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S T U



Micaela Scacchi  
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## “TRANSGREEN APPROACH” IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### Abstract:

Article provides a conceptual and systematic approach to stakeholder participation and engagement within green and grey infrastructure development processes. The concept is a output from Interreg Danube Transnational Programme project – TRANSGREEN focused on better connected Carpathian Region with transport infrastructure that takes nature conservation into account and aims to contribute to safer and environmentally-friendly road and to project green infrastructure and rail networks in the Central-East Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine).

### Key words:

*Transgreen, stakeholder, participation, engagement, infrastructure development, harmonisation.*

### Introduction

The European Project TRANSGREEN (DTP1-187-3.1-TRANSGREEN) is one of the approved and co-funded projects inside the “Interreg Danube Transnational Programme (DTP)” through Priority 3 - Improving connectivity and energy accountability of the Danube region and it will be implemented between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2019.

The key concept, slogan of this project is “to integrate transport and green infrastructure planning in the Danube-Carpathian Region for the benefit of people and nature”.

([www.interreg-danube.eu/transgreen](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/transgreen)).

The TRANSGREEN Project, indeed, means better connected Carpathian Region with transport infrastructure that takes nature conservation into account and aims to contribute to safer and environmentally-friendly road and to project green infrastructure and rail networks in the Central-East Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine). The main aim is to avoid the pressures and potential threats posed by the transport infrastructure and to set environmentally friendly planning of transport corridors. Another important objective is to development methodology, trainings and common strategies, into TEN-T related transport infrastructure development, to contribute to an environmentally-friendly infrastructure network in the Carpathians as part of the wider Danube River. The relationships between transport sector and the environment are complex and multidimensional. The growth of mobility in recent decades has expanded the role of transportation as a source of emission of pollutants and multiple impacts on the natural environment.

Linear structures can significantly damage and fragment many significant protected areas, including sites of community importance. Project innovative pilot actions will focus on elements of Green Infrastructure, in particular ecological corridors and on concrete environmentally-friendly and safe road and rail transport solutions.

Integrating green infrastructures into planning means defining GI as a “strategic network of natural and semi-natural elements with high environmental and identity characteristics designed and managed to offer a high range of ecosystem services” (EU, 2013, Green Infrastructure (GI)— Enhancing Europe’s Natural Capital).

The project concerns the collaboration of an interdisciplinary partnership and integration of territorial planning with the infrastructure system/network, as basic management function, involving formulation of plans to achieve optimum balance of needs or demands with the available resources. The concept of development expressed in this project is not identic with the quantitative growth, but it is understood as a qualitative capacity of to improve environmental, economic and social well-being.

In the Carpathians, four pilot-areas were selected for which specific measures will be proposed for the planning, building, management and monitoring of large infrastructure: the Beskydy motorway (Czech Republic-Slovakia); the Miskolc (Hungary) – Kosice (Slovakia) – Uzhgorod (Ukraine) motorway; the Tirgu Mureş-Iaşi motorway (Romania); the Curtici (Radna) - Deva railway (Romania). Essential has been the phase of data investigation and collection, both at the national scale (e.g. observation of long distance migration routes and the connection of isolated wild populations) and at the regional and local scale (e.g. habitat and species diversity; the impact of the infrastructure and mitigation measures; the conservation status and landscape elements; the protection zones; the density of built-up areas and infrastructure networks...).

Taking into account aspects of road safety and biodiversity conservation, the project will improve the coordination and interoperability among partners, to develop a scientific knowledge, training modules on Environmental Impact Assessment, Catalogues of measures and common standards and also the production of ready-to-use methodologies for stakeholder Participation Processes (detailed below).



## Cooperation and Participation

One of the aims promoted by this project is to identify a specific and innovative approach to involve several stakeholders and decision makers (the lead partner is WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme, Austria) in a cooperation based on common strategies and guidelines. The TRANSGREEN project brings together organizations directly involved in the development of large road transport infrastructure plans and nature conservation institutions (e.g. National Motorways of the Slovak Republic and Slovak State Nature Conservation), research centers, international and national environmental and territorial planning organizations. Project partners have the experience and capacity to propose solutions and concrete “green” measures and the Cooperation Programme is structured across 4 priority axes. These axes (innovative and socially responsible Danube Region; environment and culture responsible; better connected and energy responsible; well-governed Danube Region) mean to develop coordinated policies and actions in the programme area reinforcing the commitments of the Europe 2020 Strategy towards the three dimensions of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. The strategic framework is the Communication Strategy and it is basis of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) during the whole programme period 2014-2020.

It forms an integral part of the programme implementation and aims to ensure that programme communications are well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public. The strategic vision is “policy integration” below the EU-level (Natura 2000) and should influence national/regional/local policies and actions of the involved States.

For the purpose of introducing the TRANSGREEN Project to interested parties and starting project implementation, the concepts of cooperation and participation are the basis of the union strategy and the promotion and implementation of innovative approaches and planning tools in the field of transport infrastructure planning and management, nature conservation monitoring and green infrastructure projects.

As specified in the introductory documents (Transgreen Kick-off event Report) the main actions of this Project concern:

- the identification of a better coordination and inter-operability among relevant partners from transport spatial planning and environmental sector;
- the creation of a scientific knowledge base for the development of tools, methodologies and guidelines for decision-making;
- to support activities and projects in the pilot areas regarding nature conservation and green infrastructure.

In addition to the drafting of main documents and the selection of pilot areas especially in Slovakia (sites of Beskydy and Miskolc-Kosice-Uzgorod), the SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of the Slovak Technical University (STU) has developed a web-based database, a planning toolkit for scientific support and an innovative approach in stakeholder engagement, as provided in Work Package n.3. The aim of the WP3 is to collect research and information material; to develop tools, methodologies and best practices; to support activities in the pilot areas (WP4) and to involve all stakeholders in an integration process of transport infrastructure, ecological corridor and spatial planning, sustaining also the Carpathian Convention Working Group (Wp5).

Tools like GIS based data, telemetric data maps, spatially referenced and tool for road-kills registration were very useful to create the database of information to find innovative solutions for conflicts between transport planning objectives and nature conservation.

The participation process and the creation of stakeholder’s consortia are of crucial importance to promote and support knowledge and best practices for conflict resolution.

## Participatory Process and Stakeholder Analysis

In recent times, the complexity and the interdisciplinary of urban issues have increased and politicians and technicians need to move from traditional models of “vertical” governance to “horizontal, territorial and network” models. This model proposes an integrated multi-functional approach to spatial planning (UE, 2010) and it provides a better involvement, with greater openness, accessibility and transparency for reaching out to citizens and civil society through representation and involvement. A participatory process allows sharing and accelerating “change” through participation and engagement of stakeholders and citizens.

Also the 2014-2020 European Programming recognizes the public participation as a strategic scale for the EU urban dimension and has defined new instruments for cohesion and territorial development strategies. Strategies that encourage local communities to participate and develop integrated bottom-up approaches, as promoted by the TRANSGREEN Project. Public Participation is a tool which enables local people and interest groups to get involved in the planning and delivery of innovative solutions to local problems, empowering stakeholders in decision-making.

According to the “EU Directive 2003/35/EC” on public participation and the “Aarhus Convention” on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice, the “Public” is defined as “one or more natural or legal persons and, in accordance with national legislation or practice,



their associations, organisations or groups". Therefore, the citizens can be involved on all "scales" and it includes them both in directly affected stakeholders and non-directly affected public.

This means that "Public" can affect, but also complicate the decision-making process, so it is very important to carry out a proper stakeholder mapping and analysis. Then, a stakeholder analysis is both a multi-criteria and multi-factor approach, which includes, as its main objectives, the involvement and participation, the mediation and the information facilitation on the project. Below I will describe the involvement process of stakeholders in this project.

### **TRANSGREEN approach in stakeholder engagement**

The "TRANSGREEN approach" in stakeholder engagement regards an interdisciplinary partnership comprised of planners, economists, engineers, and ecologists will integrate and apply their specific knowledge. Participatory process management means that all participatory activities are embedded in the overall planning activities of the Project. In this project there are 11 main Partners from 5 European Countries, 9 Associated Strategic Partners from 3 more countries and other bodies involved (National and Regional public Authorities; Sectoral Agencies; Infrastructure and public Service Provider; Interest Groups including NGOs; Local Communities).

Therefore, "participation" means to integrate Central and Eastern European institutes and organisations and to involve different stakeholders across the regions to cooperate on developing guidelines and best practices in the field of integrated transport infrastructure planning, spatial research, management and monitoring, taking into account aspects of road safety, biodiversity conservation and local development. The overall benefit of stakeholder participation in management planning is a better quality of a management plan. Indeed, this approach increases sense of ownership and awareness about agricultural and urban landscape quality and ecosystem services and management as a phenomenon of land-use life quality.

The TRANSGREEN approach in stakeholder engagement develops innovative methods joining scientific knowledge and their applicability in practice. The most significant criteria for the participatory process are identified as "objectives and collaborative behaviour", "stakeholders mapping", "phases of involvement" and "communication mechanism/tools" which together organize a framework for linking generally applicable methods with local conditions and the aims of the Project.

This approach considers continuous consultation in various stages of the management plan production to be the most appropriate Strategic Action Plan. Stakeholders should be involved when all options are still open and

engagement should continue throughout the all planning process. Several meetings and innovative tools have been developed for implementation action plans and to produce a "Strategic Plan" to promote a smart, sustainable, inclusive development and economic, social and territorial cohesion. According to "Eurosite Management Planning Toolkit" , the consensual/participative management planning approach can be achieved in different ways:

- consultation before drafting of the plan begins
- cooperative working during the whole drafting process
- consultation following various stages of plan production
- consultation on completed draft plans

Moreover, as stated in IUCN Guidelines for Management Planning in Protected Areas , the list of benefits includes increased the sense of ownership; greater support for the protected area; links planning for conservation with planning for development; provision of communication mechanism. It enables better quality of decisions, and creates common basis for harmonized actions.

Stakeholder engagement also increases the legitimacy of the planning and decision-making process as it enables a dialogue and deliberation about the issues. The following main participation principles are crucial for successful stakeholder engagement in decision-making process:

- Efficiency (clear and well-designed procedures as well as a stakeholder engagement plan for informing, consultation, and active participation);
- Inclusiveness and transparency (an open, transparent and inclusiveness engagement process);
- Effectiveness (it is essential that the stakeholders' views are taken into account and have a real impact on plan or policy development and implementation).

### **Procedure of public participation**

In the figure 1 SPECTRA team has developed a scheme of the participation procedure. The objective of the proposed procedure of public participation is to engage the stakeholders in the project. This needs to be done in gradual steps as it is continuous process with its internal logics. The procedure has 5 main steps in which the decision makers are engaging with the stakeholders with one initial phase of stakeholder mapping which provides the essential early information about the stakeholders of the project.

All the steps need to be performed as one is related to another, from a passive process to an active one. The difficulty of involving the various stakeholders is mainly their different involvement in the various phases. The implementation needs to be efficient without unnecessary

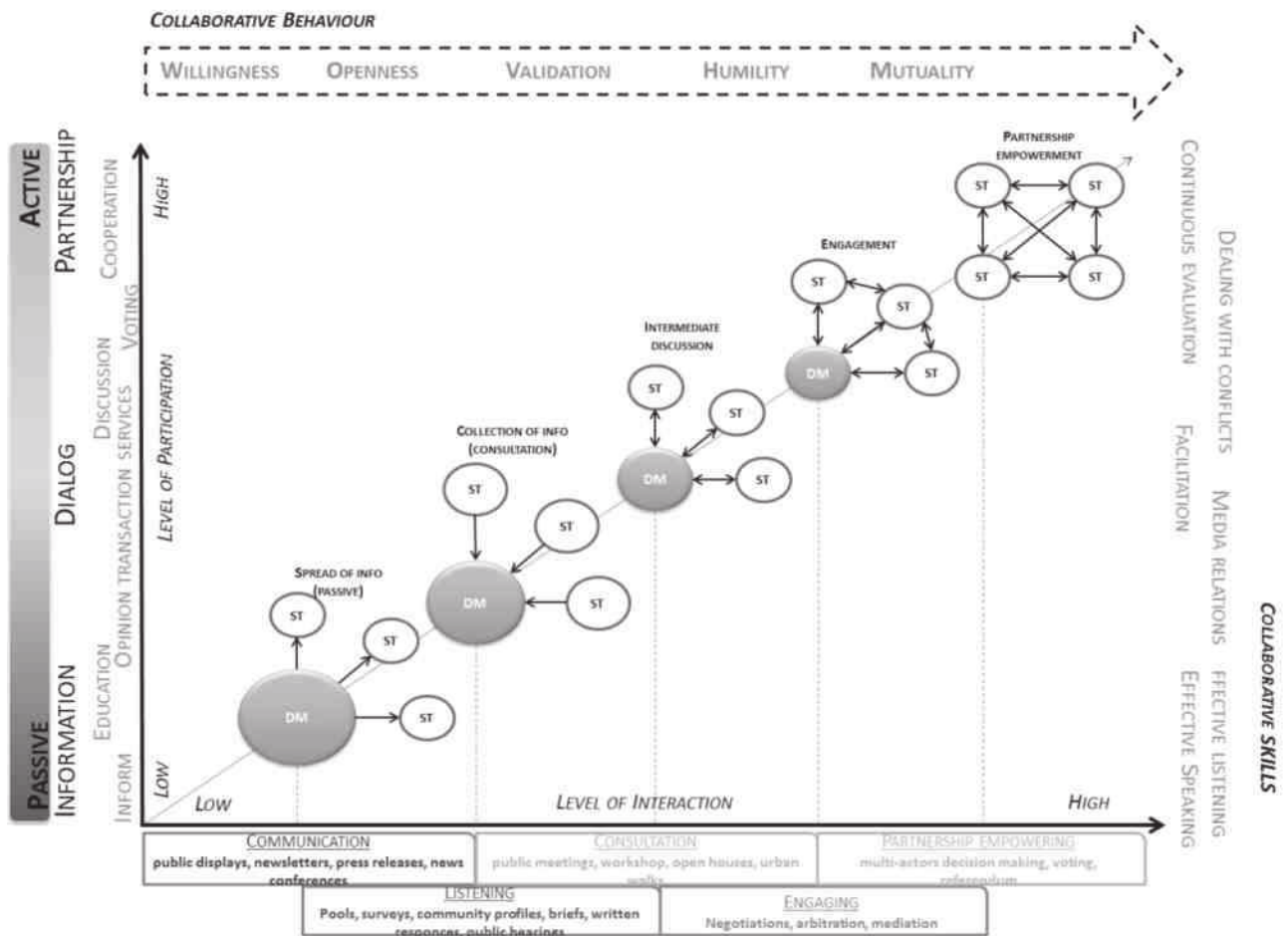


Figure 1: Scheme of Participation procedure (Finka, et al, 2017)

stages which can render the stakeholders uninterested after the initial stages. The whole participation process is a procedure of trust building between the decision maker and stakeholders, inherently a two-way process. It is essential to make stakeholders feel listened to and appreciated in practice, not only in theory for the whole duration of the process.

The first step of the stakeholder analysis is to identify the key-stakeholders from the large array of institutions and individuals that could potentially affect or be affected by the proposed intervention. It is important in the mapping to understand “who” the potential beneficiaries are and “who” might be positively or adversely impacted.

It is necessary to identify the stakeholders involved in the process, their impact on the project and the relationships between them.

Before the beginning of the participation process it is crucial to select groups of the likely stakeholder categories and those who are directly or indirectly affected:

- Direct key-stakeholders = the subjects who are affected by the decisions in direct way, the decision regards them and their interests or properties; they are mainly involved as

leaderships or partners in the promotion, organization, management and financing of the decision-making and the protection and transformation of the Territory (Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Economic Development; National, regional and local Governments – Professional/Planner – International Associations for environmental protection and animal as WWF, LIPU, Greenpeace EU – Universities and Research Centres on the environment, the territory and economic development – Association for the sustainable development and the rural environmental protection; Cooperatives of large land producers – regional and local Farmers Associations – National and International Companies related to the environment and natural resources – National and FUA area communications and infrastructures Companies...)

- Indirectly affected = all public people who can bring information, tools and support in participation, promotion and realization of the process, for example individuals or groups who have interest in building green eco-corridors in



general (Local Representatives of the city cores – Cultural, Environmental Local Associations – Small Landowners and Local Farmers – those who has an interest in the local projects and consider the land as “common good” to be protected; Citizens who are involved in environmental protection and local development.)

After this first basic division, three other main levels of participation can be considered:

- Level 1 - the actors who have direct economic relations with the organization
- Level 2 - the stakeholders that may influence or be influenced by the project directly, or unmediated
- Level 3 - people who interact with the organization in an indirect way

There are different tools for involvement of these groups, nevertheless, independently from this division the logic remains the same, to achieve collective decision making in form of partnership empowerment. In phases one to four, the mediators are needed to moderate the discussion and mediate the interests; the phase five considers mediators to become stakeholders as well and the dialogue shall take place in form of partnership in which all actors are considered stakeholders. These tools can be divided into two main categories: offline and online methods.

In the first group are the tools, as methods of involvement; face to face meetings; reports and conferences; public events, school lessons; direct questionnaires; traditional advertising and promotion techniques; co-design activities...

In the second group there are the tools with the aid of the virtual network, as internet platforms; websites and mail list for documents and information; virtual forum; online surveys, social networks; guided or virtual tours on the project sites...

Questionnaire for stakeholder mapping A first acquaintance and selection of the interested parties shall be drawn up on the basis of a questionnaire. It has been important for the relevant data collection and to understand the capacity contribution of stakeholders to the project. The questionnaire is divided into six sections, covering general concepts, competences, interest and expectations for the TRANSGREEN project, knowledge of the topics and about the key actors, documents, laws and strategies.

This questionnaire was divided into 6 sections concerning:

- Section 1 – Introduction. Basic information about the position and the knowledge of stakeholders;
- Section 2 – Expectation from the TRANSGREEN project. Interest and expectations on the project;
- Section 3 – Experience with integrated transport and green infrastructure planning. About previous experience with dealing with integrated and green infrastructure planning;

- Section 4 – Issues of integrated transport and green infrastructure planning. Evaluate the knowledge and deepen the opinion of the stakeholders on the main problems and the need for change;
- Section 5 – Key players. Questions about the main decision making in the infrastructure and environment planning;
- Section 6 – Key documentation. Some questions regarding existing documentation and relevant strategies in the project field. (Finka, et al., 2017)

A second phase of in-depth analysis foresees stakeholder analysis for each pilot-area, using a table-report on “State of the Art” and “Gap Analysis” in the field of environmentally-friendly transport infrastructure development. Analysis and monitoring of environmental impacts of transportation were performed and instruments of ecological connectivity are developed for an integrated land-use management and sustainable recommendations for the improvement of transport infrastructure development addressing the political level.

## CONCLUSIONS and next steps

In conclusion, this report discusses some TRANSGREEN project steps and it reports the knowledge acquired during my collaboration with the SPECTRA Center of Excellence EU. During this period, several general and local meetings combined with research and training events were held. I had the opportunity to listen the kickoff meeting about the topic and objectives (2017 - project manager Hildegard Meyer, from WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, Austria); to participate in an online meeting and to attend the project working meeting, held in Bratislava in January 2018. The last one was focus on the final project output production, the Guidelines on Integrated Transport Development and it was a collaborative work of expert-authors from across the region and across fields of expertise. The most important project issues and the need to work on the use of a common technical language and platform (to integrate the possible misunderstandings related to difference knowledges or professional figures involved) have been highlighted in the different chapters of this final handbook, still in progress.

The next important event will be in September 2018 still in Bratislava, with a conference on “Sustainable Transportation Planning in the Carpathians. Latest developments and steps forward”, organized by WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, Slovak National Motorway Company, CEEweb for Biodiversity (Project Partners) and Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention with content support from IENE - Infra Eco Network Europe.

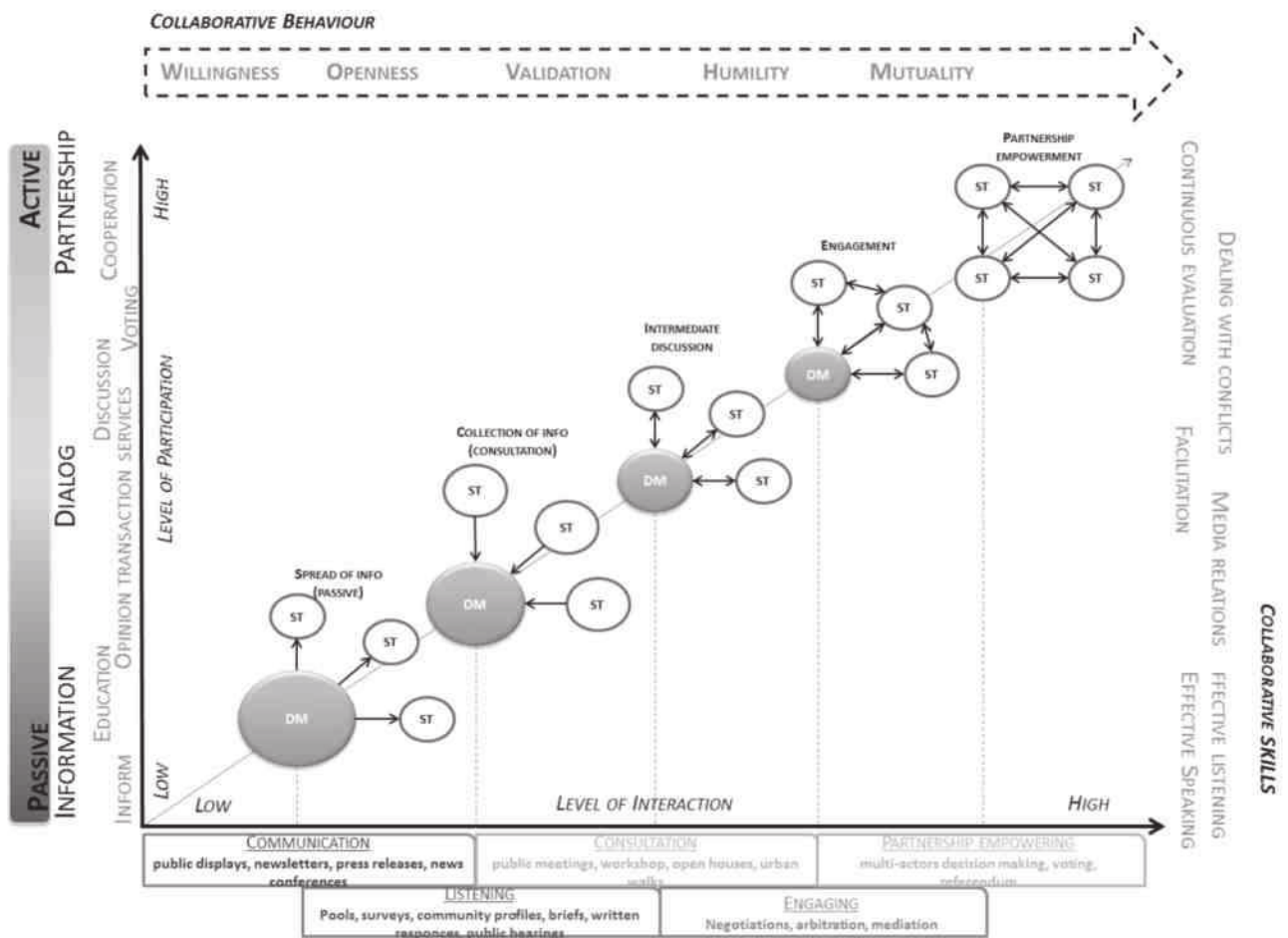


Figure 1 Scheme of Participation procedure  
(Finka, et al., 2017).

Collaborative Workshops will also be organized, aiming at bringing together cross-sectoral perspectives on the current research and policy recommendations in the field and the main purposes are:

- to learn about recent developments in the Carpathians and to raise awareness on the need for cross-sectoral approaches on sustainable transportation infrastructure development in the Carpathians;
- to gain feedback for preliminary findings of the TRANSGREEN Project for better integration of stakeholders' needs in the documents to be developed;
- to prepare the basic background for elaborating the Carpathian Convention Strategic Action Plan on Sustainable Transportation in the Carpathians.

Hereby, I would like to express my gratitude to the SPECTRA Center Excellence EU of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (STU) for their involvement, encouragement and the way I was welcome. The participation in the TRANSGREEN Project, so interesting in the purpose and so complicated in the organization, has allowed me to improve an integrated ecosystem approach to the planning/project management and the process of mapping and involvement of the partners/stakeholders. It is in my interest to follow the development of the project and the results dissemination in the coming months.

Annexed diagrams and tables: Below are diagrams and tables regarding the data and participatory process developed in the TRANSGREEN Project.

It describes the phases of the procedure and its internal logics.





Stakeholders associated with/interested in the topic		Field of activity	Official role/responsibility	Type	Position	Impact			Involvement		Level of involvement	
Name	Contact info					Positive	Negative	Importance*	Direct	Indirect	Current	Desired
				<u>Examples:</u> consultant advisor decision-maker investor broader public interest group (NGOs, clubs, quasi-governmental body voluntary activist entrepreneurs (e.g. in forestry - forest business, wood producer, agricultural enterprises owner individuals	<u>Examples:</u> citizen state body subject of law professional	X		Phase 1 + Phase 2 ++ Phase 3 +++ Phase 4 ++ Phase 5 +++	X			

Table 1 - A3 Stakeholder mapping tool (Finka, et al., 2017).  
It provides a sheet of main phases with brief explanation of each phase which is to be used by practitioners as a tool for running the procedure in the projects.

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PHASES 0-5	<i>Phase 0 Stakeholder mapping</i>	<i>Phase 1 Spread of Information</i>		<i>Phase 2 Collection of Information</i>		<i>Phase 3 Intermediate discussion</i>		<i>Phase 4 Engagement</i>		<i>Phase 5 Partnership, empowerment</i>	
<b>Purpose</b>	Is to introduce the project and to establish who are the stakeholders who will be relevant for the project.	It is to inform the stakeholders about the project, its objective and its vision and how the project will continue. It is important to create a common baseline knowledge and to formulate a common glossary		It is dedicated to collecting the responses and information from the stakeholders; to inform the decision-makers about ideas, opinions...		to create the dialogue and facilitate open and inclusive conversations and transaction of opinions		To engage stakeholders with the decision makers.  It is a process of closer involvement and direct work		It is to foster cooperation in the project via partnership and empowerment	
<b>Behavior</b>	It maps out the stakeholders and sorts out their relevance to the project.	It is willingness on which the phase is built on. The provided information is aimed at catching attention and kindling interest of stakeholders.		The collaborative behavior required from the stakeholders is openness, to express them to the decision makers		To justify their different ideas and clarifying their views on the project.		It is humility and respect as the main principles of this phase		To support of participatory process acknowledging and working towards the common objectives as equal partners.	
<b>Skills</b>	It is important to identify various groups, and those who are directly or indirectly affected.	It is effective speaking and the ability to provide the right amount of information to catch the attention and to inform.		Is the ability to listen effectively and openly		Media relations and the ability to share ideas and facilitate the discussion		Negotiations, arbitration and mediation to assist a continuous dialogue and effective facilitation		Dealing with conflicts and continuous evaluation of the process using the feedback of all participants	
<b>Tools</b>	Expert opinions; Focus groups; Interviews; Self-selection; Check-list	<u>Direct S:</u> Newsletters; Journal; Websites; Events; Questionnaires	<u>Indirect S:</u> Newspapers; Journal; Websites; Information Sheets	<u>Direct S:</u> Survey; Meetings; Summary; PPGIS; SWOT;	<u>Indirect S:</u> Community profiles; Public; PPGIS; On-line platforms/ Tools	<u>Direct S:</u> Meeting; Workshop; Interactive form of discussions	<u>Indirect S:</u> Public meetings/ events; Urban walks; questionnaires	<u>Direct S:</u> Action Planning; Meetings; Conferences	<u>Indirect:</u> Public Meeting; Workshops; Reports	<u>Direct:</u> Multi-actor decision making Meetings	<u>Indirect:</u> Voting Referenda;

Table 2 - A3 Phases and tools of stakeholder participation processes.  
It describes more in detail the different phases with purposes, skills and tools.



Stakeholders Position	Stakeholders Type	Impact						
		Positive	Negative	Importance*				
		X		Phase 1 (spread of information)	Phase 2 (collection of information)	Phase 3 (intermediate discussion)	Phase 4 (engagement)	Phase 5 (partnership)
State Body Subject of law Professional	decision-maker	X		+++	+++	++	++	++
	investor	X	X	++	+++	++	++	+
	advisor	X		+++	+++	++	++	+
	consultant		X	++	++	+++	++	+
	entrepreneurs (e.g. in forestry - forest business, wood producer, agricultural enterprises...)	X		+++	++	+++	+++	+++
Citizen	owner	X	X	+++	+++	++	++	++
	individuals		X	+	+	++	++	+++
	interest group (NGOs, clubs, quasi-governmental body...)	X	X	+++	+++	+++	++	++
	local communities	X		++	++	+++	+++	+++
	voluntary activist	X	X	+++	++	++	++	+++
	broader public		X	+	+	++	++	+++

Table3 - A3 Impact of stakeholders in respective phases.  
It deepens the impact and the involvement of stakeholders in respective phases.



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■ UPDATE

**Dagmar Petříková**

LUMAT PROJECT MEETING AND PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE IN LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA 24-25.05.2018  
VENUE: URBAN PLANNING INSTITUTE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

