



Guidelines for Applicants

TAF-DRP Call 3

Table of Contents

1.	Key data to the 3 rd Call of the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP)	2
2.	Background	2
3.	Objective and main principles of TAF-DRP	3
4.	Set up of a TAF-DRP Project	4
4.1	Duration of TAF-DRP support	4
4.2	Budget of the Facility	4
4.3	Official language	4
4.4	Main conditions to be fulfilled.....	5
4.4.1	Basic eligibility criteria.....	5
4.4.2	Quality criteria.....	6
5.	Application Procedure.....	6
6.	Formal check by the Implementing Bods.....	7
7.	Pre-selection of applications by the PACs and their Steering Group	7
8.	Plausibility check of pre-selected applications	7
9.	Final Decision	8
10.	Description of Expert Services & Cooperation with the Beneficiary.....	8
10.1	Expert Services.....	8
10.2	Expert Consortia	9
10.3	Conduct of the expert.....	9
10.4	Conduct of the Beneficiary	9
11.	Implementation of Expert Services	10
11.1	Inception phase	10
11.2	Implementation phase	11
12.	Follow-up	11



1. Key data to the 3rd Call of the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP)

Volume of the total TAF-DRP support for the 3rd Call:	€ 450.000,00
Value of Experts' Services for each project:	€ 15.000,00 – € 25.000,00 incl. VAT
Planned number of supported projects:	15 - 20
Duration of the assignment	6 months
Planned start of experts' services:	Approx. October 2015
Latest completion deadline:	31st of May 2016
Restricted thematic Call for the following Priority Areas → Detailed summary, see Annex I	PA 02 Energy
	PA 03 Culture & Tourism
	PA 04 Water Quality
	PA 09 People & Skills
	PA 10 Institutional Capacity and Cooperation

2. Background

The development of qualitative projects in a transnational, macro-regional environment is a challenging venture. In order to give momentum to the implementation of the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)** for the programming period 2014-2020 and to support the preparation of projects with a clear EUSDR added-value, in 2013 the European Commission decided to establish a **Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects** (hereafter called "**TAF-DRP**" or "**Facility**").

The City of Vienna, in charge of the coordination of **Priority Area 10 (PA 10): Institutional Capacity and Cooperation** of the EUSDR as well as of the TAF-DRP, has entrusted the implementation of the TAF-DRP to the PA 10 Coordination office. PAC 10 Vienna and EuroVienna EU-consulting & -management GmbH are acting as "**Management Unit (MU)**" for the purpose of this Facility. The operational implementation of TAF-DRP is assigned to **EuroVienna EU-consulting & -management GmbH** (hereafter referred to as the **Implementing Body - IB**).



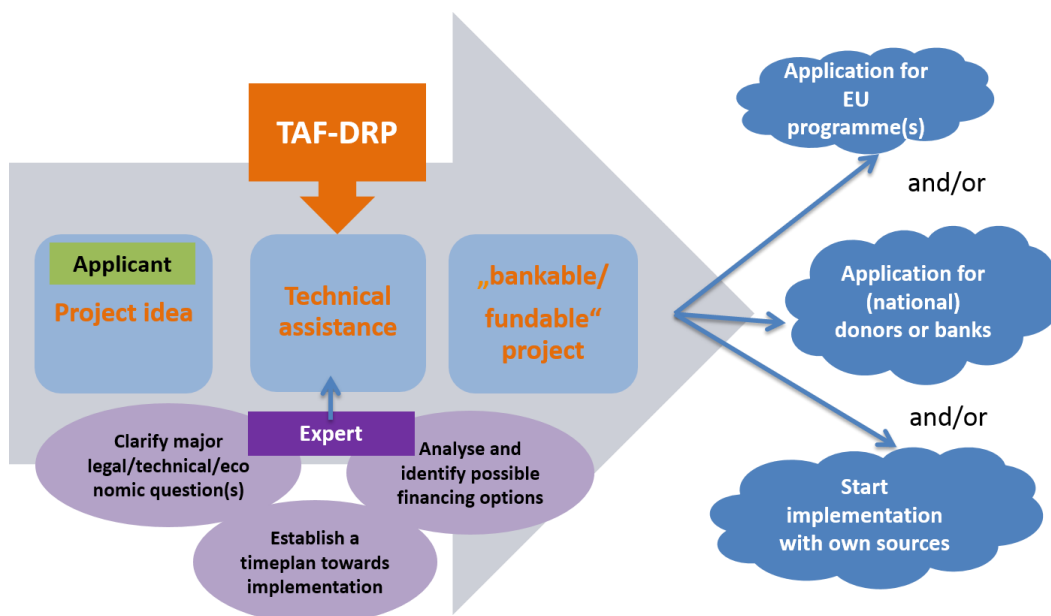
3. Objective and main principles of TAF-DRP

Objective

Due to a lack of capacity, know-how and resources, as well as due to existing legal, technical and financial obstacles, many project ideas never turn into concrete projects.

The TAF-DRP is an EU grant scheme to develop project ideas relevant to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, into **“bankable/fundable” project concepts**. Bankable/fundable projects are mature enough to either apply for funding from donors (private, public) and/or to EU programmes, and/or to start implementation with own resources.

The Facility supports selected project ideas to set up **a clear pathway towards project implementation**, through the **provision of experts** performing consultation services. Expert services are provided free of charge to selected project Applicants, **up to a value of € 25,000 (incl. VAT) and for a duration of maximum 6 months** (see details in section 4.1).



An instrument for the EUSDR

TAF-DRP aims to support projects:

- From the entire **Danube Region** which covers the following 14 Countries:

EU Member States		EU Accession Countries	
1	Austria	1	Bosnia and Herzegovina
2	Bulgaria	2	Montenegro
3	Croatia	3	Serbia
4	Czech Republic	Non-EU Member States	
5	Germany (Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg)	1	Moldova
6	Hungary	2	Ukraine (Danube Region)
7	Romania		
8	Slovakia		
9	Slovenia		



- Addressing issues from **all Priority Areas (PA)** of the EUSDR:

Pillars	Priority Area	
Connecting the Region	PA 1A	Mobility – Waterways
	PA 1B	Mobility – Rail – Road – Air
	PA 02	Energy
	PA 03	Culture & Tourism
Protecting the Environment	PA 04	Water Quality
	PA 05	Environmental Risks
	PA 06	Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soil
Building Prosperity	PA 07	Knowledge Society
	PA 08	Competitiveness
	PA 09	People & Skills
Strengthening the Region	PA 10	Institutional Capacity and Cooperation
	PA 11	Security

For more information about the priorities and main targets of each area, please visit the EUSDR webpage: www.danube-region.eu/about/priorities and see Annex I to this document.

A pilot initiative

As TAF-DRP is a pilot-initiative, a **flexible approach** is used and adaptations may be brought during implementation, to best reflect the needs that may occur and provide the most appropriate support.

So far, two TAF-DRP Calls for Project ideas have been organized, out of which 35 projects were selected. To improve the functioning of the Facility, the Facility and its implementation were evaluated externally after the second Call. The recommendations made have been integrated into the procedure for the third Call, where possible. The Facility will end in 2016, thus, this third Call shall be the last one.

4. Set up of a TAF-DRP Project

4.1 Duration of TAF-DRP support

Submitted project ideas will be assessed thoroughly. Support services by the experts are foreseen to start from **End of October 2015**. Experts' services will last up to **6 months**. Real project commencement dates and the final duration of the experts' services will depend on individual project needs.

4.2 Budget of the Facility

- The Facility, with an allocation for expert services of **€ 450.000,00**,
- will enable experts to support between **15 and 20 project ideas**
- with a maximum value of **€ 15.000,00** to max **€ 25.000,00 incl. VAT each**.

4.3 Official language

The official language of TAF-DRP is **English**. The application documents, (expert) reports and other documents are to be completed in English.



4.4 Main conditions to be fulfilled

Project ideas need to be **relevant for the EUSDR and the related Priority Area** and need to show a **high commitment** on behalf of the Applicant. The TAF-DRP is expected to **evolve the project idea towards a fundable/bankable project**.

4.4.1 Basic eligibility criteria

Eligible Applicants	<p><u>Eligible applicants are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bodies established under public or private law, having legal personality including small organisations, non-governmental and civil society organisations. International organisations are also eligible. Organisations having their seat in the Danube Region (eligible countries see also p.3) <p><u>Not eligible are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual persons Priority Area Coordinators
Project partnership (Lead Applicant and project partners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants are not required to formally establish partnerships between organisations. In case a partnership/consortium exists, one partner acts as the Applicant. The applicant is required to take responsibility for the submitted application
Thematic scope of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A project proposal can be submitted in all Priority Areas of the EUSDR Some PAs have restrictive thematic focuses for eligible project proposals; a detailed description of the thematic focuses is provided in Annex I.
Project Financial Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAF-DRP targets project ideas of all financial dimensions as long as plausibility is given. Estimate the overall project volume of the future project and indicate the project's financial size in the application form.
Public interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects have to reveal public interest. TAF-DRP does not support projects with a predominant commercial interest.
TAF-DRP Applications 3rd Call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Applicants can only submit <u>one</u> TAF-DRP application within the 3rd Call In case a Lead Applicant submits an application for TAF-DRP funding, they cannot act as Project Partner for another TAF-DRP application In case a project received TAF-DRP support in the previous two Calls, an application for the same project within the 3rd Call is not possible It is not possible to apply for TAF-DRP support and START funding for the same project at the same time



4.4.2 Quality criteria

Expected change to the status quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maturity of submitted project ideas is expected to differ. Applications should demonstrate that the status quo of the project idea will evolve substantially with the help of the Facility, to an extent that would not have been feasible without the Facility. The project needs and the requested support must be presented realistically in the Application Form in a clear and convincing way.
Relevance for the EUSDR and the Priority Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects need to contribute to the objective(s) and /or action(s) of the selected Priority Area, as defined in the EUSDR Action Plan: http://www.danube-region.eu/component/edocman/action-plan-eusdr-pdf.
Macro-regional dimension of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported projects shall have a macro-regional dimension (in terms of partnership/location of activities) and / or impact. A project implemented locally can also be considered as relevant, if it has an impact on the EUSDR
Commitment to the Future Project (Follow-Up)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAF-DRP support is aimed at projects that could not be implemented without the support. TAF-DRP support need to push the status quo of the project idea further. The commitment of the applicant to initiate follow-up activities is a decisive pre-condition for the selection of the applicant (see section 12)

Beside the basic eligibility and quality criteria the Management Unit will ensure, as far as possible, that selected projects are **from all Danube Region countries and address all Priority Areas of the EUSDR**.

5. Application Procedure

The application form is available for download on the PA 10 - Institutional capacity and cooperation webpage: <http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/taf-drp-2> from the 20th of May until the 24th of June 2015.

The application form must be completed according to the guidelines, signed by the legal representative of the Applicant's organisation and submitted through an **Online Application Tool that will be open from 24th of June 2015, 12:00 am to 26th of June 2015, 12:00 am (CET)**. The link to the online tool is stated in the application form.

The following **2 documents** must be uploaded to the Online Application Tool:

- **Completed Application Form as open Word file** (all pages)
- **PDF - scan of printed and signed Application Form** (all pages, as one single document)

No additional documents are requested.

If one of the following criteria applies, the application will not be assessed:

- The application is incomplete
- Mandatory fields in the Application are not filled in
- The application contains inconsistent information
- The application was not submitted via the Online Application Tool
- The application was submitted after the deadline



Timeline for the application procedure

20 th of May 2015	Launch of the 3rd Call – application documents can be found at: http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/taf-drp-2
24 th – 26 th of June 2015, 12:00 AM (CET)	Online submission of applications: Applicants must register for the Online Application Tool and upload the complete application

6. Formal check by the Implementing Bods

All applications submitted via the Online Application Tool will be formally checked by the Management Unit.

The following criteria will be checked:

- Is the application complete and submitted correctly?
- Is the applicant eligible?
- Is the project idea eligible?

Incomplete applications or applications where formal criteria are not fulfilled will not be subject to further assessment. **Applicants concerned will be informed.**

7. Pre-selection of applications by the PACs and their Steering Group

PACs receive all applications relevant for their Priority Area (PA) and conduct the pre-selection procedure with their Steering Group according to the following criteria:

- Relevance of the project for the EUSDR and the identified Priority Area
- Macro-regional dimension or expected impact of the project
- Quality of the application (consistency, clarity, feasibility of the project, justification for needing TAF-DRP support, commitment to the future project, ...)

PACs inform the IB about the results of their pre-selection and forward a ranking list of the pre-selected projects for final check.

8. Plausibility check of pre-selected applications

The plausibility check of best ranked projects is conducted by the Management Unit.

The applications are assessed in relation to the following plausibility elements:

- Adequacy between project objectives, planned activities and requested expert services
- Expected change to the status quo

As TAF-DRP targets the entire Danube Region and all Priority Areas, the geographic and thematic balance will be considered within the assessments.

The Management Unit reserves the right to verify the legal existence of Lead Applicants by requesting official documents of the organisations.



9. Final Decision

PAC 10 will send the final selection list to all PACs for their comments. After consulting the PACs, PAC 10 will send a decision letter to each lead applicant informing them whether the application is selected or is not selected for TAF-DRP support. **In case of rejection, assessment details can be provided.**

10. Description of Expert Services & Cooperation with the Beneficiary

Depending on the maturity of selected project ideas and the type of support needed, different types of expertise may be provided, **including a combination thereof**

10.1 Expert Services

Type of Service	Action & Description of Service	Output (examples)
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define objective for the project Define cornerstones of the project Establishing a clear time plan towards project implementation Clarify technical questions e.g. regarding tender procedures General assistance with major open issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadmap for project implementation Overview of relevant funding sources Applicable conditions (for different funding sources) Recommendations of the expert General overview of funding possibilities Cost-benefit analysis (Pre-) feasibility study
Conceptual/ Methodological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed provision of planning steps Define cornerstones of the concept Provide guidelines on how to write a concept/application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project concept Application for funding Applicable conditions (for different funding sources) Recommendations of the expert
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the legal framework applicable Addressing major legal questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal opinion Legal recommendations
Financial/Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a cost estimate for possible solutions Provision of a budget estimate for the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget plan Financing plan Cost-benefit analysis (for different legal/technical options)
Support with clustering/ partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance with identifying important partners Assistance in defining concrete partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of main actors Set up of a targeted network



10.2 Expert Consortia

Three consortia have been selected prior to this Call to provide technical assistance services. **Experts will be assigned to successful applicants** according to the topic of their projects.

- **LOT 1:**
 - Priority Area 1A (Mobility and Intermodality)
 - Priority Area 1B (Mobility and Intermodality)
 - Priority Area 2 (Sustainable energy)
- **LOT 2:**
 - Priority Area 4 (Water quality)
 - Priority Area 5 (Environmental risks)
 - Priority Area 6 (Biodiversity, landscapes, air and soil quality)
- **LOT 3:**
 - Priority Area 3 (Culture and Tourism)
 - Priority Area 7 (Knowledge Society)
 - Priority Area 8 (Competitiveness)
 - Priority Area 9 (People and skills)
 - Priority Area 10 (Institutional capacity and cooperation)
 - Priority Area 11 (Security)

10.3 Conduct of the expert

Following criteria will be applied by the experts in delivering their support:

- Use of sound methodologies;
- Realistic and concise assessment of the status quo;
- Concise and operational outputs, drafted in a clear style;
- Regular communication and cooperation with the Beneficiary, through dialogue and process-oriented approach;
- Beside desk work and email/phone contact, 1 to 2 physical meetings between expert and beneficiary are foreseen during the assignment;
- Compliance with agreed objectives, outputs and timelines. In case of difficulties, the expert will inform the Beneficiary and the Management Unit;
- Transfer of all results and deliverables to the Beneficiary, who will own exclusive rights of use.

10.4 Conduct of the Beneficiary

Consultant services **cannot and should not replace the commitment of the Applicant/Beneficiary** to the project. The Beneficiary is expected to closely cooperate with the consultant throughout the assignment period, and to provide all relevant inputs and documentation in his/her possession to the consultant. After completion of the assignment, the Beneficiary will be expected to take follow-up actions (see section 12).

Following criteria have to be applied by the successful applicant/beneficiary:

- Realistic and concise description of the status quo to the expert;
- Regular communication and cooperation with the Expert,
- Compliance with agreed objectives, outputs and timelines;
- Upon request, provision of all information and documentation to the expert without delay;
- Delivery of requested outputs without delay



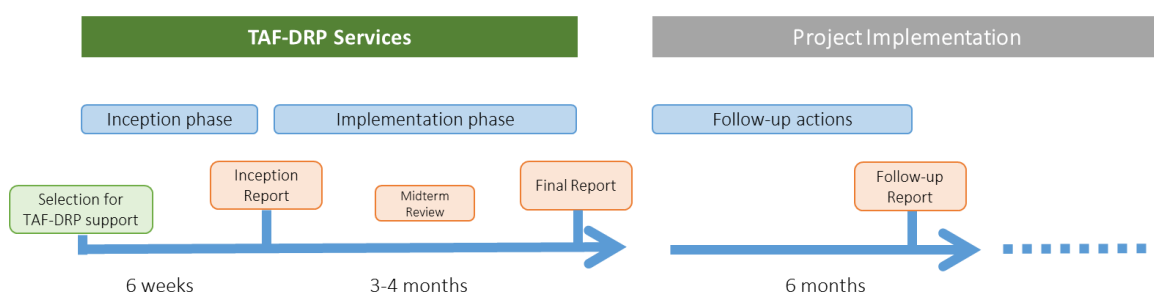
- In case of a partnership, coordination and involvement of the relevant partners during the assignment
- Designation of a contact person or project leader to communicate with the expert. This person needs to be familiar with the project idea, have a good command of English and needs to be available throughout the assignment and participate in meetings. In case this person changes, the expert and the Management Unit need to be informed
- Compliance with agreed objectives, outputs and timelines. In case the beneficiary experiences any kind of difficulty, they will inform the expert and the Management Unit;

11. Implementation of Expert Services

For successful applicants (hereafter called beneficiaries) the implementation of the TAF-DRP support will be organised in 2 phases, see below. The successful applicants commit themselves to **provide relevant information and documents** in his/her possession to the assigned expert without any delay and to cooperate with the expert throughout the assignment period.

The Beneficiary and the expert share a joint responsibility for the TAF-DRP output. In order to ensure mutual understanding between expert, beneficiary and Management Unit, regular reporting is taking place.

Overview of the TAF-DRP setting:



11.1 Inception phase

The Inception Phase is the first phase TAF-DRP supports and serves as a basis for the following consultation work performed by the assigned expert. During this phase the project's and the beneficiary's needs will be clarified on the basis of the information contained in the Application Form, appropriate goals of the consultation will be set and a roadmap on the following services developed.

Upon project selection, the assigned expert receives following documents:

- Copy of the application form
- Assessment results
- Copy of the decision letter.

The experts are expected to contact the beneficiary, to clarify any issues required to start the implementation phase. The inception phase takes up **approximately 20% of the total service value** and will last **approximately 6 weeks**. After completion of the inception phase, the expert submits a concise **inception report** to the Management Unit. After the Management Unit confirms the report, a copy will be forwarded to the beneficiary. The report serves to confirm and verify the terms of the assignment and/or to proposed justified modifications. It is accompanied by an offer for the delivery of services for the implementation phase or contains a recommendation to terminate services.



The report should contain:

- Understanding of the project idea and the future project;
- Outline of the major focus of action in project development, specifying potential risks
- Detailed description of the results which can be achieved in the course of the assignment;
- Detailed work schedule for the activities and work steps planned in the assignment, as well as activities conducted so far;
- Provisional list of possible funding options and initial assessment of the probability to acquire funding.

11.2 Implementation phase

After the inception phase is completed, the assigned expert and the beneficiary will work together on pushing the project idea a considerable step forward into a bankable or fundable project. The activities conducted are based on the goals documented in the inception report and will thus differ from project to project, depending on the maturity of the project idea. During the implementation phase two reports will be established by the expert. Up to two face-to-face meetings with the expert can be held during the assignment (incl. the inception phase). Management Unit can participate in the meetings as an observer.

1. **Progress review:** A short interim review will be conducted between the expert and the Implementation Body to check the main achievements to date, investigate open matters and (re)define expected final deliverables. If no achievements have been made so far, the Management Unit reserves **the right to stop TAF-DRP support** for the concerned beneficiary.
2. **Final report:** A final report is to be delivered by the expert and sent to the Management Unit after the project services are completed. The final report summarises the work undertaken and presents the outputs of the assignment. All documents elaborated in the course of the assignment shall be attached to the report. In the final report, the expert will define (in close cooperation with the beneficiary) recommendations for follow-up activities. These are based on the application form and the experiences made during the assignment. The beneficiary commits themselves to conduct follow-up activities accordingly. The report will be assessed and validated by the Beneficiary and the Management Unit. Clarifications may be requested if needed.

12. Follow-up

By submitting an application for TAF-DRP support, the applicants commit themselves to perform future project activities. After the expert services are completed, the applicant needs to perform **follow-up activities based on** the information given in **the application form as well as on the experts' recommendations**. The Beneficiary will be responsible for the follow-up actions towards implementation of the future project. In particular, the Beneficiary shall **take all necessary steps and actions** that will enable the project concept to be implemented. The Lead Partner needs to ensure the sustainability of the project activities.

Within a period of 6 months after validation of the final report the beneficiary needs to submit **a detailed report on the conducted follow-up activities**. These follow-up report must be submitted to the Management Unit of TAF-DRP upon request. The exact deadline will be defined by the Management Unit.

The Management Unit reserves the right to inform the concerned PACs, in case **no report is submitted** or the report reveals **poor commitment** on behalf of the Beneficiary.

ANNEX I - Overview of thematic focuses for the 3rd Call of TAF-DRP