**ALIGNMENT OF FUNDING –**

**Operative programmes for EU SDR**

## Topics and intervention areas of the Priority area “Quality of Waters” (PA4) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region relevant for coordination in the course of the alignment of funding with the European Structural and Investment Funds as well as other financing schemes of the European Union for the 2014-2020 Multiannual FinancialFramework

Priority Area 4 “To restore and maintain the
quality of waters” (PA4)

March 2014

Version: v.5 draft for consultation following the 7th meeting of the Steering Groups of Priority Area 4 and 5 of EU SDR

Date: 4th April 2014

Background

The Council conclusions on added value of macro-regional strategies[[1]](#footnote-2) reiterated one of the underlying tasks of the countries of the EU Strategy of the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the European Commission: to align available financial resources at the EU, national and regional level with the objectives, roadmaps and implementation plans of macro-regional strategies and to embed these objectives into the programming documents of the new 2014-2020 programming period in a coordinated way. Ministers of Regional Development agreed during the Second Annual Forum of the EU SDR that a cross-cutting programming and implementation process is necessary to ensure tangible results envisioned by the Strategy. The Regulation laying down common provisions of European Structural and Investment Funds[[2]](#footnote-3) (ESIF) reinforced the mandate of the countries participating in Macroregional Strategies to align the financing, Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes with the content and measures adopted in respective Strategies. Priority Areas 4 „Quality of Waters” and 5 „Environmental Risks” took several steps to help facilitating this process as described in the ANNEX I. to this document.

Goals of the document

Priority Area 4 and 5 helps facilitating the process described in chapter “Background” by providing this strategic aid to

* contribute to the transboundary facilitating of the coordination of efforts and funding;
* confirmation of national priorities from the macroregional perspective of the EU SDR (with relation to the inclusion of national "implementation legs" of convergent and complementary actions and intervention topics in “national envelope” Operational Programmes);
* to support bridging gaps and ongoing efforts needed to be speeded up or promoted (inter alia supporting priority interventions of partner organizations facing bottlenecks and barriers).

Scope of the contribution to drafting the Operational Programmes and the consultation process

A clear understanding of how the programming of OPs fit into the Strategy process (what is the task of this stage and what is not) is essential to provide meaningful contribution to major partners of programming.

Task of the OP programming stage are to

* help the programming process of OPs and design of financial tools for the 2014-2020 MFF;
* prepare and enable OPs for funding, taylor OPs for water management related support;
* in broad terms to help transposing the strategic content of the EU SDR to the operational programmes.

Tasks of other stages and hence not to be done within the framework of preparing this guidance document are

* the identification of policy priorities and actions of the EU SDR and implementation plans (done through adoption and endorsement of the Action Plan and adoption of the Roadmaps);
* selection of projects or funding decisions (will be done by appropriate OP committees and bodies and authorities at the implementation stage of the Operational Programmes).

It must be noted, however, that continuous coordination for the EU DRS will be necessary throughout the implementation stage of the OPs as well as the further gradual unfolding and implementation of the Actions and Roadmaps.

The task of the consultations following the 7th meeting of Steering Groups is therefore primarily to

* identify proposed elements that are not relevant to river basin / sub-basin level efforts identified in Roadmaps or their national legs in at least one of the partner countries;
* identify missing intervention areas or indicative interventions that are crucial for river basin / sub basin wide efforts and are relevant in at least one of the partner countries;
* propose interventions that are addressing major bottlenecks or substantial contributions to RB/SB level efforts and therefore should be subject to special efforts for coordination of funding along with coordinated interventions (coordination of funding is not necessarily equal to providing additional funding).

Approach of the guidance document “Topics and intervention areas of the of PA4 and PA5 relevant for coordination in the alignment of funding for the 2014-2020 MFF”

Due to the broad range of water related interventions for the next multiannual financial framework and the various stages these interventions are in various countries there is no exhaustive list of planned interventions or projects is foreseen or practical even to compile for each country and operative programme within the framework of the Priority Area. Rather the range of interventions that are relevant to be considered in programming, derived from the actions and roadmaps is to be compiled.

There are four basic aspects of relevance criteria to be met simultaneously, three of them addressed by this document:

* time relevance: foreseen interventions (or part of them) are to be started, coordinated or implemented during the 2014-2020 period;
* financial relevance: foreseen intervention need to have at least one element that needs EU (or EIB) co-financing in at least one of the participating countries;
* coordination relevance: intervention or the financing of the intervention need to be coordinated or is a part of a coordinated effort according to an action / roadmap.

The fourth element is country relevance (linked to overall relevance or the aforementioned three aspects). As relevance varies by countries this element is not addressed by this document and therefore a rule of thumb there are no country specific recommendations in this document.

Composition of the proposal

The basic category to be covered by this guidance document is a topic / intervention area relevant for consideration in the programming process. As a rule of thumb it is a broad category that allows to foresee the type/direction of interventions as well as the potential sector / actors involved in the intervention. It is an essential input for programmers needed to accommodate the subject within respective OPs also with respect the delineations of intervention areas between various OPs. In some cases intervention areas might be “nested”: some more detailed intervention areas might be highlighted within another intervention area. That happens when part of a broad task or legal obligation is planned in a more detailed way that the remaining elements to be unfolded later due to a later deadline or a sequential process.

In some cases intervention areas are very wide and noted to provide “broad support” to general or framework/umbrella activities. This cannot be avoided where foreseen interventions are too numerous to be covered in programming documents or will be identified at a later stage due to the normal course of legal obligations and later deadlines. Broad support in this case covers support for the process of meeting the obligations and deadline (generally an institutional support). Attention should be provided to the timeframe of the programming procedure: when interventions are identified between 2014-2020 such interventions might also be relevant for funding before 2020.

The next category to be covered is indicative intervention. Indicative interventions are more concrete examples for the programmers that provide an explanation of focus on specific target groups, territories, particular themes or issues. Many of the proposals for actions and projects conforms to this broad category. This is not an exhaustive list, it is indicative only.

Aside from interventions horizontal questions could be listed. These are “messages” to OPs not primarily linked to water related issues on what kind of water related cross cutting criteria and factors to be taken into account when addressing and supporting other sectorial interventions and investments.

Detailed methodology

As agreed in the 6th meeting of the Steering Group of the Priority Areas 4 and 5 the efforts of the PA4 and 5 SGs of the EU SDR are focused to delivering the PA specific content rather than meeting the technical criteria of preparing and drafting OPs. (The output of the process might be somewhat further processed to be of timely assistance for the programming process by the PACs.) The document prepared therefore need not follow the templates for Partnership Agreements and various Operational Programmes. It should however help delineation and allocation of tasks between various OPs though by narrowing down areas so potential affected sectors and actors can be foreseen. An optimal balance between narrowing and broad, flexible content is essential.

Arguments for broadening the scope:

* necessary for some major "umbrella" activities;
* unavoidable where interventions are too numerous;
* unavoidable where specific interventions are unknown (not planned yet) and not anticipated with high level of confidence.
* provides greater flexibility for programming, delineation and implementation options in a complex system of Operational Programmes.

Arguments for narrowing:

* some decisions on OPs in the first stage of design and adoption are restrictive in terms of future scope, so a narrower intervention might provide a higher confidence in terms of future eligibility.

Although this structure needs not to be followed throughout a process understanding the structure of an Operational Programme helps understanding what kind of input could be useful and how to prepare it. An operative programme consist priority axes, that are made of (hierarchic) thematic objectives and investment priorities. This is the underlying structure determined first. Specific objectives, result indicators, overview of interventions/actions and indicative interventions as concrete examples are linked to these. To provide helpful contribution to the programming the intervention area should be the primary level of inputs. Intervention areas should be grouped by target sectors / actors / types of intervention. Broad categories are used also as "placeholders" for interventions to be determined later. Intervention areas must be complemented with both nested intervention areas (if any) and indicative interventions.

It is not needed to be supplied at this stage but intervention areas might be complemented with specific objectives (broad category but narrower than the axis/TO/IP). Intervention areas should “hint” at description of the type and examples of actions and their contribution to the specific objectives if defined. Indicative interventions should provide a more concrete understanding as described above.

More detailed categories, especially project level interventions are not advised to be listed. There are many reasons for that:

* not all OPs might accommodate projects in the programme document;
* those that do can generally only include large scale projects of very specific qualities.

Please note, however, that the content of most projects proposed by partners during the programming consultation also qualify as indicative interventions.

An example of this categories using the ICPDR document of Significant Water Management Issues would be decimal level 2 and 3 (and 4) in combination typically could be used to define a specific objective. Many preliminary identified actions and coordination requirements would be roughly equivalent to intervention areas, but should be grouped foremost by sectors targeted by the actions.

Multiple sectors (cross cutting areas) are also possible targeting multiple OPs or Priority Axes of an OP (various legs of interventions) or cross cutting interventions to be supported by single programmes. Results indicators (1-2 per specific objectives): can be linked to sector or objective. (Note that sometimes intermediary indicators are necessary where results are not expected to be directly measurable or attributed to intervention areas.)

**SUMMARY LISTIDENTIFYING JOINT PRIORITIES FOR EUSDR PA4**

The PA4 identified top priorities (topics) for PA4 and further discussed in the frame of the 7th Steering Group Meeting.According to the Action Plan of the EUSDR and in line with the Roadmap of PA4he following priorities shall be adopted and should be indicated in the OPs of the Danube countries according to their national priorities. The listed topics are divided according to main interventions areas and zoomed to indicative interventions as follows:

**Intervention areas** relevant from programming point of view of PA4 (top level):

1. Framework activities
2. Strengthening cooperation on sub basin level
3. Assessment and monitoring
4. Complex tasks and interventions for protection and sustainable use of water resources and aquifers
5. Address gaps in water infrastructure
6. Hydromorphological pressures
7. Information systems
8. Cross-cutting tasks
9. Scientific support

***Horizontal areas relevant to PA4 of EUSDR***

* Complex green infrastructure projects and coordinated planning (eg. in water and coast management, flood prevention, biodiversity) following a cross cutting approach (involving all affected sectors) should be encouraged in sectors contributing to the planning, use and restoration of water resources and water bodies.Such coordinated planning should always address (improve) the status of waters, hydromorphology, water resource management (quantitative and qualitative aspects) and biodiversity of water and related ecosystems.Additional interruptions in water bodies affecting sediment continuum or migratory species are to be avoided.
* Joint approach also to be ensured in a macroregional scale in coordinating funds and activitiesrelated to the aforementioned projects, appropriately involving PA4 and it’s partners especially in EU DRS efforts throughout all priority areas.

In line with the listed intervention areas the following **indicative interventions** can be listed:

Intervention areas relevant for programming in Priority Area 4 (all levels, indicative interventions are listed with *italics*):

1. **Framework activities Preparation and  monitoring of programmes of measures and implementation plans on a River Basin/sub-basin level**

## 1.1 Broad support to be provided to implementation of Water Framework Directive (also Reference to the Common Implementation Strategy is relevant throughout the OPs in the macroregion)

## 1.2 Broad support to addressing bottlenecks River Basin Management Planning, Joint Programme of Measures planning and review process on the basin / sub basin level. Indicative interventions:

### *2nd Morava River Management Plan*

### *Update of the Sava River Basin Analysis (2nd cycle)*

### *Preparation of the 2nd Sava River Basin Management Plan*

### *Complex ecological and hydromorphological target status for complex (intersectorial) planning*

## 1.3 Broad support for RBMP, JPM implementation on the basin / sub basin level. Indicative interventions:

### *Address the bottlenecks in JPM implementation*

### *Broad support to be provided to the measures foreseen in the 2nd Danube River Basin Management Plan*

### *Implementation of the Sava RBMP*

## 1.4 Significantly strengthening cooperation on sub basin level. Indicative interventions:

## *Strong support to the process envisioned in the Tisza Group by the Ministers of the Tisza countries and in the Pro Tisza initiative*

## *Sava*

## *Prut*

# Assessment, monitoring and information systems

## 2.1 Knowledge gaps and assessment related to RBMP, PoM, review, Blueprint and significant issues or emerging issues in the 2014-2020 period. Indicative interventions:

### *Hydrological study of the Sava RB*

### 2.2 Address the significant knowledge gaps in order to enable Danube Countries to plan and assess impacts of sustainable management of Danube and tributaries’ sediment for a range of end user sectors (drinking water, flood management, biodiversity, navigation, etc.). Indicative interventions:

*Danube Sediment project*

*Project towards a sustainable sediment management in the Sava RB*

### 2.1.2 Address knowledge gaps on hydromorphology related issues and hydropeaking

## 2.2 Monitoring and preparedness. Indicative interventions:

### *Support for addressing knowledge gaps and lack of data in hazardous and emerging substances*

### *Water quality monitoring and early warning system- (Sub) basin*

### *Support for coordinated compilation of national inventories on discharges, emissions and losses*

## 2.3 Complex monitoring of water bodies. Indicative interventions:

### *Examination of biodiversity and evironmental status of sediment, water and biota in the Sava River Basin*

### 2.3.1 Complex hydroecological assessment of sub-basins*.* Indicative interventions:

*Complex Tisza Hydroecological Status Report*

## 2.4 Socioeconomic impact assessment and decision aid for complex water management planning

## 2.5 Improve information systems to support tasks of the EU SDR. Indicative interventions:

### *Sava GIS 2nd and 3rd stage*

### *Support for the improvement of consistent spatial and monitoring data for addressing the needs of planning and scientific support to the water related strategic interventions in the DR, inter alia in the context of climate change*

# Complex tasks and interventions for protection and sustainable use of water resources, bodies and aquifers (Some tasks common with PA5 and PA6)

## 3.1 Water bodies (Morphological alterations)

### 3.1.1 Implementation of sediment management plans with complex financing following the resolution of knowledge gaps (potentially part of complex interventions)

### 3.1.2 Address hydromorphological alterations and restore river continuity*.* Indicative interventions:

*Planning and implementation of fish migration aids based on common priorities*

*Furthering efforts on Iron Gate*

*Support to planning and rehabilitation of longitudinal and lateral connectivity of rivers and ecosystems (incl. wetlands and inundation zones): also see PA5 floodplain related issues*

*Morphological restructuring of modified river beds*

*Sturgeon 2020 project*

## 3.2 Aquifers. Indicative interventions:

### *Protection and sustainable use of water resources from alluvial aquifers in Sava River Basin*

### 3.2.1 Mitigate diffuse pollution from agricultural sources

# 4. Address gaps in water infrastructure

## 4.1 Water supply

### 4.1.1 Identification of most efficient interventions to improve climate resilience of water supply systems

### 4.1.2 Establishing and upgrading water supply systems and networks to EU standards and improve climate resilience

## 4.2 Wastewater treatment and sewerage

### 4.2.1 Settlements under 10 000 PE (non-MS) and 2000PE

*Program for optimized deployment of UWWT for 10000PE-2000PE and 2000 PE> settlements*

*Planning and dissemination*

*optimized development framework*

*Pilot projects for 2000 PE> UWWT investments*

### 4.2.2 Establishing and upgrading UWWT systems and networks to EU standards, reduce organic pollution

*Introduction of nutrient reduction in existing and new UWWTPs*

### 4.2.3 Upgrade of the sewerage network

# 5. Cross-cutting tasks*.* Indicative interventions:

### *Sediment Balance Project*

### *System for collection, treatment and disposal for hazardous waste on Sava river (follow-up for CO-WANDA)*

### *Master Plan for the development of Eco-Tourism in the Sava RB*

**ANNEX I.**

Background

The Priority Area 4 “To restore and maintain the quality of waters” (PA4) of the European Strategy on the Danube Region (EU SDR) is one of the two priority areas (beside PA5) where **special emphasis has been taken on the process of alignment of funding** in the past years. It was facilitated in the frame of the 5th and 6th Steering Group meetings in 2013 to discuss on the needs of the countries related to financing as well as on the possible roles of the EU SDR PA4 to ensure financial sources to the implementation of action plan between the 2014-2020 financing period.

For the sake of continuous process the PA4 prepared the current document summarising the essence of legislation and collected the identified country priorities and suggested PA4 priorities with the aim of identifying the joint priorities of PA4.

Steps taken by PA4

1. The PACs in 2013 participated at many meetings to discuss the roles, tasks and opprotunities of the PA in the upcoming financing period.[[3]](#footnote-4)
2. In the frame of the 5th Steering Group meeting (5th June 2013, Bratislava, Slovakia), agenda items on financing the activities and project of EUSDR as well as on the involvement of SG members in the 2014-2020 programming process have already been started to be discussed.
3. PA4 disseminated the message in all possible forums, especially called the attention of all stakeholders during the Green Danube region Workshop of the Annual EU SDR Stakeholder Forum (28-29th October 2013, Bucharest, Romania) that it would be of outmost interest to **identify priorities** and be active in the upcoming programming period and to be involved in the operational programs of the Danube countries.
4. As a next step prior to the 6th Steering Group meeting PA4 **circulated a questionnaire** to the members and observers of the Steering Group related to the following main issues:
* Priority issues of water management in the Danube River Basin to be dealt with within the next programming period (PA4 relevance);
* State of play of the preparation in the countries related to the operational programmes (OPs);
* Danube Strategy integration into the planning process in the countries, role of SG members in the programming;
* Sources of funding is envisaged, operational programmes planned or established in the countries;
* Assistance needs from the PACs and from the Steering Group;
* National financing visions.
1. At the 6th SG meeting (12th December 2013, Vienna) the financing possibilities and the ALIGNMENT OF FUNDING were discussed in detail. (Please see the outcome of the discussions bellow.)
2. The PA4 in January 2014 called again the attention of the SG members to identify priorities and started to collect items from members for PA4 **JOINT PRIORITIES**.
3. The PA4 further contacted the Secretariate of the ICPDR in February 2014 to reach in a coordinated manner the ICPDR working groups identifying Joint Priorities.
4. PA4 colleagues participated at the Hydromorphology Task Group of ICPDR on 27-28 February 2014, Vienna, AT and further asked the contribution of the WG to inform PA4 about Joint Priorities for the operational programmes. (PA4 will be similarly active and present at other ICPDR WG meetings and will ask the opinion of the WGs for Joint Priorities.)
5. PA4 started to compile a draft document assisting the identification of PA4 Joint Priorities.
6. PA4 provided updated information related to financing and operational programmes to the SG members at the 7th SG meeting on 28th March 2014 in Budapest, Hungary.

**To the knowledge of PA4 these sets of proactive measures taken by PA4 in 2013 are out of precedent and show the commitment of PA4 for assisting in reaching the targets identified by the EU for the upcoming financial period for macro-regional strategies.**

ANNEX II. General considerations and National Priorities

EU situation in relation to alignment of funding

In the frame of the 6th SG meeting the representative of the DG Regional Policy presented up to date information about the new legislative package for the European Cohesion Policy and it was stressed that the implementation of the EUSDR will be supported by the programmes of the ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds and beyond).

On the 6th October 2011 the European Commission adopted a draft legislative package for the Cohesion Policy for the funding period 2014 – 2020 and on 17 December 2013 the new regulations were adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.[[4]](#footnote-5) According to the new regulations, the European Territorial Cooperation will be continued and even reinforced as separate cohesion goal. The existing strands of cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation will be maintained andthe present area of the South East Europe Programme Transnational Cooperation Programme will be covered in the next programming period 2014-2020 by two transnational programmes: Danube and South East Gateway (renamed later on Adriatic-Ionian).

These two new programmes will support the development and implementation of two Macro Regional Strategies: Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Regions.

The Danube programme area includes Austria; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Germany (Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria) not whole territory); Hungary; the Republic of Moldova; Montenegro; Romania; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Ukraine (not whole territory). The geography of the new Danube programme matches exactly the territory of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The macro-regional strategy and the transnational programme are two different instruments developed for similar aims but acting on different levels and principles. Their matching territory and goals provide great opportunities for cooperation between the two: besides contributing to the Strategy’s thematic goals by realizing relevant cooperation projects, the programme might also support the institutional cooperation of stakeholders and institutions of the Danube Strategy.

The Danube Transnational program is a prioritised program to support the implementation of the EUSDR, but it is crucial that the strategy is reflected in all Operative programmes. The Danube Transnational Program is practically supporting the smaller preparatory actions. Due to this the PA4 SG has an important role in the preparation of the financial programming period for 2014-2020.

Thematic priorities of the Danube programme will be defined in line with the relevant draft EC legislation, the national priorities of Partner States, and reflect the needs of the programme area. Topics to be addressed by programme priorities may include many of traditional transnational cooperation topics, like innovation, transport, environment, etc.

As new tools the

* integrated territorial investments (funding for several OPs to follow integrated investment strategy for a functional area), the
* integrated operations (an operation financed through several EU funds);
* joint Action Plan;
* EGTC (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation) are to be mentioned.

It is important to note that the SG can be used to define priorities at the macro-regional level. It is also a platform for the exchange of programming documents (good practice) or to prepare project pipeline. The Commission also urges countries to get involved in the programming process in the relevant countries (in coordination with NCP) and to influence the preparation of PA and OPs (national, regional, and ETC) to be able to influence the priorities and project selection criteria and to be able to participate in selection processes.

One can conclude form the replies and the SG meeting debate that:

* Discussion on financing should be arranged on high level but SG members should facilitate and define priorities at the macro-regional level in terms of technical input and priorities;
* Gaps identified by the reporting processes linked to the RBM by DG ENV or ICPDR or other related partners ;
* ICPDR reports (RBMPs and SWMIs) should be checked to list priority issues;
* However programming is not a project based procedure the information (and related brochure) circulated by the Sava Commission is a good sample on harmonising common fields of activities in terms of programming and both the cooperation within the sub-basin and on-going projects gave significant input to the programming process of the operative programmes.
* PACs should also help facilitate the inclusions of priority issues into financing procedure having direct contact with the European Commission, but still it is part of the job of the SG members and the Commission according to the priorities set up by various partners.

National priorities

Austria, Czech Republic, Bavaria, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia answered the Questionnaire sent by PA4 and the alignment of funding was further discussed in detail in the frame of the 6th Steering Group Meeting.

The main outcomes of the feedbacks demonstrate that the national priorities and institutional/organisational solutions vary, but there are some general considerations that are applicable to the whole macro-region.

**ANNEX III: JOINT PRIORITIES**

The PA4 asked its members and also the Sava Commission and the ICPDR to provide items for joint consideration and of macro-regional importance. So far only Slovakia and the ICPDR provided a reply. The SG members are called up again to identify joint priorities that can further be represented as JOINT PA4 Priorities.

**The Slovak Republic appointed two following priorities for the Priority Area 4 „Water Quality“, EUSDR:**

1. **Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM)**

**Content:**

Optimisation of water management, water use and water economy with the aim to ensure the sufficient water sources to overcome the drought and water scarcity, and creating the sustainable protection against deteriorative water consequences. These aims are harmonised with EUSDR PA4 aims. The IRBM will ensure the effective connection between the river basin management and the flood risk management, and also with other sectors as forest management, agriculture, fish management, investment and territorial development, energy, transport, regional policy, tourism and other activities in river basins.

**Output:**

Harmonisation of processes and prioritisation of measures in the field of legislation, technique, organisation, finances and information within integrated water management.

1. **Water Sources Protection**

**Content:**

Identification of regions of common interests, harmonisation of processes and measures to decrease pollution. These aims are harmonised with EUSDR PA4 aims. To create the coordinated approach to enforce the common interests in measures proposal to protect water sources, mainly in connection to environmental risks and extremes.

**Output:**

Proposal of common legislative, economic-financial and technical tools inevitable for implementation of measures which aim in reaching of environmental aims listed in Conception of Water Sources Protection in Europe.

**The ICPDR indicated its sphere of priority topics as follows:**

**Significant Water Management Issues for the Danube River Basin**

The ICPDR Secretariat shared with PA4 its recent study on "**Interim Overview on the Significant Water Management Issues in the Danube River Basin District**" which was adopted at the ICPDR Ordinary Meeting in December 2013 and which is now in public consultation. The document was elaborated by ICPDR Expert and Task Groups and basically outlines the main issues which are in need to be addressed by the 2nd Danube River Basin Management Plan according to the EU Water Framework Directive. More information is available at <http://www.icpdr.org/main/SWMI-PP> . The PA4 also contacted the ICPDR working groups to collect their identified priorities.

With regard to specific project needs as outlined in different ICPDR documents and/or resolutions by the Heads of Delegations and through the WGs, the following points were specially emphasised:

* Project on **sediment management** (as included in the PA4 roadmap) in order to close the existing knowledge gap on this issue (project proposal was already handed in under the SEE Programme in November 2011 but was not successful)
* Project(s) on the **sturgeon issue** based on "Sturgeon 2020" elaborated by the Danube Sturgeon Task Force in the frame of PA6: <http://www.dstf.eu/assets/Uploads/documents/DSTFStrategySturgeon-2020final.pdf>
* Projects in support of sub-basin activities as indicated in the PA4 roadmap, e.g. the **Tisza**
* Project on **wetlands and floodplain restoration** as included in the PA5 roadmap and indicated in the 1st Danube River Basin Management Plan.

**List of suggested measures**

**(1)** Transboundary relevance – coordinated in transboundary scale:

* Prioritization Approach – fish migration aids
* Priority ranking of wetland/floodplain restoration
* Morphological restructuring of modified rivers beds
* Sediment issue
* Sturgeon – long distance fish migration
1. Measures with transboundary impact - to be implemented/financed on national level:
* Construction of fish migration aids (based on prioritization approach)
* Restoration of wetlands/floodplains

**At project level:**

* Sediments project, potentially to be financed out of the upcoming Danube Transnational Cooperation Programme
* Sturgeon projects - in-situ conservation measures, habitat mapping, ex-situ conservation measures, and, the famous Iron Gates Feasibility Study
* A project on Danube floodplains
* The Tisza project

**The priorities provided by the SAVA Commission are as follows:**

**River basin management**

* Examination of biodiversity and environmental status of sediment, water and biota in the Sava river basin
* Towards sustainable sediment management in the Sava river basin
* Protection and sustainable use of water resources from alluvial aquifers in in the Sava river basin
* Implementation of the Sava RBM Plan
* Update of the Sava River Basin Analysis
* Preparation of the 2nd Sava RBM Plan

**Information management**

* Establishment and completion of the Sava GIS

**Hydrological and Meteorological Issues**

* Hydrological study for the Sava river basin

**ANNEX IV. THE REPLY OF CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE PA4 QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. **How the preparation stands in your country related to the operational programmes?**

*Operational Program Environment 2014 - 2020 is currently as well as other programs in the state of preparation in accordance with EC requirements. Ministry of Environment is currently preparing the 4th programming document, including indicators and targets. Expected date for the transfer of all operational programs as well as the draft Partnership Agreement to the Government for approval is the end of March 2014. The priority of the CZ govermnent is to have the OPs up and running as soon as possible.*

1. **How the Danube Strategy is integrated into the planning process in your country?**

*The present strategy is integrated into the working version of the OP Environment 2014 - 2020, as an integral part, as well as in other relevant OPs. It is also integral part of PA. The National contact point works directly under the authority o Prime Minister and he primarilly excercises the role of State Secretary for the European Affairs. As such, he is an integral and very important actor at the process of preparation of new period and he is integral part of all important bodies that prepare the next period on a horizontal level, including the negotiation team of the CR with the EC and the steering committee for the prepration of new period. The ESUDR has therefore a rather influential advocate in the process. In promoting the EUSDR goals, the NCP works close in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development, who is the National Body of Coordination responsible for the preparation of the new programing period and who has the authority to instruct the managing authoritties.*

1. **What sources of funding is envisaged, what operational programmes are planned or established in your country?**

*Operational Program Environment under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment will be financed by the ERDF and Cohesion fund. The proposed allocation for the operational program has not yet been approved. Responsible state institutions are in charge of the particular operational programs. Except for ERDF and Cohesion fund, sources are also ESF, EARDF and in a rather limited manner EMFF, therefore all 5 ESI funds.*

1. **How can the SG members be involved in programming?**

*Members of the SG can be involved in preparation of the operational program. They provide necessary information with regard to ongoing activities and plans in Danube strategy and present the results of the SG meetings. SG members represent contact points in particular areas. The SG also provided a document with targets and priorities of all 11 priority areas to managing authorities. The steering committee members were approached by the programming authorities in order to jointly identify common interests and overlaps which were later incorporated into the draft OP.*

1. **Do the Blueprint and the Common Implementation Strategy items appear in the programming tasks?**

*Yes, operational program is involved in the Common Implementation Strategy.*

1. **What kind of assistance you would like to obtain from the PA and from the Steering Group?**

*We are interested in obtaining the current information about contact points, ongoing projects and activities of the group. We are also interested in common priorities in a long run – i.e. till the end of the programming period. Certain of our common goals are limited in time, however with the OP fully operational by the mid 2014, we can expect first calls by the end of 2014. Taken into account the long period of assement of the project, we need more goals that relate to the 2020 and beyond. A discussion of our common long-term priorities would be helpful.*

1. **Is there a national financing vision?**

*There is the Operational Program Environment ongoing until 2015. There is about 2 billion euro of absorption capacity within the Priority Area 1 for projects dedicated to the improvement of the surface and ground water status, decrease of the amount of dangerous substances in water and other listed issues.*

*Within the priority area 6 for the halt the loss of biodiversity and increase of the landscape´s ecological stability, absorption capacity of almost 600 million euro exists for this period. For the next period 2014-2020, the financing is being prepared.*

1. **What are the national priorities (related to the Danube)?**

*The national priorities related to the Danube are preparation of the 2nd Morava River Management Plan as well as the preparation of the Flood Risk Management Plan for the Morava River Basin. Morava River Basin is part of the Danube River Basin. The CZ is a PAC for PA2, therefore it naturally focuses primarily on activities in the area of sustainable energy. Given the rather frequent floods, PA4, 5, 6 are also of prime importance for us.*

1. GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting, Luxembourg, 22 October 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. **REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013** OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006; **REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013** OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. In 2013 several events were organised to discuss on the EUSDR future financing possibilities and about the needs of the future operational programmes, such as: 16-17 April Meeting between the national coordinators (NCPs) of the Strategy and the responsible for financial programming in the 14 partner countries, Bucharest; 29-30 April Meeting of Priority Area Coordinators, Sofia; 21 June A conference on the use of the future Structural Funds for the implementation of the Danube Strategy, Stuttgart; 28-29 October 2nd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Bucharest  and 3 rd Financing Dialogue, National Bank Romania, Bucharest. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. **REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013** OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006; **REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013** OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal [↑](#footnote-ref-5)