

E40 Inland Waterway - international -

Sectors: transport and infrastructure

Active

This profile is actively maintained

Send [feedback](#) on this profile

Created on: May 22 2018

Last update: Jul 9 2018

Contact:

[Zoltan Kun](#), Frankfurt Zoological Society

[Project website](#)

Status



About E40 Inland Waterway

The E40 Inland Waterway (E40 IWW) is a transnational project aimed at establishing a 2,000 km Black-to-Baltic-Sea inland waterway through Poland, Belarus and Ukraine connecting the seaports of Gdansk and Kherson. It consists of the following rivers and canals: Vistula, Bug (new canal to be built), Mukhavets, Pina, Pripyat and Dnieper. The **reconstruction plans** of the E40 mention building a bypass canal in Poland, six or seven dams and locks in the Pripyat, as well as dredging on the entire route so that multitonnage river-sea vessels can follow the course of the rivers. The biggest part of the capital investments (around EUR 12 billion) is directed to the Polish section of the route Vistula—Brest. The Belarusian section has been preliminarily estimated at EUR 150 million.

Brief history

The **development of the project** began at the end of 2013. The initiator of the E40 construction is a coalition of organisations from three countries (Belarus, Poland and Ukraine) headed by the Republican Unitary Operational and Construction Enterprise "Dnepro-Bugsky Canal". The feasibility study was developed by a consortium led by the Gdansk Maritime Institute. The work on the project's feasibility study was funded by the European Union within the Program for Transboundary Cooperation among the three countries. Now the initiators of the project are in search of funding for further research and work.

The main supporters of the E40 Waterway are the relevant ministries of infrastructure, navigation or transport in the various countries. The UN Economic Committee for Europe (UNECE) is also a supporting organisation of inland waterway development in general (although the E40 is not a priority within the Trans-European Transport Network).

The E40 Waterway would cross three countries, all of which have different economic, legal and social conditions. The governments of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine are looking into the possibility of investing significant funds into this project with mobilisation of state resources as well the financing of international donors.

What must happen

The E40 Waterway is a large infrastructural project which will affect various rivers, regions, several protected areas, including national parks, Ramsar sites and Natura 2000 areas. Because of these adverse impacts banks should not invest in any section of the project. The waterway would go through the Chernobyl exclusion zone and mobilise and transport radioactive silt into the Kyiv water reservoirs, the drinking water source of millions of Ukrainians. Financially the E40 IWW can only be implemented if foreign investors provide the required financing for the project.

Issues

Social issues

Research has shown that the economic benefits of the project for the people of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine are questionable. The feasibility study contains a shallow risk analysis. The risks are analysed from the following viewpoint: if the economies of the three countries grow at a slower rate than expected, the impact of the project implementation may be worse than expected ([Ales Gerasimenko](#)). E40 waterway advocates also suggest to consider their project not in terms of direct payback but in terms of indirect impact on the economies of the three countries. However, as BUEE analysts estimate, there is no guarantee that modernisation of the waterway between Vistula and Dnieper will bring any long-term economic dividends to the region. Moreover, the impact of the project on Belarusian economy may be negative.

Environmental issues

The **E40 Inland Waterway will impact heavily** on the unique region of the Belarusian Polesye, and on several valuable natural territories in Poland and Ukraine.

Natura 2000 areas Along the Lower and Middle Vistula, the impacted Natura 2000 sites include both Bird Directive Special Protection Areas (SPA) and

Habitat Directive Special Areas of Conservation, (SAC). The entire Bug river, from the River Narew to Terespol is part of the Natura 2000 network. In the case of constructing the E40 IWW between Vistula and Terespol based on the preferred third variant, an additional two Natura 2000 sites will be impacted.

The border region of Belarus, Poland, Russia and Ukraine called Polesia hosts one of Europe's largest wilderness areas with an immense network of protected and unprotected natural areas. The size of this region is more than 18 million hectares and it has immense natural value, making it a cornerstone of a European network of protected areas. The region hosts the most valuable protected areas of Belarus including the Pripyatsky National Park, Polesye State Radiation-Ecological Reserve, 11 national and six local reserves.

Polesia Pripyat, which is the main river of Polesia, is among the few undamaged, free flowing large rivers in Europe with high species and habitat richness. During migration periods, 1.5 million birds recharge in the floodplains of Pripyat, and over 90% of the total number of bird species of Belarus are recorded to inhabit the region. The E40 will impact the breeding sites of the vulnerable Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*). The total length of the E40 would affect sites holding 75% of the species' population. Polesia's wetland habitats include fen mires and raised bogs as well as floodplain areas with riparian forests, which are complemented by large areas of forest. Almost all key large mammals – among them lynx, bison, wolf – are to be found here.

Dnieper The valley of the River Dnipro includes several designated Emerald Network sites, which are designated within the framework of the Berne Convention. These areas are not only important for halting biodiversity loss through hosting key species and habitats, but also offer important ecosystem services to the people living in the region.

Other issues

A **part of the E40 Waterway** route will pass through the territories affected by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. These are the section of the River Pripyat flowing through the Polesye Radiation Reserve (Belarus), and the section of the Dnieper flowing through the Chernobyl Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine). **The E40 Waterway may cause** washing of radioactive silt away from the river bed and thereby affect Kiev's water reservoir.

Governance

Applicable norms and standards

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

Ramsar Convention

Updates

Financiers

Banks involved in the E40 Waterway project so far are the European development banks the EBRD and the EIB.

Multilateral development banks

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Details ▼

Approached, interested
EBRD and EIB plan to fund EUR 50-70 million for the Dnieper section of the project.
source: Apk-inform.com
[link](#)

European Investment Bank Details ▼

Approached, interested
EBRD and EIB plan to fund EUR 50-70 million for the Dnieper section of the project.
source: Apk-inform.com
[link](#)