

Bottleneck: Germany

Project: Straubing-Vilshofen

Danube river-km: 2330-2250 (80 rkm total)

Final Beneficiary: Rhine-Main-Danube Aktiengesellschaft, owned by the state of Bavaria and the federal republic of Germany

WWF Position

- WWF will not accept a project alternative with dams.
- The precautionary principle must be applied and no new projects for inland navigation on the Danube River be initiated until a basin-wide strategic environmental assessment be carried out. This ensures that no further or new negative ecological impacts occur.



Since then, the project has not begun, and continues to be a topic in regional, and sometimes national, press. Read more in the next section.

Project details

Many studies have been performed because of the strong opposition to regulation of this section for navigation. The latest study, estimated to cost 30 million EUR with 50% EU co-funding, will start in 2010. A monitoring group of various experts from the transport and environmental side, will be involved in this study.

Until this study is complete and taken into consideration, the project is on hold. This is not expected to begin before 2012.

Four project alternatives have been considered to date including various hydraulic measures, such as river regulation, dredging, weirs and dams. Only one alternative would allow for reasonable mitigation and compensation.

Ecology

There are several Natura 2000 sites along this stretch, although the list is not yet complete. Presently, there is one Fauna, Flora and Habitat site (FFH) and two Special Protection Areas (SPA) along the stretch. There

are also 10 habitats that belong to the priority list. In addition, there is a large federally protected area at the mouth of the Isar River.

Impact & conflict

It is expected that river works for improving navigation, especially ensuring larger depth, will have serious impacts on terrestrial, aquatic habitats, fauna and flood control. Some project alternatives can lead to a reduction of one-quarter of the minimum floodplain water level, i.e. 1 m. This would have considerable impact on the alluvial forest and other habitats.

Another concern is the free-flow of the river. For example, riparian communities are worried about impacts on flood control. Dam alternatives would likely destruct the alluvial forest and its dynamics.

Contact

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Project location

This is the last free-flowing section of the Danube River in Germany (between the towns of Straubing and Vilshofen in Bavaria).

Background

The first regional planning procedure began in the early 1990s. It was stopped due to strong opposition because during this time the project only considered engineering works.

The first stakeholder meeting was then held in 1996. It was requested that other project alternatives be investigated and ecological aspects be considered.

The last public consultation process (held in April/May 2005) received 110 formal reactions and 17,000 written statements from concerned citizens. Both regional planning and public consultation procedures were completed in 2005.