

Danube Region Strategy

PA7 Knowledge society



29th PA4 SG meeting in Bratislava | 3 - 4 June 2025
Jaroslava SZUDI, PA7 coordination team

Danube Region Strategy – priority areas

The Danube Region Strategy addresses a wide range of issues divided among **4 pillars** and **12 priority areas**.

Each priority area is managed by two countries as Priority Area Coordinators (PACs).



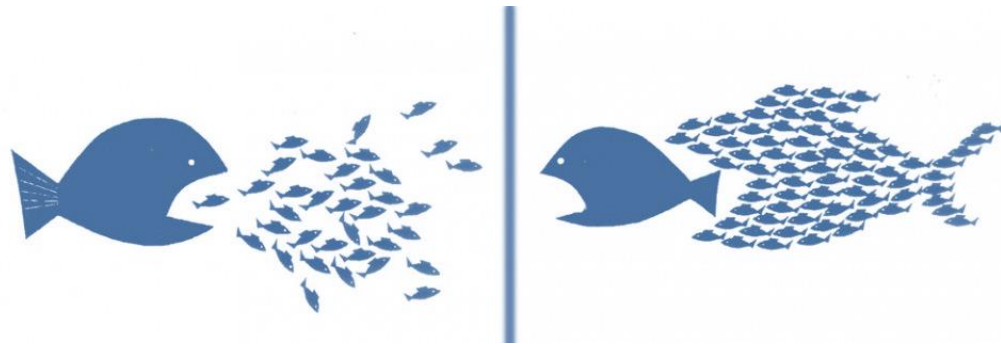
More information: <https://danube-region.eu/about/priority-areas/>



PA7 „Knowledge Society“ approach towards the EUSDR Action Plan

PA7 supports development of the knowledge society via education, research and ICT elements

- **horizontal** character; **cross-cutting** priority area
- **higher education, research and innovation** are not only highly relevant issues per se, but they also form an **integral and essential part of other priorities**; from energy, water and environment, to culture and security



PA7 – Actions

To promote **coordination of national, regional and EU funds to stimulate excellence in R&D&I**, in research areas specific for Danube Region

To promote **participation of Danube countries in EU R&I Programmes**, in particular in Horizon Europe

To **strengthen cooperation among universities, research organisations and SMEs** in the Danube Region

To increase **awareness and visibility of science and innovation** in the region

To **support exchange of information and experience for the purpose of preparation of future strategic R&I documents** applicable in the new programming period

To promote **horizontal cooperation in S&T across all PAs and other MRSs**



PA7 – Working Groups

WG1: Danube Funding Coordination Network (DFCN) (Austria)

- to support joint R&D&I activities
- to coordinate and synchronise national, bilateral and regional efforts in order to foster multilateral collaboration

WG2: Higher Education and Mobility (Serbia)

- interaction with academic institutions, exchange of best practices
- cooperation with Danube Rectors' Conference

WG3: Smart Specialisation of the Danube Region (Serbia)

- data collection on RIS3 in Danube Region
- screening and identification of common priorities in different countries of the region

WG4: Danube Region in European Research Area (Slovakia)

- experience exchange, good practice sharing on the R&I activities in the region
- surveys regarding Horizon Europe participation + informative workshops
- policy recommendations



Ongoing and Next Activities

Analyses:

- Midterm evaluation of the participation of the Danube countries in Horizon Europe
- Challenges and Perspectives of Higher Education in the Danube Region
- RIS3 Development with a specific focus on strategies in non-EU countries in the Danube Region

Position Paper:

- [Reflection on the preparation of the 10th EU Framework Programme for research and innovation from the perspective of the Danube Region](#)

PA 7 Flagship Projects:

- HARMONMISSIONS | <https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/harmonmissions>
- POLICY ANSWERS | <https://westernbalkans-infohub.eu/>
- MSTC | <https://danube-region.eu/multilateral-danube-call/>



PA7 flagship project: MSTC

Multilateral Scientific and Technological Cooperation in the Danube Region (MSTC)

- ✓ multilateral call supporting researchers' mobility
- ✓ every participating country supports its research team,
- ✓ outputs – joint publications or preparation of a transnational project,
- ✓ provide an opportunity for young/female researchers to cooperate in an international setting and to develop their scientific careers.

Participating countries: Austria; Czech Republic; Serbia; Slovakia; France (from 2019), Bulgaria (2022), Montenegro (2022)

- **pilot call:** launched in 2016; 55 applications, 19 projects funded
- **2nd call:** launched in 2019; 55 applications, 20 projects funded
- **3rd call:** launched in 2022, 58 applications, 24 projects funded
- **4th call :** launched in November 2024, 106 applications, evaluation is ongoing



PA7 flagship project: HARMONMISSIONS

The main objective is to harmonise the implementation of the European Missions (1 and 4) on the Danube region level.



Opportunity to connect
European experts on key topics
such as:

Adaptation to Climate Change

and

**Climate-Neutral and Smart
Cities.**



PA7 flagship project: POLICY ANSWERS

The project aims at continuing and scaling up the common efforts of the European Union and the Western Balkans– for cooperation on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.




09:30 - 12:30 CEST (BRUSSELS TIME)
How to become an expert for Horizon Europe

Join us for an info day and discover how you can become an expert for Horizon Europe. Learn about the programme, the roles experts play, and the diverse expertise sought across different areas. Gain insights into how to become an expert and use your unique skills to evaluate and monitor Horizon Europe proposals and projects.

Info Day
EC Info Session: How to become an expert for Horizon Europe

19 June 2025 | online

On 19 June 2025, 09:30 – 12:30 an info day takes place on “How to become an expert for Horizon Europe”. The speakers introduce the programme, the roles experts play, and the diverse expertise sought across different areas. Participants gain insights into how to become an expert and use their unique skills to evaluate and monitor Horizon Europe proposals and projects. The agenda includes:



Webinar with Elin Bergman,
expert in Circular Economy
and Chief Impact Officer of
Cradlenet

5 June
10:00–11:30 CET
on Zoom

Cradlenet

Webinar
Webinar: Introduction to Circular Economy with Elin Bergman

5 June 2025

Want to learn the basics of the circular economy or need a refresh from the perspective of an expert with over 20 years of experience in the field? Sign up for the Western Balkans Circular Economy Hub's first online training with Elin Bergman on 5 June, aimed at anyone who would like to hear a comprehensive introduction and an inspiring overview of what the circular economy is, why it is needed, and how business models and product design can be developed to maximize the use of materials and resources and minimize



Danubius Young Scientist Awards

Danubius Young Scientist Awards is a competition open to all scientific disciplines organised by BMBWF, IDM, DRC and JRC

138 applications in 2024 received – 14 award winners (1 per EUSDR country)

Deadline of the ongoing call: 9th May 2025

More information: <https://www.idm.at/en/activities/awards/danubius-young-scientist-award/>



PA7 + PA4 cooperation focused on youth

DANURELY-WS Danube Youth Leadership “Empowering the next generation in water”

- Organised by **Global Water Partnership** (GWP CEE) in cooperation with **EUSDR Priority Area 7 | Knowledge Society** and **Priority Area 4 | Digital Society**
- **The main aim:** bring together young voices to discuss pressing issues around water management
- **Key Highlights:**
 - ✓ Engage in critical discussions – Young people contribute to conversations on environmental management challenges.
 - ✓ Network with key stakeholders – Attendees meet fellow changemakers passionate about water.
 - ✓ Shape regional decisions – Insights influence decisions and policies affecting the Danube region's future.



PA7 + PA4 Online Streaming Tradition

Invitation to the on-line stream with a Danube Region Scientist – Hydrogeologist Dr Peter Malik
10 November 2023 | 14.00 – 15.00 CET |



Regular online streaming to promote Danube Region scientists to a wider public

PA7 in cooperation with PA4 organized two online streams **with a renowned Danube Region Scientists** as short presentations and moderated discussions with a hydrogeologists:

- [Dr Peter Malík](#) representing *Slovak State Geological Institute of Dionyz Stur* and
- [Prof Helmut Habersack](#) from *BOKU, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna*.

Recorded versions available here: [Dr Malik](#) and [Prof Habersack](#)



PA7+PA8 profited out of the Capitalisation



Policy Influence and Capitalisation and Cooperation and Future Project Opportunities.

More information: <https://knowledgesociety.danube-region.eu/pa7-pa8-capitalisation-event-in-bratislava-26-27-march-2025/>



Summary of conclusions of the workshop

Knowledge Transfer and Reusability

- Supporting and promoting local sustainability initiatives (e.g. local green deal)
- Using agile piloting as a universal method for implementing innovative solutions
- Organising events to ensure continuity and impact of project outcomes
- Facilitating long-term knowledge exchange among stakeholders
- EUSDR support: connection to the policy makers, providing an overview of the events in the region

Maximising Impact and Visibility

- Hosting online knowledge-sharing sessions for broader outreach
- Enhancing collaboration through shared promotional efforts
- Danube Strategy Flagship Status
- Contributing to shared publications for greater dissemination
- Joint projects events
- Using EUSDR network and dissemination channels
- Youth involvement potentially through youth camps, working groups (universities support)

Policy Influence and Capitalisation in the Region

- Capitalisation workshops
- Projects advocacy at policy makers level
- Leveraging EUSDR Presidencies (including by joint / side events)
- Involving projects funded by other programmes
- Joint policy briefs of several projects at the end of programme period
- Inviting projects to events of the PAs to and then sharing the project results
- Focus on in-person events
- Repository of the results of DRP projects
- Project level impact assessment

Cooperation and Future Project Opportunities

- Projects and partners matchmaking events / projects lab (online or in person)
- Creating an open contact database / platforms
- Agile piloting transfer to other countries and /or complementary upscaling programme
- Potential idea: Mitigating the lack of knowledge in the region/enhancing human capital
- Potential idea: enhancing R&I ecosystem with various toolboxes

Why is it good to capitalise?

1. **to foster linkages between projects related to similar topics** (within thematic poles);
2. **to create a higher leverage effect** by enabling projects to exploit and consolidate one another's achievements;
3. **to fill knowledge-gaps by linking actors** with complementary thematic specialisation, experience, methodological approaches or geographical scope;
4. **to increase the visibility and impact** of both projects and Programme and **ensure impact on the policy making process**;
5. **to reinforce the links between the Programme and the Strategy** and foster the capitalisation opportunities.





For more information



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