
WFD & FD Public Participation Plan

regarding public consultation and communication in the course of developing the 4th Danube River Basin Management Plan (Update 2027) and the 3rd Flood Risk Management Plan (Update 2027) for the Danube River Basin, both for the implementation cycle 2027 to 2033



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1 Introduction

As part of the efforts to coordinate the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC, WFD) and EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC, FD) in the entire Danube River Basin, the ICPDR, in its role as coordinating platform, has put a special emphasis on the promotion of public participation and the implementation of certain communication activities. These activities are carried out (1) on the basis of the legal requirements defined in the two mentioned directives and (2) in accordance with the ICPDR communication approach (see Annex).

This document will serve as a blueprint for Public Participation activities for the development of the 4th Danube River Basin Management Plan and 3rd Flood Risk Management Plan until 2027 and outlines coordination potential between EU Water Framework Directive and EU Flood Directive. It is drafted by the PP Expert Group (PP EG) under consultation of the RBM Expert Group (RBM EG) and FP Expert Group (FP EG).

It focuses on the basin-wide level and is complementary to the public participation processes on the national and sub-basin levels, which follow closely Article 14 of the WFD and its timetable, as well as Art. 10 of the FD with its more open provisions. The document is divided into (1) an internal discussion paper and (2) a general section that will be made available to the public for comments for a period of six months.

General Section for public comments starts here.

2 Timeline and Framework

This document serves as a blueprint for Public Participation activities for the development of the 4th Danube River Basin Management Plan (4th DRBMP) until 2027 and the 3rd Danube Flood Risk Management Plan (3rd DFRMP). It deals with public participation on the basin-wide, international level. The legal requirements described in EU Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC) and EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC) result in the following **general timeframe for activities**:

WFD: Publication of the timetable, work programmes and statement on consultation measures (December 2024); collection of comments, revision and endorsement (June 2025); publication of interim overview on SWMIs (December 2025); collection of comments, revision and endorsement (June 2026); publication of a draft management plan (end of 2026); collection of comments (June 2027); revision and endorsement (end of 2027).

FD: Publication of Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment; Publication of Flood Risk Maps and Flood Hazard Maps (March 2026); development of the 3rd DFRMP, with active encouragement of interested parties to get involved (December 2026); revision and adoption of 3rd DFRMP, with active encouragement of interested parties to get involved (December 2027). As far as the PP EG is concerned, efforts should be aligned with the provisions of the FD as appropriate.

This general timeline leads to the following deadlines for deliverables; abbreviations are explained below the table:

| Deliverable | Timeframe | Actor(s) |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Draft timetable and work program for the production of the 4 th DRBMP; draft statement on consultation measures to complement this timetable and work plan (this document) and draft timetable and work program for the production of the 3 rd DFRMP; draft statement on consultation measures, timetable and work plan revised as appropriate (this document) | May - Nov 2024 | RBM EG, FP EG, PP EG |
| Publication of drafts (timetable, work program and statement on consultation measures); and collection of comments in writing | June 2024 – December 2024 | PP EG, RBM EG, |

| | | |
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| for a period of six months | | FP EG |
| Revision of timetable, work program and consultation measures | December 2024 | RBM EG, FP EG, PP EG |
| Endorsement of revised timetable, work program and statement on consultation measures | January 2025 | In written form, following OM-27 |
| | | |
| Review and, if necessary, update of Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment | March 2025 | FP EG |
| | | |
| Interim overview of SWMIs | May – Nov 2025 | RBM EG |
| Publication of interim overview of SWMIs and collection of comments in writing for a period of six months | Dec 2025 – June 2026 | PP EG, RBM EG |
| Revision of overview of SWMIs | Autumn 2026 | RBM EG |
| Endorsement of the interim overview of revised SWMIs | Dec 2026 | OM |
| | | |
| Review and, if necessary, update of Flood Risk Maps and Flood Hazard Maps | March 2026 | FP EG |
| | | |
| Development of the draft 4 th DRBMP and 3 rd DFRMP | Until Dec 2026 | RBM EG, FP EG |
| Publication of draft copy of the 4 th DRBMP and 3 rd DFRMP; collection of comments on the 4 th DRBMP and on the 3 rd DFRMP in writing for a period of six months | Dec 2026 -Jun 2027 | RBM EG, PP EG, FP EG |
| Revision of draft 4 th DRBMP and 3 rd DFRMP | Jun-Dec 2027 | RBM EG, FP EG |
| Endorsement and publication of the revised 4 th DRBMP and 3 rd DFRMP; political (ceremonial) endorsement likely to follow in 2028 | Dec 2027 | Ordinary Meeting / Ministerial Meeting |

Abbreviations relate to ICPDR structures or events and products: RBM (River Basin Management); PP (Public Participation); FP (Flood Protection); EG (Expert Group); OM (Ordinary Meeting); SWMIs (Significant Water Management Issues); DRBMP (Danube River Basin Management Plan)

3 Consultation Measures

| Deliverable/Measure | Deadline | Actor(s) |
|--|----------|----------------|
| Update the ICPDR Stakeholder list of 2020 | Dec 2024 | PP EG |
| All accredited observers are actively participating in the ongoing work of the ICPDR and are providing their input in the development of the 4 th DRBMP, but also the 3 rd DFRMP. | Ongoing | Observers, EGs |
| Specific discussions are held with selected key | Ongoing | EGs, |

| | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| <p>stakeholders about the activities of the ICPDR regarding the implementation of WFD and EFD; such stakeholders can go beyond the observers and include the navigation sector, hydropower sector, agriculture, etc. The results of these discussions will be publicly available.</p> | | Stakeholders |
| <p>Raise awareness and inform wider stakeholder groups about the opportunity for public participation, the activities and the timetable regarding the 4th DRBMP and 3rd DFRMP by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • including a text on the ICPDR website with links to the national activities and relevant national websites • include relevant statements in fact sheets or other technical reports, especially when dealing with issues such as significant water management issues • publishing articles periodically in Danube Watch • targeted mailings to stakeholder groups • making use of social media outlets • publishing information in other media | Ongoing, but matched in particular with the publishing deadlines specified above | PP EG, ICPDR Secretariat |
| <p>Stakeholder Workshop: After the identification of the SWMIs, a stakeholder workshop can be held to support the development of the plan. Through such a workshop, a larger and very focused group of people can get involved in the formalization of the 4th DRBMP and the 3rd DFRMP.</p> | 2026 | EGs, ICPDR Secretariat |
| <p>A response paper on the inputs is developed and published, so that the stakeholders can see how their input to the 4th DRBMP and the 3rd DFRMP has been considered by the ICPDR.</p> | Fall 2026 | EGs, ICPDR Secretariat |

4 Annex

4.1 Legal Background

The relevant passages in Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC, WFD) read as follows (note: the two quoted preambles are not legally binding):

Preamble 14

(14) The success of this Directive relies on close cooperation and coherent action at Community, Member State and local level as well as on information, consultation and involvement of the public, including users.

Preamble 46

(46) To ensure the participation of the general public including users of water in the establishment and updating of river basin management plans, it is necessary to provide proper information of planned measures and to report on progress with their implementation with a view to the involvement of the general public before final decisions on the necessary measures are adopted.

Article 14 - Public information and consultation

1. Member States shall encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of this Directive, in particular in the production, review and updating of the river basin management plans. Member States shall ensure that, for each river basin district, they publish and make available for comments to the public, including users:

(a) a timetable and work programme for the production of the plan, including a statement of the consultation measures to be taken, at least three years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers;

(b) an interim overview of the significant water management issues identified in the river basin, at least two years before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers;

(c) draft copies of the river basin management plan, at least one year before the beginning of the period to which the plan refers.

On request, access shall be given to background documents and information used for the development of the draft river basin management plan.

2. Member States shall allow at least six months to comment in writing on those documents in order to allow active involvement and consultation.

3. Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall apply equally to updated river basin management plans.

Annex VII - RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLANS

A. River basin management plans shall cover the following elements:

...

9. a summary of the public information and consultation measures taken, their results and the changes to the plan made as a consequence;

...

11. the contact points and procedures for obtaining the background documentation and information referred to in Article 14(1), and in particular details of the control measures adopted in accordance with Article 11(3)(g) and 11(3)(i) and of the actual monitoring data gathered in accordance with Article 8 and Annex V.

The relevant passages in the EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC, FD) read as follows (note that a coordination is required “as appropriate”):

CHAPTER V - COORDINATION WITH DIRECTIVE 2000/60/EC, PUBLIC INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

Article 9

Member States shall take appropriate steps to coordinate the application of this Directive and that of Directive 2000/60/EC focusing on opportunities for improving efficiency, information exchange and for achieving common synergies and benefits having regard to the environmental objectives laid down in Article 4 of Directive 2000/60/EC. In particular:

1. the development of the first flood hazard maps and flood risk maps and their subsequent reviews as referred to in Articles 6 and 14 of this Directive shall be carried out in such a way that the information they contain is consistent with relevant information presented according to Directive 2000/60/EC. They shall be coordinated with, and may be integrated into, the reviews provided for in Article 5(2) of Directive 2000/60/EC;

2. the development of the first flood risk management plans and their subsequent reviews as referred to in Articles 7 and 14 of this Directive shall be carried out in coordination with, and may be integrated into, the reviews of the river basin management plans provided for in Article 13(7) of Directive 2000/60/EC;

3. the active involvement of all interested parties under Article 10 of this Directive shall be coordinated, as appropriate, with the active involvement of interested parties under Article 14 of Directive 2000/60/EC.

Article 10

1. In accordance with applicable Community legislation, Member States shall make available to the public the preliminary flood risk assessment, the flood hazard maps, the flood risk maps and the flood risk management plans.

2. Member States shall encourage active involvement of interested parties in the production, review and updating of the flood risk management plans referred to in Chapter IV.