.3. Communication tone

Communication with focal points should be conducted in a clear, respectful, and cooperative tone, emphasizing partnership and mutual objectives, while remaining concise, structured, and focused on actionable outcomes. Even in cases where challenges arise, such as lack of response or failure to complete the requested actions, communication should remain polite, professional, and constructive, avoiding accusatory language while clearly reiterating expectations and next steps.

#### 5.4.2.4. Handling communication issues

In cases where requested information, documents, or approvals are ignored or not provided, it is important not to give up on the request, but to enhance communication with appeals that emphasize the importance of completing the required actions.

In such situations, communication should be intensified by sending a follow-up email that refers to the initial message, requests confirmation of receipt and understanding of the task, and once again politely asks that the requested action be completed.

#### 5.4.2.5. Expressing appreciation for completed work

Once the person you requested to carry out a specific task has completed their part of the work, it is important to express appreciation for the successful completion of the task and to acknowledge the value of their contribution. This can be communicated in the following manner:

*Thanks to the report you submitted in a timely manner, a clearer overview at the global level has been achieved, representing an important step toward the accomplishment of our shared objective—the conservation of wetland habitats.*

#### 5.4.2.6. Highlighting measurable contribution

As additional motivation for future engagement, it is beneficial to refer to quantitative data at the micro level that demonstrate how the individual's contribution has had a visible impact across multiple levels. This may be formulated as follows:

*Without your commitment to co-financing our project, we would not have been able to implement it as originally planned. As a result, more than 100 children would not have had the opportunity to participate in workshops focused on endangered wetland species. The knowledge gained through these workshops has increased their awareness of the challenges facing wetland habitats. The*

*financial resources you provided were invested in the development and production of educational materials designed to help children adopt practices that contribute to our shared goal—the conservation of wetland habitats.*

## 6. EVENT ORGANISATION

Public events are crucial because they serve as a meeting point for targeted audiences. They provide an opportunity to engage directly with key groups, which is essential for building strong relationships and leaving a positive impression. These events play a significant role in enhancing brand visibility and credibility, making them an integral part of a successful marketing strategy

### 6.1 Press conference

Press conferences are an important method of promoting associations and projects. They are not only a means of informing the wider public but also a tool for garnering stronger media support, ultimately leading to increased media visibility.

A press conference may be organized for the following reasons:

- *Presentation of key project deliverables:* When project activities result in concrete outcomes, such as the development of educational materials or studies, the establishment of new partnerships, or positive changes in local legislation and regulations, it is essential to inform the public. This raises awareness of the benefits the outcomes bring to the community, as well as the process that led to those achievements.
- *Announcement of important events:* If the project includes public events, a press conference is an effective way to promote them. It not only helps target specific audiences but also conveys the significance of the event.
- *Presentation of final project results:* A final project conference provides an opportunity to present the project's main quantitative and qualitative outcomes, the activities that led to achieving the set objectives, implementation methods and how challenges were addressed, the benefits for specific groups and the broader public, as well as plans for sustainability and potential continuation of the project.
- *Response to external developments:* If a situation arises in the project environment that could negatively impact a wetland or other area of concern, it is advisable to organize a press conference. This enables the project team to offer solutions, alert relevant authorities to the importance of mitigating both the consequences and root

causes, and inform the public about the potential impacts, protective measures, and recommended behaviors that could help prevent similar issues in the future.

### 6.1.1. Organizing a press conference

Press invitations should be sent 5 to 7 days prior to the planned date of the press conference. In the case of a crisis or urgent issue, the conference should be organized as soon as possible—allowing enough time for media representatives to make necessary arrangements.

The most effective way to send invitations is via email, using verified contacts in local, national, and specialized media. Whenever possible, the invitation should be addressed directly to journalists responsible for covering topics relevant to the press conference.

A press conference invitation should include:

- The topic of the press conference
- The reason for organizing the conference
- The location, date, and time
- A list of speakers and topics to be addressed
- Information about the availability of additional statements
- A request to confirm attendance

It is advisable to follow up with invited media representatives no later than the day before the event to remind them and confirm their attendance.

The venue should be arranged to allow the press conference to proceed smoothly and leave a strong visual impression. This includes setting up roll-up banners, promotional materials, and printed agendas on branded stationery. In addition to the main conference room, a designated space should be available for one-on-one interviews with speakers. A sign-in sheet should be placed at the entrance to record media attendance.

A photographer should be engaged to capture speakers, guests, and the venue, so images can be quickly published on social media and the project website, and shared with media representatives who were unable to attend. For topics of broader public interest, it is recommended to provide live coverage (e.g., via Facebook Live) or share updates via text posts on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter).

### 6.2. Organizing public events

The organization of public events plays a key role in promoting the project, as it enables informative, educational, and engaging outreach to the wider public — encouraging positive shifts in behavior towards environmental protection.

- Educational events: To effectively raise public awareness and deepen understanding of environmental protection and wetland conservation, we recommend hosting engaging, interactive events that make these topics accessible, inspiring, and memorable.
- Pub quiz on environmental topics: A lively, team-based quiz that turns learning about ecology and wetland conservation into a fun, competitive experience, while simultaneously reinforcing the association’s brand and values.
- Interactive lectures: Captivating talks led by respected experts, enriched with Q&A sessions and open dialogue, designed to spark curiosity, inspire action, and motivate attendees to further explore environmental issues.
- Panel discussions: Dynamic, multi-expert conversations that provide diverse perspectives on ecology and wetland preservation, fostering informed debate and creating lasting impact on public awareness.
- Education for preschool and school-age children – Play-based learning programs that use games, creative challenges, and interactive activities to introduce children to the importance of environmental protection and wetland conservation.
- Guided tours on locations: An immersive tour designed to present wetlands not only as attractive tourist destinations but also as vital ecosystems, highlighting their importance for environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.
- Open day: A full-day event that offers free access to the location while engaging visitors through complementary activities such as art workshops for children (where they can illustrate scenes from nature), interactive prize games focused on environmental themes (with opportunities to win branded project materials), and informative sessions where guests can learn more about the project and its activities.
- Open-air photo exhibition: The open-air photo exhibition, set in busy streets and city squares, brings wetland locations closer to the wider public. Through striking images displayed on portable panels, the exhibition not only showcases the beauty of these sites in a visually engaging way, but also highlights the importance of taking action to ensure their protection and preservation.
- Practical actions: Activities such as improving green spaces, planting trees and flowers, and installing bird feeders and insect hotels, guided by experts, deliver tangible benefits for the locations themselves while encouraging participants to

systematically adopt eco-friendly behaviors. In addition, by inspiring participants to share their experiences on social media, these actions further promote environmental protection practices and amplify the visibility of the project.

### 6.2.1. General guidelines for organizing public events

When selecting the date and time for an event, it is crucial to ensure that no other events, which may attract the same target audience, are scheduled in the same area at the same time.

When choosing the event location, it is important to assess its logistical suitability for the type of event being organized. If the event is held outdoors, special permits from local authorities for the event or for setting up a booth may be required, in accordance with local regulations. Additionally, if the event requires electricity, it is necessary to contact the relevant institutions to ensure access to the nearest power sources. In case of outdoor events, it is essential to have a contingency plan in place in case of inclement weather.

Promoting the event is crucial for achieving the desired number of participants. To ensure successful promotion, it is necessary to define the target audience for the event and tailor the messages accordingly—both in terms of content and tone—while choosing the most appropriate communication channels. Project events can be promoted through social media, the event website, press releases, and conferences, but personal contacts can also play a key role. For each event, it is essential to identify organizations that may find the event appealing and reach out to their representatives in order to increase the number of visitors.

After the event, a gallery of high-quality selected photographs should be shared on social media, and an article about the event should be published on the website. A textual report, along with photographs, should also be sent to relevant media outlets to maximize the event's reach. Post-event content can also include short videos featuring participant comments on the event.

Good practice exchange day: This event brings together experts from diverse fields, offering them the opportunity to showcase successful projects they have contributed to and the approaches that led to positive outcomes. Beyond sharing knowledge and proven practices, the event also serves as a platform for visibility and promotion. Most importantly, it creates space for professionals from different yet complementary sectors to connect, network, and spark new collaborations that drive future environmental initiatives.

## 7. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Promotional materials can ensure lasting visibility among target audiences, while also communicating ideas aligned with the values of the association.

### 7.1 Guidelines for paper based promotional materials

- Use your brand's primary colors for promotional materials so that recipients can immediately make a mental association between the leaflet and your organization.
- Include high-quality photographs that will capture attention and encourage recipients to take and read the leaflet.
- Choose recycled paper for printing to contribute to environmental protection and demonstrate your commitment to this cause.
- Incorporate QR codes linking to your website and social media channels, allowing recipients to access additional information at their convenience.
- Apply the principles of universal design to make the leaflet as accessible and readable as possible, especially for people with visual impairments.
- Highlight information about the donor in accordance with their specified requirements.

#### 7.1.1. Suggestions for non-traditional paper-based promotional materials

Although printed promotional materials have the advantage of conveying a larger amount of information, their drawback is that they are often used only once.

To avoid single-use consumption of printed promotional materials, it is recommended to design unconventional paper-based materials that offer practical value to the recipient:

- *Bookmarks:* If attractively designed and printed on quality paper, a bookmark can be used frequently and over a long period after it is received. It can also include a QR code linking to websites and social media, adding extra value. Bookmarks are cost-effective to produce and suitable for distribution across various target groups.
- *Postcards:* Given that many of the sites DANUBE PARKS works to protect are popular tourist destinations visited by a large number of people, a postcard offers a great way to combine the promotion of these areas with messages about the importance of conservation. Postcards are economical to produce and have great potential to increase outreach. To highlight the role of DANUBE PARKS, it is recommended to include a sentence such as: "Protected and loved by the DANUBE PARKS"

- *Stickers*: Used in combination with other promotional items such as leaflets, tote bags, or notebooks, stickers can be a visually appealing and lasting form of promotion. It is recommended to create a sticker pad (up to A5 size) featuring illustrations of animal and plant species, along with inspirational environmental messages. The stickers should be designed so recipients can peel and use them individually (e.g. for notebooks, phones, laptops, etc.).
- *Hand fans*: During the summer months, a hand fan can serve as a highly functional and attractive promotional item. With its relatively large surface area, there is space to include a map of the project area, a QR code, and other relevant elements. Fans can continue to be used well after they are received and can also be displayed in spaces for greater visibility.
- *Folders*: When communicating with public authorities and potential donors, it is advisable to present printed materials such as letters of intent or reports inside a branded promotional folder. The folder should be made visually appealing—featuring a map and high-quality photographs of the project area—to encourage recipients to continue using it even after reading the contents.

## 7.2 Guidelines for promotional items

Useful promotional materials can help strengthen the connection between the DANUBE PARKS Association and its target audience by serving as everyday reminders of the sender and the story behind the item.

Given the association's commitment to environmental protection, it is recommended that all produced items be made from eco-friendly or recycled materials. These materials should be durable enough for long-term use and easily recyclable at the end of their lifecycle.

When designing promotional items, it is important to ensure that both the functional value and production cost are appropriate for each target group.

### 7.2.1 Proposal for the target group: general audience

For outreach to the general audience, it is recommended to produce low-cost, simple promotional items designed primarily to raise awareness and maintain the association's visibility.

- *Refrigerator magnet*

A refrigerator magnet featuring, for example, a mini-map of the project area, is a long-lasting item that can remain on display for years, serving as a continuous reminder of the association.

### 7.2.2 Proposal for the target group: Nature protection enthusiasts

For the target group of environmentally conscious enthusiasts, it is recommended to produce promotional items with added value—such as seed packets or plantable materials—which contribute to the greening of the area and promote sustainability.

- *Seed paper notebook*

A notebook made from seed paper combines practical value for the user with an environmental component that encourages eco-friendly behavior. Through its design, the notebook can reflect the project's thematic area and convey key messages that promote environmentally responsible practices. Additionally, it can include inserts such as sticky notes for enhanced usability.

### 7.2.3 Proposal for the target group: Professionals and practitioners in nature protection and project management

Promotional items intended for this target group — with whom the goal is to build long-term relationships and effective collaboration — should be of slightly higher individual value and designed for regular, long-term use.

- *Lunchbox set*

A lunchbox set, complete with cutlery and engraved with *The Danube Association* logo, is a practical item that both subgroups can frequently use during a typical workday, fieldwork, or personal travel.

## 8. MONITORING TOOLS FOR ACTION PLAN

Monitoring the effectiveness of communication activities is necessary to develop a tool that will allow both quantitative and qualitative tracking of the activities carried out by the project team during the implementation period.

A performance monitoring tool provides valuable feedback on the success of individual activities, facilitates the preparation of project reports, and allows communication efforts to be adjusted according to each specific target group.

For effective monitoring, a combination of a simple database for systematic tracking and knowledge of analytical tools for activity monitoring is essential.

To ensure a structured and transparent approach to communication, a CEPA alignment matrix (Table 1) is introduced as a practical monitoring and reporting tool. This matrix links each communication activity to specific target groups, communication channels, and relevant CEPA priorities under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

The tool supports:

- systematic tracking of communication efforts and their impact
- clearer demonstration of how activities contribute to CEPA objectives
- improved consistency in reporting at project and institutional level
- easier identification of gaps and opportunities for strengthening communication actions

By applying this matrix, the project ensures that all communication activities are not only well-coordinated but also aligned with international standards for wetland awareness, education, and stakeholder engagement.

<b>Communication Activity</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Channel</b>	<b>CEPA Priority</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
Social media campaign on wetlands	General audience	Facebook, Instagram	Awareness raising	Increased public engagement
Summer camp (Persina Edu Camp)	Youth	On-site	Education & participation	Improved ecological knowledge
Stakeholder meetings	Local stakeholders	In-person	Participation & policy support	Strengthened local cooperation
Expert outreach	Professionals	LinkedIn, email	Knowledge exchange	Enhanced professional network

## 8.1 Social media

To monitor the effectiveness of social media activities, a spreadsheet should be used to record all posts. For clarity, it is recommended to manage the data monthly (1 sheet = 1 month), with a separate sheet to summarize data from monthly statistics.

The spreadsheet for monitoring social media activities should include at least the following columns:

- Date of activity
- Responsible person (Name and Surname)
- Social media platform (Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube)
- Type of post (post, story, reel, shorts)
- Post elements (photo, video, link, quiz)
- Topic of the post (project, locations)
- Target audience (e.g., general public)
- Key message (e.g., summary of the post in one sentence)
- Reach (enter the total post reach based on analytics available on the platform)
- Engagement (enter the number of reactions to the post)
- Additional comments: general impressions on reactions (e.g., positive comments, follow-up questions, etc.)

Comparison of cumulative data categories (platform, post type, content format) should serve as a guideline for planning future posts.

## 8.2 Website activities

To monitor website activity, the following columns should be included in the spreadsheet:

- Date of publication of project news/article
- Responsible person (Name and surname)
- Character count
- Article elements (e.g., text + image)
- Target audience (e.g., general public)
- Key message (summary of the article in one sentence)
- Link to the article
- Note if the article was shared on social media

- Number of article visits (data available via Google Analytics)
- Number of actions (e.g., comments or newsletter subscriptions if the article includes a call to action)

If additional analytics are needed, data can be analysed per country within the project area.

### 8.3 Press releases

To analyse the effectiveness of media releases, a spreadsheet should record all sent and published press releases.

The spreadsheet should include the following columns:

- Date of release distribution
- List of media outlets the release was sent to
- Total number of media contacted
- Country and region where each media outlet operates
- Indicate whether it is local/national/international, and general or specialized media
- List of media that published the press release
- Link to the published press release
- Exact or estimated reach of the release
- List of media that shared the press release on social media
- Link to social media post sharing the release
- Exact or estimated social media reach of the press release

### 8.4 Press conferences

To analyse the success of press conferences, it is recommended to maintain a spreadsheet tracking media attendance.

Recommended spreadsheet content includes:

- Date of press conference invitation
- List and type of media invited
- Date of follow-up contact regarding attendance
- List and type of media that attended the press conference
- Link to the press conference coverage
- List of media that did not attend but received the press release
- Links to coverage by non-attending media
- Data on:

- total number of invited media
- number of media that attended
- number of media that didn't attend but published the press release
- number of media that neither attended nor published

## 8.5 Project events

To evaluate the effectiveness of organizing project events, a spreadsheet should track attendee data.

Recommended columns include:

- Date of invitation to the project event
- Number of invitations sent
- Number and role of attendees who responded
- Number of media present at the event
- Number of promotional materials distributed at the event
- Number of media outlets that published news about the event

## 8.6 Direct marketing towards experts, decision makers and donors

To evaluate the activities towards experts, decision makers and donors, spreadsheet should track their effectiveness

Recommended columns include:

- Date the email was sent
- Recipient of the email
- Total number of emails sent for the purpose of collaborations and donations
- Number of responses to the email
- Success rate in establishing collaborations

## 9. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Team organization for communication is important because it can significantly contribute to the quality of activity implementation and the monitoring of their impact.

To establish a successful team, it is necessary to define:

- Roles, responsibilities, and hierarchy within the team
- Organized documentation related to the implementation of communication activities

- Task management within the team for carrying out communication activities

These guidelines can be applied during the implementation of communication activities throughout the project, as well as after its completion.

### 9.1 Forming a team

Clearly defining roles within the communication team is essential, as each team member should understand the tasks they are expected to carry out and the scope of their responsibilities. When these elements are well defined, team members are more focused on their duties, which ultimately improves the quality of task execution.

It is also important that each team member knows who they can rely on when faced with more complex tasks they cannot handle independently, as well as from whom they need to seek input or approval for activities that require it.

To support this, it is recommended to create a table containing the following information:

- Names and contact information of members of the core internal communication team
- Names and contact information of members of the extended communication team (e.g., external graphic design service providers)
- Names and contact information of communication focal points at each local site within the network
- Description of the work tasks assigned to each team member (e.g., creating written and graphic content for social media)
- Description of responsibilities (e.g., in line with assigned tasks, the person is responsible for monitoring and reporting the effectiveness of specific activities – such as reach on social media)
- Escalation process (identifying the situations and individuals to whom a team member should turn when carrying out an activity that would benefit from additional input or approval by someone with greater expertise or experience – e.g., handling complex queries on social media or crisis communication)

### 9.2 Organization of communication activity documentation

To ensure effective organization of documentation for implementing communication activities, the use of SharePoint is recommended.

Given the needs of communication and project-related activities, it is recommended to create a folder named EURENI, which will consist of the following subfolders with the following contents:

- 00 Project basics: The folder should contain important basic documents such as bid form, contract and other important administrative documents)
- 01 Communication team: The folder should contain sheet with information about team members, their CVs, photos and any other useful documents such as diplomas and certificates)
- 02 Strategic documents: The folder should contain Communication strategy and sheets that are part of it
- 03 Basic graphics: The folder should contain subfolders with main logos and their variations
- 04 Social media: The folder should be divided into subfolders named after each social media platform. It should also include a table for planning posts and a table for tracking the performance of posts. Within each social media subfolder (Facebook, Instagram, X...), additional subfolders should be created for each post (naming format: year-month-day), where graphics and screenshots of the posts will be stored.
- 05 Website: The folder should be divided into subfolders named using the format year-month-day, each containing the article text, photos, and screenshots. Article readership data should be recorded in a table that is also part of the folder.
- 06 Public Relations: The folder should be divided into subfolders named after each public relations activity. Within each subfolder, additional subfolders should be created for each specific activity, where sent press releases, emails, and related screenshots will be archived. The main folder should also contain a table for planning activities and a table for tracking their effectiveness.
- 07 Project Events: The folder should be divided into subfolders named after the type of event (meetings, conferences, public events, etc.). Each of these subfolders should contain documents related to event planning (calls, checklists, invitations, agendas, attendance sheets), and after the event, reports, photos, and completed documentation. The data on the number of visits should also be recorded in an additional table for tracking overall performance.

For easier navigation and searchability, it is extremely important to name individual files in a detailed and consistent manner.

It is recommended that each file name follows the structure: Activity--Topic--AdditionalDescription (FacebookStory-FunFactKopackiRit-Quiz or PressRelease-ClosingConference-Osijek)

### 9.3 Using project management tools

To ensure timely and comprehensive execution of communication activities, the use of a task management tool is strongly recommended. Such a tool provides a structured overview of all tasks in one place, along with their deadlines and the individuals responsible for completing them. It also allows for easy monitoring of progress across activities using boards that show tasks as completed, in progress, or planned.

The recommended tool for this purpose is ClickUp, which, even in its free version, offers a range of features that greatly support team collaboration, including:

- Efficient task tracking through status labels (*Completed, In Progress, To Do*)
- Clear overview of who is responsible for each task and the corresponding deadline
- Ability to add comments, notes, and external links (e.g., links to Google Drive)
- Monitoring time efficiency and duration of task execution
- Structuring tasks into logical categories or communication activity groups

#### 9.3.1 How to organize tasks in ClickUp

To align with the communication activity plan, the following structure is recommended within the ClickUp platform:

- Workspace (main environment): *EURENI project*
- Space (divided by activity type, based on the communication plan): *Social Media, Website, Public Relations, Project Events, and Other*
- Folder (grouped by specific communication channels or themes): e.g., *Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), LinkedIn* – within the *Social Media* space
- Task (specific activity): e.g., *Prepare post about XY (date)* – located in the *Facebook* folder
- Subtask (a smaller step within the task): e.g., *Design visual for the post*

This structure provides a clear, organized overview of all communication activities and ensures that all team members can easily track responsibilities, deadlines, and progress.

## 9.4 Meeting organization

Meetings of the communication activities implementation team are an important element that can enhance team efficiency and improve workflow. To achieve this, it is essential to ensure that meetings are purposeful and efficient, so that the most relevant topics can be addressed in a timely and effective manner.

### 9.4.1 Scheduling a meeting

To ensure a meeting is held in an optimal way, it is important that all key participants are present. This can be achieved by setting a fixed day and time of the week for meetings, allowing team members to plan ahead and prepare accordingly.

Given the geographic scope of the project and the need to hold online meetings (via Zoom), it is essential that the responsible person sends the invitation link on time, along with a brief agenda.

### 9.4.2 Meeting agenda

Online meetings should be structured into the following three main parts:

#### 1. Follow-up on completed activities

Each team member should briefly report on what they have worked on in the past week. In addition to the type of activity (e.g., social media posts), they should also provide a short reflection on how the activity performed (e.g., *The post reached XYZ users, which is more/less than the previous week*).

If the person was responsible for a more complex or long-term task (e.g., *event organization*), they should provide an update on the progress of that task as well (e.g., *A list of relevant stakeholders in area XY has been prepared and will be contacted next week*).

#### 2. Planned activities for the upcoming period

In this section, team members should announce the activities they will be working on in the short term (e.g., *planned social media posts*) and the long term (e.g., *tasks that serve as preparation for an upcoming event or campaign*).

#### 3. Other business

Participants may share examples of good practices observed on similar projects, or raise topics aimed at improving internal team processes (e.g., *identified process improvements or new collaboration opportunities*).

#### 4. Meeting Minutes

To properly document what was discussed and agreed during meetings, it is useful to prepare brief meeting minutes, which should include:

- Date and time of the meeting
- List of participants
- Summary of key topics and decisions

Meeting minutes, as well as meeting invitations, should be stored in a designated folder within Share point.

#### 10. CRISIS COMMUNICATION

Crisis communication is essential in the case of unforeseen and negative events that may occur at one of the Danube Parks network sites or in their surrounding areas, which could lead to undesirable consequences in the near or distant future.

Crisis situations may include various types of pollution and ecological disasters, accidents and property damage, legal and economic issues, or reputational harm.

This type of communication would also be necessary if problems arise during the implementation of project activities.

Effective crisis communication is considered to be timely, professional, and appropriate communication that informs the wider public about the issue, its potential consequences, and its impact on the broader community.

Timely, expert, and appropriate communication also helps convey an impression of professionalism, transparency, and the importance of the topic to the wider public.

To communicate effectively in a crisis situation, it is recommended to appoint two individuals within the team who will be responsible for this type of communication. They should ensure that all public statements are professional, technically accurate, timely, and appropriately worded and distributed.

## 10.1 Suggested content of a crisis statement

- A brief description of the incident
- An explanation of the damage and the negative impact on the location and surrounding area
- Proposed actions to mitigate the damage
- Guidelines for preventive actions to avoid similar incidents in the future
- A reference to the context of the project and its goals related to protection and crisis prevention

## 10.2 The tone of a crisis communication

- Informative: The reader should understand what happened after reading the statement
- Educational: The reader should become aware of the consequences of the event for the site, themselves, and the broader community
- Professional: The message should be written in a serious and respectful tone, avoiding speculation or (unproven) accusations
- Authentic: The statement should end with a sentence clearly showing that the project is led by a team of professionals who genuinely care about finding solutions and who are actively working to prevent similar events in the future

## 10.3 Response time

Considering the high volume of information the public is exposed to, no more than 24 hours should pass between the occurrence of the crisis and the release of the statement.

## 10.4 Communication Channels

To reach the widest possible audience, crisis communication should include:

- An article published on the official website
- A social media post (with a link to the article)
- A statement sent to relevant local and specialized media in the area where the crisis occurred

## 10.5 Improving the Effectiveness of Crisis Communication

To ensure crisis communication is as effective as possible, it is important to:

- Appoint responsible individuals in advance

- Maintain a prepared list of relevant media contacts for each location to distribute statements in the event of a crisis
- Create a database of previously published crisis statements that can serve as templates or references for future messages

## 11. POST-PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY STRATEGY

Communication regarding a project and its activities should not cease with the formal conclusion of the project itself.

The end of a project presents a valuable opportunity to review implemented activities, conduct an internal evaluation of the project team, and highlight the positive outcomes generated through project implementation.

Effective post-project communication helps to consolidate the project narrative and ensures that key findings and lessons learned are captured and documented for future initiatives.

As part of the post-project activities following the completion of the EURENI project, the following actions are recommended:

### 11.1 Post-project communication and visibility strategy

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As part of the post-project activities following the completion of the EURENI project, the following actions are recommended:

### 11.2 Project highlight on the organization's website

The completion of project activities should be marked by a dedicated article on the organization's website. However, this should not be the final mention of the project.

It is important to maintain project-related information in a visible and accessible place on the website to inform interested parties about the organization's past work. This enhances the organization's professional image and highlights its experience in implementing relevant projects.

It is recommended to create a dedicated "Completed Projects" section where each project has its own subpage. These pages should include:

- Basic project information
- Links to key news articles and project milestones
- Optionally, a call to action (CTA) encouraging visitors to get in touch for more information or to explore potential collaboration on future projects.

To improve navigability, projects should be listed in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent.

### 11.3 Showcasing project memorabilia in the office

The project office can serve as an inspiring space that reflects the achievements of past initiatives.

Displaying photo collages or project-related merchandise can spark interest among visitors, prompting questions and discussions that highlight the scope, experiences, and success of the project.

### 11.4 Use communication metrics strategically

Statistics related to communication activities implemented during the project can be instrumental in attracting sponsors or securing funding for future initiatives.

A visually engaging report should be developed, highlighting the project's most significant achievements and the reach of its communication efforts. This document should leave a strong positive impression and motivate potential partners to support or engage in future collaborations.

## 12. USING FLAGSHIP SPECIES TO RAISE AWARENESS

Environmental challenges across the Danube region should be communicated to a broad audience in order to increase awareness of their existence, scale, and potential consequences.

To effectively engage the general public—particularly audiences with limited prior knowledge or awareness of environmental issues—it is recommended to communicate these challenges through the perspective of endangered animal species, using narrative-driven and relatable messaging to enhance understanding and emotional engagement.

Flagship species can be highly effective tools for communicating the importance of wetland conservation for several key reasons:

- *Emotional engagement and visibility:* Flagship species are typically charismatic, recognizable, or culturally significant species that easily capture public attention. By focusing communication on such species, wetland conservation messages become more relatable and emotionally engaging, helping audiences form a personal connection with otherwise abstract or complex ecosystems.
- *Simplifying complex ecological messages:* Wetland ecosystems are often perceived as complex and difficult to understand. Flagship species serve as a tangible entry point through which broader ecological concepts—such as ecosystem services, biodiversity, and ecological balance—can be communicated in a clear and accessible way.
- *Raising awareness of ecosystem interdependence:* Protecting flagship species requires the protection of their habitats. Communicating the needs of these species naturally highlights the importance of wetland ecosystems as a whole, helping audiences understand that conserving wetlands is essential for maintaining the conditions necessary for species survival.
- *Strengthening public and political support:* Flagship species are often effective in mobilizing public interest and political will. They can serve as powerful symbols in advocacy campaigns, helping to justify policy measures, funding allocations, and conservation initiatives related to wetland protection.
- *Enhancing communication across diverse audiences:* Flagship species transcend technical language and can be used effectively in communication with policymakers, local communities, educators, and the general public. They provide a common narrative that resonates across different stakeholder groups.
- *Linking local actions to global conservation goals:* Many flagship species are associated with international conservation frameworks or protected status. Communicating their protection helps demonstrate how local wetland conservation efforts contribute to broader national, regional, and global biodiversity and climate objectives.

## 12.1 Implementation of communication through flagship species

Storytelling from the first-person perspective of an animal species, combined with the use of human names and relatable characteristics, represents a memorable and engaging approach that can initially capture public interest in endangered species. Through this approach, audiences are encouraged not only to learn about these species, but also to develop awareness of the need for their conservation.

As awareness of conservation issues becomes more established, individuals are more likely to adopt behaviors that contribute to the protection of wildlife and their habitats, as well as to develop a willingness to speak about these issues and help raise awareness among others.

## 12.2 Communication concept and channels

For this type of communication, the use of separate social media channels is recommended, specifically Facebook and Instagram, under a distinctive and engaging name such as *The Danube Five*.

On these platforms, communication with followers will be conducted by the animals themselves—representatives of endangered species—who will share their life stories through posts addressing topics such as:

- Biological characteristics of the species
- The role of the species within the ecosystem
- Description of ideal habitat versus current habitat conditions
- Causes of endangerment
- Population trends over time
- Impacts of climate change on the species
- Impacts of human activities on the species
- Benefits of the species for ecosystems
- Negative consequences of species extinction

## 12.3 Flagship species characters

- Sophia, the Wise Sturgeon

Sophia's ancestors have inhabited the Danube for centuries, but she worries that her long-lived story may soon come to an end. She knows the tales of the Danube as it once was and gladly shares them, believing they will inspire people to think about environmental protection.

Aware of the threats, Sophia draws on the wisdom passed down through generations in her family, offering valuable advice for safeguarding the ecosystem.

- Karol, the Mystical Crested Newt

Karol is reserved, yet extremely diligent and meticulous. He dislikes being in the public eye and is almost impossible to spot. However, he has realized that very challenging times have come for his species, and he has therefore decided to speak out publicly so that as many people as possible understand that some human behaviors threaten his survival. Considered a guardian of the river's health, he believes it is essential for people to recognize that his efforts significantly contribute to maintaining it.

- Bianca, the White-Tailed Eagle

Bianca is known for her elegant white tail and piercing call. She is a great gourmand, enjoying a variety of foods, and her balanced diet helps maintain ecosystem equilibrium. When Bianca is well-fed and content, it signals that her environment is well-preserved. She uses her sharp voice to highlight problems and the consequences that pollution and environmental damage have on her and the entire ecosystem.

- Robert, the Hardworking Beaver

In wetland habitats, Robert is considered a leading expert in forestry and construction. He has developed strong work habits and is so diligent that he often works night shifts. Thanks to his building skills, numerous animal species have their small homes, and his work affects river flow and soil quality. With his brilliant mind and warm fur, he often attracts human attention, and as a top specialist, he speaks out about habitat protection.

- Mary, the Little Ringed Plover

Mary is a traveler who loves both the Danube River and regions in North Africa. She is a caring mother, carefully laying her eggs and attentively monitoring her surroundings to ensure a safe and pleasant life for herself and her family. Exceptionally beautiful and meticulous, she chooses only high-quality habitats for her home. She dislikes human disturbances in her environment and wants to teach people what they should avoid if they want her to be happy.

#### 12.4 Event proposal for communicating the flagship species

As a core activity for introducing children to the flagship species in an engaging and interactive way, a series of educational and creative workshops titled Paint and Learn is proposed.

The concept combines three interconnected workshop formats:

- *Biology and nature protection workshop:* During this workshop, a professional educator introduces children to the key characteristics of the flagship species, including its classification, physical features, lifestyle, habitat, and role within the food chain. Special emphasis is placed on explaining why the species is endangered and what conservation measures are necessary, using age-appropriate language and examples.
- *Art workshops:* In the art workshops, children create representations of the flagship species using a variety of artistic techniques, with each animal being presented through a single technique. Suggested techniques include collage, watercolors, tempera paints, modeling clay, and drawing. Art workshops also provide an opportunity to integrate broader environmental themes. For example, during drawing activities, children are encouraged to use both sides of the paper to promote responsible resource use, while recycled materials can be incorporated into collage workshops. Additionally, some children may be asked to depict the animal in a clean, healthy habitat, while others illustrate it in a polluted or degraded environment. This contrast helps evoke emotional engagement, empathy, and a deeper understanding of human impact on nature. Workshops using watercolors and tempera paints can further highlight the importance of clean water and aquatic ecosystems.
- *Creative writing workshops:* The creative writing workshops introduce children to various literary and media formats while developing their writing and communication skills. Suggested formats include poems, interviews, fables, media articles, and storytelling letters. These workshops foster creativity, language development, media literacy, and further strengthen environmental awareness.

The artworks and written pieces created during the workshops can be showcased in a dedicated exhibition, increasing project visibility, celebrating children's creativity, and reinforcing key conservation messages related to the flagship species.





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<b>Project events</b>									
Organization of various project event		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organization of closing conference									✓
<b>Crisis communication</b>	When necessary								