

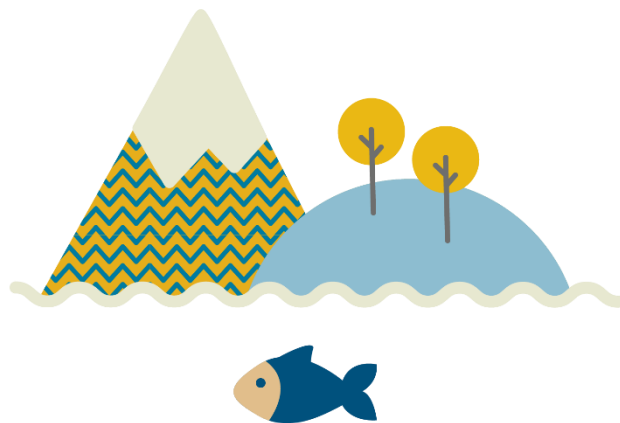
Meeting of macro-regional coordinators



5 November 2019

Building common cross-MRS collaboration platform on water

Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge, Széchenyi István tér 2
Budapest, Hungary





Building common cross-MRS collaboration platform on water topics

5 November 2019

Budapest, Hungary

Outline

EU macro-regional strategies (MRS/Strategy) address societal and ecological challenges shared within a wider territory. The Strategies work towards coordinated development and implementation of EU policies, they address challenges across borders, integrating various policy sectors and taking multilevel governance as their guiding principle. The MRS point to a new Europe where different perspectives are incorporated to find a more effective way of addressing common matters. Neighbouring countries are involved in the MRS, therefore the Strategies are not just tools for supporting integration within the European Union but also across the whole of Europe.

Four existing MRS are at different implementation stages, though there are similarities between them. The MRS are very much alike in terms of thematics, governance structures and implementation processes. Each Strategy aims to achieve set objectives, defined targets and indicators.

We, the Interact Programme, support the development of new ways of cooperation involving the macro-regional framework. Moreover, the Council Conclusions on the implementation of the MRS¹ request that Interact supports exchanges across the MRS.

In 2018, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region priority area 'Water quality' (EUSDR PA4) in cooperation with Interact Programme initiated the first meeting of experts working on water-related issues in all four MRS. The workshop focused on freshwater-related matters and common freshwater-marine topics in the MRS. Besides exchanging knowledge and sharing experiences, the workshop identified potential for cross-MRS collaboration. During the first meeting of MRS coordinators, an analysis on common 'water' related matters across the MRS was introduced². The final report of the study 'Water Related Themes in the EU Macro-regional Strategies' highlights horizontal nature of the 'water' theme in the MRS and its great relevance to be further addressed in collaborative manner. Moreover, study underlines that "although the somewhat different geographical, social and economic characteristics of the regions mean that the water-related challenges faced and the answers proposed are also different, several problems can be identified that have strong relevance in all the regions. The Study proposes that a platform for co-operation, exchange of best practices between regions (both at governance level and between stakeholders) could lead to better answers in all regions"³, thus justifying benefit, scope and potential for cross-MRS collaboration.

Taking into account [conclusions from the first macro-regional strategies' workshop on water](#), suggestions from the Study 'Water Related Themes in the EU Macro-regional Strategies', views, experiences and lessons learn from studies and our work⁴, we call for the second cross-MRS meeting on water.

¹ Council Conclusions on the implementation of the macro-regional strategies, 8461/17 as of April 2017; Council Conclusions on the added value of the MRS, 22 October 2013.

² The Study 'Water Related Themes in the EU Macro-regional Strategies' was launched by EUSDR PA4 and conducted by TRENECON Consulting And Planning Ltd., November 2018.

³ *ibid*, p 75

⁴ Recent [Report on implementation of the EU macro-regional strategies](#), Study 'Macro-regional strategies and their links with Cohesion Policy', EUSDR PA4 experiences and Interact delivered activities



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Objectives

The main aim of the second meeting is:

- to discuss topics for further cross-MRS cooperation;
- to exchange on how cross-MRS cooperation could be organised and collaboration maintained in the future.

The discussion should take into consideration best practice tools for governance; input of MRS in policy development, identified themes for exchanges, format, scope and deliverables of cross-MRS cooperation.

In addition, the meeting will address questions related to MRS delivery:

- clarifying a meaning of a 'macro-regional project' and role of thematic coordinators;
- capitalisation of macro-regional project results; how to ensure continuity and dissemination;
- how to work together more effectively.

For the discussion and clarifying understanding of a 'macro-regional project', we will use the input paper ['How do macro-regional strategies deliver: workflows, processes and approaches'](#).

Primarily target group for the event is thematic coordinators from all four MRS.



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Budapest, Hungary

Monday, 4 November 2019

19:00

Get together dinner
HILDA Restaurant, Nádor utca 5

Day one

Tuesday, 5 November 2019

08.30 – 09.00

Welcome coffee/tea

09.00 – 09.15

Welcome and introduction to the meeting

Baiba Liepa, Interact

Tour de table

09.15 – 10.00

EU Water Policy: updates

EU Cohesion policy: current investments and future perspectives for post 2020

Giacomo Luciani, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, EU Commission

10.00 – 11.15

Macro-regional strategies as territorial frameworks for better coordination and cooperation

Baiba Liepa, Interact

How MRS work with emerging topics: practice and approaches

Maxi Nachtigall, Priority Area 'Hazards', EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (tbc)

Comments and updates from other coordinators of the macro-regional strategies

Objectives of the session:

Provide updates and reflections on work within the macro-regional strategies.

11.15 – 11.30

Coffee break

11.30 – 12.15

General conclusions from the Study 'Water Related Themes in the EU Macro-regional Strategies'

Balázs Horváth, Priority Area 4 'Water Quality', EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Questions and Answers

Objectives of the session:

Provide brief recap of the Study and its proposed cross-MRS collaboration actions. The summary will serve the afternoon discussion on the cross-MRS collaboration potentials.



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12.15 – 13.30

Lunch break

13:30 – 15.30

Discussion: Cross-MRS exchanges and collaboration potentials

Discussion around preselected topics:

- *Nutrient load reaching the waters from agriculture or inefficient sewage/waste water treatment;*
- *Contamination of waters with hazardous substances (e.g. plastics and pharmaceuticals);*
- *Increased risk of water related hazards due to climate change (floods, droughts).*

Tasks for the discussion:

- *What conclusions we can draw from the Study on existing macro-regional activities. How to capitalise on MRS project results and roles of different actors/stakeholders?*
- *Discuss collaboration potentials (identifying 2-3 topics for cooperation);*
- *Consider and agree on cross-MRS collaboration actions to be proposed to other macro-regions;*
- *Discuss milestones and responsible for the actions' implementation, incl. outreach strategy to involve other macro-regions.*

Objectives of the session:

Discuss and propose cross-MRS collaboration actions; set milestones and responsible lead for collaboration across MRS.

15.30 – 15.45

Coffee break

15.45 – 16.20

Joint discussion on how to organise and maintain cross-MRS collaboration (platform)

Discussion based on a background paper prepared by the Priority Area 4 'Water Quality' coordinators, EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Objectives of the session:

Discuss and confirm interest for cross-MRS cooperation on water topics (themes).

Final reflections on the discussions and next steps

Balázs Horváth, Priority Area 4 'Water Quality', EU Strategy for the Danube Region

16.20 - 16.30

Closing of the meeting

Baiba Liepa, Interact



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Practicalities

Venue

The meeting is held in Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge hotel, Széchenyi István tér 2, Budapest, Hungary.



The meeting participants are kindly invited to the networking dinner that will be held on 4 November 2019 at 19:00 in HILDA Restaurant, Nádor utca 5.

Travel

Every participant is responsible to take care of his/her travel.

Accommodation

Every participant is responsible for his/her accommodation arrangements.

Other information

Only registered participants will be accepted for the meeting. To register, please follow the link [here](#). The registration is open until 29 October 2019!

Any questions and uncertainties reading the event should be addressed to Baiba Liepa, (baiba.liepa@interact-eu.net, +358 40 159 9430 or Ilze Ciganska, ilze.ciganska@interact-eu.net, +358 50 396 4891).