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IAD: Danube River education

The Danube River and its tributaries are facing significant ecological challenges, affecting the ecological status of the river as well as biodiversity in the river and its floodplains. However, there remains a gap in **effectively communicating such environmental knowledge and awareness to a broader public**. The International Association for Danube Research (IAD), a key player in promoting sustainable management of the Danube River Basin, can expand its impact by enhancing public environmental education efforts.

To bridge this gap, an Environmental **Danube River Education Expert Group (DEEG)** within IAD has been established. This expert group is dedicated to raising public awareness, fostering emotional connections of local residents and tourists with the Danube, and empowering local communities to participate in the protection and restoration of the river and its ecosystems. The European Commission's initiative to reconnect citizens with freshwater ecosystems aligns closely with this objective, positioning IAD to contribute to wider EU goals.

While IAD has traditionally focused on research and policy, the value of these insights is limited without public communication and involvement. An Environmental Education Task Force could **transform complex scientific data into engaging, accessible content for a wider audience**. The aim is to support a broad range of educational initiatives, including programs for schools, community outreach, exhibitions, workshops, and multimedia campaigns. By collaborating with local stakeholders such as schools, NGOs, nature parks, and governments, this effort envisages far-reaching effects across the entire Danube region.

The environmental Danube River Education Expert Group hence serves as a catalyst for coordinated educational efforts, ensuring that local activities are linked and scaled throughout the basin. By initiating and developing timely educational projects, the DEEG enables the creation of a interlinked series of initiatives that foster community-driven conservation efforts. This would include a variety of educational formats, such as school programs, interactive exhibitions, and public events, aimed at diverse audiences across different regions.

In summary, the DEEG will help IAD to significantly increase its visibility and strengthen its role in promoting sustainable practices and synergies among the projects. The **Environmental Danube River Education Expert Group (DEEG) will bridge the gap between scientific research and public engagement**, creating a lasting, community-focused movement for the conservation and protection of the Danube River Basin. This initiative would ensure that the association's efforts reach beyond the scientific community and foster a deeper connection between people and the river based on environmental knowledge and emotional linkages to the Danube's unique nature.