



KEY MESSAGES

- The Douro has a strong transportation potential. However, existing bottlenecks, lacking cross-border and multimodal connections represent significant barriers to further development and fail to unlock this artery in the Iberian hinterland.
- For the Douro to become an effective TEN-T core inland waterway complying with European standards and to meet the surging freight demand, investments in planned projects should go ahead.

Corridor background

The Douro River is navigable over 208 km from the mouth of the river in Oporto to the Portuguese-Spanish border at Barca d'Alva. It links up the sea with the interior of the northern and central regions of Portugal and is today mainly used for the transport of aggregates besides passenger transport and river tourism. It could potentially serve the Spanish region of Castilla y León and its major logistics centres, such as Salamanca, thus enhancing the role of the Douro River in the Atlantic Corridor.

Waterway infrastructure

To attract more goods, diversify cargo and enable regular services on the waterway, it is essential to make long-overdue investments to upgrade locks, create uniform navigation conditions along the river and solve two severe local fairway restrictions. All projects are mature.

The 5 locks are in urgent need of modernisation due to a low level of reliability and outdated safety equipment. The locks do not allow 24-hour navigation nor safe berthing of long cargo vessels. Another measure to leverage the modal shift potential of inland waterway transport is the removal of critical bottlenecks in the fairway at Cotas-Valeira and Saião-Pocinho to enable the operation of vessels with a draught up to 3.8m across the entire waterway, resulting in an 80% increase in freight capacity.

The project plans will ensure year-round, safe and secure navigability in line with European TEN-T standards and create a seamless inland connection to the port of Leixões without congestion. The rise in laden draught will reduce transport costs and increase the economic attractiveness of transport by water.

Inland ports

It is also crucial to have multimodal interconnections to integrate the waterway effectively into the transport system. For example, a port facility near the Moncorvo mines would result in a significant shift of truckloads of ore to the waterway, improving the safety and environmental record of transport operations.

Finally, integration with the seaport's Single Window and investment in service facilities such as floating waste reception and on-shore power supply stations along the waterway would represent a significant enhancement to the transport offer.

€0.5 billion

are required to make the inland waterway network of the Atlantic corridor bottleneck-free and to increase climate resilience

Critical waterway locations

