



*Technical Assistance for Revising and Complementing the Feasibility Study  
regarding the Improvement of Navigation Conditions on the Romanian-Bulgarian Common Sector  
of the Danube and Complementary Studies - FAST DANUBE*

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# Project Communication Strategy Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum

Prepared for  
Galati Lower Danube River Administration, A. A.

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## Project details

<b>FAST-Danube project title</b>	Technical Assistance for Revising and Complementing the Feasibility Study Regarding the Improvement of Navigation Conditions on the Romanian-Bulgarian Common Sector of the Danube and Complementary Studies
<b>Funding</b>	Approved for funding under Transport CEF Call 2014 for multi-annual projects, Financing objective 4 - specific call for the Cohesion Funds, Priority 1 - pre-identified projects on the core network corridors - inland waterways and ports.
<b>Project number</b>	2014-EU-TMC-0297-S
<b>Grant Agreement No</b>	INEA/CEF/TRAN/M2014/1050286
<b>Project duration</b>	1 Nov'14 – 31 Dec'18
<b>Project coordination</b>	River Administration of the Lower Danube Galati (AFDJ Galati)
<b>Project partners</b>	Two waterway administrations from Romania and Bulgaria - Romania-River Administration of the Lower Danube Galati (AFDJ Galati) - Bulgaria-Executive Agency 'Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River' (IAPPD Ruse).
<b>Beneficiary</b>	River Administration of the Lower Danube Galati (AFDJ Galati)
<b>Consultant</b>	SC Halcrow Romania SRL



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# Acronyms / Abbreviations

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AFDJ Galati	-	River Administration of the Lower Danube Galati
EC-JASPERS	-	European Commission - Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions
AA / EIA	-	Appropriate assessment / Environmental impact assessment
EIB - JASPERS	-	European Investment Bank - Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions
EU	-	European Commission
FAST-Danube	-	Project title acronym
FAST-Danube Consortium	-	Project partners: two waterway administration from Romania / Bulgaria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Romania – River Administration of the Lower Danube Galati (AFDJ Galati)</li><li>▪ Bulgaria – Executive Agency "Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River" (IAPPD Ruse)</li></ul>
ICPDR	-	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation

# 1. Introduction

The Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum (hereinafter referred to as the forum) is a key part of the Communication Strategy for the FAST-Danube navigation improvements project – this strategy sets out how we will progress towards success of the project and its outcomes through targeted engagement with the Romanian and Bulgarian client teams and authorities, stakeholders including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), and the public.

The forum will involve selected stakeholders in review and discussion of the project findings and direction, including technical, engineering and EIA studies – the focus will be on developing consensus and acceptance for the project proposals for navigation improvements as they evolve and ensuring well-coordinated and comparable assessments in Bulgaria and Romania.

The forum will oversee and guide the more focussed efforts of Working Groups that we are setting-up under this project. The Working Groups will directly inform our overarching project appraisal that as its central objective will be to develop optimal technical solutions for navigation improvements at 12 critical sites taking account of the varied project requirements.

The forum offers effective and inclusive engagement with stakeholders as part of the river engineering and mitigation options appraisal and design development process. Our approach is in line with best practice and gives the project the best chance of progressing forward to the next stage without the objections and difficulties that might otherwise be experienced in engineering projects of this type and scale.

In scheduling the project communications, including the forum, reference was made to the recent Serbian Plovput experience promoting similar river training and dredging works on the River Danube, also co-financed by the European Union. The project was successfully guided by a forum of stakeholders: a multi-disciplinary body to improve the quality of the project, exchange information of importance to the project and involve organisations with an interest in the project.

The same purpose guides the forum being established for the project in Romania and Bulgaria.



## Project context

The historical Convention and Bi-lateral Agreements signed by and between the states of Romania and Bulgaria which established the responsibility for maintaining adequate navigation conditions from km 863 to km 610 and from km 610 to km 375, between AFDJ Galati of Romania and IAPPD Ruse of Bulgaria respectively.

As a result of feasibility study completed in 2011, the Authorities of both countries have agreed to significantly improve navigability in their joint section of the Danube River, their intention being to minimise the time periods when commercial navigation is not possible; both during winter and ice conditions, and during late summer when river flows tend to be very low. As a result of this study, the Danube Commission recommended a navigation channel width of 180 m with minimum depth of 2.5m for the Romanian-Bulgarian sector, with reduction to 150m width where the minimum depths cannot be ensured.

The activities which both authorities currently undertake to meet these recommendations, and to maintain viable navigation conditions include surveys and information dissemination, the provision of navigation signage, dragging (tugs), ice-breaking, and dredging of the fairway and shoals.

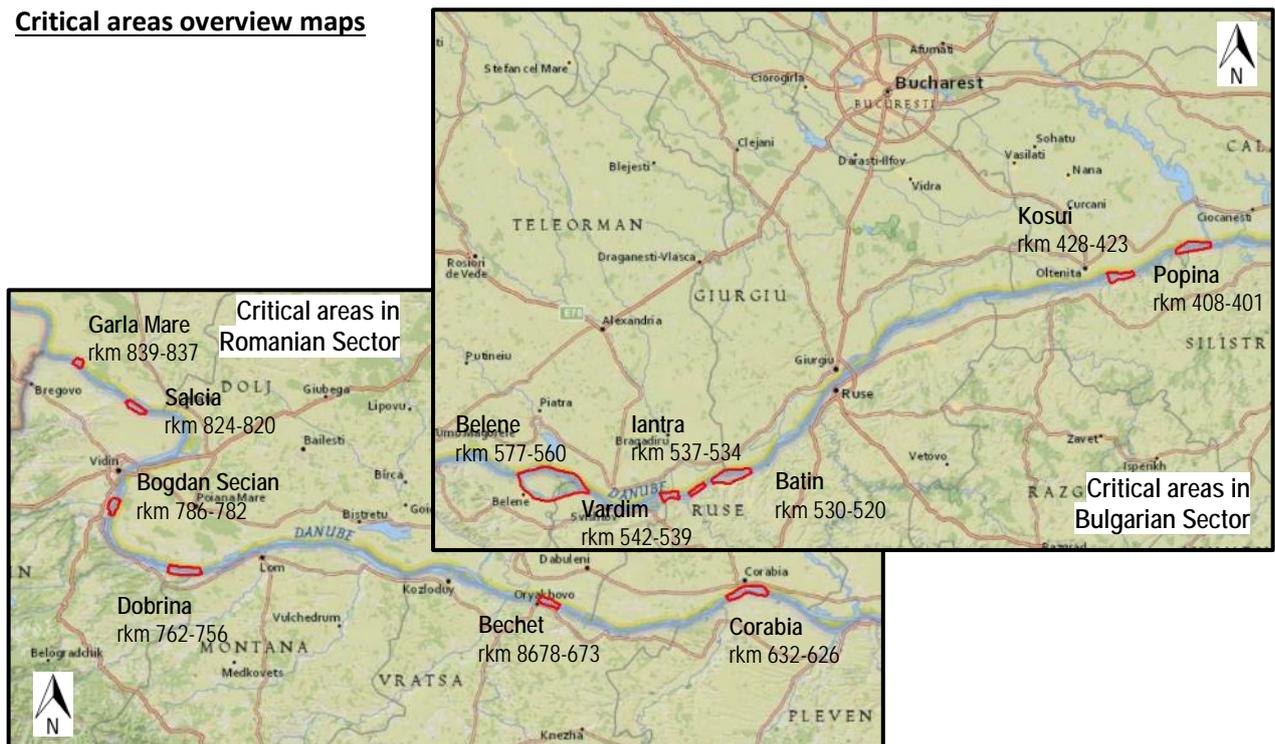
However, the effectiveness of maintenance dredging works to maintain minimum navigation conditions is very short-term, due to the dynamics of the sediment and hydrological regimes and the nature of bed morphology of the Danube River. It has thus become apparent that some of the technical solutions proposed in the 2011 study on which the Danube Commission recommendations were based, have become inapplicable due to significant morphological change in critical reaches of the river.

Both Authorities are therefore looking to update the recommendations of the 2011 feasibility study, and to identify a longer-term solution and package of management measures which are technically, environmentally and financially acceptable and sustainable.

Project objectives/deliverables of the technical assistance services:

- Undertake a comprehensive Feasibility Study presenting and justifying at least two long-term, sustainable technical options to improve navigation usage and safety at each identified critical location.
- Support this with full documentation of all physical surveys, investigations and data; and of calibrated and verified simulation and analytical models including provision of licensed software and training.
- Provide all necessary documentation to support consultation of scenarios and options, and all approvals and permitting documentation to support promotion and allow adoption of the preferred option(s).
- Furnish all necessary Tender Document and plans to implement the project and dispense its responsibilities to fulfil the recommendations of the Budapest Danube Commission to increase the traffic of transported goods through the Danube corridor.

## Critical areas overview maps



## 2. Stakeholders Natura 2000 forum

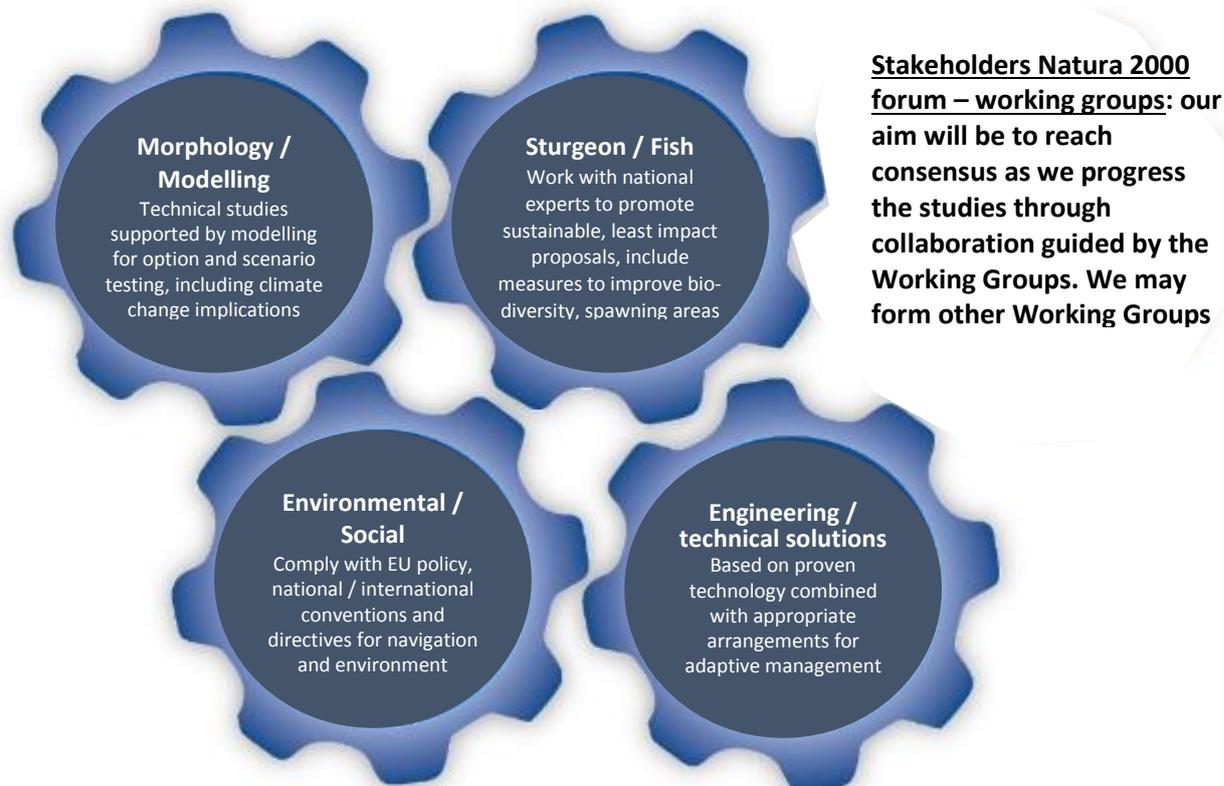
This Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum will oversee and guide the more focussed efforts of Working Groups that we are setting-up under this project. We propose four Working Groups as follows:

- morphology / modelling
- sturgeon / fish
- environmental / social
- engineering / technical solutions

In terms of logistics, the working group sessions will be held either face-to-face with the project team experts or via video-conferencing using facilities in Halcrow's Bucharest office. The meetings with the Natura 2000 forum will be arranged in Bucharest.

Proposed guiding principles for success of the Natura 2000 forum, with advisory role:

- to engender an inter-disciplinary approach: environment/hydraulics/ industry/transport
- to build trust and understanding across the forum partners, and learn from each other
- to always act with mutual respect and acknowledge the viewpoint of others
- to be transparent by making public the work of the forum and welcome observers
- to put forward advisory recommendations for the technical and environmental studies
- to develop a common understanding of the project results and options appraisal
- to plan together to reach common agreement on the preferred options



### 3. Stakeholders Natura 2000 forum rules

The Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum is being set-up, organised and run by the project consultant, Halcrow Romania, with the full consent of the Galati Lower Danube River Administration (AFDJ) and Executive Agency for Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River Ruse (IAPPD) – the Beneficiaries of the project.

#### **Article 1: Purpose / goals**

The forum will support the long-term orientation of the Danube navigation authorities towards implementing the modern concept of integrated inland waterways management in line with best practice. The goal is to achieve harmonisation of interests of different stakeholders, respecting national and international legal frameworks, including, among others, the Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin (ICPDR, Danube Commission).

The organisations expected to be members of the forum will make it multi-disciplinary, tasked with improving the quality of the project outputs and recommendations, as well as exchanging of information of importance to the project. The forum will also ensure wider input by involving civil society organizations with interests in the project.

#### **Article 2: Basic principles**

- Forum conduct – members to act with mutual respect and acknowledge other viewpoints.
- Forum recommendations – advisory only, which the project team will give due consideration.

#### **Article 3: Tasks**

- Ensure transparency during project development.
- Exchange data and other information about the project.
- Provide independent and professional inputs and guidance in relation to the protection of the species/habitats of the Natura 2000 sites along the Romanian-Bulgarian Danube sector.
- Make recommendations on the integrated approach to ensure environmental protection.

#### **Article 4: Membership**

- Forum membership – voluntary, free of charge.
- Maximum number of regular forum members – limited to 40 (considered an upper limit to ensure manageable for effective engagement).

The stakeholders, including their representatives and experts, to be invited to join the forum and offered to send representation to the working group sessions are indicated below. Key members include the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS).

Organisations which accept forum membership may delegate one person to be the regular forum member and one person as the deputy forum member – to substitute at times when the regular form member is unable to attend any forum meeting.

#### **Article 5: Observers**

- Maximum number of observers per meeting – 10.
- Registration (mandatory) – observers must register to attend any meeting in advance.

Observers can attend forum meetings as representatives of civil society organisations if they are not already forum members or work for relevant governmental organisations interested in the project.

Working Groups	Stakeholder organisations*	Project team – Halcrow experts
Modelling / Morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AFDJ/IAPPD</li><li>• WWF</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hydraulics / hydrodynamics</li><li>• Hydrotechnical constructions</li></ul>

Working Groups	Stakeholder organisations*	Project team – Halcrow experts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAD / ICPDR</li> <li>• Danube Delta Institute</li> <li>• JASPERS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geomorphology / sediment transport</li> <li>• Numerical modelling</li> </ul>
Environmental / Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFDJ/IAPPD</li> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• IAD / ICPDR</li> <li>• Danube Delta Institute</li> <li>• Asociata Echilibru (custodian)</li> <li>• InterAgro (custodian)</li> <li>• Bird Society Romania (custodian)</li> <li>• ROMSILVA Constanta (custodian)</li> <li>• Asociația BIO România (custodian)</li> <li>• Bulgarian Nat 2000 sites custodians</li> <li>• JASPERS</li> <li>• Ministry Of Environment – Romania</li> <li>• Ministry of Water and Forests – Romania</li> <li>• National Authority Apele Romane</li> <li>• National Environment Agency – Romania</li> <li>• Ministry of Environment and Water - Bulgaria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate assessment</li> <li>• Environmental impact assessment</li> <li>• Environmental</li> <li>• Natura 2000</li> </ul>
Sturgeon / Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFDJ/IAPPD</li> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• IAD / ICPDR</li> <li>• Danube Delta Institute</li> <li>• JASPERS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ichthyology</li> <li>• Sturgeon</li> </ul>
Technical solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFDJ/IAPPD</li> <li>• WWF</li> <li>• IAD / ICPDR</li> <li>• Danube Delta Institute</li> <li>• JASPERS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydraulics / hydrodynamics</li> <li>• Hydrotechnical constructions</li> <li>• River engineering / design</li> </ul>

*Note: additional stakeholders may join in agreement with the Beneficiaries*

### **Article 6: Meetings / Working Group sessions**

The following Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum meetings and working group sessions are scheduled. In advance of each session the project team will issue working papers that summarise the findings of the ongoing studies and propose topics for specific discussion – working papers to be issued two weeks in advance.

Project stage	Working Groups	Sessions
Inception	Not applicable	Prepared the communications strategy and remit for Natura 2000 forum (during the first 100 days).
Measurements		
Modelling / morphology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelling / Morphology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model development / calibration</li> <li>• fluvial morphology assessment</li> <li>• options identification / appraisal</li> </ul>
Complementary assessment studies, incl. environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental / Social</li> <li>• Sturgeon / Fish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• baseline studies incl. literature research</li> <li>• options appraisal / impacts</li> <li>• design parameters for technical solutions</li> </ul>
Alternative solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engineering / Technical Solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of original feasibility study proposals</li> <li>• concept designs / typical details</li> <li>• preliminary designs</li> </ul>

**Article 4: Meeting organisation**

- Forum meetings will be organized and chaired by the consultant, Halcrow Romania.
- Every forum meeting to be fully documented – agenda, list of participants, minutes.
- Forum chairperson:
  - to be selected from the consultant’s project team
  - to ensure equal treatment of all forum members during meetings
  - to arrange issue of the agenda at least 2 weeks in advance of each meeting
  - to arrange issue of the draft minutes within 1 week following each meeting
  - to collate written amendments received from attendees within 1 week of draft issue
  - to finalise minutes within 2 weeks of issue of draft minutes
- List of participants – to be signed by all participants at the beginning of each meeting.
- Forum meetings to be organised periodically to suit project needs – minimum of three.

**Article 7: Languages**

- Official languages of forum – English and Romanian.
- Documentation of every forum meeting – English and Romanian.

**Article 8: Transparency**

Documentation of every forum meeting (English and Romanian versions) to be made available to the public by uploading to the Internet project portal of AFDJ at [www.fastdanube.eu/](http://www.fastdanube.eu/).

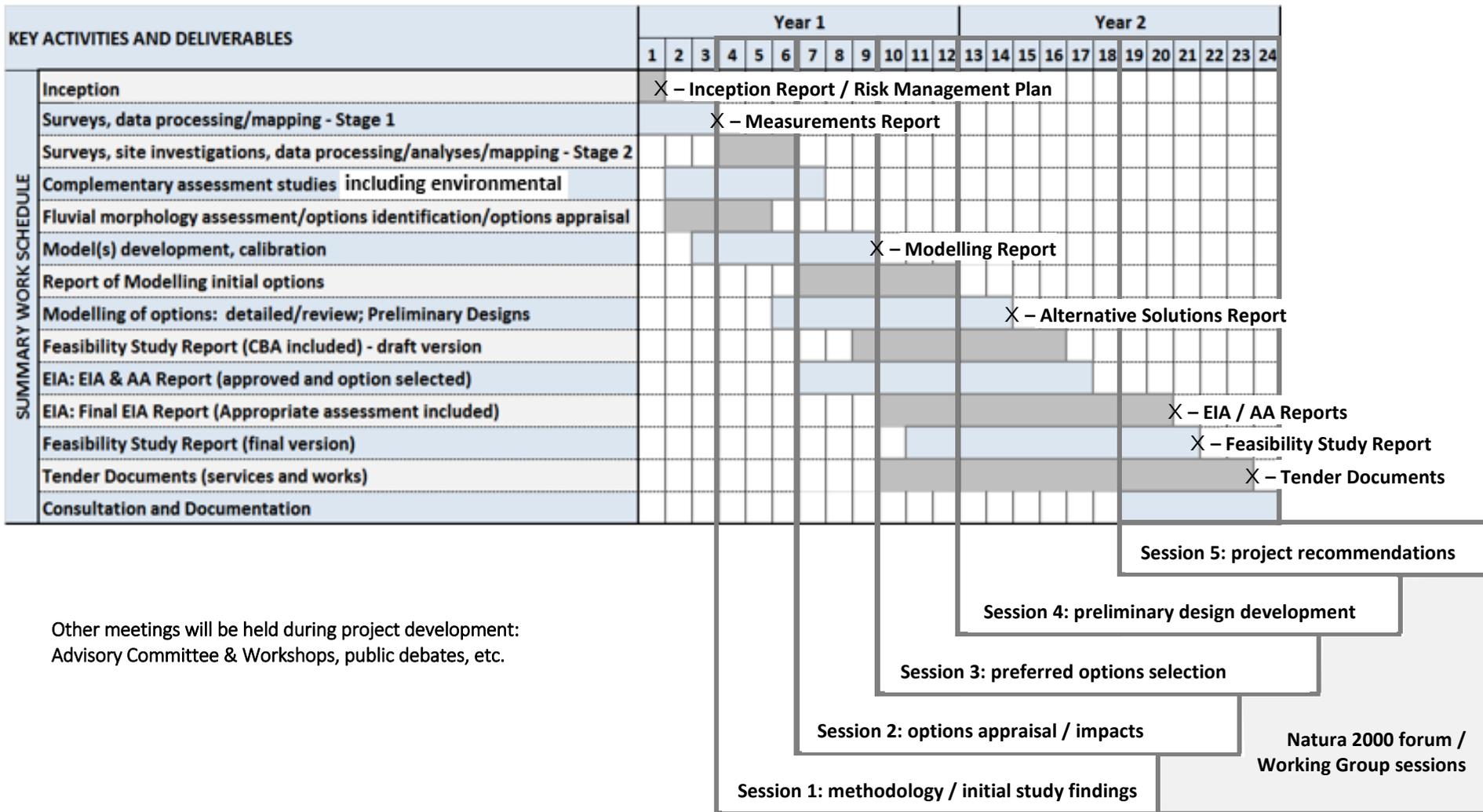
**Article 9: Termination**

- Forum termination – stops on the date of project finalisation.
- Legacy arrangements – to be considered for the period following input by the consultant.

## 4 Project execution summary details

The Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum will input to critical stages of the project execution, as shown below in the breakdown of key activities and deliverables (next page) and summarized as follows:

- **Month 1 (March 2017):** Inception phase complete.
- **Months 1 to 4 (March to June 2017):** Measurements and initiating studies phase complete, including the 1<sup>st</sup> survey campaign (hydrographic, topographic, hydrodynamic) and starting embankment condition assessments, options identification and review of original Feasibility Study proposals, complementary assessment studies and hydrodynamic models development.
- **Months 5 to 8 (July to October 2017):** We will undertake: (i) 2<sup>nd</sup> survey campaign; (ii) fluvial morphology assessment to understand the sediment regime (iii) complementary studies, options and scenarios testing; (iv) initial hydro-dynamic and sediment transport modelling in Months 4 to 8, we will (v) detailed modelling of options to continue to Month 13; and (vi) confirmation of the types and scale of options, EIA and AA assessments reporting and complying with formal procedures for environmental assessments if there is a technical solution agreed.
- **Months 9 to 15 (November to May 2018):** We expect to complete the appraisal and ranking of options for all critical locations, and to identify the preferred options or scenarios for each. Appraisal will include technical effectiveness, environmental impacts and implications for Appropriate Assessment, mitigation and compensation measures; costs, benefits and economic attractiveness.
- **Months 16 to 20 (June to October 2018):** We will (i) continue and finalise the EIA and consultations for the preferred options at all critical locations (ii) progress and finalise the Appropriate Assessment of the preferred options including consultations and the preparation of Urban Certification for approval (iii) undertake full cost benefit assessment (iv) initiate the preparation of Preliminary Designs for all locations; and (v) proceed with preparation of the full Feasibility Study Report.
- **Months 21 to 24, final 4 months of the commission (November 2018 to February 2019):** We will then (i) proceed to finalise Preliminary Designs and Feasibility Study report (ii) prepare full sets of Tender Documents, drawings and specifications for all civil construction, equipment supply and installation, and services contracts (iii) finalise all necessary permitting documentation; and (iv) continue to assist both Client organisations with any further consultations with public bodies and the EC.



Summary Project Execution Schedule – Key Activities / Deliverables / Working Group Sessions

## 5 Next steps

The Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum is a key part of the Communication Strategy for the FAST-Danube navigation improvements project that sets out a framework towards success of the project and its outcomes through targeted engagement with the Romanian and Bulgarian client teams and authorities, stakeholders including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), and the public.

As a next step, stakeholders are being invited to join the Stakeholders Natura 2000 Forum – copies of this document are also being provided. The forum's inaugural meeting is scheduled in early August 2017. At this event the project team and experts will first present the project methodology and initial findings, and then open discussion with the forum members. Further forum meetings are planned at critical stage in the project.