

TRANSFER Danube Newsletter №4

September 2026

Contents:

1. *About the Project*
2. *Project Conference in Bulgaria*
3. *News from Austria*
4. *News from Romania*
5. *News from the Czech Republic*
6. *Communication channels*



About the project

The [TRANSFER Danube project](#) aims to analyze the new patterns of climatic extreme events (drought, floods, heat waves, e.g.) and design/develop the necessary tools for agriculture in the Danube region in order to be able to properly adapt and respond to such challenges. This will be done by developing and implementing a Danube transnational e-platform that will integrate climatic/water resources/agriculture database, maps, knowledge, tools, modelling, good practices for water management, for reducing drought in order to be prepared and adapt to climate change in the vulnerable areas for crops (winter wheat and maize) in the Danube Region.

Through cooperation between country partners, a standardized monitoring system for the phenological status of selected agricultural crops throughout the Danube Region will be established, serving as a basis to evaluate the crop-specific water balances and yields.

The TRANSFER Danube project aims to raise the awareness of policymakers and the private agricultural sector to the possible consequences of climate change on agricultural production. The beneficiaries of the project and the groups targeted by it are local and regional decision-makers in the field of environmental protection and agriculture, also people in the field of agricultural policies and farmers.

The activities of the project will generate support for trans-disciplinary bilateral cooperation

among partner institutions in the Danube area to tackle the challenges set by climate change in agriculture.

The project is co-funded by the Interreg Danube Region Programme and has a duration of 30 months, April 2025 – September 2027.

1,842,380 €

Project budget

80.00 %

Interreg funds

04/2025-09/2027

Project duration

Project Conference in Bulgaria

First Year Review Meeting in Bulgaria



Date: 21st April 2026

Location: Pazardzhik, Bulgaria

InTegRATED monitoring System For agro-climatic risks within DanubE Region

The First Year Review Meeting within the frame of the TRANSFER Danube project (InTegRATED moNitoring System For agro-climatic risks within DanubE Region), co-funded by the Interreg Danube Region Programme, was organised in Pazardzhik, Bulgaria, on the 21st and 22nd of April 2026. The host of the event was the Bulgarian project partner – Association Centre for Sustainability and Economic Growth (CSEG).



The conference was opened by the event's organisers and followed by a welcome speech from the project Lead Partner, the National Meteorological Administration of Romania.

The first working day was dedicated to reviewing overall progress during the first year of the project implementation. In the first session, the Lead Partner made a recap of all project activities and an overview of the outputs that should be achieved. Also, they discussed with the rest of the partners the main challenges they encountered during that year.

Each activity responsible partner presented their implementation status, the achieved

activities' progress and key lessons learned. In addition, the TRANSFER Danube e-platform was mentioned. The platform aims to provide professional tools and indices that support the monitoring and assessment of agro-climatic risks and phenological monitoring. The next sessions included the following topics: Financial Implementation, Project Management, Monitoring and Communication. The main focus was on reporting practices, quality assurance mechanisms, and communication and dissemination activities at project and partner levels.

A representative of the Interreg Danube Region Programme Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat attended the meeting, providing project partners with feedback on how to maximise the overall performance during the remaining periods of the TRANSFER Danube project.



The first day concluded with a Management and Steering Committee meeting, during which a review of activities and progress on Specific Objectives 1 and 2 was made, and next steps were discussed.

InTegRATED monitoring System For agro-climatic risks within DanubE Region

The second working day continued with an overview of the activities under Specific Objective 3, and each partner's responsibilities in the upcoming phases.

A Financial management session followed, which included a discussion of partner-level and project-level forecasts.



The conference concluded with a project Communication session focusing on project communication activities, national dissemination events and how to increase stakeholder engagement. A final debate was organised to outline the monitoring and evaluation, as well as the upcoming events of the TRANSFER Danube project.

News from Austria

Technical Outline of the Strategic Measure Bundles

Project Partner 11 (BOKU University, Austria) is responsible for Activity 1.7 in the TRANSFER Danube project, which deals with the “Identification of Response Strategy Potential” with regard to the main thematic focus of the project, which is drought in relation to agriculture. Part of this Activity is “Deliverable 1.7.1 - Technical Outline of the Strategic Measure Bundles (SMB) (D.1.7.1)”. This was published in March 2026, and is also publicly available via ResearchGate as a technical report.

Under current climate change conditions, drought periods exert a fundamental threat to agriculture. Additionally, for all further project activities, the identification of potential response strategies to this threat is fundamental. Based on the analysis of scientific publications and historic and current strategic activities in agriculture dealing with this thematic field, it was possible to elaborate D.1.7.1.

The application of strategic measure bundles (SMB) in agriculture can provide various benefits. The described SMB yield main ecosystem services for which they are established. Additionally, all SMB create

benefits at the level of further ecosystem services.

Main Ecosystem Services of SMB:

SMB-I wind-breaker forest belts (WBF) are established as soil protection installations. They can mitigate soil erosion processes, above all aeolian (= wind-driven) erosion, but also water-driven soil erosion during strong precipitation events.

SMB-II buffer-strip forest vegetation along streams (BSF) can hold back soil substances which are eroded during strong precipitation events hence, they act as a trap for sediments and agrochemicals. The transpiration of BSF growing on the relatively wetter Fluvisols (alluvial soils) provide higher relative humidity of the local air mass and hence increases dewfall.

SMB-III forest plantations (FP) have the most important benefit through their economic dimension. Only if trees can create a substantial increase in income for the farmers (timber, fruits or timber and fruits), they will be planted in FP on agricultural land.



Further Ecosystem Services of SMB:

All three SMB additionally provide forest effects, like cooling of the top-soils through their provision of shade on the agricultural soils, evaporative cooling through transpiration, positive effects on biodiversity at both flora and fauna levels, and also carbon sequestration for climate change mitigation.

Despite the positive effects of the SMB on the hydrological regime within an agricultural area, it was identified that irrigation is, in many cases, a necessary adaptation strategy under extreme drought conditions. Irrigation in agriculture helps to ensure the yield of agricultural products in sufficient quantity and quality. The application of SMB increases the intended effect of irrigation, as it provides, e.g. reduction of wind speed and insolation on the agricultural fields. This results in a more efficient irrigation process.

Regardless of the multitude of benefits of SMB, farmers will have to overcome hindrances for their implementation. This challenge can be tackled through knowledge-transfer activities for being aware about the benefits created through SMB. If specific management measures are carried out, like e.g. keeping wind-breaker forest belts or buffer-strip forest vegetation within their allocated spatial extension, the acceptance of SMB application among farmers will potentially increase.

Under the current extreme drought conditions in Europe (summer 2026), awareness regarding the urgent need for the application of SMB and

efficient irrigation concepts in agriculture should be communicated to the broad public.

News from Romania

Agrometeorological monitoring in the TRANSFER Danube Pilot Areas

Meteorological and climatic conditions are one of the main factors influencing the growth and development of agricultural crops and the stability of production. The variability from one year to another of the thermal and pluviometric regime, associated with the intensification of extreme meteorological phenomena, can determine the occurrence of periods of water or thermal stress, with effects on crops. In this context, the continuous monitoring and evaluation of agrometeorological conditions constitutes an important component for characterizing the state of crops and for substantiating adaptation measures to climate variability and change.

Agroclimatic risks, including thermal, atmospheric, and water stress parameters such as soil moisture, extreme heat, winter severity, and precipitation, are monitored in the TRANSFER Danube project's Pilot Areas across the Danube Region through cooperation among consortium partners and data sharing. LP1-NMA (National Meteorological Administration of Romania) is responsible for collecting and processing meteorological data and phenological observations and for

generating the relevant agrometeorological parameters for the TRANSFER Danube Pilot Areas.

An important element of the analysis is the precipitation regime, both in terms of cumulative quantities and their distribution in periods with specific water requirements. The amount of precipitation during the autumn crop sowing period 01 September - 31 October 2025 is exemplified in Figure 1.

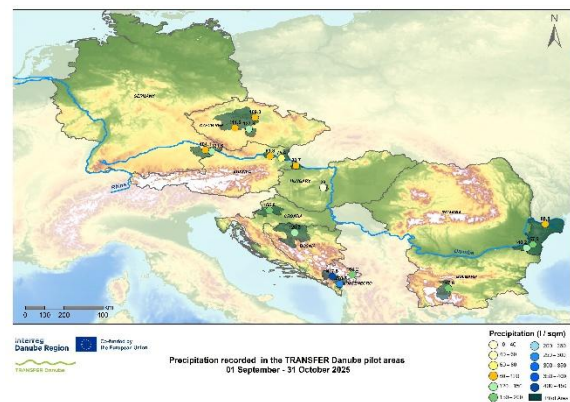
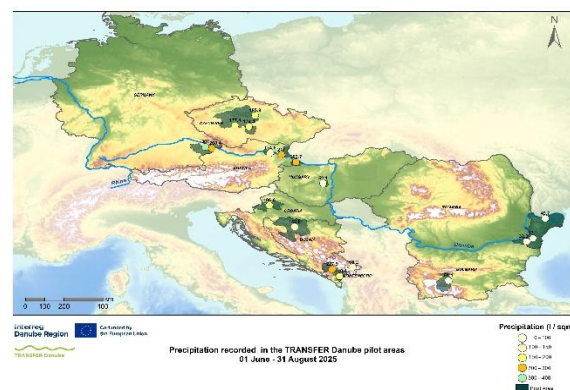


Figure 1

Precipitation recorded during the period 01 June – 31 August 2025, representing the period of maximum water consumption of the non-irrigated corn crop is depicted in Figure 2.



Thermal resources are also an essential factor for the succession of plant growth and development phases. Temperature requirements differ depending on the species and phenological stage, and reaching certain thermal thresholds conditions vegetative processes. In this sense, the analysis of the winter severity index ($\Sigma T_{min. \leq -10^{\circ}C}$ /"frost units") for the period December-February enables the evaluation of wintering conditions for the wheat crop (Figure 3), while the evaluation of the "scorching" phenomenon (Figure 4), based on maximum air temperatures of at least $32^{\circ}C$ during the period June-August, allows the assessment of an important risk factor for winter wheat and corn crops.

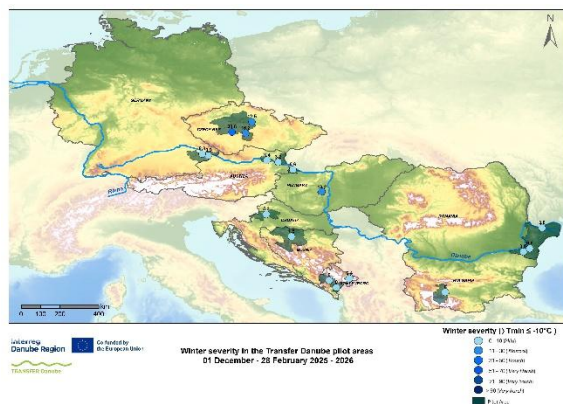


Figure 3

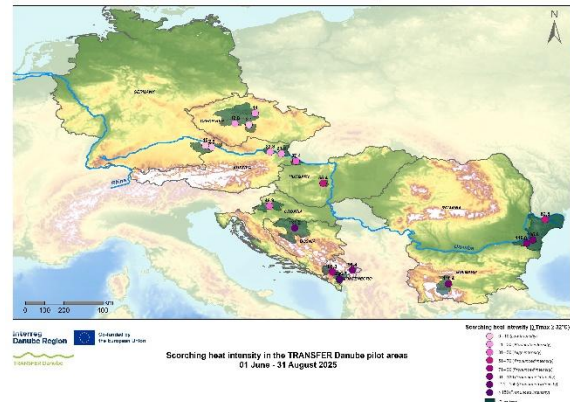


Figure 4

The phenological observations within the TRANSFER Danube Pilot Areas are carried out using the extended BBCH (Biologische Bundesanstalt Bundessortenamt and Chemical industry) scale which is a standardized system designed to uniformly describe the phenological growth stages in the life cycle of crop development, from germination to tillering, stem elongation, flowering, grain filling, and senescence. The consortium makes phenological observations in the pilot areas at an interval of 10 days, registering the phenological phases of winter wheat (Figures 5-8) and maize (Figures 9-11) crops.

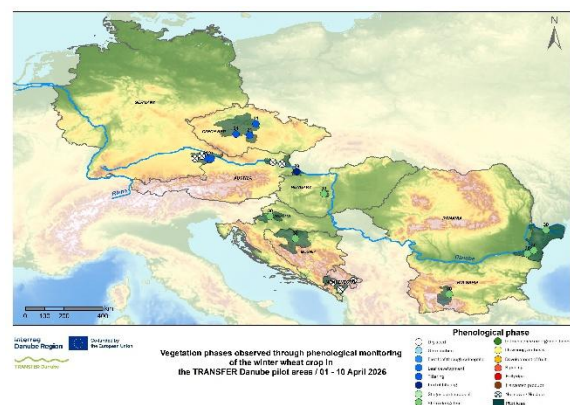


Figure 5

TRANSFER Danube

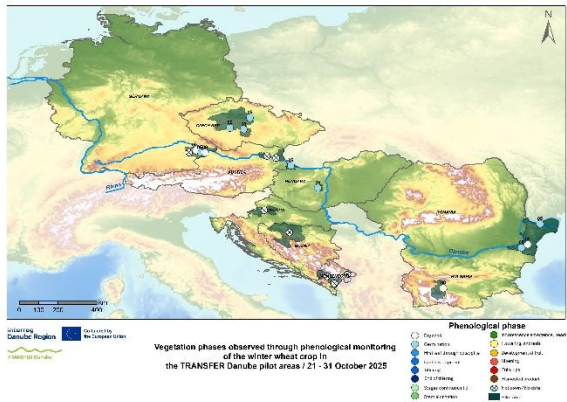


Figure 6

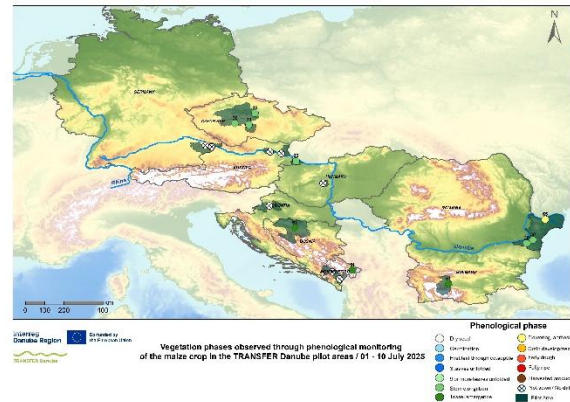


Figure 9

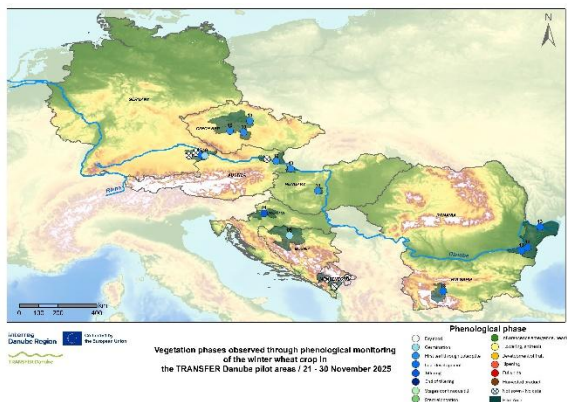


Figure 7

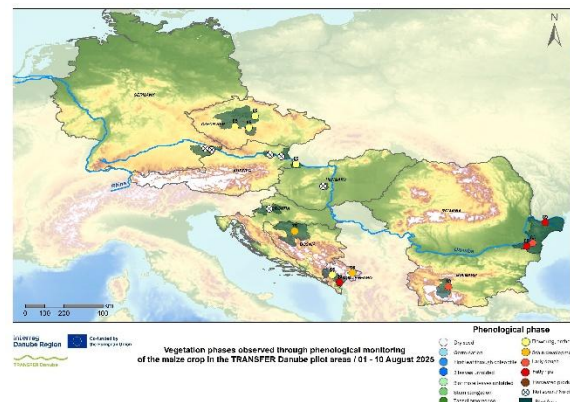


Figure 10

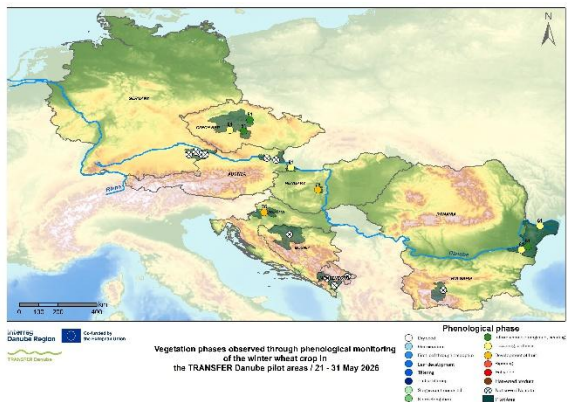


Figure 8

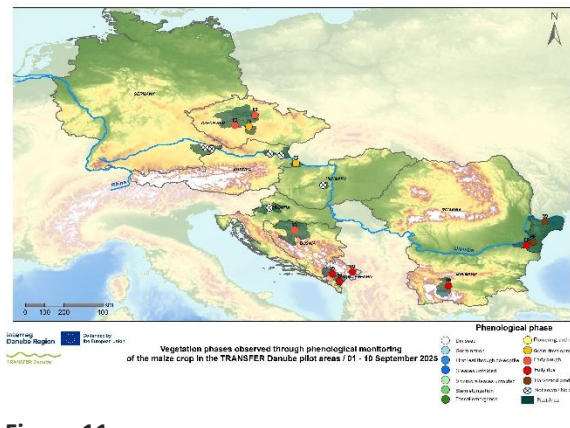


Figure 11

Low precipitation, severe winter conditions, and scorching heat can adversely affect winter wheat and maize by causing water and temperature stress, reducing crop

development and resilience, and ultimately leading to yield losses. These parameters are monitored within the TRANSFER Danube project to assess the impact of key agroclimatic risks on winter wheat and maize, support the identification of areas vulnerable to water and temperature stress, and provide a basis for timely, climate-informed adaptation measures in the Danube Region.

News from the Czech Republic

Stakeholder Feedback Shapes the Best Practice Catalogue

In total, 85 questionnaires from four stakeholder events in Romania, Austria and Czechia were analysed. One of these events took place in Znojmo, Czechia, on 25 November 2025, where predominantly small, highly engaged farmers discussed climate-related challenges and the future content of the Best Practice Catalogue.

The results show a strong demand for practical and decision-oriented information. Stakeholders particularly highlighted the importance of information on the benefits, economic aspects and potential risks of individual practices, together with equipment requirements and suitability for specific soil and climatic conditions.

Drought and heat waves emerged as important climate-related challenges, while improving soil structure and water retention ranked among the

strongest priority areas. Implementation costs, machinery availability and uncertainty about expected benefits were identified as important barriers to adopting new practices. In contrast, training and demonstrations, recommendations from other farmers and opportunities to test practices directly were among the strongest factors encouraging uptake.



Date: 18th September 2026

Location: Znojmo, the Czech Republic

The findings also underline the importance of transferability. Differences in soil and climatic conditions were identified as the main limitation to transferring successful practices between regions. The future catalogue should therefore explain not only what a practice involves, but also where it is suitable and under which conditions it can be successfully applied or adapted.

The stakeholder feedback will provide direct input for shaping the content, thematic priorities, structure and presentation of the TRANSFER Danube Best Practice Catalogue, supporting its development as a practical decision-support and knowledge-transfer tool for agriculture across the Danube Region.

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Communication channels

The project includes a well-balanced mixture of partners coming from several main sectors: public authorities (local, regional and national), research institutions, NGOs, meteo, and environmental agencies. Together, we represent varied views across a range of stakeholders and interests, providing competent knowledge and experience in the field of climate change, agriculture, and policy design. The partnership is characterized by a strong transnational character, covering nine nations and eleven institutions within the Interreg Danube Region Program area, thus ensuring a good geographical and cultural coverage and relevant attention to the issues and needs of a wide range of institutional settings and establishments from European Countries.

National Meteorological
Administration (NMA)- **Lead
partner**, Romania



<https://www.meteoromania.ro>

Sensum Ltd. (SENSUM), Croatia



<https://sensum.hr>

Rába-Duna-Vág European
Grouping of Territorial
Cooperation with Limited
Liability (RDV EGTC), Hungary



<https://rdvegtc.eu>

University of Stuttgart (IWS),
Germany



University of Stuttgart
Germany

<https://www.uni-stuttgart.de>

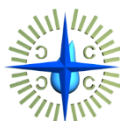
Central Danube Development
Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (CDDA),
Hungary



CENTRAL DANUBE
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
NONPROFIT LTD.

<https://kdmfu.hu>

The Republic
Hydrometeorological Service of
Republika Srpska (RHMZ RS),
Bosna and Herzegovina



<https://rhmrzs.com>

Association "Centre for
Sustainability and Economic
Growth" (CSEG), Bulgaria



<https://cseg.eu>

Czech University of Life Sciences
Prague (CULS), Czech Republic



<https://www.czu.cz/en>

Széchenyi István University
(SZE), Hungary



<https://www.uni.sze.hu>

Institute of Hydrometeorology
and Seismology (IHMS),
Montenegro



<http://www.meteo.co.me>

University of Natural Resources
and Life Sciences, Vienna
(BOKU), Austria



<https://boku.ac.at/en/oekb/wald>

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Mr. Georgi Simeonov | georgi.simeonov@cseg.eu

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