

THE THIRD YEAR’S PROGRESS REPORT

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Priority Area 4

***“to restore and maintain the quality of waters”***

co-ordinated by Hungary and Slovakia

30 June 2014

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# State of play

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the frame of the reporting period of June 2013-June 2014 PA4 made important steps and achieved significant results towards implementing the overall goals of the priority area.

**Achieved results and demonstrated synergies:**

**PA4 achieved the following results and demonstrated ADDED VALUE of PA4 with regards to WATER POLICY as follows**:

* Completed a full spectrum inventory of the related water organisations.
* Established cooperation with many partner organisations.
* Identified gaps and needs with relation to the Blueprint options.
* Organised several scientific stakeholder seminars focusing on water quality, drinking water, transboundary water cooperation, demonstrating innovation and dissemination activities (issued promotion brochure; special issue of Water Management Journal).
* Carried out extended legal research in all Danube countries and as a result, completed comprehensive *Studies related to specific actions* during the last year such as a legal study on buffer zones (A5), on solid waste (A5), on alternative collection and treatment of waste water (A5) and on phosphates (A7) assessing the situation in the EUSDR countries and prepared a feasibility study for the early warning monitoring system (A2).

**IT is a great achievement of PA4, being the first of the Priority Areas of the EUSDR to prepare an alignment of funding OP document** including intervention areas relevant for programming in Priority Area 4 . The document that was adopted in June 2014 can serve as a model for the other priority areas offering solution on how to contribute to the facilitation of the macro-regional coordination of efforts and funding as well as for the confirmation of national priorities from the macro-regional perspective of the EU SDR.

**A *Joint document of synergies between the ICPDR, PA4 and PA5*** has been developed in 2014 (still to be approved by countries) to outline common elements of the work, to seek for more strengthened cooperation and to specify issues/goals to be achieved by the different expert bodies.

**Relevant issues and topics were discussed; projects were introduced in the frame of the *SG6 and SG7* and at several ICPDR WGs,** where country representatives gave their feedback on the on-going activities and initiatives as well as next steps to be achieved.

**dissemination actions were completed; a special Water Journal Issue was prepared for the Annual Meeting;** issued promotion brochure of PA4**.**

**Projects supported by Technical Assistance** got via PA10 Institutional Capacity and Cooperation: Remediation of Ethylene Dichloride (EDC) Pollution Project (Serbia)

Utilization of the Unique Wetlands in Undermined Area Novaky – Kos (Slovakia)

The following pages introduce the details of the outcomes, outline lessons learned and emphasises issues specific to the Priority area in the reported period.

## Achievements/Outcomes of the third year of the implementation

### Policy developments

The Action Plan introduces fourteen actions for priority area 4. The mission of PA4 is the improvement of the efficiency of the implementation of roadmap items by setting up an efficiency model, optimising the implementation by using the model, making a plan for the implementation and making an optimised investment and financing plan for the roadmap item.

The policy environment is defined on one hand by the ***Water Framework Directive***. The basin-wide coordination which is foreseen under the WFD is ensured by the Member States via the ICPDR as coordination platform. The operation of the EUSDR is linked to these activities. With regard to the forthcoming planning period all tools necessary for the preparation of the new RBMPs have to be prepared, unified to the possible extent and have to be spread between the MSs and even to the non-MSs. To facilitate and harmonise the mutual interest and efforts of the EUSDR and international organisations working for the implementation of the WFD (ICPDR, ISRBC), a ‘*Joint Paper on Cooperation and Synergy for the EUSDR Implementation’* is being prepared as first step to harmonise **ICPDR** – EUSDR PA4 & PA5 coordination activities. More details to be introduced in the coming chapters.

To reach the main objective of PA4, to improve water policy and to reach good status under WFD, structured discussions has started with the relevant main policy actors concerning water quality including the UNECE - Helsinki Convention, DG Environment, ICPDR, Sava Commission, Danube Commission, JRC, REC, ASEM, Water boards-bilateral commissions.

Further new policy element, issued by COM, is the ***Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources*** issued in November 2012**.** This document is summarising and defining the way forward after the first RBMP. DG ENV and PA meeting was organised in 2013 in Brussels where it was agreed and stressed that the EUSDR can significantly contribute to the implementation of the EU legislation on river basin management. The systematic cooperation in the future was also preliminary agreed on in order to incorporate the EUSDR strategy to the EU environmental and water policy process and also to ensure the embedding of the DG ENV’s major findings and efforts to the Danube Region Strategy process. It was agreed on that recent review on the River Basin Management and CIS carried out to frame and priories the tasks of the PA4. Focus areas were preliminary agreed as follows:

* buffer strips,
* priority substances,
* uniform monitoring network,
* early warning systems,
* cooperation with services, and initiative for the UWWT, and
* finally to enable non- EU countries for reasonable planning for implementation and use cohesion sources.

The list served as a basis of further development within the priority areas and as a result (also in line with the Roadmaps) PA4 organised to prepare studies to seek for gaps and to outline recommendations for the future work. Details about the studies are introduced in the next chapter.

Efforts to coordinate common activities a meeting was organised with the ***Joint Research Centre*** in 2013. PAC participated at the different water nexus meetings and the cooperation resulted in initiating the macro regional conference in Budapest in September 2013. JRC gave a presentation on the Multi-criteria hydro-economic optimisation of water resources in Europe to support the EU Blueprint to safeguard Europe’s waters and the Danube Strategy. JRC study on challenges and solutions related water demand and supply was introduced as well. The aim of the study is to stimulate EU countries to increase the efficiency of water use by 2020/2030. JRC as a key initiator of fact and science based policy support to the macro-regional water policy. To integrate the new water nexus being established by the JRC into the framework in to PA4 of EUSDR the PAC already invited the water nexus leaders to the SG to provide an overview and to discuss the nexus. PAC noted with appreciation the high interest from scientific institutions to take part within the water nexus and participated at various meetings to foster and deeper integration of research and science activities towards the implementation of PA4 actions in the Action plan. There are some good examples already of macro regional co-operations established between research institutions to join forces with the JRC and to broaden the research to support the EUSDR. On the 6th March 2014 a follow-up activity have been organised in Hungary where PA4 relevant international scientific-research project ideas have been introduced and discussed. Short overview presentation was given in the frame of the SG7 PA4 meeting in Budapest to introduce the outcomes of the meeting.

To give an overview on the scientific and technical models as helping tools to fulfil gaps outlined in the Roadmaps of the EUSDR Pillar II and to involve wide range of stakeholders in the overall process a ***Macro Regional Conference has*** been organised and held with 300 registered participants from many Danube countries in September 2013. Next to governmental cooperation the macro regional conference also gave a platform for scientific and technical discussions, where bottlenecks and gaps were recognised (e.g. early warning system). PA4 initiated further cooperation between potential partners of the Danube countries. Since one of the main task of the PA4 to ensure and create platform for stakeholders and partners to facilitate cooperation and to discuss existing gaps, the macro regional conference, following the high level section focused on specific issues of Pillar II (PA4, PA5 and PA6) introducing partners and relevant organisation of watershed management and water quality protection and discussed about existing gaps and on possible solutions to fulfil these gaps. High level statements were presented from speakers from Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bavaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Commission; participants were coming from Slovakia, Austria, Ukraine, Moldova, Germany, Croatia, Bosnia, Italy and Hungary. The representatives of major international, regional and local water and environmental organisations were also present, such as the UNECE, the European Commission, the ICPDR, the IDM, the REC, the Sava Commission, the ASEM, the Slovak Water Research Institute (VUVH) and the JRC. Representatives of many scientific institutions as well as environmental and water consultants and experts also participated at the event. The conference facilitated further technical consultations and gave horizontal overview on relevant issues, such as sharing waters, integrated river basin and international watercourse management, sediment issues, early warning systems and toxicology testing, sanitations and waste water treatment and drinking water protection in changing climate, to name a few.

The international conference ***Safeguarding of Drinking Water Supply – Challenge for the Danube Region*** was organised in December 2013 in Bratislava, Slovakia. The topic of the conference was related to Action 13 of PA4: “To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply”. The main sections of the conference contained the issues of drinking water in the light of European legislation, EU SDR in the sphere of water quality, progressive analytic methods in the microbiology of drinking water and overview of drinking water quality in the Danube Region. The main outcomes of the conference stated that Danube Strategy provides the unique common platform for the cooperation of EU member and non-member states; the principle is based on common attitude to problems solved by the participating states and this way the macro-regional cooperation substitutes the competition; the EU SDR actions establishment stands on subsidiarity “bottom up” principle and the coordinated approach to Operational Programmes development for period 2014-2020 would facilitate the common solution of defined problems.

### Implementation of the Roadmap of PA4 (main outcomes and on-going processes)

The Priority Area Coordinators shall among others ensure the implementation of the Action Plan defined for the Priority Area by agreeing on planning, with targets, indicators and timetables, and by making sure that there is an effective cooperation between project promoters, programmes and funding sources.

**Development of tasks and studies towards the fulfilment of specific actions of the Roadmap of PA4**

The main activities facilitated by PA4 to implement actions outlined in the Roadmap are based on the relevant scientific methods introduced in the frame of the macro-regional conference in 2013 are the following:

* Facilitating the implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan (**Action 1**);
* Study development related to issues water quality monitoring – Feasibility study on early warning water quality monitoring (**Action 2 milestone 4, project 2**);
* Study development related to the situation on buffer zones: EUSDR PA4 “Survey of the situation of buffer zones” **(Action 5, Milestone 1);**
* Study development related to the situation on management of solid waste: EUSDR PA4 “Survey of the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements” **(Action 5, Milestone 3);**
* Study development related to the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements: EUSDR PA4 “Survey of the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements” **( Action 5, Milestone 4);**
* Study development related to Limit the presence of phosphates in detergents: EUSDR PA4 Study “Legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents -policy response on the overview report” **(Action 7, Milestone 2);** and
* Facilitating set up a consortium to resolve Sediment issues (**Action 10 milestone 4 project**).
1. *Implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan*

Action 1 of the Roadmap, aiming at to fully implement the Danube River Basin Management Plan toward reaching good status of the waters of the DRB. The ICPDR coordinates the overall implementation of the **Danube River Basin Management Plan (**DRBMP).

There are initiatives on behalf of Ukraine for the participation in the classification and qualification of waters according to the EU WFD requirements and for the capacity building and cooperation in this specific field.

*2) Feasibility study on early warning water quality monitoring*

For the fulfilment of action 2 milestone 4, project 2 of the roadmap a very effective water quality model was identified by PA4 as a result of an intensive research and discussion process in 2013. A scientific model was presented to wide international audience at the macro- regional conference in September 2013. The base concept is ready for a unified early warning alert system for the territory of the Tisza river basin. The idea for the technical structure of EW system was presented at the Macro Regional Conference last year getting a general acceptance. The study was discussed at the regular meeting of ICPDR APC EG (Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group) on 25-26 March in Ljubljana and the issue was introduced by Mr István György Toth, advisor to PA4.

Investment and operational costs were discussed related to EWS system and it was clear that costs of such a system can be very significant. The study was discussed with the SG members in the frame of the SG7 meeting and further introduced to the relevant ICPDR experts groups (APC and MA EG). The ICPDR recommended further discussing this issue with the relevant ICPDR Tisza expert group as well.

1. *Study on buffer zones*

In line with the Roadmap Action 5 milestone 1, surveys on the situation of buffer zones have been initiated by Hungarian PAC as Hungary was identified as primary responsible actor for this Action (beside PA4 and the ICPDR).In the Action Plan a special task was identified to send a questionnaire to the countries and based on the replies, to provide an assessment on the situation of the buffer zones. Based on the outcome of the questionnaire it became necessary to make further research and to carry out a complete assessment of the situation in all of the Danube countries. For this reason and partially based on Hungarian governmental funds, a contract with an international research organisation, Czech based Justice and Environment was concluded to prepare a complete research document analysing the situation in the Danube basin for the utilization of PA4. Legal experts that are members of an international legal association worked on the project in each country to present the local situation. The aim of the study was to provide a general overview of the situation in each country and based on the findings, to make a general assessment. The situation differs in many countries; some are more developed and comply with all norms, while other countries face with several problems and difficulties, but as a result up to date legal information related to the buffer zones are available from all countries. The study was discussed with the SG members in the frame of the SG7 meeting as well as it was introduced to the relevant ICPDR experts Group (PM EG and RBM EG) and were appreciated. The ICPDR recommended elaborating further on the recommendations that will be the task to progress in the upcoming period.

1. *Study on management of solid waste in small rural settlements*

In line with the Roadmap Action 5 milestone 3, further assessment analysing the situation in the Danube basin **of the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements** have been initiated by Hungarian PAC as Hungary was identified as primary responsible actor for this Action (beside PA4 and the ICPDR).As a result, up to date information related to **management of solid waste in small rural settlements** are available from all countries. The study was discussed with the SG members in the frame of the SG7 meeting as well as it was introduced to the relevant ICPDR experts Group (PM EG and RBM EG) and were appreciated. The ICPDR recommended elaborating further on the recommendations that will be the task to progress in the upcoming period.

1. *Study on small rural settlements, alternative waste water treatment possibilities for small settlements*

According to the EU WFD, establishment of waste water treatment plants are obligatory in all EU countries independently from the size of the settlements. The initial problem outlined in action 5 milestone 4 and 5 of the roadmap of PA4 arises from the settlement structure of agro-industrial regions of many countries resulting in large proportion of untreated waste water and substantial diffuse pollution of ground water and surface water. A small settlement waste water treatment optimizations system was identified as a result of the cooperation with the Budapest Technical University (BME) for the integrated solutions for wastewater treatment in small settlements and rural areas in line with action 5 milestone 4 of the roadmap of PA4. In line with the agreed milestones of the Roadmap and towards outlining steps to fulfil objectives outlined in the Action Plan of the EUSDR a survey on the situation of alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements has been carried out first by PA4 and then by international legal expert group to assess the situation and promote best practices in WWT for small settlements. A questionnaire have been circulated related to the legislative background of waste water treatment, the waste water treatment solutions in small rural settlements as well as on the supervision and control of waste water treatment activities (authorities responsible and legal instruments applied) and based on the research, further assessment analysing the situation in the Danube basin of the situation on small rural settlements, alternative waste water treatment possibilities for small settlements have been initiated by Hungarian PAC and a comprehensive legal assessment of the Danube countries was prepared. As a result, up to date information related to small rural settlements, alternative waste water treatment possibilities for small settlements are available from all countries. The study was discussed with the SG members in the frame of the SG7 meeting as well as it was introduced to the relevant ICPDR experts Group (PM EG and RBM EG) and were appreciated. The ICPDR recommended elaborating further on the recommendations that will be the task to progress in the upcoming period.

*5) Situation toward legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents*

The Roadmap of Priority Area 4 of the EUSDR contains Action 7, “To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents”. The ICPDR was responsible under Milestone 1 to prepare an overview report on the implementation of regulation (EU) 259/2012. In the Roadmap of PA4 A7 a special task was identified in Milestone 2 to make a policy response to the overview report. Therefore to complete this task and partially based on Hungarian governmental funds, PA4 concluded a contract with an international research organisation, Czech based Justice and Environment, who prepared a complete research document analysing the situation with regards to phosphates in the Danube basin. The summary of the Study and the recommendations based on the research were provided for the Steering Group Members of PA4 and for further recommendations to stakeholder institutions. The study on Action 7 on phosphates was discussed in detail at the SG7 Meeting in Budapest. The study was discussed with the SG members in the frame of the SG7 meeting as well was introduced to the relevant ICPDR experts Group (PM EG and RBM EG) and were appreciated The ICPDR recommended elaborating further on the recommendations that will be the task to progress in the upcoming period.

*6) Sediment issues and consequences in the Danube river*

An international consortium was set up that brings together all Danube countries and that is able to provide a tool to preliminary assess hydrological monitoring and to serve needs of water use. The project was not funded yet, but as a result of joint efforts several social partners achieved a common understanding (including DG MOVE, navigational sector and other field representatives) to work on this issue together. PA4 had significant role in initiating the project and to facilitate the preparation of the project proposal. Colleagues of the ICPDR played an important role in this initiative and also indicated that they are open to further discussions. PA4 launched negotiations in the frame of 2014-2020 Program in terms of outlining proper financing mix of the EU Structural and Investment Funds, the connected Europe Facility and the Horizon 2020. According to the information available all these sources can provide useful contribution to various elements of the project.

### Main events relevant for PA4 activities (2013-2014)

Since the last progress report several events has been organised in connection to the restoration and maintenance of waters. PA4 PACs were presented also on several meetings to disseminate results and to discuss specific elements of the Roadmap. The following table summarizes the main events relevant from the priority area implementation and dissemination activities point of view.

**Table 1 - main events relevant from the priority area implementation and dissemination activities point of view**

| **Key activities conducted** |
| --- |
| Date | Activity  | Description of the event |
| 05 June 2013 | Steering Group meeting 5 | Organising and leading of 5th PA 4 SG meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia |
| 18-19 June 2013 | Participation on international events | PAC4 participation and Pillar B presentation providing in ICPDR 11th Standing Working Group meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Hercegovina |
| 11 July 2013 | Participation in national events | Meeting of consultative group of Danube Strategy at Governmental Office, Bratislava, Slovakia |
| 11-12 September 2013 | Budapest Macro-regional Conference | The Macro-regional conference was organised by PA4 with the participation of circa 300 registered participants |
| 8-11 October 2013 | Participation on international events | Budapest Water Summit, participation of EUSDR on the BWS |
| 18 October 2013 | Participation on bilateral meeting | Bilateral HU-SK meeting held in Budapest |
| 28-29 October 2013 | EUSDR Annual Forum  | Participation of PAC4 at the Annual Forum, presenting state of play in joint Pillar B Environment workshop  |
| 3 December 2013 | DR-TAF meeting | Participation of PAC4 at the DR – TAF meeting (2nd call information) in Vienna, Austria |
| 11-12 December 2013 | Participation on international events | Conference European Funding Opportunities for Competitiveness and Innovation in the Danube Region |
| 12 December 2013 | Steering Group meeting 6 | Organising and leading of 6th PA 4 SG meeting in Vienna, Austria, back to back with the ICPDR OM.  |
| 16-17 December 2013 | The Safeguarding of Drinking Water Supply – Challenge for the Danube Region | Participation and presentation of PA4 (NCP-HU) at the Drinking Water Conference, Bratislava, Slovakia |
| 27-28 February 2014 | ICPDR HYMO TG | Participation and presentation of PA4 at the 12th HYMO TG mtg, presenting the early warning feasibility study.  |
| 6 March 2014 | JRC discussion - Hungary | A meeting has been organised by the Secretariat of the Government Commissioner for the EU Danube Strategy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hungary to introduce and discuss on scientific-research project ideas relevant for the EU Danube Strategy point of view. The meeting was linked to the JRC water nexus. The Steering Group was informed about these projects in the frame of the SG7 meeting. |
| 11-12 March 2014  | NCP-PAC meeting-Vienna | Presenting the current state of play of PA4, discussing the governance draft document  |
| 25-26 March 2014 | ICPDR 6th APC meeting  | Participation and presentation of PA4 in Ljubljana, Slovenia (Early warning feasibility presented) |
| 28 March 2014 | SG7 PA4 | Budapest, Hungary, presenting all 4 studies related to A5 and A7, the feasibility study for A2, JRC projects  |
| 3-4 April 2014 | ICPDR 19th MA EG  | Koblenz.  |
| 7-9 April 2014 | ICPDR 9th NTG and 20th PM EG meeting | Bratislava, SK – Participation and presentation of PA4, and buffer strips and p-free detergents studies presented |
| 5-6 May 2014 | ICPDR 39th RBM EG | Participation and presentation of the Hungarian NCP-Government Commissioner in Zagreb, Croatia. |
| 5-7 May 2014 | IFAT, Munich, Germany | Participation and presentation of PA4 at International Trade Fair for Water, Sewage, Waste and Raw Materials Management |
| May 2014 | Meeting of ICPDR and NCPs (HU, SK, RO) | Discussion about the Joint paper for the harmonisation of the ICPDR/ EUSDR activities (Vienna, Austria) |
| 2-3 June 2014 | 3rd ASEM Sustainable Development Seminar – Tulcea, Romania | Presentation of PA4 as the only representative of EUSDR at high level meeting  |
| 10 June 2014 | JRC conference, Bratislava | Discussion of possible fields of further cooperation  |
| 19-20 June 2014 | ICPDR - Sophia | Standing Working Group Meeting, presenting the current state of play of PA4 |
| 26-27 June 2014 | EUSDR Annual Forum-Vienna | Participation of PAC4 on the Annual Forum Policy workshop organised by PA4 at the Danube Cosmos |
|  |  |  |

### Lessons learned

*From management point of view the following main lessons learnt can be summarised:*

* There is a clear need to strengthen on-going cooperation between PA4 and relevant institutions such as ICPDR and ISRBC and there is a strong intention from both parties (PA4, ICPDR and ISRBC) to do so. Joint document on cooperation between PA4 PA5 and ICPDR serves as a model to other priority areas on how to set up further links with relevant organisations.
* Strengthen cooperation with Joint Research Centre in the implementation of PA4 EUSDR goals
* Countries involvement in the overall process should be further strengthened and there is a strong need to better mobilise the least active countries, through diplomatic bodies.

*From professional point of view the following main lessons learnt can be summarised:*

* PA4 is one of the priority areas with the widest scale of actions. Roadmaps were agreed to reach objectives outlined in the action plan. As an important next step actions related milestones, projects has to be further specified to be able to follow-up on the progress of the implementation of the action plan on a more precise manner.
* Projects can give significant input to the actions and/or can serve as a pilot activities or good samples relevant in basin wide scale.

*From policy and financing point of view the following main lessons learnt can be summarised:*

* Letter of Recommendations and Letter of Merits can serve as an important tool to support EUSDR PA4 related projects, however it is crucial to consider / take into account these tools in the decision making process during the distribution of the related financial funds.
* PA4 has collected information related to the state of play of the operational programming in the Danube countries to summarise how the EUSDR related activities are considered within the next financing period (2014-2020). It can be concluded that it is crucial to guarantee on national level the implementation of the WFD and in transboundary scale to ensure funds and support (labelled) projects with PA4 priorities to reach objectives set in the EUSDR action plan. Document on Alignment of Funding – developed by PA4 and PA5 – can serve as a model to other priority areas.
* *From dissemination point of view the following main lessons learnt can be summarised:*
* Based on the outcomes and experiences of the PACs there is a high interest towards the EUSDR and PA4 related activities, and there is a clear need to further strengthen dissemination activities in the future, such as presentations in relevant forums, platforms or publication of articles in relevant magazines or preparation of brochures.

## Alignment of Funding

One of the core activities of the EU SDR is the alignment of funding for the interventions and goals a) proposed, identified and endorsed by the European Commission and the European Council in the Action Plan; and the b) Roadmaps and Milestones further identified for the implementation of the Action Plan adopted by EU SDR countries in the respective Steering Groups.

The alignment of funding for various interventions and activities in different stages especially in terms of the most timely element of securing the future financial mix, notably cohesion policy and other EU financing instruments is a complex task involving Partnership Agreement and Operational Programme programmers, sectorial administration of participating countries and the European Commission that facilitates the preparation and implementation of these documents and receives the plans in various stages from all the countries involved.

PA4 contributes to this process at various ways. By elaborating roadmaps and implementation milestones common interventions are identified which might need EU co-financing. To incorporate EU funding in filling financial gaps the PA4 contributed to the process to support sectorial steering group members and sectorial administrations to establish a common base for programming of the EU SDR goals and interventions in operative programmes via active contribution and mobilizing PA4 partners and sectorial administrations via Steering Group members to the Bucharest and Stuttgart meetings of OP programmers and EU SDR partners. In terms of identifying financial gaps as well as in project level financial engineering the Budapest Danube Contact point offered assistance in a dedicated agenda point in a PA4 Steering Group meeting especially for medium and large scale interventions and EU SDR projects related water and environment.

Programming of PA4 specific interventions was an agenda point in the SG5 meeting. State of play, tasks and legislative background of programming MRS to 2014-2020 MFF OPs was broadly introduced by DG ENVI and NCPs present, while SG members provided a preliminary snapshot of national implementation of OP programming especially in the fields of PA4. One of the major topics of SG6 was be the detailed methodology of programming as well as highlighted gaps to be financed, following the Annual Forum and related ministerial meetings that also has financing in the top of the agenda. It was requested from Interact that mainstream programmes to be covered in the thematic workshop of the Pillar 2.

The Danube Transnational ETC programme is expected to have a highlighted role in macro-regional coordination, assessment, monitoring, support of institutional cooperation and planning. Via National Contact Points the PA4 requested to that water quality and river basin management be incorporated to the OP. The proposal was well received and was passed with support to the Task Force preparing the programming of the OP.

**Project funding**

Funding is crucial to make EUSDR PA4 operate. As it is generally known, the EUSDR started operating during the last two years of the current EU funding period 2007-2013. By now the most of the main funding programmes, including SEE and CE have closed their last calls for projects, and in many cases it was too late for new project proposals and their developments. The limited funding opportunities definitely slow down the progress of the EUSDR implementation. Though there were some communications about funding in the Danube Region at national level, no systematic mechanisms to get access to these funding was revealed.

Despite of the situation described above PA4 continuously collects information from EU funded projects and tries to learn from their experiences (such as LIFE, FP7, ERC) in order to find the actually available resources.

**European Investment Bank Budapest Danube Contact Point**

The funding of high investment projects is possible through the European Investment Bank (EIB). The Budapest Danube Contact Point (BDCP) aims exactly at the sector of high investment projects. BDCP was launched by the European Investment Bank and Hungary (Ministry for National Economy, MNE) on the 15th June 2012 to support feasible and financeable projects in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. BDCP functions as a smart tool providing project cycle management, strategic advisory services, relationship management and financial expertise for EUSDR stakeholders. BDCP supports selected EU SDR projects in the field of transport, energy, water management and environment. BDCP facilitates the successful implementation of transnational projects with high added value, via:

* Strategic advisory,
* Project cycle management,
* Involving and coordinating stakeholders for transnational projects,
* Inviting seconded experts from EU member and non-member states to work jointly on selected projects, on a temporary basis, using technical and financial expertise of EIB/JASPERS.

The way of funding also includes financial engineering and alignment of funding. BDCP helps to assign optimal financing structure to projects via in-depth knowledge of available grant / financing instruments and via EIB liaison.

The macro-regional added-value comes by promoting and supporting the transnational and macro-regional concept, e.g.:

* BDCP promotes and supports the development of transnational and macro-regional concepts (i.e. feasibility studies). Essence of the macro regional concept lies within its transboundary character and multi-sectorial approach which allows for a broader and more complex focus by integrating every current or planned regional development or sector-specific strategy, plan and project with an effect on the region. This provides solid basis for comprehensive and sustainable regional developments within the Danube Strategy.
* Creating universal and repeatable macro-models (e.g. transport, flood management, waste management) for the benefit of similar initiatives

BDCP aims to work in close cooperation with all actors of the Danube Strategy including National Contact Points (NCPs), Priority Area Coordinators (PACs), Steering Group Members, EC, EIB, JASPERS and relevant project promoters.

**Partnership agreement, operational programmes**

The main task of the planning period was to mirror the priorities of EUSDR in the Operational Programmes for EU Member States and in EU financial instruments for non-member states. The structure and operation of EUSDR offered a stable cooperation platform for this, making it possible to identify common priorities and facilitating coherence and collaboration between the programmes and policies developed in the Danube region. The precondition of the successful programming was the identification of the national priorities that require cooperation with other states in order to be achieved. According to the aforementioned the programming of Operational Programmes and Partnership Agreement was a topic of SG5.

**Danube Transnational Programme/ETC Danube Programme**

The Danube Transnational ETC Programme (DP) will be a really substantial step ahead, nevertheless because of its limited amount (probably 10 million EUR) will not solve all the financing issues of EUSDR related projects and activities. The current state of discussions, negotiations is summarised below:

* An close link is needed between EUSDR and DP
* One of these topics should be the financing of preparatory steps of EUSDR projects, PACs should be involved in project preparations, selections and should involve the SGs and major stakeholders (e.g. ICPDR). Probably a non-exhaustive set of common labelling criteria and practice will be needed for all PAs. It is crucial to keep PACs well informed
* Obviously other financial resources are/will be needed as well, on a complementarity base
* Thematic objectives have to be defined and a selection is needed to make a subset as a mainstream of ETC DP financed objectives. Environment is one of the common elements of various subsets
* SGs should provide the link between DP and the political and strategy level of EUSDR and PACs should give the thematic expertise
* ETC DP needs a joint communication for all the PAs

PA4 followed additional region specific financing options that can support PA4 partners and projects. Additional financing sources can be provided inter alia by the following financial institutions:

* Danube Money Alliance,
* Danube Exchange,
* Danube Insurance,
* Danube Investment Funds,

and the following Danube region networks of business entities:

* Danube Chamber of Commerce and Industry
* Danube Development Forum
* Danube Business Forum
* Bucharest Business Forum.

Despite of the above financial possibilities and the future plans the financial conditions in general were unfavourable during the last year period. Contrary to this 4 Letters of Recommendation (LoR) were given by the PA4 SG to EUSDR projects. Till the opening of major 2014-20 funding possibilities the main option practically is to prepare projects with high quality which have a really good chance for later financing.

As it was already indicated in the report, during the 2007-2013 EU funding period ten Letters of Recommendations has been issued by PA4 to confirm the link between the projects and the EUSDR targets/actions. As a lessons learned it was concluded that further provision would be necessary to better acknowledge EUSDR relevance of a project during the assessment process of the project proposals. In order to make LoRs more effective the FIs’ decision making process should reward such projects with extra points. In line with the above mentioned experiences and lessons learned, in the frame of the 11th ICPDR Standing Working Group meeting, with the participation of the EUSDR PA4 coordinator, a resolution has been agreed asking the European Commission and relevant Committees working on the elaboration of the coming funding programmes to provide special status to priority projects agreed by the ICPDR contracting parties.

The technical assistance (TA) granted to PACs by EU has a great emphasis ensuring the proper operation of PACs and their assistants, financing their participations in relevant meetings, workshops and public actions. TA also helps cover the costs of participation of non-MS representatives on various PA4 meetings.

**Alignment of funding document adopted by PA4**

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 Macro-regional Strategies to align the financing, Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes with the content and measures adopted in respective Strategies.

PA4 is one of the two priority areas where special emphasis has been taken on the process of alignment of funding. Started in the frame of the 5th SG meeting and further facilitated in the frame of the 6th SG and 7th SG meetings discussions were organised on the needs of the countries related to financing as well as on the possible roles of the EUSDR PA4 (and PA5) to ensure financial sources to the implementation of action plan between the 2014-2020 financing period.

Priority Areas 4 „Quality of Waters” and 5 „Environmental Risks” took several steps in 2013 and 2014 to help facilitating this process and developed a **Consolidated OP** **guidance document** for the water management stakeholders and decision-makers in the Danube countries by providing a strategic aid to

* contribute to the facilitating of the macro-regional coordination of efforts and funding;
* confirmation of national priorities from the macro-regional perspective of the EU SDR;
* to support bridging gaps (inter alia supporting priority interventions of partner organizations facing bottlenecks and barriers).

The goal of the document is to provide assistance for experts and stakeholders related to water management in the Danube countries in order to support the generation of projects that are most relevant for the Priority Areas 4 and 5 of the EURSD. The goal of the optimisation is to have less number of projects, but those should be relevant for the macro region concerned with coordinated planning to meet specific criteria and also to improve the efficiency of common projects for the sake of macro-regional optimisation.

The document includes those strategic objectives and proposed intervention measures (not indicative) that were identified during the consultations in the frame of PA4 and PA5 in the period of one year between June 2013 and June 2014.

The alignment of funding OP document including intervention areas relevant for programming in Priority Area 4 was **adopted by the Steering Group** in a written procedure of PA4 in June 2014.

The full document can be downloaded from the PA4 website: (<http://groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/>)

##  Joint Paper on Cooperation with the ICPDR

The Commission Report in 2013 has emphasised the need to further strengthen synergies with existing bodies and initiatives such as the ICPDR[[3]](#footnote-4).

The cooperation between ICPDR and EU SDR is closely coordinated from the launch of the EU SDR providing some of the best practices of cooperation between macro-regional strategies and regional organizations, ensuring mutual participation in meetings and integrating the ICPDR in preparation and implementation of roadmaps (implementation plans) unfolding the relevant elements of the EU SDR Action Plan.

In 2013 PA4 made important steps to further ensure continuous constructive dialogue with the ICPDR. The experts of ICPDR are invited and are welcome at the Steering Groups, technical working groups and conferences. Discussions are on-going at expert level and management level as well. Both the executive secretary and the president of the ICPDR were invited and participated as key speaker at the Macro-regional Conference in Budapest in 2013, similarly, experts of PA4 are participating at ICPDR events. It was agreed that the ICPDR also welcomes the experts of PA4 at its working groups. During 2013/2014 PA4 members (PACs, assistants and advisors) participated in several technical meetings to discuss on-going initiatives and studies. Outcomes of the discussions were introduced in sub-chapter 1.1.2 of this document.

PA4 cooperates also in organisational matters and when feasible it is willing to organise SG meetings back to back with ICPDR meetings. The 6th SG meeting was held in Vienna in December 2013 especially to be held back to back with the ICPDR Ordinary Meeting.

In December 2013 a Joint paper document started to be developed to overview the consensus on the modalities of present and future cooperation to fully utilise its potential for mutual support of EUSDR and ICPDR in relevant fields. The modalities and framework described in the document respects the mandate and processes of the EUSDR on one hand, and the ICPDR mandate, tasks and activities on the implementation of the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC), EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the EU Floods Directive (FD) on the other and it provides a state of play as of June 2014. For the development of the joint paper representatives of the ICPDR and relevant countries for PA4 and PA5 coordination (Hungary, Romania and Slovakia), sit together in May 2014 in Vienna and agreed on the main principles of the document.

The full document after adoption will be available on the following website: (<http://groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/>)

# Process

## Steering Group meetings organised within the third year of implementation

During the third year of implementation two steering groups meeting was organised to discuss main activities of the priority area and outline next steps to further facilitate the work.

### 6th Steering Group meeting

The 6th Steering Group meeting was held in 12th December 2013 in Vienna, organised back to back with the 16th Ordinary meeting of the ICPDR[[4]](#footnote-5).

The main objective of the meeting was to present the progress of and state of play of PA4. It was also the objective to present the results of the Budapest Scientific Stakeholder Conference of EU SDR Pillar 2 on Macro-regional Water Management supporting the implementation of Priority Area 4 as well as the outcomes of the Bucharest Annual Forum were introduced and discussed. Updates and review on on-going institutional and research activities was presented. The SG also provided an update on the state of programming of the operational programmes for the 2014-2020 period and SG members discussed the opportunities to integrate common efforts on river basin management and quality of waters to the process. One letter of merit was issued to the Liberty Island project managed by WWF. Please see the adopted minutes in Annex 3.

### 7th Steering Group meeting

The meeting was held on 28th March 2014 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Budapest, Hungary, organised back to back with the Steering Group meeting of the PA5. The minutes of SG6 were adopted. The main objective of the SG7 meeting was to formulate strategic and technical recommendations for the programming of the operational programmes for the 2014-2020 periods (development of the paper on Alignment of Funding) and detailed discussions were held on the matter of alignment of funding with the participation of DG Region experts.

Technical and legal experts presented to the SG for discussion the technical studies (such as the A2, A5 and A7 studies on *management of solid waste*, *phosphate free detergents, early warning water quality monitoring system for the Tisza River Basin,* *small rural settlements, alternative waste water treatment possibilities for small settlements,* see also information in sub-chapter 1.1.2.). *The Steering Group was also informed about on-going discussions with the ICPDR on the preparation of a Joint Synergies Document* for the harmonisation of the EUSDR and ICPDR relevant activities. JRC Danube Nexus relevant projects and DR-TAF projects were also introduced to the SG members and decided for support. Please see the minutes in Annex 4.

Following the SG meeting the minutes of the meeting, the technical studies and the alignment of funding document was put into consultation. The written procedure is completed for the alignment of funding document, the technical studies were put on review two times, and their adoption is on-going. [[5]](#footnote-6)

##  Involvement of relevant stakeholders

Chapter 1.1.1 on Policy developments introduced the main objectives and outcomes of the Macro-regional Conference, which was organised by PA4 in 2013, in Budapest, Hungary. The main stakeholders that PA4 cooperated with are the following: representatives of major international, regional and local water and environmental organisations, such as the UNECE, the European Commission, the ICPDR, the IDM, the REC, the Sava Commission, the ASEM, the Slovak Water Research Institute (VUVH) and the JRC. Representatives of many scientific institutions, as well as environmental and water consultants and experts also participated at the event.

##  Governance structure of PA4 (Coordination of PA4)

Since 2011 both Hungary and Slovakia made steps to achieve and establish strong governance system for PA4. Due to family and health reasons, however, changes have happened in the personnel of PACs both in Hungary and in Slovakia.

In Hungary Mr László Perger PAC/PA4 resigned from his position due to family reasons and from the middle of October 2013, Mr Ottó Szabó was officially appointed as priority area coordinator in Hungary until February 2014 for a transition period. Currently Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper coordinates the PA4 Team in Hungary. She is supported by three colleagues, working part-time for PA4.

In Slovakia, Andrea Vranovska was nominated as PAC for the period of 15 September – 31 November. As of 1st December Mr. Dušan Čerešňák, Director General of Water Department, Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic has been appointed as PAC for PA4 in SK. Ms Vranovska remains in the team and acts as PAC assistant. The HU and SK team cooperates well and discusses pending issues regularly by telephone, mail, skype and by bilateral meetings.

SG attendance related issues still need significant efforts. For this various measures are introduced with measurable results expected. A financial mechanism was developed from the TA fund that allows covering the travel costs of non- MS SG members to SG meetings. At the request of the PA4 to SG members and NCPs to mobilize administrations of non- MS DR countries, the Hungarian NCP, the Budapest Danube Contact Point and the Hungarian diplomacy initiated various cooperation platforms, projects and high level agreements to incorporate all DR countries to the work of the PA4.

##  Dissemination – Publications

As Table 1 shows, PA4 and related PAC’ teams participated on and/or organised several **meetings, conferences**. One of the important platform to disseminate results was the large stakeholder conference (**Macro-regional conference, Budapest**, organised by PA4), the **Water Summit**, (organized by Hungary, with the involvement and participation of PA4) and the conference **Safeguarding Drinking Water Supply – Challenge for the Danube Region, Bratislava** (organized by PA4) where relevant organisations, institutions, stakeholders came together and shared their knowledge and information about relevant water quality-related issues (including policy processes, research options towards best practices, etc.)

As an important activity – also as a joint result of the on-going harmonisation process between ICPDR and PA4 – PA4 experts from both Hungary and Slovakia, participated on relevant **ICPDR expert groups and tasks groups** to discuss relevant actions and disseminate the information on PA4 relevant on-going processes. The main activities of the PA4 were introduced in the frame of the ICPDR yearly meetings as well (Standing Working Group meetings and Heads of Delegation meetings.)

The **PA4 website** (set-up in the beginning of the dissemination process) is continuously used to share documents for discussions, it makes available the outcomes of the steering group meetings as well as used to publish other relevant information about PA4.

EUSDR PA4 activities are disseminated via issuing the promotion brochure (Slovak and English version).

The Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Water Section in cooperation with the Water Research Institute have decided to publish a special issue of the **Water Management Journal** devoted to the Danube Strategy mainly in the context of the Priority Area 4 ‘*To Restore and Maintain the Quality of Waters’*. This special issue is prepared in dual version (English language - Slovak language) and divided into two sections: political-administrative and specialized. The issue will be published in the first half of June 2014, especially to be disseminated at the Annual EUSDR Meeting.

# Funding

Activities and teams of PAC / PA4 are supported via own resources provided by the European Parliament (TA1 and TA2) and by the Hungarian and Slovakian Governments. The aim of the first fund was to facilitate the starting phase of coordination of EUSDR Priority Area 4 “To restore and maintain the quality of waters”. The practical task was to establish a stable, effective and innovative governance system for EUSDR PA4.

The first Technical Assistance fund (TA1) has been finalised as of December 2013 (EU Strategy For The Danube Region Implementation of Priority Area N°4 (‘*To Restore And Maintain The Quality Of Waters*’)and currently the priority area is using funds from the 2nd TA, in which contract the ICPDR is also a party beside HU and SK.

The Priority Area is aiming to utilise available funds from 2014 also including funds from the Danube Transnational Program.

# Progress by target

The following pages give an overview on the main activities of the third year of implementation to achieve targets. More detailed information can be found in **Annex 1.** of this document, which specifies both ICPDR specific and PA4 specific actions in separate columns.

**Target 1: Achieve the management objectives set out in the Danube River Basin Management Plan**The target is linked to 8 actions of the EUSDR PA4. These are the following:

* Action 1: “To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan”
* Action 3: “To continue to invest in and support the information collection systems already developed by ICPDR”.
* Action 4: “To continue boosting major investments in building and upgrading urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure”.
* Action 8: To treat hazardous substances and contaminated sludge with the newest and best available technology and to develop and promote remediation measures
* Action 9: “To assure the proper control and progressive substitution of substances that are considered problematic for Danube Region”
* Action 11: “To promote measures to limit water abstraction”
* Action 12: “To strengthen general awareness and facilities exchange of good practice in integrated water management issues in the Danube Basin among decision-makers at all levels and among the population of the Region”
* Action 13: “To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply.”

As mentioned in sub-chapter 1.2., PA4 is one of the two priority areas where special emphasis has been taken on the process of **alignment of funding**. Started in the frame of the 5th SG meeting and further facilitated in the frame of the 6th SG and 7th SG meetings discussions were organised on the needs of the countries related to financing as well as on the possible roles of the EUSDR PA4 (and PA5) to ensure financial sources to the implementation of action plan between the 2014-2020 financing period.

Priority Areas 4 „Quality of Waters” and 5 „Environmental Risks” took several steps in 2013 and 2014 to help facilitating this process and developed a guidance document for the water management stakeholders and decision-makers in the Danube countries. The goal of the document is to provide assistance for experts and stakeholders related to water management in the Danube countries in order to support the generation of projects that are most relevant for the Priority Areas 4 and 5 of the EURSD. The goal of the optimisation is to have less number of projects, but those should be relevant for the macro region concerned with coordinated planning to meet specific criteria and also to improve the efficiency of common projects for the sake of macro-regional optimisation. The document includes those strategic objectives and proposed intervention measures (not indicative) that were identified during the consultations in the frame of PA4 and PA5 in the period of one year between June 2013 and June 2014.

Related to this target as an important activity the **Joint Danube Survey** 3 has to be also highlighted, organised by the ICPDR involving experts and scientist from all over the Danube River Basin. The survey was aiming at to collect information on parameters not covered in the on-going monitoring, to have data that is readily comparable for the entire river because it comes from a single source and to promote the work of the ICPDR and raise awareness for water management.

The survey took six weeks between 13 August and 26 September. The JDS3 ships travel 2,375 km downstream the Danube River, through 10 countries, to the Danube Delta. The JDS3 was coordinated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). An international Core Team consisted of 20 scientists was responsible for sampling, sample processing, on-board analyses and all survey activities. The final report of JDS3 is under preparation and will be available in autumn 2014. (http://www.danubesurvey.org/)

**Target 2: Reduce nutrient levels in the Danube River to allow the recovery of the Black Sea ecosystems to the conditions similar to 1960s by 2020**.

The target is linked to 3 actions of the EUSDR PA4. These are the following:

* Action 5: “To establish buffer strips along the rivers to retain nutrients and to promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements”
* Action 6: “To foster and develop an active process of dialogue and cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to ensure that measures are taken to address agricultural pollution”
* Action 7: “To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents”.

Next to the ICPDR core activities linked to this target area (and introduced in Annex 1 of this document) PA4 organised the **development of the following studies** to fulfil relevant milestones towards reaching target:

* Study development related to the situation on buffer zones: EUSDR PA4 “Survey of the situation of buffer zones” **(Action 5, Milestone 1);**
* Study development related to the situation on management of solid waste: EUSDR PA4 “Survey of the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements” **(Action 5, Milestone 3);**
* Study development related to the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements: EUSDR PA4 “Survey of the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements” **( Action 5, Milestone 4);**
* Study development related to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents: EUSDR PA4 Study “Legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents -policy response on the overview report” **(Action 7, Milestone 2).**

General policy recommendations were drafted by the legal experts preparing the studies. According to the feedback of the SG members and also the suggestion of the ICPDR these recommendations would be further polished during 2014.

**Target 3: Elaborate a Danube Delta Analysis Report by 2013 as a step towards completion of the Delta management Plan, which shall be adopted by 2015.**

The target is linked to 2 actions of the EUSDR PA4. These are the following:

* Action 14: “To further strengthen Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) practices on the Western shores of the Black Sea”
* Action 2: “To greatly strengthen cooperation at sub-basin level”

The kick-off meeting for partners and associate partners of the project “Improvement of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Black Sea Region, ICZM”, took place in Constanta between 11-13 March 2013. The main scope of the meeting was a review of partners input, setting-up a programme of actions, setting up of the working groups for further activities for Developing an ICZM common approach in Project area” (GA 1).

<http://crs.org.ua/en/projects/current/177.html>

**Target 4: Secure viable population of Danube sturgeon species.**

The target is linked to 1 action of the EUSDR PA4. This is the following:

* Action 10: “To reduce existing water continuity interruption for fish migration in the Danube river basin”

In line with the previous reports two projects are specific for this target focusing on sediment issues and on sturgeon. The Priority Area is aiming to utilise available funds from 2014 also including funds from the Danube Transnational Program. More details on on-going activities are introduced in **Annex 1**.

**Target 5: Elaborate, adopt and implement the sub-basin management plans, such as Sava, Tisza and Prut sub-basins**

The target is linked to 1 action of the EUSDR PA4. This is the following:

* Action 2: “To greatly strengthen cooperation at sub-basin level”

An international **expert position on watershed-planning** at the National Institute for Environment at the beginning of October 2013 has been established. The main objective was to carry out the task of Action 2 to greatly enhance sub-basin wide cooperation by ensuring follow-up activities of the ICPDR Tisza Group work and to provide continuation of the cooperation of the effected countries of the Tisza River. Currently high level discussion is on-going in Hungary to specify tasks and related activities.

The Priority Area is aiming to utilise available funds from 2014 also including funds from the Danube Transnational Program.

**Projects supported by PA4 Letters of Recommendation and Letters of Merit in 2013:**
1.        Cross-border Water Supply Development in the Pannon-Fertȍ - LoR
2.        ICZM – Improvement of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Maritime Spatial Planning practices on the Western Shores of the Black Sea - LoM
3.        Climate Change and Impacts on Water supply (CC-WaterS) -LoM
4.        Danube River Research and Management (DREAM),\* University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna - LoR
5.        Conservation of alluvial habitats of community interest on the Szabadság Island and side channel in Béda-Karapancsa pSCI, „Liberty Island“ – LoM (see the details in Annex 2.)

Budapest-Bratislava, XX June 2014

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 EUSDR PA4 co-PAC EUSDR PA4 co-PAC

 Hungary Slovak Republic

# Annex 1: Roadmaps to implement each action

Action 1: ***“To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan”***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | related Project |
| Milestone 1 | Interim Report on the Implementation of the Joint Programme of Measures | 2012 | ICPDR | Finalised and adopted in December 2012 | Finalised document is available via the ICPDR website (www.icpdr.org) | N/A | - |
| Milestone 2 | Facilitate the alignment of funding and the support of the JPM of 1st and 2nd Danube River Basin Management Plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1 | Policy reflections and Plan on financing for 1st JPM | First quarter of 2013 | EUSDR PA4 and ICPDR | Finalised: Workshop organised 4-5 April 2013 | Envisaged and planned activity is fulfilled, workshop minutes is available via the ICPDR website (ww.icpdr.org) | N/A | - |
| Output 2 | Supporting documents to financing of 2nd Joint Programme of Measures | End of 2014 | EUSDR PA4 and ICPDR | In progress |  Outcomes of the workshop as of 2013 4-5 April (see also output 1)Summary document to be prepared  | Discussion with the ICPDR on the harmonisation of the workDevelopment of the related document | - |
| Milestone 3 | Update of the Danube Basin Analysis Report | First half of 2014 | ICPDR | Document currently under development | Data collection is ongoingDevelopment of the draft document is ongoing | Finalisation of data collectionDrafting and finalisation of the documentEndorsement of the document by the ICPDR HoDs in June 2014 | - |
| Milestone 4 | 2nd Danube River Basin Management Plan | End 2015 | ICPDR | Preparation ongoing | Draft structure and outline of 2nd DRBM Plan prepared and discussed; Public Participation schedule published for 6 months, ready for adoption.Updated Interim Overview on the Significant Water Management Issues ready for adoption and 6 months public consultation | Data collection and preparation of draft 2nd DRBM until December 2014 for public consultation Plan | - |

Action 2: ***“To greatly strengthen cooperation at sub-basin level”***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Implementation of the 1st ITRBM Plan | 2015 | UA, SK, HU, RO, RS, (ICPDR Tisza Group) | Feedback on the progress of the Joint Programme of Measures has been prepared and should be endorsed in 2014 (activity is prolonged due to institutional changes of ICPDR Tisza Group coordination). | - | endorsement of the report by the ICPDr HoDs in 2014 | SEE RIVER |
| Project 1 | Case studies on Tisza sub-basin | End 2012 | ICPDR Tisza Group (HU, RO, RS, SK, UA) | Finalised: 2 case studies  | Studies (agriculture and water management and climate change case studies) are available via the ICPDR website | N/A |  |
| Project 2 | Early warning water quality monitoring system on transboundary rivers | 2020 | Water Boards on sub-region | A cluster was established including on-line monitoring experts, analytical and toxicology experts and telecommunication and database experts. The preliminary results were presented in the Macro Regional Conference and in UN Budapest Water Summit, further results were presented at the 7th SG Meeting.This project is a PA4 initiative | Feasibility Study on early warning water quality monitoring system | Applying for the funding of a feasibility study. |  |
| Milestone 2 | Interim report on the 1st ITRBM Plan | End 2013 | UA, SK, HU, RO, RS, (ICPDR Tisza Group) | Feedback on the progress of the Joint Programme of Measures has been prepared and should be endorsed in 2014 (activity is prolonged due to institutional changes of ICPDR Tisza Group coordination). | Report on the progress on the implementation of the Tisza JPM. | endorsement of the report by the ICPDR HoDs in 2014 | SEE RIVER |
| Milestone 3 | Strengthening of cooperation in the Tisza River Basin |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1 | Proposal for a framework for a long-term cooperation between Tisza countries | First half of 2013 | PA4, UA, SK, HU, RO, RS, ICPDR Tisza Group | ProTisza consortium set upHungary offered to coordinate ICPDR Tisza Group activities during the transition period.  |   | Update Tisza project, discuss with project partners to ensure their continuous commitment |  |
| Output 2 | Alignment of funding and setup of the proposed framework | End of 2014 | PA4, UA, SK, HU, RO, RS, ICPDR Tisza Group | (see information about Output 1 and Output 2 related project) | Starting Tisza project with the involvement of the Tisza countries | (see information about Output 1 and Output 2 related project) |  |
| Project | ProTisza (Promoting Strategic Partnership Enabling Cooperation in the Tisza River Basin) | 2014 | PA4,UA, SK, HU, RO, RS, ICPDR Tisza Group | (see information about Output 1 and Output 2 related project) | - | (see information about Output 1 and Output 2 related project) | Pro-Tisza |
| Milestone 4 | Development of the 2nd ITRBM Plan | End 2015 | HU, RO, RS, SK, UA, ICPDR Tisza Group | - | - | - | SEE RIVER |
| Milestone 5 | Danube Delta Sub-basin Analysis Report | 2013 | MD, RO, UA, ICPDR | Draft report available  | Work is in progress | Finalisation first half 20104 |  |
| Milestone 6 | Danube Delta Management Plan | 2015 | RO, MD, UA | Project proposal was not supported under the last call | - | - |  |
| Milestone 7 | Prut Management Plan | 2015 | MD, RO, UA | Pilot project on-going on the Prut sub-basin, identified in the frame of an on-going EU project including | concept note was handed in by 30 January 2012; Applicant: Prut River Basin Administration - Romania | - | SEE RIVER |
| Milestone 8 | Implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan | End of 2014 | ISRBC | In progress |  | Continue the work | SEWABIS |
| Milestone 9 | Update of the Sava River Basin Analysis | 2015 | ISRBC | In progress |  | Continue the work | SEWABIS |
| Milestone 10 | Development of the 2nd Sava River Basin Management Plan | 2017 | ISRBC |  |  | - | SEWABIS |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Milestone 4 | Development of the 2nd ITRBM Plan | End 2015 | HU, RO, RS, SK, UA, ICPDR Tisza Group | Work related to the 2nd ITRBMP is planned to be started in 2014 | - | - | SEE RIVER |
| Milestone 5 | Danube Delta Sub-basin Analysis Report | 2013 | MD, RO, UA, ICPDR | Draft report available  | Draft Danube Delta Analysis Report is available | Finalisation in first half of 2014 | ICPDR/ENVSEC project |
| Milestone 6 | Danube Delta Management Plan | 2015 | RO, MD, UA | Consortium was set up for the development of the management plan.  |  DDMP to be developed | Project proposal should be updated in line with the outcomes of the DDAR. Relevant financing programs to be investigated |  |
| Milestone 7 | Prut Management Plan | 2015 | MD, RO, UA | Pilot project on the Prut corridor is on-going in the frame of the SEE RIVER projectEU funded EPIRB project is ongoing, developing coordinated management plans for the MD and UA part of the Prut sub-basin | – | Finalisation of ongoing projectsInvestigate on sources for financing development of overall Prut sub-basin Management Plan | SEE RIVEREPIRB Project |
| Milestone 8 | Implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan | End of 2014 | ISRBC | Activity is managed by the ISRBC, the SRBMP has already been developed as the first step | SRBMP developed - RBM Plan – The final draft of the “Sava RBM Plan” undergoing internal national procedures precedingthe adoption |  adoption of the plan | SEWABIS |
| Milestone 9 | Update of the Sava River Basin Analysis | 2015 | ISRBC |  |  |  | SEWABIS |
| Milestone 10 | Development of the 2nd Sava River Basin Management Plan | 2017 | ISRBC |  |  |  | SEWABIS |

Action 3: ***“To continue to invest in and support the information collection systems already developed by ICPDR”***.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | ICPDR databases | end 2015 | ICPDR | See information related to the relevant projects |   |   |  |
| Project 1 | Development of databases on inventories related to ARS, CS and MS | end of 2015 | ICPDR | The data collection process is on-going. Compilation of templatesof the ARS and CS inventories in the draft form for all countries planned to be finished in the first half of 2014. The final ARS and CS inventories planned to be available at the end 2014. Detailed analysis and database development are expected to be done in 2015.. PA4 initiative: potential future joint activity with the ICPDR. It is suggested to set up a project to facilitate the implementation of this task.  |  Templates for the ARS, CS and MS inventories. | Data collection, finalisation of the inventories. |  |
| Project 2 | Further development of TNMN database | end 2015 | ICPDR | Slovakia in cooperation with the MA EG and the ICPDR Secretariat prepared TNMN Yearbook 2011. |  TNMN Yearbook 2011 | Continue the work |  |
| Project 3 | Development of database on inventories on Hazardous Substances | end of 2015 | ICPDR | Draft template for preparing inventories of particular PS already selected is available. The ICPDR PM EG discussed and agreed on the preparation of the EDL inventories (Inventory of Emissions, Discharges and Losses of Priority and Priority Hazardous Substances) making use of the CIS Guidance No. 28 methodology and the results of its testing at the DRB. Detailed analysis and database development are expected to be done in 2015..Activities commenced on identification of Danube River Basin Specific Pollutants in the frame of the FP7 project SOLUTIONS using JDS3 results. | Draft template for the PS inventory. | Reconsider the template, discussion on the upcoming PM EG Meeting. Start collecting data. |  |
| Milestone 2 | Joint Danube Survey 3 | 30/09/2014 | ICPDR | JDS 3 took place in August and September 2013. Analysis of samples is ongoing. | Samples collected | Analysis of samples is ongoing. Report on the results of the JDS 3 will be available in 2014 |  |
| Project 1 | Monitoring survey on the Danube | 30/09/2013 | ICPDR | JDS 3 took place in August and September 2013 | Samples collected | Analysis of samples is ongoing |  |
| Project 2 | Preparation of JDS3 reports | 30/09/2014 | ICPDR | This milestone depends on previous, still on-going milestone/project; therefore its implementation has not started yet. | JDS 3 report will be available in 2014. | Analysis of samples is ongoing |  |
| Milestone 3 | Joint Tisza Survey 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project 1 | Monitoring survey on the Tisza River | 2015 | ICPDR Tisza Group | Discussion on the Tisza Survey is in progress in the MA EG. Funding is still missing | methodologically oriented survey was carried out in HU and RO supported by US IGERT funding | Raising funds for JTS2 |  |
| Project 2 | Preparation of the JTS2 reports | 2016 | ICPDR Tisza Group | in line with the outcomes of project 1 | - | - |  |
| Project 3 | Survey and assessment of hydro-ecology of the Tisza River | 2015 | HU, UA, SK, RO, RS | University of Debrecen set up a project consortium and developed a relevant project proposal | - | - |  |
| Milestone 4 | INSPIRE compliant DanubeGIS  | 2015 | ICPDR | Redevelopment based on *OpenGeo suite* platform is in process System changes and related discussion in IMGIS EG is on-going |  | Continue the work |  |
| Step 1 | Refinement of system concept and preparation of implementation plan | 2012 | ICPDR | The implementation plan prepared. |  |   |  |
| Step 2 | Development of tools for integrated visualisation and interpretation of data | 2015 | ICPDR | New tools for data validation and uploading were developed and implemented. WebGIS based on OpenLayers is in development. Discussion in IMGIS EG is on-going |  |  Continue the work |  |
| Milestone 5 | Establishment and completion of the SavaGIS |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Step 1 | Setup of the core Sava GIS functionalities. | 2012 | ISRBC |  |  |  |  |
| Step 2 | Development of the advanced tools, mapping and reporting services as well as basic application and/or decision support systems. | 2015 | ISRBC |  |  |  |  |
| Step 3 | Extension of common data model to accommodate additional themes and datasets and the establishment of the most advanced service components | after 2015 | ISRBC |  |  |  |  |

Action 4: ***“To continue boosting major investments in building and upgrading urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure”***.

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Updating the implementation programme of UWWT | End of 2012 | ICPDR | Finalised. An overview on the measures taken and progress achieved by the Danube countries is available in the Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. | Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. |  |  |
| Step 1 | Information on national level of UWWTPs | End of 2012 | ICPDR | Finalised. An overview on the measures taken and progress achieved by the Danube countries is available in the Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. | Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. |  |  |
| Step 2 | Revision and update of the ICPDR database on UWWTPs | End of 2014 | ICPDR | Update of the information is on-going, analysis will be elaborated for the Danube Basin Analysis Report. The database on UWWTPs is planned to be updated for the 2nd DRBM Plan.PA4 initiative: potential future joint activity with the ICPDR. It is suggested to set up a project to facilitate the implementation of this task. | Data from the countries, draft DBA Report and 2nd DRBM Plan. | Finalization of the DBA Report, data collection for the 2nd DRBM Plan. |  |
| Milestone 2 | Financial planning for programme implementation |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work 1 | Facilitate dialogue among donors and IFIs on financing options of the urban wastewater treatment plants in the DRB | First half of 2013 | ICPDR | Done. The ICPDR workshop on financing on 4-5 April 2013 specifically addressed the financing issues of the UWWTP’s. |  |  |  |
| Work 2 | Workshop on financing | First half of 2013 | ICPDR | Done. The ICPDR workshop on financing was held in Vienna on 4-5 April 2013. |  | - |  |
| Work 3 | Preparation of a financial plan for the implementation programme on update for the UWWT | First half of 2013 | PA4, BDCP | (this work will be harmonised with Milestone 1 Step 1 and 2) |  |  |  |
| Milestone 3 | Technology developments |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work | To promote investments to foster penetration, where necessary, of improved UWWT technology based on research or already proved “state of the art” technologies | 2015 | EUSDR Countries |  |  | - |  |
| Project 1 | New technology for specific contamination | 2015 | EIB BDCP |  |  | - |  |
| Project 2 | Blue Danube – “Improved framework conditions for fast track eco-innovation in waste water treatment” | 2015 | DE, BG | Submitted but rejected project | - | Submit the project | Blue Danube |

Action 5: ***“To establish buffer strips along the rivers to retain nutrients and to promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Survey of the situation on buffer zones | first half of 2013 | HU, ICPDR , PA4 | The questionnaire was circulated to the countries as first step in 2013.A PA4 smaller scale project to investigate on the legal background and about measures included in this legislation was completed in December 2013 and the related studies were discussed at several ICPDR WGs, were presented at the 7th SG Meeting. An overview on the basic and supplementary measures, inter alia the buffer zones, and progress achieved by the Danube countries is available in the Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. Update is in progress. | Comprehensive Legal Study on buffer zones completedInterim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. | Elaborate further recommendations. Update for the 2nd DRBM Plan. |  |
| Milestone 2 | Implementation of projects on nutrient buffer zones |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work 1 | Preparatory paper for evaluating different solutions of establishing buffer zones | June 2014 | HU, ICPDR , PA4 | Discussions started already based on the Buffer Study. |  | reconsidered |  |
| Work 2 | Programme planning on common methodology and applying solution of buffer zones engineering | 2015 | Danube region countries |  |  |  |  |
| Work 3 | Projects generation and implementation | 2015 | Danube region countries |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone 3 | Survey of the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements | first half of 2013 | HU, PA4 | A PA4 smaller scale project to investigate on the legal background and about measures included in this legislation was completed in December 2013 and the related studies were discussed at several ICPDR WGs, were presented at the 7th SG Meeting.  | Comprehensive Legal Study on the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements was prepared. | Elaborate further recommendations |  |
| Milestone 4 | Survey of the situation on alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements | 2013 | HU, ICPDR, PA4 | To reduce water use and waste water amount a source separation scheme was presented in the frame of the macro-regional conference on the 11th September 2013 defining descriptive categories of yellow, brown and grey water and their possible paths within a rural/agricultural household and environmentA PA4 smaller scale project to investigate on the legal background and about measures included in this legislation was completed in December 2013 and the related studies were discussed at several ICPDR WGs, were presented at the 7th SG Meeting.  | Comprehensive legal Study on the situation on alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements was prepared. |  Elaborate further recommendations |  |
| Milestone 5 | Promoting best practices in WWT and Programme of Measures for solid waste management and wastewater treatment for small settlements |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work 1 | Analyses of solid waste management and WWT | 2014 | HU, ICPDR, PA4 | A PA4 smaller scale project to investigate on the legal background and about measures included in this legislation was completed in December 2013 and the related studies were discussed at several ICPDR WGs, were presented at the 7th SG Meeting. | Comprehensive legal Study on solid waste management was prepared. | Elaborate further recommendations |  |
| Work 2 | Proposal for a supplementary, eco-friendly and site-specific waste water treatment units for less than 2000 PE small settlements where UWWTPs are financially non-feasible | End of 2013 | HU, ICPDR, PA4 | This milestone depends on previous, still on-going milestone/project. |  |  |  |
| Work 3 | Generating policy response to the findings of the survey on waste management in small settlements | End of 2013 | PA4 | Partial Elaborate further recommendations |  |  |  |
| Milestone 6 | Implementation projects and promotion of site-specific and eco-friendly waste water treatment for less than 2000 PE settlements |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Phase 1 | Programme proposal for technical and financing solutions for the Danube region countries reflecting their different circumstances of topography | 2013 | PA4, Danube region countries, BDCP | This milestone depends on previous, still on-going milestone/project, therefore its implementation has not started yet.To reduce water use and waste water amount a source separation scheme was presented in the frame of the macro-regional conference on the 11th September 2013 defining descriptive categories of yellow, brown and grey water and their possible paths within a rural/agricultural household and environment. |  |  |  |
| Phase 2 | Projects generation based on documents focusing on know-how exchange (BAT) and applying the most suitable technical solutions to small regions and/or settlements concerned | 2015 | Project leaders |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone 7 | Promotion of the implementation of good practices | end of 2015 and continuously | ICPDR, PA4 | Discussions on the good agricultural practices have regularly been initiated at the PM EG Meetings.An overview on the on the basic and supplementary measures and progress achieved by the Danube countries is available in the Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. | Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. | Continuation. |  |

Action 6: ***To foster and develop an active process of dialogue and cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to ensure that measures are taken to address agricultural pollution***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Strengthen the cooperation between agriculture and water authorities  | 2013 | SK, ICPDR | In progress.A preparatory assessment on cooperation between agriculture and water sector is part of „**Tisza case study on agriculture and water management**“, ICPDR, Nov. 2012.  | Tisza case study is available via the ICPDR website |   | GoodWater |
| Milestone 2 | Implementation of Action plan | continuous | Project leaders, Danube countries |  |  |  | GoodWater |

Action 7: ***“To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents”.***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Implementation of Regulation (EU) 259/2012 | End of 2012 | ICPDR, PA4 | An overview on the legislative regulation of the P-free detergents and its implementation is available in the Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. | Interim Report on the Imp. of the JPM. |  |  |
| Milestone 2 | Policy response on the Overview Report | 2013 | PA4 | A PA4 smaller scale project to investigate on the legal background and about measures included in this legislation was completed in December 2013 and the related study was discussed at several ICPDR WGs, were presented at the 7th SG Meeting. | Legal Study on policy response phosphates was prepared. | Continue the work Elaborate further recommendations |  |
| Milestone 3 | Scenarios calculation for P reduction in laundry and dishwasher detergents and incorporation in 2nd DRBM Plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Output 1 | Modelling of anticipated nutrients reduction effects due to P-free detergents | End of 2014 | ICPDR | Preparatory work for modelling with MONERIS in progress | Results of model calculations | Continue the work. |  |
| Output 2 | Incorporation of model results in 2nd DRBM Plan | End of 2014 / end 2015 | ICPDR | Preparation of 2nd DRBM Plan ongoing. | P-free detergents and related management options addressed by 2nd DRBM Plan | Continue the work. |  |

Action 8: ***To treat hazardous substances and contaminated sludge with the newest and best available technology and to develop and promote remediation measures***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Inventory of polluted sites by upgrading of ‘hot spot’ inventory 2001 | end 2014 | ICPDR | In progress, ARS, CS templates have been sent out, MS templates agreed, data collection is on-going. |  | Continue the work. |  |
| Milestone 2 | List of activities and research needs | End of 2014 | ICPDR, PA4 | In progress, knowledge gaps and the necessary activities have been discussed in preparation the DBA Report and will be updated for the 2nd DRBM Plan. |  | Continue the work. |  |
| Milestone 3 | Implementation of projects | End of 2020 | Danube region countries, companies, to be defined as appropriate |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone 4 | Knowledge transfer | continuous | EU |  |  |  |  |

Action 9: ***“To assure the proper control and progressive substitution of substances that are considered problematic for Danube Region”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Testing of the EU Guidance document on EQS Directive | Dec 2012 | ICPDR | Finalised. | Finalised Report, draft ICPDR list of the relevant PS. |  |  |
| Project | Testing of the Guidance to elaborate a draft ICPDR list of relevant priority substances at the DRB | Dec 2012 | ICPDR | Finalised. | Finalised Report, draft ICPDR list of the relevant PS. |  |  |
| Milestone 2 | Inventory on emissions, discharges and losses of priority substances | End of 2014. | ICPDR | In progress, draft template has been elaborated for data collection.). Template might be reconsidered. | - | Continue the work.  |  |
| Project (planned) | Project proposal on emissions reduction of priority substances in the Danube Basin (PS – RED) | End of 2014 | ICPDR | The project idea has to be discussed at the next PM EG Meeting. |  | Preparation of project proposal depending on results of discussions in PM EG |  |
| Milestone 3 | Harmonization of data available from various sources | End of 2014 | ICPDR | In progress, available as a methodology and first draft list of relevant substances in the Danube River. Further harmonisation is intended using additional and/or updated information of different data sources available (TNMN, JDS3, PS EDL, E-PRTR, Waterbase, etc.) for the whole river network. | Draft list of relevant substances. | Continue the work.  |  |

Action 10: ***“To reduce existing water continuity interruption for fish migration in the Danube river basin”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Revision and update of the ICPDR ecological prioritisation approach for addressing longitudinal continuity interruptions in the Danube River Basin |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work 1 | Revision and update of methodology with support from EU Grant | End of 2012 | ICPDR | Update of draft methodology finalised. | Updated draft methodology available | Work 2 |  |
| Work 2 | Application of new methodology with updated data from 2013 data collection | During 2014 | ICPDR | Advanced draft for updated methodology available; Application of updated methodology and testing planned for 2014 with data from 2013 Update DBA |  |  |  |
| Milestone 2 | Application of the updated approach for 2nd Danube River Basin Management Plan | End of 2015 | ICPDR |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone 3 | Feasibility study for restoring continuity at the Iron Gate dams | As soon as possible | RO, RS, ICPDR, PA4 | Project “Fish migration at the Danube and Iron Gates” approved for funding by Dutch "Partners for Water Programme" in June 2013. Project was launched in September 2013 and will be implemented by September 2014 | Project results available in June 2014 | Implementation of project | Project “Fish migration at the Danube and Iron Gates” |
| Milestone 4 | To carry out an assessment for restoration of the sediment balance in the Danube |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project | Danube Sediment Management - Assessment for Restoration of Sediment Balance in the Danube River Basin | End of 2014 | HU, AT, DE, SK, HR, RS, RO | Project proposal rejected by SEE. During the 36th RBM EG Meeting in October 2012, the potential need for enlarging the project consortium with involvement of additional stakeholders (e.g. navigation and hydropower) was raised.  | Planning ongoing | prepare a revised project proposal | Danube Sediment |
| Milestone 5 | Assessment of the establishment of a hydro-morphological monitoring system for the Danube and tributaries | End of 2014 | HU, Danube countries, ICPDR |  | - |  |  |
| Milestone 6 | Study on the improvement of longitudinal continuity of rivers with operational changes in existing installations and low cost improvements in the light of the specific needs of various migratory fish species and taxa (coordination with PA6) | 2014 | HU, Danube countries |  | - |  |  |
| Milestone 7 | Examination of the biodiversity and environmental status of sediment, water and biota in the Sava River Basin |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Project | Environmental Status of Sediment, Water and Biota in the Sava River Basin - SEWABIS | June 2014 | SI, SK, BA, HR, RS |  | - |  |  |

Action 11: ***“To promote measures to limit water abstraction”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Collection of good practice examples dealing with limiting water abstraction | End of 2013 | HU, PA5, ICPDR, PA4, GWP DS task Force | In progress. There is an ongoing project dealing with this topic (CC-Ware) and a finished project (CC-WaterS). | In progress, CC-WaterS | Continue the collection | CC-WaterS, CC-Ware |
| Milestone 2 | Dissemination of results of the best practices and policies for decision-makers and stakeholders | First half of 2014 | HU, ICPDR, PA4 | Results were presented at the Macro-regional conference, 2013.  |  |  |  |
| Milestone 3 | Integration of the results from the good practices collection into the Risk assessment and 2nd DRBMP | End of 2013 and 2015 (DRBMP) | HU, PA5, ICPDR, PA4 | This milestone depends on previous, still on-going milestone/project, therefore its implementation has not started yet |  |  |  |
| Milestone 4 | Pilot projects based on best practices of milestone n°1 and promotion | continuous | Project leaders | This milestone depends on previous, still on-going milestone/project, therefore its implementation has not started yet |  |  | CC-WaterS, CC-Ware |

Action 12: ***“To strengthen general awareness and facilities exchange of good practice in integrated water management issues in the Danube Basin among decision-makers at all levels and among the population of the Region”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Danube Day 2012 held in 14 countries with more than 100 individual events | continuously every year for Danube Day, 30 November for review diary | ICPDR | On the 29th June 2013 countries celebrated in national level the Danube Day <http://www.icpdr.org/main/activities-projects/danube-day>, <http://www.danubeday.org/> | pictures, interview etc are available on the ICPDR website | review diary |  |
| Milestone 2 | Re-launch of the ICPDR Website as a tool to communicate accessible and appealing information on RBM efforts of the ICPDR as a contributing organization in implementation of some PAs of EUSDR. Link to the Danube region website | June 2012 for re-launch of the ICPDR websiteEnd of 2012 for including and linking EUSDR items | ICPDR, PA4 | Finalised, ICPDR.org was re-launched in summer 2012. All contents of the website were reviewed, outdated information was removed, new contents added, [http://www.icpdr.org](http://www.icpdr.org/) | ICPDR website is re-launched in 2012. | Website update continuously |  |
| Milestone 3 | Organisation of the Danube Art Master as a basin-wide competition among schools and youth care facilities | June of every year | ICPDR | In progress, <http://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-art-master-2012-czech-republic-wins-competition> | Yearly competition is organised. In 2013 ceremonial event was organised in the frame of the Budapest Water Summit to the national winners of the Danube Art masters.  | Continue the organisation |  |
| Milestone 4 | Information for the broad public on the progress report of the DRBMP implementation through an appropriate article in Danube Watch | 15 December 2012 | ICPDR, PA4 | Finalised, <http://www.icpdr.org/main/publications/danube-watch>. | Article is published and available via the ICPDR website. | Danube Watch articles |  |
| Milestone 5 | Information exchange on the progress, achievements and current events of EUSDR PA4 to strengthen of general awareness | continuous | PA4, ICPDR | On-going information through established media: Danube Watch, ICPDR.org, e-mail to ICPDR observer organisations | website of the ICPDR re-launched, article in Danube Watch published  | Continue the exchange |  |

Action 13: “***To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply.”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Identify responsible authorities, enterprises, associations responsible for drinking water supply | End of 2012 | SK, ICPDR | Finalised, list of the available national and trans-national associations is prepared | list of the available national and trans-national associations is available | - | CC-WaterS, Pannon-Fertő, FoWaP, CC-Ware |
| Milestone 2 | Develop joint actions with responsible authorities, enterprises, associations responsible for drinking water supply including transboundary issues on shared water resources | 2013 | SK, ICPDR, suppliers’ umbrella organizations | Completed. Conference was held on 16-17 December in Bratislava.  | Conference findings available |  | CC-WaterS, Pannon-Fertő, FoWaP, CC-Ware |
| Milestone 3 | Implementation of joint actions with responsible authorities, enterprises, associations responsible for drinking water supply | continuous | Danube countries and suppliers, BDCP |  | - |  | CC-WaterS, Pannon-Fertő, FoWaP, CC-Ware |

Action 14: ***“To further strengthen Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) practices on the Western shores of the Black Sea”***

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|  | Name | Deadline | Responsible actors | Status of the action and Progress in 2013 | Results (available and expected results) | Next steps | Project |
| Milestone 1 | Development of specific project regarding the improvement of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Black Sea Region | 2012 | RO | In progress, kick-off meeting on 11-13 March 2013. | Project planning in progress | Project activities | ICZM |
| Milestone 2 | Provide contribution to the development of the ICZM Strategy for the Black Sea | 30 November 2013 | RO, BG, UA | In progress | - | These results will be coordinated (harmonized) with the activities of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission) and discussed within ICZM Advisory Group of the Black Sea Commission |  |
| Milestone 3 | Development of a project proposal concerning Black Sea marine environment protection considering the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and using the Maritime Spatial Planning | 30 March 2013 | RO | In progress, proposal is under development at the level of the Black Sea Commission | - | Continue to develop the proposal. |  |

# Annex 2. Projects approved in 2013

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| **Name of the project** | Cross-border Water Supply Development in the Pannon-Fertő Region – Phase 3. |
| **Action related** | PA 4.13 To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply |
| **Countries involved** | Austria, Hungary |
| **Funding** | 86.000 EUR, EU Funds, National Contribution, Federal Contribution  |
| **Stage of implementation** | Project in preparation |
| **Description** | The project aims at the cross-border connection of the water supply systems of Central and Northern Burgenland (AT) and the region of Sopron (HU) in order to improve the quality of drinking water, to preserve the water resources in a sustainable way and to decrease energy use, by shortening pumping distances. The predecessor project aiming at investment preparation and planning is under implementation co-financed by the AT-HU ETC Programme. The proposed project’s main goal is to establish the infrastructure of the cross-border water supply system, enabling the transfer of drinking water between the involved regions. The project contributes to a strengthened cross-border cooperation and exchange of information between the involved institutions, to an increasingly safe water supply and an improved water quality, which goals are in line with Priority 4 of the EUSDR. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Supply with Letter of Recommendation.Participation in public events, networking with other projects and initiatives, strengthening links to policy level and participation in Project Meetings if necessary. |
| **Next steps** | To be discussed after approval of project. |

Projects granted with a Letter of Merit in 2013

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| **Name of the project** | ICZM –Improvement of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Black Sea Region |
| **Action related** | PA 4.14 To further strengthen Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) practices on the Western shores of the Black Sea |
| **Countries involved** | Turkey, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Romania |
| **Funding** | 627.100 €Joint Operational Programme “BLACK SEA BASIN 2007-2013”, 2nd Call  |
| **Stage of implementation** | Planned |
| **Description** | Taking into account that the action to which the above mentioned project is belonging, is meant to make connection between the Danube River and the Black Sea, and the Danube River is the most important tributary for the Black Sea, any actions taken within the Danube River Basin will influence the Black Sea marine environment. The project will support the improvement and development of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management addressing to the area at the interface between land and sea while the Maritime Spatial Planning will focus on the activities developed on sea. Both of them will focus on water environment quality.Overall: To improve quality of maritime environment using common innovative methodologies for Integrated Coastal Zone Management plans within the Black Sea region to assure the economical use of resourcesSpecific: * develop common and coherent ICZM approach within the regions
* provide integrated support for the stakeholders
* increase the level of public participation in the decision-making process
 |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Supply with Letter of Recommendation.Participation in public events, networking with other projects and initiatives, strengthening links to policy level and participation in Project Meetings if necessary. |
| **Next steps** | After the approval of project the SG granted it with a LoM. Implementation of the project activities until the end of 2014. |

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| **Name of the project** | Climate Change and Impacts on Water Supply - CC-WaterS |
| **Action related** | PA 4.13 To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply |
| **Countries involved** | Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Serbia |
| **Funding** | 4 219 727 EUR, South East Europe (SEE) Transnational Cooperation Programme 1st call |
| **Stage of implementation** | Completed |
| **Description** | Climate change affects fresh water resources and may have signiﬁcant impact on public drinking water supply. Land use activities exert pressure on water resources and are changing according to climate change. It is crucial for safeguarding future water supply to anticipate climate and land use changes and to assess their impacts on water resources. Danube Region is facing the challenge of ensuring water supply in a changing climate. Policy makers and water suppliers are required to develop sustainable management practice, considering existing and future effects of climate change. CC-WaterS identifies and evaluates impacts on availability and safety of public drinking water supply for several future decades. In order to achieve this goal in the most efficient way a multi sectoral and multi level approach is applied. The joint actions are performed on a transnational level in the Danube Region and in the Mediterranean representing different characteristic climates and topography. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Supply with Letter of Merit. |
| **Next steps** | The follow-up project CC-Ware is granted with LoR, and is under implementation. |

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| **Name of the project** | Danube River REsearch And Management University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, DREAM |
| **Action related** | PA 4.01 To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan |
| **Countries involved** | Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Czech Republic |
| **Funding** | approx 70 Mio Euro |
| **Stage of implementation** | Project in preparation (e.g. project proposal, feasability study) |
| **Description** | Water Framework Directive and Danube River Basin Management Plan demand to integrate use and protection of the Danube River sustainably. This requires basic and applied research to derive monitoring strategies, modeling and engineering solutions. They will provide crucial suitable measures to reach a win-win situation between economic use and environmental protection of the Danube River. DREAM will boost cooperation between research institutions in the Danube basin and improve their infrastructure substantially. Two new laboratories combined with existing ones will offer unique possibility for large scale physical laboratory investigation. It will allow fundamental and applied research. DREAM was awarded with the label “Priority Area 7 Flagship Project” within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Supply with Letter of Recommendation Participation in public events, networking with other projects and initiatives, strengthening links to policy level and participation in Project Meetings if necessary. |
| **Next steps** | To be discussed after approval of project. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the project** | Conservation of alluvial habitats of community interest on the Szabadság Island and side channel in Béda-Karapancsa pSCIDANUBEISLANDFORESTSLIFE+ NAT/H/00320 |
| **Action related** | PA 4.01 To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan |
| **Countries involved** | Hungary |
| **Funding** | 60% EU LIFE+ Nature15% WWF as Coordinating Beneficiary10% Associated Beneficiaries, such as Danube-Drava National Park Directorate, Lower-Danube-valley Water Management Directorate, Transdanubian Regional Waterworks Corporation.15% Co-financiers: local Mohács Municipality and Coca-Cola Hungary. |
| **Stage of implementation** | Completed |
| **Description** | The Danube is one of the priority areas for WWF’s global freshwater program, with key contributions in freshwater habitat conservation, water stewardship and water security. It is the most international river in the world, flowing through 10 countries and 4 national capitals on its 2,800 km stretch from the Black Forest to the Black Sea.While large sections of the upper Danube have been regulated, the lesser-intervened areas of the middle and lower Danube feature a rich and unique biological diversity that has been lost in most other European river systems. All the projects that improve ecological status of Danube and its floodplains contributes to the EUDRS priority areas 4, 5 and 6.  |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Supply with Letter of Merit. |
| **Next steps** | - |

# Annex 3 Summary Minutes of the 6th Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 4



 **European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**

**Priority Area 4**

December 2013

Adopted at the SG7, on 28 March 2014

**Summary Minutes of the 6th Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 4**

**Opening of the meeting**

The 6th Steering Group (SG) meeting of Priority Area 4 (PA4) of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region took place in Vienna, Austria on the 12th December 2013 in the Balassi Institute – Collegium Hungaricum back to back with the ICPDR 16th Ordinary meeting and 6th Steering Group meeting of PA5.

The meeting was opened by Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis Kupper Hungarian PAC assistant.

Mr Márton Méhes, Director of the Collegium Hungaricum welcomed the participants and as a member of PA3 he highlighted the importance of the EUSDR. Mr Méhes announced an exhibition of the Collegium Hungaricum about the Danube and kindly invited the particpants to visit the exhibition on the‘ *The Human. The River’*, featuring through the Danube countries. In the frame of the meeting the representatives of the European Commission, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Bavaria, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia were presented. Representatives of the ICPDR and Sava Commission also gave important inputs during the meeting. Ukraine has been participated in the PA5 meeting and was also intended to take part on the PA4 szeering group meeting, but due to governmental commitment the Ukrainian representative had to leave Vienna before the 12th December 2013. From Romania the Secretary of State and from Hungary the EUSDR Government Commissioner were participating on the meeting. From Hungary State Secretary responsible for Water, Péter Kovács, also participated on the meeting. In the frame of the PA4 SG 6 meeting the highest country participation has been reached.

List of participants can be found in **Annex 1.**

Ms Kocsis-Kupper announced that Mr László Perger resigned from his position due to family reasons and from the middle of October 2013, Mr Ottó Szabó was officially appointed as priority area coordinator in Hungary.

In Slovakia, Andrea Vranovska was nominated as PAC for the period of 15 September – 31 November. As of 1st December Ing.Dušan Čerešňák, Director General of Water Department, Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic has been appointed as PAC for PA4 in SK. Ms Vranovska would remain in the team and would act as PAC assistant.

**Approval of the Agenda**

Due to the regrettable illness of the new HU PACMs Kocsis-Kupper chaired the meeting. She proposed two small changes in the Agenda:

* Mr Raimund Mair was kindly asked to give short information about the outcomes of the ICPDR 16h Ordinary meeting.
* Ms Kocsis Kupper asked the participants to agree that agenda item on programming would be shifted to the afternoon, since Government Commissioner for the Danube Region Strategy, Mr Balázs Medgyesy (due to his official obligations), could only arrive following the lunch.

There were no objections against the proposals.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper kindly asked the delegates/alternates/observers to specify their formal positions within the EUSDR to facilitate future communication between PACs and SG members/observers. PAC (HU) will circulate a list of the SG members, observers and countries. PA4 relevant countries and observer organisations are kindly asked to update the list in line with the latest information.

**Related Tasks:**

* *Task 1:**PAC (HU) will circulate a list of the SG members and observers and countries and the PA4 relevant organisations are kindly asked to update the list in line with the latest information (related table see in* ***Annex 2****).*

**Progress within PA4**

PA4 acknowledges that water quality is a world- wide significant policy issue and its aim (in line with the Action Plan) is to improve water policy and to reach good status under the Water Framework Directive. Following the second year of implementation of the EUSDR the Priority Area 4 has achieved important milestones such as it completed the identification of the operational steps, with targets and milestones that were revised and accepted by the Steering Group (SG) and as a result, the Roadmaps to the Action Plan for PA4 has been finalised to achieve the identified goals of the Action Plan for the Strategy.

The Steering Group serves as a platform to examine the results of the implementation and the achievements of the targets set for PA4, to facilitate alignment of funding and to identify institutions playing significant role in the implementation of the Action Plan. The SG also outlines gaps and make steps to fill in gaps where further activities are needed to reach objectives and targets set in the Action Plan.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper listed the main added values and summarized the main messages related to PA4 activities as follows:

* PA4 working structure is politically embedded in a way to ensure financial and human sources where mostly needed towards the realisation of the Action Plan;
* The ratio of participation in the meetings is improving, and in the frame of the SG 6 meeting 11 countries and the European Commission were presented;
* PA4 is one of the priority areas, which takes efforts toward facilitating Aignment of Funding;
* PA4 is one of the priority areas, where coopeartion with international organisations (ICPDR and ISRBC) can serve – in long term – an example.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper summarized the main progress taken in 2013:

1. PA4 facilitated relevant policy processes in line with the already existing policy developments to reach objectives of PA4 outlined in the Action Plan (discussion with relevant main policy actors concerning water quality including the UNECE - Helsinki Convention, DG Environment, ICPDR, Sava Commission, Danube Commission, JRC, REC, ASEM, Water boards-bilateral commissions);
2. Steps were taken in line with the objectives of the EUSDR action plan to fill in gaps towards reaching goals outlined in the Roadmap and to set up consortiums to implement tasks and objectives of the priority area;
3. Coordination and harmonisation of tasks/steps listed in the roadmap with relevant institutions and organisation to achive goals indicated in the EUSDR Action Plan (e.g. ICPDR, ISRBC) has been started;
4. Macro-Regional Conference has been organised in September 2013 to support objectives of PA4 activities and to offer new scientific and technical solutions to fill in gaps outlined by PA4;
5. PA4 explores possible financial sources and facilitates that national programming process can fit to the objectives of the EUSDR;
	* Facilitating policy process within PA4

For the implementation of the Strategy, the European Commission proposed a Communication[[6]](#footnote-7) and an Action Plan, which were formally endorsed by the European Council in June 24, 2011. The Strategy seeks to create synergies and coordination between existing policies and initiatives taking place across the Danube Region. One of the main roles of the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs**)** is to provide technical assistance and advice during the implementation of the Action Plan and to work in consultation with the Commission, and relevant EU agencies and national/regional bodies.

To reach the main objective of PA4, to improve water policy and to reach good status under WFD, discussion has been started with the relevant main policy actors concerning water quality including the UNECE - Helsinki Convention, DG Environment, ICPDR, Sava Commission, Danube Commission, JRC, REC, ASEM, Water boards-bilateral commissions

The main outcomes and results of the process was summarised by Ms Kocsis-Kupper as follows:

* important result related to policy process and as an outcomes of the discussions with DG Regio, DG Env. and with Commissioner Hahn, is that cooperation with ICPDR has been strenghtened in 2013. In addition to the Best Practice document prepared in 2013 due to this efforts a comprehensive document is under development focusing on common cornerstones of cooperation.
* Ms Kocsis-Kupper recalled DG ENV and PA meeting in 2013 where it was agreed that the EUSDR can significantly contribute to the implementation of the EU legislation on river basin management. The systematic cooperation in the future was also preliminary agreed on in order to incorporate the EUSDR strategy to the EU environmental and water policy process and also to ensure the embedding of the DG ENV’s major findings and efforts to the Danube Region Strategy process. It was agreed on that recent review on the River Basin Management and CIS carried out to frame and priories the tasks of the PA4. Focus areas were preliminary agreed as follows:
* buffer strips,
* priority substances,
* uniform monitoring network,
* early warning systems,
* cooperation with services, and initiative for the UWWT, and
* finally to enable non- EU countries for reasonable planning for implementation and use cohesion sources.

The relevance of the listed topics should be further discussed in the frame of the expert group meetings of the ICPDR and Sava Commission and list should be further adjusted based on the countries feedback.

* It was also agreed on that result of the continuous efforts of DG ENV to review the CIS in respective Danube Region countries will also be feed into the PA4’s workflow and that areas what ICPDR also addressees is the major interfaces of EU water policy and Danube basin wide efforts. It was also agreed that in the future there will be regular interchanges of recent tasks and development.
* The chairperson noted the outcomes of discussions with DG ENV had significant effects on the major areas of the macro-regional conference and the efforts of PA4 and the major results are also already incorporated as was appreciated by the representative of DG ENV representative in the discussions at the margins of the working group meeting at the Annual Forum.
* PA4 (PAC) ensures on-going discussions with DG ENV. Potential areas of cooperation has been agreed. It was highlighted that a systematic overview of the priorities based on the Blueprint findings should be outlined, the common implementation strategy (CIS) should be reviewed and potential synergies of the work of EUSDR should be explored. It would be especially helpful to have a review on the cross cutting issues. With regard the Blueprint the PA4 identified and screened the research and development options in 2013. Further on discussions were carried out with research institutes and policy experts, resulted in the macro regional conference findings (JRC, DG ENV, universities).
* Efforts to coordinate common activities a meeting was organised with the Joint Research Centre in 2013. PAC participated at the different water nexus meetings and the cooperation resulted in initiating the macro regional conference in Budapest in September 2013. JRC gave a presentation on the Multi-criteria hydro-economic optimisation of water resources in Europe to support the EU Blueprint to safeguard Europe’s waters and the Danube Strategy. JRC study on challenges and solutions related water demand and supply was introduced as well. The aim of the study is to stimulate EU countries to increase the efficiency of water use by 2020/2030. JRC as a key initiator of fact and science based policy support to the macro-regional water policy. To integrate the new water nexus being established by the JRC into the framework in to PA4 of EUSDR the PAC already invited the water nexus leaders to the SG to provide an overview and to discuss the nexus. PAC noted with appreciation the high interest from scientific institutions to take part within the water nexus and participated at various meetings to foster and deeper integration of research and science activities towards the implementation of PA4 actions in the Action plan. There are some good examples already of macro regional co-operations established between research institutions to joint forces with the JRC and to broaden the research to support the EUSDR. The PAC looks forward receiving similar good examples of cooperation in all SG countries. It would be timely to reflect to this process in the upcoming SG meeting and we look forward discussing it with JRC experts in the spring of 2014.
* Regarding institutional development and to fill out existing and future gaps Ms Kocsis-Kupper mentioned that new international expert position on watershed-planning in the framework of the EU SDR PA4, at the National Institute for Environment at the beginning of October 2013 has been established. The main objective is to carry out the task of Action 2 to greatly enhance sub-basin wide cooperations by ensuring follow-up activities of the ICPDR Tisza Group work and to provide continuation of the cooperation of the effected countries of the Tisza River Basin.
* In September 2013 a Macro-regional Conference has been organised aiming at to identify gaps towards reaching main targets and objectives set in the Action Plan. In the frame of the Macro-regional Conference the potential partners gave their presentation providing scientific overview and introducing methods to fill in existing gaps towards reaching goals of the Action Plan. In line with these feedbacks a set of existing gaps has been identified as the outcomes of the Conference. The chair thanked again for all SG members participated on the conference and contributed to the success of this event (More details are introduced in Chapter 5).

**Conclusion**: It was concluded that several activities were organised in 2013 in the frame of PA4 to facilitate policy processes and to ensure coherence between PA4 and relevant institutions.

* + Steps to fill in gaps towards reaching goals of the Action Plan

The Priority Area Coordinators shall among others ensure the implementation of the Action Plan defined for the Priority Area by agreeing on planning, with targets, indicators and timetables, and by making sure that there is an effective cooperation between project promoters, programmes and funding sources.

The main activities facilitated by PA4 to implement actions outlined in the Roadmap and based on the relevant scientific methods introduced in the frame of the macro-regional conference in 2013 are the following:

* Facilitating the implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan;
* Study development related to the situation on buffer zones and on management of solid waste;
* Study development related to issues water quality monitoring – early warning (Feasibility study on early warning water quality monitoring);
* Facilitating issues on small rural settlements, alternative waste water treatment possibilities for small settlements;
* Facilitating set up consortium to resolve Sediment issues;
* Urban Waste Water Treatment.
	+ - **Implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan**

Action 1 of the Roadmap, aiming at to fully implement the Danube River Basin Management Plan toward reaching good status of the waters of the DRB. The ICPDR coordinates the overall implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP).

To support the implementation and the alignment of funding of the Joint Program of Measures of 1st DRBMP and to facilitate the 2nd DRBMP the PACs mobilized SG members and Danube countries to take active part in the programming process regarding 2014-2020 (<http://www.southeast-europe.net/en/about_see/danubeprogramme/>). It also became evident during the last period that most of the countries weren’t really active in EUSDR related programming and this is an area where more efforts are to be provided.

There are initiatives on behalf of Ukraine for the participation in the classification and qualification of waters according to the EU WFD requirements and for the capacity building and cooperation in this specific field.

* + - **Buffer zones and management of solid waste**

In line with the Roadmap action 5 milestone 1 and 2 a survey on the situation of buffer zones and on the management of solid waste, on alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements has been initiated by Hungarian PAC. HU PAC initiated an international research to investigate the gaps and prepare a study on the situation regarding the above topics in the Danube countries. The research reports will be circulated and dicussed in the SG and relevant working groups of the ICPDR and Sava Commission. For the development of the study Hungary used national sources and for the outcomes and results on buffer zones information will be available from all countries.

* + - **Water quality monitoring**

For the fulfillemnt of action 2 milestone 4, project 2 of the roadmap a very effective water quality model was identified by PA4 as a result of an intensive research and discussion process in 2013. A scientific model was presented to wide international audience at the macro- regional conference in September 2013. The base concept is ready for a unified early warning alert system for the territory of the Tisza river basin. This issue is very important as it affects all inhabitants in the Danube river basin and can improve water quality and thus would improve living conditions. Early warning function and effect based monitoring of water analysis are joined together comprising a cost effective integrated system which performs sampling, analysis and toxicity testing of surface waters. The selection of appropriate sampling locations is essential to characterise water bodies while reacting on industrial or other hot spots and also keeping record of water quality in country border sections. Due to the proper architecture of monitoring stations, data transmission and databases, together with a state-of-the-art communication system the international early warning function is also ensured. The modular structure of each monitoring station makes easy to react on varying analytical requirements, the frequency and speed of analysis results in quasi-continuous information about whole catchment areas. As a result of effect based monitoring only relevant samples are transported and analysed in labs resulting in decrease of running and investment cost of monitoring.

In the development of the study Slovakian experts are also involved. Study will be circulated to the SG members as soon as it is available.

* + - **Small rural settlements, alternative waste water treatment possibilities for small settlements**

According to the EU WFD, establishment of waste water treatment plants are obligatory in all EU countries independently from the size of the settlements.

The initial problem outlined in action 5 milestone 4 and 5 of the roadmap of PA4 arises from the settlement structure of agro-industrial regions of many countries resulting in large proportion of untreated waste water and substantial diffuse pollution of ground water and surface water.

The effect of loads caused by untreated waste water on water quality is a significant issue.

There is a wide scale spectrum of the natural technologies already exists for small settlements to solve waste water treatment related challenges. In line with the economical and ecological characteristics of the settlements a model should be adjusted to the characteristics to optimize this characteristics and needs. In the frame of the Macro-regional conference, organised in September 2013, the main cornerstones of the model has been outlined. The core idea of PA4 is a multi-criteria evaluation method with all the small scale water treatment equipment on one side, and a large number of ambient and social and economy parameter on the other side. With the multi-criteria evaluation method joined with GIS ambient and social database the most suitable small scale waste water treatment equipment can be determined.

A small settlement waste water treatment optimizations system was identified as a result of the cooperation with the Budapest Technical University (BME) for the integrated solutions for wastewater treatment in small settlements and rural areas in line with action 5 milestone 4 of the roadmap of PA4.

As a next step a survey of the situation on alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements (A5M4) should be initiated and a pilot program should be outlined (A5M5) to offer and promote best practices in WWT for small settlements.

* + - **Sediment issues and consequences in the Danube river**

An international consortium was set up that brings together all Danube countries and that is able to provide a tool to preliminary assess hydrological monitoring and to serve needs of water use. The project was not funded yet, but as a result of joint efforts several social partners achieved a common understanding (including DG MOVE, navigational sector and other field representatives) to work on this issue together. PA4 had significant role in initiating the project and to facilitate the preparation of the project proposal. Colleagues of the ICPDR also played an important role in this initiative and also indicated that they are open to further discussions. PA4 launched negotiations in the frame of 2014-2020 Program in terms of outlining proper financing mix of the EU Structural and Investment Funds, the connected Europe Facility and the Horizon 2020. According to the infomation available all these sources can provide useful contribution to various elements of the project.

The sediment project identified by the Danube Countries focuses on the Danube bed situation and its problems. The relevance of the project started decades ago, but only slow and little steps were made towards a better knowledge of the real effects caused of human interventions into the nature. The proposed project deals with the effects of the hydropower plants (78 barriers along the Danube), the works of flood protection (causing a loss of the 80% of the original floodplain area) and the navigation (2411 km navigable waterway), river bed degradation (2 cm/year) in the upper and also the middle Danube. This project was also presented to wide international audience at the macro-regional conference in September 2013 and meets the objective outlined in the roadmap action 10 milestone 4 project. The base concept is ready for the establishment of adequate hydraulic laboratories, computer based simulations, but also field study sites for model calibration and validation are selected. With the project planning the building of cooperation between research institutions along the Danube River has already started.

* + - **Urban Waste Water Treatment**

A workshop was organised in April 2013 focusing on the topics of action 4 milestone 1 and 2 to discuss progress achieved in the implementation of the Joint Program of Measures from the 1st Danube River Basin Management Plan, to learn about funding needs and potential funding instruments for actions, supported by presentations on practical examples for financing measures. A key element of the Joint Program of Measures is the extension of urban wastewater treatment, which was specifically addressed in the frame of the workshop.

Hungary recommended providing further funding for this task under the Danube Transnational Programme. The PA4 initiated contacts with the related waste water treatment services to establish working groups and preceded developing project ideas. It is also important to note that for the preparation of the financial plan for the implementation programme on the update for the UWWT indicated in action 4 the updated ICPDR database on UWWTPs are needed to be finalised. Actions between ICPDR and PA4 should be harmonised in time. The action should be further discussed also in the frame of the relevant ICPDR EGs.

**Related Tasks:**

* *Task 2: PAC HU is requested to upload presentations following the meeting.*
* *Task 3: Feasibility study on early warning system and study related to buffer strips and solid waste will be introduced in 2014 in the frame of the ICPDR relevant EG meetings and circulated to the SG members and ICPDR relevant EGs.*

* + Coordination and harmonization of tasks with relevant institutions and organisation

Between 2011 and 2013 as a significant step PA4 agreed on the Roadmap to implement Action Plan outlined for PA4. Actions, milestones, deliverables and related projects have been identified and implementation of the roadmap has been started. The Roadmap has been formulated in a way that also includes several tasks, which are carried on in the frame of the ICPDR and Sava Commission.

Cooperation between PA4 and ICPDR and Sava Commission are crucial as it was also stressed by Ms Kocsis-Kupper in the frame of her presentation.

The Danube River Protection Convention clearly stipulates the mandate for framework for cooperation between its Contracting Parties at both technical and political level in terms of water management, water protection, flood protection and overall sustainable use of the Danube River on the territory of 14 states within the Danube River Basin. The ICPDR has also been tasked by the Danube Ministers to provide the platform for the implementation of the EU WFD and FD at basin-wide level. However, with the evolving and broadening scope of river basin management and the new opportunities provided by the implementation of the legal provision as well as the successive financial periods the great potential for cooperation and for a mutual support of the EUSDR and the ICPDR in relevant fields has not fully utilised yet, in order to exploit all the potential added value for Danube countries and their citizens. Therefore, the ICPDR representing the Contracting Parties to the DRPC, approached the National Contact Points of PA4 and PA5 and agreed to prepare a joint document, where the particular mandates, responsibilities, tasks and modus operandi between ICPDR and PA4/PA5 will be clarified. The National Contact Points and Priority Area Coordinators agreed to channel their preparatory activities and drafting would start following to the meeting of high level representatives and PACs on PA4 and PA5 coordinator countries in the margin of the EU SDR Annual Forum in Bucharest, 2013 via this common pipeline together with ICPDR.

It was also stressed by the ICPDR representatives that cooperation between PA4, PA5 and ICPDR was discussed and highlighted in the frame of the ICPDR workshop organised in November 2013.

The HoDs of the ICPDR agreed to elaborate a draft joint document to clarify the respective roles and expectations towards generating maximum synergy between PA4, PA5 and ICPDR. The agreement was made in the frame of the 16th Ordinary meeting and the related resolutions can be found in the **Annex 4**. The document should clearly express the key cornerstones of water-related cooperation in the Danube basin and it t was also requested by the HoDs to jointly prepare a letter to Commissioner Johannes Hahn in cooperation with the EUSDR National Contact Points from HU, RO and SK, informing about the intention and progress in the development of a joint document, indicating above.

t was highlighted by the SG members (RO, AT) that precise setting should be outlined between the relevant organisations. It was also stressed that the best would be to discuss relevant issues in the respective ICPDR EGs. Ms Kocsis-Kupper appreciated the offer from the ICPDR and empahised that PA4 is open to any discussions and offered assistance for coopearation.

**Related Tasks:**

* *Task 4: Joint letter from NCPs and ICPDR PS should be sent out as early as possible. The letter should be stated that a process was started. It should be signed by the NCP (HU, SK, RO) and the ICPDR.*
* *Task 5: A letter should be sent to the ICPDR EGs (via the ICPDR PS) about the intention to share ideas about the future work and ongoing process within the EUSDR PA4 with the ICPDR EGs members. Thank to the ICPDR members and Secretariate to contributing to the work of PA4 (stakeholder conference and SG meetings)*
* *Task 6: A joint document (demarcation document) will be developed in 2014 on the common fields of the ICPDR and PA4 and PA5.*
	+ Outcomes of the Macro –regional Conference

To gave an overview on the scientific and technical models as helping tools to fulfill gaps outlined in the Roadmaps of the EUSDR Pillar II and to involve wide range of staleholders in the overall process a Macro Regional Conference has been organised and held with 300 registered participants from many Danube countries in September 2013.

Following the coffee break Ms Kocsis-Kupper gave a presentation about the main outcomes of the Budapest macro-regional conference.

Next to governmental cooperation - as Ms Kocsis-Kupper told - the macro regional conference also gave a platform for scientific and technical discussions, where bottlenecks and gaps were recognised (e.g. early warning system). PA4 initiated further cooperation between potential partners of the Danube countries. The stakeholder conference facilitated further technical conultations and gave horizontal overview on relevant issues. Since one of the main task of the PA4 to ensure and create platform for stakeholders and partners to facilitate cooperation and to discuss existing gaps, the macro regional conference, organised in September 2013 following the high level section focused on specific issues of Pillar II (PA4, PA5 and PA6) introducing partners and relevant organisation of watershead management and water quality protection and discussed about existing gaps and on possible solutions to fulfill these gaps.

High level statements were presented from speakers from Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bavaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Commission; participants were coming from Slovakia, Austria, Ukraine, Moldova, Germany, Croatia, Bosnia, Italy and Hungary. The representatives of major international, regional and local water and environmental organisations were also present, such as the UNECE, the European Commission, the ICPDR, the IDM, the REC, the Sava Commission, the ASEM, the Slovak Water Research Institute (VUVH) and the JRC. Representatives of many scientific institutions as well as environmental and water consultants and experts also participated at the event. Ms Kocsis-Kupper emphasized the main messages of the presenters as follows:

***“****Innovation, new models and new strategies, as well as methods to improve the knowledge base and incorporate the contribution of science and innovation to the Strategy” said* ***Government Commissioner for the Danube Region Strategy Mr Balázs Medgyesy.***

 *“Enhanced water cooperation across borders is indispensable” said Ms.* ***Marianne Wenning, the Director from the European Commission****, Directorate General Environment welcomed the conference and noted that water is a precondition for human, animal and plant life as well as an indispensable resource for the economy and stressed that the demand for water is continuously growing in the world. She mentioned that on present trends about 40 % of global water supply is likely not be met by 2030 and that 47% of the EU water will fail to achieve good status by 2015. She called to step up our action at all levels.*

*“It is necessary to apply sustainable methods in order to preserve the status quo and for the sake of developing water management innovations” said* ***Zoltán Illés, State Secretary*** *in**the frame of the conference.*

*HE* ***Ermina Salkičevic- Dizdarević, Deputy Minister Bosnia and Herzegovina, President International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River*** *noted that the ecosystems of the Danube River Basin are highly valuable in environmental, economic and social terms, and also noted that they are subject to increasing pressure and serious pollution from various sources and welcomed the cooperation among the Danube countries to overcome the environmental challenges.*

*Mr.* ***Ivan Zavadsky, Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River*** *presented a topic on the Danube basin cooperation and referred to the Danube River Protection Convention (1994, Sofia) highlighting the cooperation mechanisms of the ICPDR with 15 contracting parties*

*“Sustainable land use, efficient water and land management, protection of biodiversity and flood prevention is necessary.” HE* ***Vojtech Ferencz, State Secretary from the Slovak Ministry for Environment*** *further welcomed the conference and stressed that we have to pay attention to the conservation and sustainable use of the ecosystem, including the management of riparian forests and the protection of the regional biodiversity.*

*Our Danube Region Strategy has lead us to wider frameworks of cooperation. “This strategic cooperation conveys the message of Central European solidarity” HE* ***Enikő Győri, Minister of State from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*** *mentioned that transboundary cooperation is necessary for the preservation and sustainable exploitation of water.*

*Mr.* ***Wolfgang Klug from the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Public Health*** *noted the importance of cooperation in relation to the Danube and mentioned that Bavaria is also a Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) for the Danube Strategy, he specially emphasised that stakeholders will need to approach the PACs with project ideas as projects can still be financed in the upcoming financing period.*

*Mr.* ***Peng Qinghui, the Assistant to Secretary General, ASEM Water Resources Research and Development Center****, China presented a topic on the ASEM cooperation mechanisms and highlighted that the water challenges in Europe and in Asia are similar, such as flood, drought and pollution and that there is a similar gap between water supply and demand in both continents.*

 *“Smart and sustainable growth for the Region is to be ensured, joint monitoring of water quality, development of common databases and common river modelling systems and other coordinated measures are needed for effective, sustainable and joint policy making” Mr.* ***Normund Popens, the deputy Director General of the Directorate General Regional & Urban Policy, European Commission*** *pointed that the Danube Strategy is demonstrating that by working together, we can have a far greater impact than if we try to tackle problems in isolation and mentioned that when dealing with water management, the macro-regional approach is self-explanatory, since water does not recognise borders and its management requires strong coordination and cooperation across the countries.*

*The final speaker for the policy session was Mr.* ***Péter Kovács, the State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development****, who spoke about the Context of EU water policies and the EUSDR. He highlighted the international cooperation in the water sector and described the structure of the EUSDR and its connection to EU Strategy 2020. Mr. Kovács called the attention to the fact that there is close connection to DG Environment policies as most of Pillar B Actions are covered by Directives of DG Environment and that most of the EUSDR Water Quality (PA 4) Actions refer to the Water Blueprint issues. He also pointed to the connections of EUSDR to the activities of the ICPDR activities and to the activities of the JRC as the later initiated a ‚Scientific support to the Danube Strategy’, which main objectives are to gather scientific expertise and data. Mr. Kovács emphasised that the EUSDR can efficiently contribute to reaching the relevant EU environmental objectives.*

The aim of the conference was to provide an overview about scientific results and innovative methods which are essential to the implementation of the water-related goals of the EU Strategy for the Danube Macro-region. It was stressed in the frame of the conference that the EUSDR provides a comprehensive cooperation platform for macro-regions; builds on a legal context, offers a complex framework to coordinate, enhance and implement strategies in a multi-sectoral and transnational context and also for the first time it offers an opportunity for alignment of funding with cohesion policy instruments and other potential sources. To grasp the opportunities and potentials such a comprehensive framework provides participating countries and partners must make the best use of existing frameworks of cooperation and best practices as well as to find the innovative tools, models to complement them.

Ms. Kocsis-Kupper recalled further that for the preparation of the conference the full spectrum of PA4 related activities were investigated and concerned policy and scientific actors were identified by the PA4 coordinative team; contacts were established and work progressed in 2013. As a result, the main topics and actions of the Roadmaps of PA4 were included in the preparatory work, research organizations and policy makers were contacted to discuss progress and identify current and new methods for the PA4 actions.

Progress was visible among others in the topics of River basin management-challenges. The expert bodies of the ICPDR agreed that updating of the Danube River Basin District Management Plan (DRBMP) requires that a comprehensive study on sediment balance, on the pressures and impacts as well as on the measures needed will be performed. PA4 noted accordingly that the issue of Sediment is the most important link between water and other areas that use water bodies; and where PA4 initiated supplementing partners for a flagship project. The base concept is ready for the establishment of adequate hydraulic laboratories, computer based simulations, but also field study sites for model calibration and validation are selected and all these were introduced at the conference. With the project planning the building of cooperation between research institutions along the Danube River has already started. PA4 plans to promote it further through the Danube Transnational Programme. (A10, M4 of the Roadmap).

Ms Kocsis-Kupper noted that another important topic was progressing in 2013 and was further discussed at the conference: the Early Warning Systems and toxicology testing: the technical elaboration of methodology happened in 2013; research was done in this field and as a result the base concept is identified for a unified early warning alert system for the territory of the Tisza river basin with the use of Hungarian funds, the related results were demonstrated at the macro-regional conference. Now the feasibility testing will be on-going involving an international consortium and the results will be available in 2014 and will be submitted to the SG (The SG determined the task in A2 M1 p2).

In the topic of sanitations and waste water treatment, the PA4 initiated contacts with the related waste water treatment services to establish working groups and proceeded developing project ideas. A small settlement waste water treatment optimizations system was identified as a result of the cooperation with the Budapest Technical University (BME) for the integrated solutions for wastewater treatment in small settlements and rural areas (A13M2) and results were disseminated at the conference. As a major contribution to the reduction of water use and waste water amount a source separation scheme was presented, defining descriptive categories of yellow, brown and grey water and their possible paths within a rural/agricultural household and environment. Additionally, the drinking water linkages in Budapest example were also presented (A5 M4, M5, and M6).

Financial issues were put to the agenda based on the initiation of DG ENV.

Further topics and issues were widely presented at the conference, but could not be presented in details at the SG meeting. Ms Kocsis-Kupper stated that a conference paper was also prepared, the SG members were informed to see the details at: <http://groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/pages/stakeholder>

**Ms. Kocsis-Kupper summed the conclusions of the conference as follows:**

* The conference gave significant inputs related to the PA4 (as well as PA5 and PA6) actions.
* It promoted the PA4 relevant policy processes by ensuring discussions with relevant actors, institutions, organisations.
* The conference introduced innovative solutions for future challenges to be further built in the PA4 process e.g. possible methodologies for development of monitoring system or small scale waste water treatment plants.
* The main messages of the conference were the following:
* The EUSDR provides a comprehensive cooperation platform for macro-regions;
* The Danube Region Strategy has lead the countries to wider frameworks of cooperation;
* Water is a natural resource that cannot be supplemented with anything else;
* Macro regional and inter-sectoral cooperation is crucial;
* Member States must take the Danube Strategy into account as they plan the next generation of programmes under regional policy for 2014-2020;
* Strong added value of the Danube Strategy: joint responses to common challenges;
* Commitment of the Danube basin cooperation: need for more inter-sectoral cooperation;
* Stakeholders will need to approach the PACs with project ideas;
* Science and innovation is only possible with macro-regional cooperation;
* Coordination of international warning systems is crucial;
* Water challenges in Europe and in Asia are similar;
* A constructive dialogue, identification of common interests and political willingness are necessary for development of cooperation;
* There is a need for a Comprehensive Groundwater Utilization Plan for the Danube River Basin;
* The most successful projects are cross border/regional activities, multi stakeholder approach, framework type activities, involving stakeholders and partners;
* There is close connection between DG Environment policies and the EUSDR;
* The Danube Strategy can significantly contribute to the implementation of the Blueprint policy options.
	+ Financing of priority elements of the EUSDR PA4 activities

As it was already stressed in the earlier chapters the Priority Area Coordinators shall among others make sure that there is an effective cooperation between project promoters, programmes and funding sources.

PA4 is one of the two priority areas where special emphasis has been taken on the process of alignment of funding. It was facilitated in the frae of the SG6 meeting to discuss on the needs of the countries related to financing as well as on the possible roles of the EUSDR PA4 to ensure financial sources to the implementation of action plan between the 2014-2020 financing period.

As a first step Ms Anna Repullo-Grau from the DG Regio introduced the State of play of the programming in the Danube countries. She also introduced the system of financing in the frame of the EC.

Follwoing the presentation of Ms Repullo Grau, Government Commissioner for the Danube Region Strategy Mr Balázs Medgyesy summarised the results of the questionnaire, circulated prior to the meeting to get a feedback on the main priority issues on national level in the countries and to outline the role of PA4 in the upcoming financing process.

Ms Anna Repullo-Grau, DG Regio introduced the State of play of programming in the Danube countries (presentation see in **Annex 7**). In terms of implementation and related programming it was highlighted that both Action Plans and Roadmaps are equally relevant. It has high relevance to outline priorities – said Ms Repullo-Grau. DG REGIO Unit on Macro-regional strategies were established[[7]](#footnote-8) among other to monitor integration of macroregional startegies into the national operative programmes. The Operative Programmes will be evaluated by the EC before approving them. 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.

The implementation of the EUSDR will be supported by the programmes of the ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds and beyond) – told Ms Repullo-Grau. She also mentioned that a "macroregional strategy" is an integrated framework endorsed by the COM which may be supported by the ESIF among others, to address common challenges faced by a defined geographical area relating to MS and third countries located in the same geographical area which thereby benefit from strengthened cooperation contribution to achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Ms. Repullo-Grau mentioned that on the 6th October 2011 the European Commission adopted a draft legislative package for the Cohesion Policy for the funding period 2014 - 2020. According to the draft 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. According to the proposal, the European Commission has proposed that the 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 adopted in 2011. 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.

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) were listed.

Ms Repullo-Grau also outlined what in practice for the Steering Groups of the EUSDR could mean. She stressed that 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. Ms Repullo-Grau also mentioned that it is also suggested for 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. She welcomed the proactive action of PA4 in this regard and recommended countries to cooperate.

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.

In the frame of the 5th Steering Group meeting (5th June 2013, 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. As a next step prior to the 6th Steering Group meeting, Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper circulated a questionnaire to the members of the Steering Group to collect information from the countries, EC and ICPDR 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;
* 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.

Austria, Czech Republic, Bavaria, Bulgaria, Croatia answered the questions and gave feedback, to facilitate the discussion. Government Commissioner for the Danube Region Strategy Mr Balázs Medgyesy summarised the main outcomes of the feedbacks highlighting that discussions in the frame of the 5th SG meeting was the first opportunity to program together and to discuss about the financing objectives related to EUSDR. Mr Medgyesy mentioned that based on the answers national priorities were vary in the countries. *Austria* indicated in its answers that each programme (also ETC) has been asked to consider for themselves, how synergies between the EUSDR and other needs and potentials (as also laid down by other EU-Strategies and Policy Objectives) in the area can be used most effectively. The national priorities in the *Czech Republic* 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.The *Bavarian* priorities related to the Danube cope with the objectives of the ICPDR and the EUSDR PA 4, 5 and 6 and are followed in an intensive exchange and harmonization with the two mentioned organisations. *Bulgaria* stressed that the national priorities are focused on major challenges of the Danube river, such as the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, through investments in environmental infrastructure to reduce the pollution of the Danube. Among others as a sample the Czech Republic experiences were mentioned where the Operational Program Environment 2014 - 2020 and other programs are in the state of preparation in accordance with EC requirements. The Czech Ministry of Environment is currently preparing the 4th programming document, including indicators and targets. 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.

The main messages of the discussion were the following:

* 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 (felülvizsgálati procedúrák, amiket érdemes becsatornázni)
* ICPDR reports (RBMPs and SWMIs) should be checked to list priority issues;
* CZ stategic embedding approach could serve as a sample for financing; Ms. Kocsis-Kupper asked for the agreement of the Czech Steering Group members to disclose their replies to the questionnare as good example.
* PACs should also help facilitate the includions 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 Commision according to the priotities set up by various partners.

It is also important that it is a practical job and it was stressed that the countries should identify relevant elements of financing mix and to find the common priority interventions. Mr Balázs Medgyesy mentioned that cooperation with the ICPDR and of the NCPs is crucial.

It was also highlighted that at this moment it is not fixed how the Letter of Recommendations and Danube Strategy Transnational program will be linked. In the frame of the Zagreb Task Force meeting, the programming was discussed. The EC highlighted that the countries are the member of the task force.

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 ongoing projects gave significant input to the programming process of the operative programmes.

**Related Tasks:**

* *Task 7: Based on the countries input a document will be prepared on the programming. All SG members (who has not sent yet the answers) are kindly asked to send their feedback by mid of January 2014. The document should also suggest procedure to be followed during the last part of the programming period to ensure that the main objectives and actions of PA4 are properly represented in the next programming period.*
* *Task 8: The Sava Commission can serve as a sample when developing the programming document and it was kindly requested from the Sava Commission to introduce steps which were taken. Sample from the Checz Republic can be also included.*

**Review of progress and state of tasks drawn up in roadmaps**

To get an overview on the status of the implementation of the Roadmap of PA4, which was final agreed in the first half of 2013 by the SG members, Ms Andrea Vranovska introduced the roadmap step-by step, highlighting the main results, outcomes related to the specific actions (see **Annex 6**).

The Roadmap had been discussed already in the frame of the former SG meetings between 2011-2013. The current version of the roadmap is based on the agreement achieved in the last three years period. In line with the outcomes of the discussion the countries took note in the frame of the SG 6 meeting that further specification and clarification regarding the implementation of the given actions, projects might needed. Deadlines should be updated, where needed. (Roadmap, presented in the frame of the meeting attached in **Annex 6**).

Representative of the Budapest Danube Contact Point (BDCP) circulated a handout to the participants of the SG meeting. It was agreed that in the frame of the next SG meeting an overview presentation would be given about the BDCP role and and main activities.

Related to A5M4 and A5 M6 (*milestones related to the survey on the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements and implementation of pilot projects and promotins of site – specific and eco-friendly waste water treatment for less than 2000 PE* settlementsit was noted that countries should think through about possible steps towards fulfilling this actions.

Hungary mentioned that milestone 2 work 3 (*Preparation of a financial plan for the implementation programme on update for the UWWT*) should be harmonised, in time, with Milestone 1 Step 2 ( *Revision and update of the ICPDR database on UWWTPs*).

**Related Tasks:**

* *Task 9:* The countries took note in the frame of the SG 6 meeting that further specification of the Roadmap in respect of the status of the implementation of the actions are needed. SG members are asked to send their notes regarding this point with detailed clarification on the changes. (Roadmap, presented in the frame of the meeting see in **Annex 6)** *.*

**New projects and any other issues**

In the frame of the agenda item information was shared about the Technical Assistance Facility, which supports the development of project ideas. The Liberty Island project requested a PA4 label (and a Letter of Merit), and information about the project was prsented. An other ongoing initiative, the Danube Water Programme has also been mentioned as relevant programme to be introduced.

* + Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects

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, the European Commission has 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) “To step up 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 is acting as “Managing Authority (MA)” for the purpose of this Facility.

The Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (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 up to 40 selected project ideas to set up a clear pathway towards project implementation, through the provision of consultant services.

Consultant services are provided free of charge to selected project Applicants, up to a value of € 25,000 and for a duration of maximum 6 months.

Selected project ideas should be realistic and feasible, of public interest, show a clear macro-regional dimension and contribute to the objectives of the EUSDR (the project ideas should refer to one of the 11 Priority Areas of the EUSDR). The applicant is expected to show high commitment towards project implementation.  Support will be prioritised for project ideas where the TAF-DRP is expected to change the status quo towards project bankability/fundability.
Relevant project applications will be pre-selected in each of the 11 Priority Areas. These applications will then be submitted by Priority Area Coordinators to the Managing Authority. The deadline for the first call was 10 September 2013.[[8]](#footnote-9)

The first call for project ideas was open between 24 May and 10 September 2013. On 22.10.2013, the results of the first call were communicated to project applicants:
13 out of 21 applications were selected for this first call, stemming from 9 countries of the EUSDR, and covering almost all thematic Priority Areas of the Strategy.

Ms Andrea Vranovska introduced a PA10 relevant activity (TAF-DRP) to ensure financial possibility to develop project proposals. On the 3rd December 2013 a Review meeting was organised in Vienna about the first call of the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects.

The next call will be launced in January 2014 to support 30 days of consultancy work. It was also noted that there is a chance that a 3rd call will be opened but what is sure, that in January there would be a possibility which should be used. It was also highlighted that the meeting from where the information was gained was organised just prior to the SG6 and this was the reason why the PACs did not send details on the outcomes before the SG6.

It was agreed that PACs would inform the countries (SG members and observers) about the call and would create a list of projects to be submitted to the call. Countries will send their proposals and PA4 PACs will follow-up on the procedure to further submit the project ideas. Additional information would be asked from PA10 about TAF-DRP and will be shared with the SG members as soon as they are available (information about the call and template to be filled in).

* + Liberty Island project - WWF

Diana Heilmann, on request of **WWF-HU**, introduced the Liberty Island project. The project management sent their request to get an EUSDR label and asked PA4 to issue a Letter of Merit (LoM). (Presentation about the project see **Annex 8**).

As the conclusion of the question of the ICPDR and Austria whether criterias for the Letter of Merit is exist, it was noted by some countries that criterias have already been developed for projects, which already been financed. For this specific project the SG members were waived the criteria system and in case no objections arrive in the coming two weeks the LoM could be developed. It was agreed that PAC will check whether criteria system for the approval of Letter of Merits exists and will circulate it to the SG members in case it is available (Note: the document on the’ *Description of project labelling procedure under PA4 and Pillar B*’ has been approved in the frame of the 4th Steering Group meeting, also including criteria system for projects already financed. Document is attached in **Annex 9**).

* + Danube Water Programme

Ms.Kocsis-Kupper mentioned that Mr.Philiph Weller, project manager of the Danube Water Programme contacted the PA4 and provided information about the Danube Water Programme. A related leaflet introducing the programme and contact details was also distributed to the SG members during the meeting (More information is available on http://www.danube-water-program.org/. )

**Related Tasks:**

* *Task 10: Information will be circulated about PA10 TA 2nd call as soon as it is available. Countries are requested to issue project ideas to the deadline set by the PAC when ciculating the information. The format which should be filled in would be also attached to the information*
* *Task 11: LoM for the Liberty Island project can be issued following two weeks silence procedure, in case no objectsions from the SG members arrives.*

**Annexes**

**Annex 1**: List of Participants

**Annex 2**: List of SG members, observers relevant for PA4 (table to be updated)

**Annex 3**: State of Play presentation – Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper presentation

**Annex 4**: Resolutions of the ICPDR related to EUSDR activties (OM16,10-11 December 2013, Vienna)

**Annex 5**: Outcomes of the Macro-regional Conference (10-11 September 2013) - Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper presentation

**Annex 6**: Roadmap – presented by Andrea Vranovska, SK PAC Assistant

**Annex 7:** State of play of programming – Anna Repullo-Grau

**Annex 8**: Liberty Island appliction for LoM - WWF-HU

**Annex 9:** Description of project labelling procedure under PA4 and Pillar B

# Annex 4. Draft Summary Minutes of the 7th Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 4



 **European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**

**Priority Area 4**

**April 2014**

Put on consultation on 7 April 2014**Summary Minutes of the 7th Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 4 (28th March 2014)**

**Opening of the meeting**

The 7th Steering Group (SG) meeting of Priority Area 4 (PA4) of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region took place in Budapest, Hungary on the 28th March 2014 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Budapest, Nagy Imre square) back to back with the EUSDR PA5 SG7 meeting.

The meeting was opened and chaired by Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis Kupper Hungarian PAC advisor.

Mr Balázs Medgyesy, EUSDR Government Commissioner from Hungary welcomed the participants and provided introductory remarks. He expressed his very warm welcome to the SG members and he highlighted that the meeting is a very important milestone in the PA4 work. It was also his pleasure to welcome Mr Ivan Zavadsky ICPDR Executive Secretary as a special guest of the meeting as well as the SG members especially those coming from Non-EU MS countries. Mr Medgyesy stressed that it was a specific meeting as a consequence of the stringent timeframe of the programming of the operational programmes (having only three months left since the last SG meeting). The discussion should focus on the interim materials (most of them were already available on the website prior to the meeting) and the objective is to have the timely pipeline to be able to feed into the programming process, directions, methodologies and main topics be discussed to enable PA4 PAC team to finalise the document in a week period following the meeting. Next to the programming there were also a range of specific topics adressed by PA4, Mr Medgyesy stressed. Some of the experts developed these proposals joined the today meeting and would introduce these proposals towards next steps to implement Roadmap of PA4. Specific presentations would be given by experts focusing on buffer strips and comprehensive overview especially related to legal framework of buffer strips.This topic was identified as relevant issue regardless political sensitivity which should be addressed and should be followed up on how to proceed further to get fuller picture related to this issue. Further on issues such as collection of waste and waste water treatment plants are also challenge in some particiating country and experts investigated on how to further deal with these issues. An other important topic is on monitoring and early warning system for transboundary rivers of the macroregion which was identified as a bottle neck at most of our partners including the DG Environment and can have a substantial input to the already established procedures operated by the ICPDR and oher partners.

We have regular tasks to discuss during the day, as Mr Medgyesy told in his last sentences, such as the implementations of milestones, steps of Roadmaps, the Danube Region technical assistance funds related tasks as well as an overview on the further identification of synergies of common work and findig out common visions between the EUSDR and ICPDR.

In the frame of the meeting the representatives of the European Commission, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Montenegro, GWP-CEE, BDCP, National Institute of Healts and representatives of the embassies were presented. Representatives of the ICPDR and Sava Commission also gave important inputs during the meeting.

List of participants can be found in **Annex 1.**

**Approval of the Agenda and the Summary minutes**

The agenda was agreed by the particiants. The approved document can be found in **Annex 2**.

No comments were received related to the Summary minutes of the 6th Steering Group meeting. The chair noted that the Steering Group approved the summary minutes of the 6th SG meeting.

 A request was noted from AT to indicate the date of the documents on the papers. It was also requested by the PAC team to inform SG members in case new document was uploaded to the PA4 website. The PA4 team thanked and acknowledged the request and will act in accordance with it.

Steering group members were kindly asked to inform PAC in case any change of membership of persons delegated to the Steering Group had happened.

**Alignment of Funding**

The Priority Area Coordinators shall among others make sure that there is an effective cooperation between project promoters, programmes and funding sources.

PA4 is one of the two priority areas where special emphasis has been taken on the process of alignment of funding. The process has been started in 2013 in the frame of the 5th SG meeting and the issue was further discussed in December 2013 (6th SG mtg) and in March 2014 in the frame of the 7th SG meeting.

* As the outcomes of the discussion of the 6th SG meeting a background paper was prepared and uploaded to the website prior to the meeting (*Alignment of Funding – Operative programmes for EUSDR, Draft background paper for discussion*).
* Before introducing the document in details Ms Anna Repullo Grau from DG Regio said some words in connection to the PA4 developments and Mr Alain Roggeri, adviser for EU macro-regional strategies introduced strategic and technical recommendations related to different ways of cooperation.
* Ms Repullo Grau said that the overall process of programming entered to its final stage and now is time to finalise it. She stressed that the document prepared by PA4 would be a meaningful and useful paper to the counries and also to the Commission.
* Mr Alain Roggeri stressed in his opening words that in the preparation of the programming it should be considered that cooperation activities are important tools to reach the own strategic objectives and the identification and planning of joint, coordinated, complementary and convergent actions contribute to reinforce efficiency in the implementation and impact of the results. Further on Mr Roggeri introduced different cooperation models from the less integrated models to the integrated ones. During planning and implementation phase it is necessary to identify cooperation interests and needs and to consider their relevance to address the situation and reach the targetted results. Added value of cooperation in the strategic planning phase should be assessed (benefits, impact and cost effectiveness, but also feasibility and readiness). As much as possible cooperation activities should be mainstreamed in the usual decisional processes and delivery systems in force at national, regional, local level. Funding sources, instruments and tools in respect of their specific mission, financial allocation size, eligibility rules restrictions, faisibility and easiness of management, selection process should be also selected.
* In relation to the programming of the Operational Programs (Ops) Mr Roggeri said that implementation system of the OPs open for different cooperation models should be checked and kept. Specification of programming cooperation in broad terms is needed at OP or at Priority Axis level without being exclusive.
* Ms Kocsis-Kupper thanked and welcomed the thoughts of Ms Repullo-Grau and for Mr Roggeri for the philosophy of cooperation. Following this she gave a presentation on what PA4 is achieved.
* PA4 has already made a lots of steps in order to reach the identified joint priorities. The steps which were taken last years related to programming were the following:
* PA4 PACs in 2013 participated at many meetings to discuss the roles, tasks and opportunities of the PA in the upcoming financing period.
* Already at SG5 items on financing, OP process was on the agenda.
* At all forums in 2013 PA4 disseminated the message (macroreg conference, Annual Forum, seminars).
* At SG6 detailed discussions on OP process to identify Joint Priorities, to be active and be involved were held.
* 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;
* 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.
* At the 6th SG meeting (12th December 2013, Vienna) the financing possibilities and the *alignment of funding* were discussed in detail. Experiences of the Sava Commission and the Czech Republic were shared during the meeting.
* 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*.
* The PA4 further contacted the Secretariat of the ICPDR in February 2014 to reach in a coordinated manner the ICPDR working groups identifying Joint Priorities. PA4 colleagues participated at the Hydromorphology Task Group of ICPDR on 27-28 February 2014, Vienna, AT and further asked the contribution of the expert group to inform PA4 about Joint Priorities for the operational programmes. (PA4 will be similarly active and present at other ICPDR expert group meetings and will ask the opinion of the WGs for Joint Priorities.)
* In summary the SG members (Danube countries), ICPDR PS, ICPDR expert and tasks groups, Sava Commission were requested to fill in the questionnaire and identify joint priorities.
* As the outcomes of the above procedure and based on the replies the PA4 compiled a draft document for the identification of PA4 joint priorities. In line with the agreement made in the frame of the 6th SG meeting no country specific details were included and annexed, but the main priorities were collected and groupped in the circulated background paper. Ms Kocsis-Kupper asked again the participants to send their feedbacks on the questionnaire if they did not do so far and identify and let us know about the joint priorities.
* Ms Kocsis-Kupper stressed that this is a unique and exceptional work and contributed 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.
* 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:
* From the replies to the questionnaire it seemed as general consideration that the countries consider the *macro-regional view as crucial aspect for the implementation of the Strategy.*
* In most countries the programming is in preparatory, not completed phase and work will accelerate in 2014 and the preparation of the Partnership Agreements is in a final phase of consultation with the EU.
* In some countries the governance systems of EUSDR and Cohesion Policy are closely interlinked (A, BA); EUSDR experts also participate in programming (Bg) in some cases strong influence is assured to EUSDR aims as a result of inter-governmental coordination. (CZ, SK, HU)
* Some countries highlight the good informal exchange in relation to the new ETC Danube programme (INTEREG Vb, Danube Region Programme) between the ICPDR, and EUSDR PAC6. (BA)
* It was also mentioned that *political support* for the achievements of the macro-regional targets in the water quality area (in particular to ensure transnational funding) as well as a strong coordination and connection with the ICPDR (as an institution of all Danube countries, ensuring high quality work in the field of water for nearly 20 years) should be given.
* It was highlighted in the replies that the *cooperation is also of major relevance in terms of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC),* within these the relevant EUSDR priorities will be taken into account accordingly (especially within the ETC programmes).
* The EUSDR has been considered in the Partnership Agreements primarily under sections “territorial cooperation” and “integrated territorial approach”.
* In some countries the EU SDR is integrated into the working version of the national environmental operational programmes 2014-202. (CZ, HU), in other countries the aims of the Pillar 2 of the EUSDR are incorporated into programming (Bg, SK) or in the outline of Operational Programme “Competitiveness and Cohesion“ environmental priorities were identified (Cr).
* **The main principles towards outlining measures (or project) to be financed within the financing period of 2014-2020 are in one hand that**
* PA4 is seeking for a list of common policy interventions/measures, which cover basin-wide activities with significant aspects in transboundary scale such as common planning, coordination, implementation;
* It is an important factor that at least one of the elements of the listed measures should be implemented during the 2014-2020 financing period using sources from the European Structural and Investment Funds and/or EIB, IPA etc;
* The implementation or financing of the measures should be coordinated in transboundary scale;
* A4 is primarily seeking for a list of transboundary *measures* but in case specific tasks are already defined in details *projects* might be also considered;
* PA4 looks for all measures, which are planned to be started before 2020.
* The main objective is to identify and agree on common joint priorities and finalise this process in a week period, said Ms Kocsis-Kupper at the end of her presentation.
* Following the presentation of Ms Kocsis-Kupper, the Government Commissioner, Mr Balázs Medgyesy took the floor and introduced the methodology towards programming. The complex task what was agreed on is to identify the water management related specific topics for the Operational Program (OP) purposes, said Mr Medgyesy. The most important is to provide special content in terms of water management. The results will be circulated to the SG members and to the EC. For this purpose the most important goal is to contribute to the transboundary cooperation and the confirmation of national priorities related to EUSDR. The compliance to OP should be ensured, broad intervention topics and indicative interventions have to be identified.

An optimal balance between narrowing and broad, flexible content is essential.

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.

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.

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

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 PA4 he 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 activities related 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[[9]](#footnote-10):

* **Framework activities Preparation and  monitoring of programmes of measures and implementation plans on a River Basin/sub-basin level**
* 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)
* 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*
* 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*
* 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**
* 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*
* 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*
* Address knowledge gaps on hydromorphology related issues and hydropeaking
* 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*
* Complex monitoring of water bodies. Indicative interventions:
* Examination of biodiversity and evironmental status of sediment, water and biota in the Sava River Basin
* Complex hydroecological assessment of sub-basins. Indicative interventions:
* *Complex Tisza Hydroecological Status Report*
* Socioeconomic impact assessment and decision aid for complex water management planning
* 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)**
* Water bodies (Morphological alterations)
* Implementation of sediment management plans with complex financing following the resolution of knowledge gaps (potentially part of complex interventions)
* 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*
* Aquifers. Indicative interventions:
* *Protection and sustainable use of water resources from alluvial aquifers in Sava River Basin*
* Mitigate diffuse pollution from agricultural sources
* **Address gaps in water infrastructure**
* Water supply
* Identification of most efficient interventions to improve climate resilience of water supply systems
* Establishing and upgrading water supply systems and networks to EU standards and improve climate resilience
* Wastewater treatment and sewerage
* 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*
* Establishing and upgrading UWWT systems and networks to EU standards, reduce organic pollution
* *Introduction of nutrient reduction in existing and new UWWTPs*
* Upgrade of the sewerage network
* **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*

Following the presentation of Mr Medgyesy, Mr. Schweiger from AT thanked for the list provided by the countries. It was highlighted that priorities should be linked to clear legal obligations. Austria highlighted the importance of the ICPDR process on the SWMIs and it was requested to feed the listed priorities into the already existing hierarchy. Mr Medgyesy indicated that our aim is to determine the elements relevant for OP programming. In case the listed intervention is not relevant from the RBM point of view and it is not essential steps than we should omit from the future docment. There is more than one way to incorporate these interventions into the OP programmes. Croatia and Serbia supported the idea to focus on measures having legal obligations and not to invent on new interventions. Mr Medgyesy fully supported the comment and stressed that the list actually presented by him reflects in a broad term the necessay measures and it is clear that one measure relevant in one Danube counry might not be a priority in an other one. But the list gives a broad area of intervention including all the potential areas in a broad sence in a high level of hierarchy and than the idicative interventions which provide samples that which kind of interventions foreseen.

Mr Zavadsky noted that we have two parallel process, which should be merged. Information collected from differentt stakeholders through questionnary should me mainstreamed and certain priority measures should be highlighted with policy relevance behind. Policy and legally justified interventions should be outlined. The overall message from PA4 should be that we need this specific type of issues, because this is an obligation this has been elaborated already and it has basin wide relevance. In principle we have the goal, as Mr Zavadsky noted, to make sure that the key strategic needs in connection to the water management are being reflected in all those OPs that we have in mind.

Mr Roggeri encouraeged the consolidation which is a normal process. The task is to conribute to the consolidation of policy level, in term of prioritization and what should be in first instance to be done.

Mr Mair from ICPDR highlighted that prioritization process has already been done when preparing the DRBMP.

BDKP representative stressed that the focus should be on specific type of activities where SG can initiate or stimulate the cooperation. The new financial system should be also taken into account.

SK stressed that when preparing the Slovakian national list as the contribution to the background paper the idea was to list those measures which are the main priorities in national level. This should be a short list of priorities.

Anna Repullo Grau stressed that we should not forget about the HOW. During the programming if we can provide some thought where we can include this interventions would be useful.

Mr Zavadsky commented that we have a process within the expert groups that can be used as a full support, if we have policy relevance on what to do. In case PA4 describes the process how to do the integration of these priority elements into the OP programming it would be a very inportant input.

The policy input is not the results but the input of the overall exercise, Mr Medgyesy stressed. At the very end the consolidated list should be merged into the programming period.

*Tasks: As the outcomes of the discussion it was agreed that the presentations would be uploaded and than PACs would ask the SG members to comment on the joint priorities. The countries are kindly asked to send their feedback comments to the PA4 PACs by the 28 April 2014. Following the comments arrived in a month period the consolidated document would be uploaded to the website[[10]](#footnote-11).*

**Review of progress and state of tasks drawn up in roadmaps**

PA4 acknowledges that water quality is a world- wide significant policy issue and its aim (in line with the Action Plan) is to improve water policy and to reach good status under the Water Framework Directive.

Regarding the wording of the roadmap Ms Vranoska said that no feedback has arrived to the PACs during last months and the wording can be considered approved. In case the SG members would like to include any updates, changes are kindly asked to contact the PA4 PACs.

**Ms Kocsis-Kupper introduced the main tasks which were further elaborated during the last three months period between January and March 2014:**

Action 5 ‘*To establish buffer strips along the rivers to retain nutrients and to promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements’*

* Survey of the situation on buffer zones (M1) – main findings and proposals.
* Survey of the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements (M3) - main findings and proposals.
* Survey of the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements (M4) - main findings and proposals.

Action 7 „*To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents*“

* Survey of the situation toward legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents.

Action 2 “*To greatly strengthen cooperation at sub-basin level*”

* Feasibility study on Water Quality Early Warning System - on Transboundary Watercourses of Tisza River Basin .

Following the introductory notes of Ms Kocsis-Kupper presentations were given by dr. Szilvia Szilagyi, representative of the J& E association on environmental legal organisations, having its legal seat in Brno, Czech Republic, Coordinated from Budapest, Hungary. Ms Szilagyi introduced issues related to Action 5 and Action 7 as follows:

**General methodological background:** A questionnaire based assessment has been developed to review on the situation on buffer zones/strips in the Danube basin, to assess solid waste disposals, landfills and waste management and wastewater treatment and management in small rural settlements. The legislative background as well as the progress in implementation of existing measures were incestigated in each cases. The work was implemented by environmental lawyers from each Danube countries via short interviews with national decision makers**.** Specific focus of the given questionnaires are introduced in the below chapters.

* + Buffer zones and management of solid waste

In line with the Roadmap action 5 milestone 1 and 2 a survey on the situation of buffer zones and on the management of solid waste, on alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements has been initiated by Hungarian PAC. HU PAC initiated an international research to investigate the gaps and prepare a study on the situation regarding the above topics in the Danube countries. The Policy recommendations were circulated prior to the SG7 meeting. Information related to the buffer zones available from all countries.

**Methodology:** For the assessment of the situation in the Danube basin separate questionnaires were distributed the questions were focusin on the following issues:

* General legal background (level and type of regulations establishing protecting territories)
* Definitions, establishment, management
* Specific technical requirements
* Procedural rules (designation, authorities responsible, stakeholders taking part)
* Evaluation of effectiveness of the regulations

**Main findings**

* **The planning of the protecting territories:** The decision-making circle concerning the protection of waterflows starts with planning. Protection of waterflows appears in a wide-range of planning documents (national, regional, local spatial plans, RBMPs, nature protection plans, agricultural planning documents etc.). Coordination and alignment of these plans would be important (different terms, parallel measures, contradictory deadlines) Up-to-date registry of the protected territories would contribute to the proper implementation.
* **Size of protecting territories:** The size of the protecting territories range between 5-10-15-20-50 meters from the shore line; with or without discretionary right to the authorities to tailor the actual width of the protection zone according to the local circumstances and specialties. Protecting zones might form a system for several protecting purposes – different rules to conduct. In some cases further devided into several zones where level of protection is different.
* **Substantial rules on protecting territories:** The plans on protecting territories shall be broken down into several levels of implementing legislation.
* **The process of assigning the protecting territories:** The first major question in procedures concerning the protection territories of waters is naturally the stakeholders to take place in these procedures. They can be in most of the cases: relevant authorities, water suppliers, municipalities, planning experts or organizations, concerned land owners, farmers, local communities and their organisations.

**Problems**

* Altering definitions - different definitions for the different purposes for the same territory, lack of clarity
* Planning of the protecting territories - planning documents not in concordance with the respective legislation
* Lack of social attention and proper funding - including for the compensation of land owners for the restrictions)

**Policy proposals**

* Definitions and substantial rules – guidance document (aims, determination, stakeholders, sustantial requirements, restrictions, compensation measures, good practices etc.)
* Harmonization of planning documents
* Substantial rules of the protecting territories (site specific guidelines to orient activities of land users)
* Enhanced cooperation between different authorities
	+ Situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements

According to the EU WFD, establishment of waste water treatment plants are obligatory in all EU countries independently from the size of the settlements. The initial problem outlined in action 5 milestone 4 and 5 of the roadmap of PA4 arises from the settlement structure of agro-industrial regions of many countries resulting in large proportion of untreated waste water and substantial diffuse pollution of ground water and surface water.

To further investigate on the issue and to be able to outline next steps related to solid waste disposals, landfills and waste management a survey on the situation on management of solid waste in small rural settlements has been carried out.

**Methodology:** The questionnaire investigated on the legislative background, the local relevance of legal provisions of specific waste management activities as well s on the role of local administration in the regulation, organization, management and control of local waste management activities.

**Main findings**

* Waste management planning and waste management activities are regulated in detail in most of the countries.
* Main problems arise from implementation – illegal activities and from abandoned dumping sites.
* Local municipalities – compatitive advantage but lack of financial resources
* Landfill is still the most common disposal method of municipal solid waste - strong pressure on countries to decrease the amount of waste to be landfilled (selective collection with different effectiveness)

**Problems**

* Abandoned landfill sites - high number of to be recultivated landfills and questionable attainability of financial resources.
* Illegal waste dumping - limited number of landfill sites, exceeding landfill rates, no reliable data on the number of illegal waste dumping sites.

**Proposals**

* Prevention, detection and sanctioning illegal waste disposal - significant financial resources, effective enforcement, awereness raising campaigns.
* Liquidation of abandoned municipal landfill sites - tracing, assessment, monitoring and liquidation - cooperation of all the respective authorities and bodies.
	+ Survey on the situation on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements

In line with the agreed milestones of the Roadmap and towards outlinig steps to fulfill objectives outlined in the Action Plan of the EUSDR a survey on the situation of alternative collection and treatment wastewater in small rural settlements (A5M4) has been carried out to offer and promote best practices in WWT for small settlements.

Local waste management systems in most of the countries are divided into systems serving households and also waste management services for local industrial plans. The research has focused on the first one, because of this having strong local relevance, while the industrial waste is usually managed by large nationwide systems.

**Methodology:** The questionnaire investigated on the legislative background of waste water treatment, the waste water treatment solutions in small rural settlements as well as on the supervision and control of waste water treatment activities (authorities responsible and legal instruments they apply).

**Main findings**

* In most of the Danube countries – special regulations on alternative waste water treatment solutions for small local settlements
* Individual solutions : depending on given environmental and technical conditions (domestic wastewater treatment facilities, domestic wastewater treatment units, domestic closed wastewater containers)
* Local municipalities – limited scope in the authorization and inspection (water management authorities and water utility companies)

**Problems and proposals**

* Countries pursue to build up the respective wastewater treatment infrastructure – costly and long procedure (small, clean, flexible local solutions shall have a priority in order to drive back untreated wastewater discharge into watercourses)
* Complicated authorization (flexible egal tools shall accompany these technical solutions)

Following the presentations Ms Kocsis-Kupper stressed that the studies were developed in line with the agreement in the last steering group. Hungary was partly responsible for these milestones and in order to be able to make next steps Hungary initiated to make this study. The research report is covering the milestones related to the Action 5 and the reserach report is the product related to this action and related milestones. Ms Kocsis-Kupper also stressed that the results of this report will be introduced in the relevant ICPDR expert groups. As the outcomes of the last year meetings of PACs of PA4 with the representatives of DG Environment it was agreed that buffer zones related issues are a relevant tasks which should be investigated on. It this regards PA4 could contribute to the policy work of DG Env. Following the presentation the countries expressed the need to list the name of the experts involved in the development of the document. As a reply to the question rised by AT representative Mr Schweiger, Ms Szilágyi told that respective EU legislation were taken into account in the study.

Ms Ms Kocsis-Kupper stressed that SG members and countries are welcomed to comment on the document, which will be further developed based on the feedbacks.

Ms Szilágyi introduced the next topic on the phosphate detergents.

* + Situation toward legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents

The Roadmap of Priority Area 4 of the EUSDR contains Action 7, “To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents”. The ICPDR was responsible under Milestone 1 to prepare an overview report on the implementation of regulation (EU) 259/2012. In the Roadmap of PA4 A7 a special task was identified in Milestone 2 to make a policy response to the overview report. Therefore to complete this task and partially based on Hungarian governmental funds, PA4 concluded a contract with an international research organisation, Czech based Justice and Environment, who prepared a complete research document analysing the situation with regards to phosphates in the Danube basin. The summary of the Study and the recommendations based on the research are provided here for the Steering Group Members of PA4 and for further recommendations to stakeholder institutions. The present paper will be discussed and the study on Action 7 on phosphates will be discussed in detail at the SG7 Meeting in Budapest, on 28.03.2014.

The actuality of the issue can be traced from the fact that nutrient pollution is a priority challenge, which affects not only freshwaters but groundwater and the marine environment as well. Eutrophication of surface waters, the negative impacts on the status of water ecosystems are actual promlems and however phosphates cab improve the cleaning effects of detergents it also contributes strongly to the increased level of nutrients.

**Recommendations on short-term policy responses**

* A complex policy which aims to reduce and/or phase out phosphates from detergents shall be based on the following measures: legislative measures; voluntary agreements; an eco-labelling system of detergents; taxes or fines; increased public awareness and involvement.
* National legislative measures may include the following:
	+ introduction of a total ban of phosphates in detergents;
	+ restriction of phosphates in laundry detergents; or
	+ setting limit values for the content of phosphates in detergents.

**Short-term policy reflections**

* In those countries where no legislation on phosphate-free detergents exists yet, preparing impact assessments in order to find the most suitable policy option for further action.
* For those countries where the relevant legislation or voluntary agreements aiming to reduce/eliminate the phosphate content of detergents are already in place, the top priority is to monitor compliance with already existing agreements or legislation, with the assistance of NGOs when possible.

**Recommendations on short-term policy responses**

* Promoting public debate and involvement
* Raising consumers' awareness of negative environmental impacts of products
* Organising workshops
* Maintain close contact with the relevant government departments of the countries concerned
* Maintain a dialogue with both the industry and the relevant trade associations
* International co-operation among the relevant stakeholders

Having this study available action 7 has been fulfilled. Similar to the above studies Ms Kocsis-Kupper stressed that SG members and countries are welcomed to comment on the document, which will be further developed based on the feedbacks.

Ms Ms Kocsis-Kupper took the note that the SG welcomed that related to Action 5 and Action 7 very significant progress has been made.

*Related tasks:*

* *The studies will mention clearly the names of experts involved in the development of the studies.*

Following the presentations of Ms Szilagyi Ms Zsófia Kovács from Pannonia University introduced the study on Water Quality Early Warning System - on Transboundary Watercourses of Tisza River Basin in relation to Action 2 (M4) of the Roadmap.

* + Feasibility study on Water Quality Early Warning System - on Transboundary Watercourses of Tisza River Basin

The development of the idea of EW system is included in Action 2 and its roadmaps of EUSDR Priority Area 4 (PA4, Water Quality).

One of the front-end activities of ICPDR is the Danube AEWS (Accident Emergency Warning System) and its implementation through the operation of network of PIACs (Principal International Alarm Centres). This system is a logical framework of the proper reaction on the accidents and pollutions that may have international effects, AEWS itself physically does not exist. The detection of any kind of accidents varies from country to country and dependent on the concrete case, there is no unified and regulated, agreed system in Europe yet.

The implementation of an Early Warning Water Quality Monitoring System would result in a solid, physical base of the AEWS. As an initial step to touch the problem a preparatory study was made to find out the possible directions of beginning.

In the development of the study Slovakian experts are also involved. Study will be circulated to the SG members as soon as it is available.

The idea for the technical structure of EW system was presented at the Macro Regional Conference last year with a success and getting a general acceptance. The study was discussed at the regular meeting of ICPDR APC EG (Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group) on 25-26 March in Ljubljana and the issue was introduced by Mr István György Toth, advisor to PA4. Investment and operationa costs were discussed reated to EWS system and it was clear that costs of such a system can be very significant.

Ms Zsófia Kovács from the Pannonia University introduced the related presentation. She described at the beginning of the importance of the Early Warning System (EWS), which is

* essential for both the upstream and downstream countries, for warning and forecasting of possible catastrophic events and helping timely reactions.
* does not replace the monitoring processes required and undertaken by the states
* it would give help in the analysis and solutions of problems
* it would provide continuous timelines from the whole catchment territory
* some elements of the alarm system may already exist in some countries
* full interoperability required in case of devices, ICT, databases

Ms Kovács introduced the aims of the study to give ***a basic assumption*** and to lay down the basics of the strategy for the „basic” Water Quality EWS, and to define the framework of the extendable, configurable and specializeable automatic monitoring system, which includes installation, infrastructural and ICT elements. The study can serve as a ***basic cookbook***, a catalogue system that recommends a pre-modelled, detailed and applicable scenario for particular situations.

The main parts of the study includes

* Proposal of installation sites and measurement parameters for the monitoring system on the Tisza river basin
* Evaluation of measurement methods applicable on monitoring stations, and introduction and specification of the monitoring devices necessary for implementation.
* Evaluation of technically applicable sampling systems of EWS, taking into account different riverbed types, sample and data archivation system types and introduction of design options.
* Calculation of investment and operational costs for monitoring system to be developed

The next step could be the involvement of the countries of Tisza basin with their local knowledge, expertise and information on their water system and hazard sources. The outcome of this second phase would be a study which basically reflects on the special requirements and conditions of the five Tisza basin countries (SK, UA, RO, RS, HU) taking into consideration the accident risk sites (ARS) and their relations to the water system, the experience of operational or abandoned EW monitoring stations.

The presentation introduced one of the several options towards the implementation of an early warning system in the TRB. The EWS configuration is strongly depend on the available financial resources and the needs of the countries. The overall presentation is attached to **Annex 3.** Question related to operational costs has been raised and it was also suggested to contact Rhine Commission as well as water directors for discussing especially the pricing issue with regards to early warning. In the Elbe there was also a project were such an options were also investigated in the past and one important conclusion was that operational costs are too high.

BDKP representatives (Mr Kis-Parciu) asked about the interest of the other countries in connection to the EWS idea.

Mr Tóth from Hungary mentioned that countries are aware of the proposal. He emphasised that the costs of running an EW system must be compared to the potential damages to the environment and to the operation of a classical guarding service thus deciding about the economy of EW system. Mr Kis-Parciu suggested to organise a workshop as a next step related to the idea to further discuss the details. EIB is interested in the idea and perhaps organising a meeting can be an idea.

Serbia suggested to present the idea at the ICPDR Tisza Group since this platform should be also utilise this. Serbia also stressed that first all stakeholders should be sit at one table and should disuss about the idea.

*Related Tasks:*

* *SG members and countries are welcomed to comment on the circulated document, which will be further developed based on the feedbacks.*
* *PACs will contact the water directorates and the Rhine Commission for discussing especially the pricing issue with regards to early warning;*
* *Issue of EWS will put into the agenda for the upcoming Tisza group and study will be presented,*
* *EWS idea will be presented for EIB for future funding of a more detailed study.*

**New projects ideas**

In the frame of the agenda item information was shared about the Technical Assistance Facility initiated by PA10. Information was also given about the JRC water nexus related research projects ideas.

* + JRC related research projects relevant from PA4 point of view

On the 6th March 2014 a meeting has been organised by the Secretariat of the Government Commissioner for the EU Danube Strategy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to introduce and discuss on scientific-research project ideas relevant for the EU Danube Strategy point of view.

Mr Medgyesy noted that the meeting was linked to the JRC water nexus. It is important that the Steering Group is informed about these projects.

Ms Heilmann shortly introduced some aspects of the projects listing first the main project initiators such as the

* Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre for Ecological Research;
* National Institute of Environmental Health;
* University of Debrecen.

The planned projects are international projects including several Danube countries in the work. The main project ideas are the following:

* AGOLA - Accelerated ageing: past, present and future of aquatic biota living in wetlands and shallow water bodies (Possible partners: Water Directorates and Research Institutes of Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Croatia);
* AGAREC - Aggredation and erosion – the dual face of changing in hydrological regime of a regulated large river (River Danube): ecological consequences;
* ECOSTAD - Development of the comlementary ecological status assessments for the Danube, particularly for the floodplain ecosystems;
* LAMECOL - Impact of the various land use effect on the biotic communities (Possible partners: Water Directorates and Research Institutes of Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania)
* TISZAMICROBIA - Emerging microbial risks - Tisza river longitudinal analysis
* Tisza irrigation - Tisza irrigation

Projects on Tiszamicrobia and Tisza irrigation were introduced separately by János Fehér (Hon. Associate Professor, Leader of the GWP CEE Danube Strategy Task Force) and Márta Vargha (National Institute for Environmental Health, Department of Water Hygiene). Presentations see in **Annex 4** and **Annex 5.**

* + Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects

Ms Vranovska updated the group on the status of the TAF-DRP and she also said that the deadline for the 2nd call was 1st of April 2014. Information was circulated to the SG members during the last months and countries were requested to submit project ideas if there are any. One project proposal arrived to the SK PAC prior to the meeting requesting support for the development of the overall project proposal. The title of the project was’ *Remediation of polluted groundwater in the danube river flow in Serbia’*. Presentation was introduced related to this project by Serbian experts (**See Annex 6**).

***Following the presentation a voting was held and the SG supported the project idea to submit to PA10 – TAF DRP***.

Ms Vranovska also explained that there is a Slovakain project idea which is also requested to be submitted to PA10 TAF-DR. Serbia also indicated that is aware about a project idea which would like to apply for the support of the TAF-DRP.

The criteria is to select is quite open as MS ARG stressed. The projects should be feasible and the applicant should have high commitment to common implementation. The main question is now the timing. It would be better to have the project applications prior to the meeting and to be strict with the deadline. We should take it more serious. The SG is here to approve the project application – Ms Repullo-Grau highlighted.

Austria agreed that applicants must be more strict with the deadline but it was suggested that this time as an exceptional case the SG should agree to allow the projects to be submitted.

*Related tasks and conclusions:*

* *SG should be continuously informed about the new projects*
* *Serbian project on the ‘Remediation of polluted groundwater in the danube river flow in Serbia’ was supported by the Steering Group to further submit to PA10 – TAF DRP.*

**Joint approach towards the harmonisation of the actions of EUSDR priority areas fourth and fifth and ICPDR relevant activities**

Ms Kocsis-Kupper invited Mr Balázs Medgyesy and Mr Ivan Zavadsky to introduce the issue.

Balázs Medgyesy stressed that since the last year more stronger link is established between ICPDR and EUSDR activities and PA4 also further investigate on what kind of common activities can be developed.

The evolving and broadening scope of river basin management and the new opportunities provided by the implementation of the legal provision as well as the successive financial periods give great potential for cooperation and for a mutual support of the EUSDR and the ICPDR in relevant fields. These potentials were has not fully utilised yet, in order to exploit all the potential added value for Danube countries and their citizens.

The aim is to have a structured overview how to operate together and to explore the potential extension of this elements. The HODs of the ICPDR agreed in November 2013 to prepare a joint document, where the particular mandates, responsibilities, tasks and modus operandi between ICPDR and PA4/PA5 are clarified.

Mr Zavadsky stressed that the process is ongoing and a draft paper has been drafted by Commissioner Medgyesy and a certain view of this joint document was put together as well and sent to the HODs. Due to the timing out of the fourteen countries ten countries sent their feedback and the next step is to get this procedure streamlined.

ICPDR PS invited NCPs to sit together and furter discuss on this issue and provide a consolidate draft.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper thanked for the overview on this issue.

**Next meeting and any other business**

Ms Vranovska indicated that the next meeting is intended to organise in Bratislava in October but slight changes can occur.

In summary it was agreed that all documents will be uploaded to the website. It was also requested that the idea to having the PA4 and PA5 back to back organised is a good idea and also to follow to upload official documents to the website prior to the meeting (one week at least).

**Annexes**

**Annex 1**: List of Participants

**Annex 2**: Approved Agenda

**Annex 3**: Water Quality Early Warning System on Transboundary Watercourses of Tisza River Basin – Zsófia Kovács, Pannon University

**Annex 4** Emerging microbial risks – Tisza river longitudinal analysis Márta Vargha

National Institute for Environmental Health Department of Water Hygiene

**Annex 5**: Participation options in the JRC Scientific Support to the Danube Region Strategy – Danube Water Nexus – János Fehér, GWP CEE Danube Strategy Task Force Leader

**Annex 6:** Remediation Of Polluted Groundwater In The Danube River Flow In Serbia

**Annex 7:** Presentation of the case studies related to Action 5 and Action 7

**Annex 8:** OP programming presentations of Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper and Balázs Medgyesy, Government Commissioner

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 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Concerning the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region COM(2013) 181 final [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The meeting was held in Vienna in the Balassi Intézet – Collegium Hungaricum (Wien) (1020 Wien, Hollandstrasse 4). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <http://groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. - COM(2010) 715 - 08/12/2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. DG Regional and Urban Policy Unit: D1 Competence Centre; Macro-regions and European Territorial Cooperation; Transnational and Interregional Cooperation [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/technical\_assistance\_facility-drp [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. More detailed information is available int he document of *’ Consolidated OP document\_version\_sent\_April6\_PA4’.* <http://groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/pages/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. An updated version of the OP document was prepared and uploaded to the website on the 6th of April 2014 ([Consolidated OP document\_version\_sent\_April6\_PA4.docx](http://files.groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/files/1062618/JWsWQ8KNnpNxLZLFgnNt/Consolidated%2BOP%2Bdocument_version_sent_April6_PA4.docx)). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)