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PROJECT TITLE

EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION
IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITY AREA N°4
(‘TO RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF WATERS’)

AGREEMENT NUMBER
CCI N°2012CE160AT124

PROJECT FINAL REPORT

Reported period: from 04/13 to 10/15



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ABBREVIATIONS

A: Action

CC: Carpathian Convention

DRBMP: Danube River Basin Management Plan

EG: ICPDR Expert Groups

EoI: Expression of Interest

EUSDR: European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

GWP: Global Water Partnership

ICPDR: International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

ICZM: Integrated Coastal Zone Management

JDS: Joint Danube Survey

JRC: Joint Research Centre

MSP: Maritime Spatial Planning

NC: National Coordinator

NCP: National Contact Point

PA: Priority Area

PAC: Priority Area Coordinator

RBM: River Basin Management

SG: Steering Group

StWG: Standing Working Group

TA: Technical Assistance

TAF: Technical Assistance Facility

UWWT: Urban Waste Water Treatment

WG: Working Group

WWT: Waste Water Treatment

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the project 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 facilitate a stable, effective and innovative governance system for EUSDR PA4.

The PA4 has achieved important policy results, established an active cooperative platform, identified gaps to fill, obtained related technical and scientific results and disseminated them successfully.

- It identified and initiated wide POLICY DISCUSSIONS with the main water-quality related stakeholders of policy-making at international, European and regional level;
- It identified PRIORITY TOPICS and GAPS that PA4 should further focus on to ensure comprehensive and useful water quality actions in line with the Roadmaps and also to support the actions of DG Environment in line with the Blueprint;
- It ensured INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING and cooperation with key water partners; and for the sake of institutional strengthening it set up an international expert position;
- It is continuously working on STRENGTHENED COOPERATION WITH KEY ACTORS AND PARTNERS, including the ICPDR and PA5 and for effective cooperation a SYNERGIES DOCUMENT to clearly identify the field of actions and responsibilities for PA4-PA5-ICPDR has been prepared;
- The first steps of sectorial discussions started in 2013: it IDENTIFIED MODELS AND INNOVATIVE METHODS, CREATED AN OPTIMIZATION MODEL of key priority areas of PA4 (strengthening of sub-basin initiatives and cooperation, sediments, early warning, buffer zones, drinking water, urban waste water);
- Based on policy discussions it initiated RESEARCH and completed SURVEYS in areas of water protection, alternative waste water treatment; phosphates and solid waste collection.
- It FACILITATED COLLECTING EXPERIENCES on national PROGRAMMING from EUSDR members and continuously bringing the attention of stakeholders to promote that EUSDR aims should be included into national programming;
- For the key innovative methods identified and also for the Danube strategy concerning water quality it ENSURED HIGH VISIBILITY and dissemination at many forums (including the Water Summits and other conferences);
- It ORGANISED LARGE CONFERENCES AND STAKEHOLDER SEMINARS with more than 300 participants focusing on the Danube macro- region and water in September 2013 organised a conference on drinking water in December 2013, organised a conference on water resources protection in April 2015 and prepared a large water financing conference in November 2015;
- It FACILITATES BRINGING INVOLVED EXPERTS TOGETHER at different working groups and organises meetings in a coordinated manner to ensure the participation of involved EU experts and provides financial support in order to ensure the participation of non EU experts as well.
- It focused on deepening the NON EU MEMBER COUNTRIES COOPERATION by organising the visits and common meetings with water management experts from Serbia,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and Moldova related to UWWT, drinking water supply, legislation and information for public

PA4 acknowledges that water management is the most horizontal activity among management of the natural elements, water quality is a world- wide significant policy issue and its aim (in line with the Action Plan) is to work closely with ICPDR that is coordinating this task to improve water policy and to reach good status under the EU Water Framework Directive.

In the last two years 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.

In line with the above and as a result of the work in the past years now:

- 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;
- PA4 is one of the priority areas, which takes efforts toward facilitating ALIGNMENT OF FUNDING;
- PA4 is one of the priority areas, where COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (ICPDR, ISRBC and from 2015 CC and GWP Central and Eastern Europe) can serve – in long term – an example.
- PA4 facilitated relevant policy processes in line with the already existing policy developments to reach objectives of PA4 outlined in the Action Plan;
 - 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, to submit project proposals for different financial programmes;
 - Coordination and harmonisation of tasks/steps listed in the roadmap with relevant institutions and organisation to achieve goals indicated in the EUSDR Action Plan (e.g. ICPDR, ISRBC) is ensured;
 - PA4 continuously explores possible financial sources and facilitates that national programming process can fit to the objectives of the EUSDR.

ACHIEVED RESULTS AND DEMONSTRATED SYNERGIES:

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

- Further **STRENGTHENED COOPERATION** with many partner organisations in the field of water protection, such as the Global Water Partnership, the Danube Water Programme, the Carpathian Convention and the Joint Research Centre.
- Organised scientific **STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS** focusing on macro regional dimension (2013), on water resources protection (2014), water quality, Synergy of the Danube Strategy with the Policy of the European Union (2014) Integrated horizontal cooperation between Pillar B (2015), and Cooperation possibilities with non-EU countries in UWWT issues (2015).

- Contributed to further research regarding the comprehensive **STUDIES RELATED TO SPECIFIC ACTIONS** such as a legal study on alternative collection and treatment of waste water (A5) and on phosphates (A7) assessing the situation in the EUSDR countries.
- For the update of the studies and obtain a current needs assessment concerning waste water treatment and phosphates in detergents **ORGANISED STUDY TOURS TO AND FOR NON-EU COUNTRIES** (to Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2015, to Serbia in July 2015,
 - Ukrainian and Moldovan experts were visiting in Slovakia in September 2015).
 - At the EUSDR 4th Annual Forum - held in Ulm (Baden-Württemberg, Germany) - the PA 4 workshop provided complex information about the cooperation with non-EU countries with the vital participation of experts from Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Major steps were taken in the frame of THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE DANUBE RIVER (ICPDR), which is the platform mandated by the Danube countries for coordinating the IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (WFD) and EU Floods Directive in the Danube River Basin. The Danube River Basin Management Plan – Update 2015 and the 1st Danube Flood Risk Management Plan were prepared and adopted in December 2015. Both plans are the key strategic documents for Danube basin-wide water management for the period 2015 until 2021. Furthermore, the ICPDR accomplished the assessments and published the Scientific and Public Reports of the Joint Danube Survey 3 - the world's biggest river research expedition of its kind - which was accomplished in 2013 already for the third time.

The Technical Assistance allowed making important steps on sturgeon conservation with the successful application for a LIFE project and the elaboration of a feasibility study on sturgeon ex-situ conservation measures. Support was also provided for the elaboration of the project proposals on sediments and the Tisza sub-basin.

Major steps were taken in the frame of THE INTERNATIONAL SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION (ISRBC), where the 1st Sava River Basin Management Plan has been finalised and approved in the frame of the 5th meeting of the Parties on 2 December, 2014. Support was provided via ICPDR through the Technical Assistance for the development of the Sava Hydrological Information System (Sava HIS) as an important component of SavaGIS.

A JOINT DOCUMENT OF SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE ICPDR, PA4 AND PA5 has been developed in 2014 and it was adopted by the Danube countries in December 2014 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.

At the EUSDR 4th Annual Forum - held in Ulm (Baden-Württemberg, Germany) - the PA 4 workshop provided a platform for the ceremonial signature of the **JOINT DECLARATION between the ICPDR Tisza Group and Carpathian Convention** which is really important sub-basin initiative relevant for PA 4.

PA4 further focused on **PROJECT GENERATION, PARTNERSHIP SEARCH and NETWORKING**:

- Relevant issues and topics were discussed within the frame of PA4: **18 PROJECTS AND IDEAS** were introduced in the frames of the Steering Group 5-10 and at several ICPDR

Working Groups where country representatives gave their feedback on the on-going activities and initiatives as well as next steps to be achieved.

- PA4 assisted **STAKEHOLDERS IN THEIR NETWORKING ACTIVITIES** and provided information about **possible partner searches**. With the help of Baden-Württemberg several project ideas and possible partners were identified.
- Several project preparatory meetings were held in Budapest and in Vienna concerning one of the flagship PA4 topics of **SEDIMENTS** with the main project partners and future lead beneficiaries. A **project proposal was elaborated** and submitted in 2015 to the Danube Transnational Programme.
- Project preparatory meetings were organised for the sake of preparing a project proposal concerning the JOINTISZA project towards the development of the update of the **TISZA River Basin Management Plan (development)** plan. A **project proposal was elaborated** and submitted in 2015 to the Danube Transnational Programme.
- PA4 in connection with consultation services provided within PA10 TAF-DRP searched for partners and prepared the project “**Utilisation of the Unique wetlands and Lakes in Undermined Areas**” for the 1st call of Central Europe INTERREG Programme.
- PA4 assisted in searching for partners in PA4 projects as **IRRINOVATION**–Innovative and eco-friendly irrigation technologies and other adaptation methods to face climate change impacts on the environment and agriculture in the Danube catchment area.
- PA4 experts were actively **ASSISTING UKRAINIEN EXPERTS TO FIND PROJECT FINANCING POSSIBILITIES FOR THEIR PROJECTS AIMING TO MANAGE SOLOTIVNO SALT MINE DISASTER FOR PROTECTING THE TISZA RIVER AND TO ESTABLISH LARGE WASTE WATER TREATMENT FACILITIES**.A related workshop was organised in Budapest on 11 June 2015 and some small preparatory projects were supported by PA10 START 2 Funding.

PA4 continued **DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ABOUT THE FINANCIAL POSSIBILITIES** in the 2014-2020 financial programming periods:

- PA4 held **several presentations for the Steering Group members**, invited many financial programme experts to the SG meetings and continuously informed members about the related submission deadlines.
- PA4 experts continued to be active in the **programming work and worked towards PA4 topics to be included in the DTP**.
- PA4 was active in **selecting the BEST 15 projects** from the submitted 40 project proposals submitted for **START funding** for PA4 topics and **voted on the best two projects** to be funded under the first call: **STAWA** (Towards the assessment of ecological status of water bodies in the Sava River Basin) and **REWATER** (Revitalization of Eutrophic Waters for Different Degrees of Pollution and the Size of Water Areas) projects. In the restricted second call project **CleanRiver** (Creation of feasibility study for improvement of wastewater treatment facilities in Ukraine) and project **SANDANUBE** (Sustainable sanitation in small settlements of the Danube Region) were selected for START support.
- Organising **Stakeholder Conferences** to facilitate networking and available financial possibilities for project generation and implementation

PA4 and the ICPDR actively facilitate the SUB-BASIN ACTIVITIES:

- In the years of 2014-2015 in line with previous ICPDR agreement special attention was paid to the coordination of the **TISZA activities**. The **National Tisza Office** has been established and was ceremonially opened in Szolnok in November 2014, in the centre of the Tisza River and already two ICPDR **Tisza Group meetings** were organized on 26-27 November 2014, in Szolnok, Hungary and on 12-13 May 2015, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The National Tisza Office’s main role – among others – is to support the ICPDR Tisza Group activities and to help the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by high representatives of the Tisza countries in 2011 in the frame of a Ministerial meeting.
- The Sava Hydrological Information System (Sava HIS) was developed as an important component of SavaGIS in the frame of the International Sava River Basin Commission.
- PA4 will be similarly paying attention to other sub-basins in the upcoming period, such as the Prut River basin and the Danube Delta at the Black Sea.

PA4 continues COOPERATING WITH OTHER PRIORITY AREAS:

- With PA2 jointly organised a financing workshop in March 2015 in Budapest to provide information about financing possibilities.
- With PA5 jointly organised a study visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina where Bosnian water experts could participate at a PA5 Flood Workshop and PA4 experts could hold their waste water discussions.
- With PA6 initiated cooperation to share information related to the on-going issues specially related to the sturgeon project development.
- With PA 8 proposed a separated workshop session focusing on water treatment for the 4th Annual Forum in Ulm.
- With PA7 SK NCP organises joint meetings.
- With Pillar B PAs (PA4-PA5-PA6) proposed a joint Integrated Workshop for the Annual Forum in 2015.
- With PA10 cooperates regarding the TAF and START procedures.

DISSEMINATION ACTIONS were completed:

- A new website was established for PA4 at: <http://www.danubewaterquality.eu> .
- PA4 brochures and folders were updated, revised, printed and disseminated at the conference “Water Resources Protection” organized by PA 4 in April 2015 in Bratislava. Paper A4 folders with the motive of the Danube Strategy were printed and disseminated at the above-mentioned conference and other PA4 related events;
- Water Management Journal – Special Issue devoted to PA4 EUSDR, June 2014, bilingual EN-SK;
- Article about on-going PA4 activities was published in the ICPDR Danube Watch (Regional efforts to restore water quality, issue 2015/1)
- Article on “EU Danube Strategy – Recent activities in priority area on water quality” was published in Sava News Flash No15, May 2015

- Article in Water Management Journal 5-6/2015 was published informing about the conference “Water Resources Protection” organised by PA4 on 22-23 April 2015 in Bratislava.
- Two PA4 workshops, one panel discussion and one exhibition were organised in Ulm in October 2015 at the EUSDR Annual Forum. Two workshops were organized in Vienna in the 2014 Annual Forum and joint PAC presentations/panel discussion was held for PILLAR B in Bucharest in the 2013 Annual Forum.

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

1. SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The current report is the final report of the project on EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION, IMPLEMENTATION OF **PRIORITY AREA N°4** (‘TO RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF WATERS’), **AGREEMENT NUMBER - CCI N° 2012CE160AT124** (prolongation has been approved by the EC up till the end of October 2015). The project covers the period of 1 April 2013 and 31 October 2015.

The aim of the project was to facilitate a stable, effective, inclusive and innovative governance system for the coordination of EUSDR Priority Area 4 (PA4) “To restore and maintain the quality of waters” and to strengthen the governance system for EUSDR PA4. The project co-beneficiaries are the Hungarian and the Slovakian Priority Area Coordinators and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The Priority Area Coordinators are Mr László Perger PAC Hungary from the General Directorate of Water Management under Ministry of Interior which is the responsible ministry for water issues in Hungary and Mr Vladimír Novák PAC Slovakia, Director General of Water Section from the Slovakian Ministry of Environment. The ICPDR is represented by Ivan Zavadsky, Executive Secretary.

The goal was to implement the actions (a) to facilitate a stable, effective, inclusive and innovative governance system for this priority area and (b) to support the ICPDR as its work very much complementary to the one of the priority area ‘to restore and maintain the quality of waters’ have been carried out during the project period. The implementation of the project facilitated the identification of common objectives and synergies between the work of PA4 SK-HU PAC Teams and the ICPDR.

The priority area was successful in the past 3 years in setting and defining its targets and organizational framework. We have developed our actions, milestones, identified and established our roadmaps, adopted our procedures. We have strengthened our institutional framework: established a successful operative cooperation between HU and SK PAC teams and the ICPDR; furthermore created regular cooperation with the EC, DSP and further international partners such as the Sava Commission, Carpathian Convention, Global Water Partnership and the JRC Water Nexus.

The Priority Area was active in OP programming issues: PA4 was the first priority area approving its Alignment of Funding Document in 2014 and keeping regular cooperation partnership with the Joint Secretariat of the Danube Transnational Programme.

The EUSDR PA4 PACs therefore play an important role in the (1) alignment of funding process (2) in the cooperation with relevant institutions (3) in facilitating the development of project proposals and set up of project consortiums and (4) in fostering cooperation with non EU member countries (namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova).

The main challenges and significant water management issues for the Danube River Basin and relevant for PA4 are (1) organic and (2) nutrient pollution (3) hazardous substances pollution (4) hydromorphological alterations. To outline specific measures in line with the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives the Danube countries developed the Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP) Update 2015 in the frame of the ICPDR.

The main outcomes of the project are:

Reports, documents 2014-15



➤ PA4 Study reports:

Study developments with research in Danube countries

- On **buffer zones**;
- On **management of solid waste** in small rural settlements;
- On alternative collection and treatment of **wastewater in small rural settlements**;
- On **phosphates in detergents**;
- Feasibility study on **early warning water quality monitoring**;
- **Drinking water**: conference and related studies;
- Transboundary water cooperation in the European Union: a hydro-political gap assessment (2015).

➤ Alignment of Funding Document PA4 adopted (2014);

➤ Annual Reports of PA4 activities;

➤ Joint Document ICPDR-EUSDR adopted (2014);

➤ Work Plan PA4 2014-2015 updated regularly;

➤ UWWT mission reports (2015).



ICPDR-PA4 Technical Assistance related achievements

- Danube Sediment Project EoI, handed in under the Danube Transnational Programme in 2015
- JoinTisza Project EoI, also handed in under the Danube Transnational Programme in 2015
- LIFE sturgeon project proposal which was successful and financed by LIFE - the project was launched in November 2015
- Feasibility study on sturgeon ex-situ conservation measures - the study provided important pre-requisites inter alia for the EUSDR Start "STURGENE" project and related activities
- Sava Hydrological Information System (Sava HIS) - an important component of SavaGIS and therefore directly relevant for the related PA4 action on sub-basins.

PA4 supported projects (LoR, LoM)

- Cross-border Water Supply Development in the Pannon-Fertő - LoR
- ICZM – Improvement of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management on the Western Shores of the Black Sea - LoM
- Climate Change and Impacts on Water supply (CC-WaterS) –LoM
- Danube River Research and Management (DREAM), University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna – LoR
- Conservation of alluvial habitats of community interest on the Szabadság Island– LoM
- Clean River (Improvement of wastewater treatment facilities in Ukraine) -START
- SANDANUBE (Sustainable sanitation in small settlements of the Danube Region) START
- JOINTISZA- DTP proposal
- IRRINOVATION: LoR, CE proposal
- CC-WARE: data sheet, LoR
- DanubeSediment: LoR, DTP proposal
- FoWaP: LoR
- Good Water: LoR
- ProTisza: LoR
- River Toolkit: data sheet, LoR
- SEWABIS: LoR

Meetings organised, decisions made:

- Organisation of trilateral meetings with the PACs, ICPDR, Sava Commission and the Austrian SG member;
- Organisation of joint meeting with NCPs, PAC4s and ICPDR to prepare the Joint Paper on Cooperation and Synergy for the EUSDR
- Strengthening sub basin activities by the establishment of the ICPDR Tisza Office and organisation of the 21stTisza Group meeting;
- START call – 40 projects were submitted for PA4 in the first call out of which the best 15 projects were selected by the PACs and the best four projects were selected by the Steering Group and were submitted to PA10 recommending for financial support (2 projects were awarded a START grant) In the second, restricted call 7 projects were submitted to PA4 and 2 projects were awarded funding;
- Workshop “Fish migration at the Iron Gates I&II” addressing sturgeon migration, which was organised on 6-7 March 2014 in Bucharest;
- Organisation of Sediment project proposal development meetings, as a result a project proposal was submitted to the DTP in 2015;
- Organization of the JOINTISZA project preparatory meetings, as a result a project proposal was submitted to the DTP in 2015;
- Organisation of the 2nd workshop of Blue Danube project – preparation of the project “Development of concepts for reducing the accumulation of pharmaceutical residues in the Danube River”
- Participation at several ICPDR expert group meetings to share information and discuss common issues;
- Moldavian expert visit to Hungary in 2014;
- Bosnian water managers’ visit to Hungary in 2014 and 2015;
- PAC4 visit in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Visit of Ukrainian and Moldovan water managers in Slovakia in 2015.
- Consultancy on project adopted for financial support from PA10 EUSDR TAF-DRP assistance - “Utilization of the Unique Wetlands in Undermined Area Novaky - Kos”, acronym MINE WETLIFE and organisation of the site visit of project partners in 2015.

2. DURATION OF THE PROJECT

The prolonged duration of the fund is from 1 April 2013 to 31 October 2015.

The current report covers the project period of 1 April 2013 to 31 October 2015.

3. ACTIVITIES PLANNED AND CONDUCTED DURING THE PROJECT PERIOD

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 Bratislava, Slovakia	Steering Group meeting 5	Organising and leading of 5 th PA 4 SG meeting
18-19 June 2013 Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina	Participation on international events	PAC4 participation and Pillar B presentation providing in ICPDR 11 th Standing Working Group meeting
11 July 2013 Bratislava, Slovakia	Participation in national events	Meeting of consultative group of Danube Strategy at Governmental Office.
11-12 September 2013 Budapest, Hungary	Budapest Macro-regional Conference	The Macro-regional conference was organised by PA4 with the participation of circa 300 registered participants
8-11 October 2013 Budapest, Hungary	Participation on international events	Budapest Water Summit, participation of EUSDR on the BWS
18 October 2013 Budapest, Hungary	Participation on bilateral meeting	Bilateral HU-SK meeting held in Budapest, Hungary
28-29 October 2013 Bucharest, Romania	EUSDR Annual Forum	Participation of PAC4 at the Annual Forum, presenting state of play in joint Pillar B Environment workshop
3 December 2013 Vienna, Austria	DR-TAF meeting	Participation of PAC4 at the DR – TAF meeting
11-12 December 2013	Participation on international events	Conference European Funding Opportunities for Competitiveness and Innovation in the Danube Region
12 December 2013 Vienna, Austria	Steering Group meeting 6	Organising and leading of 6 th PA 4 SG meeting , back to back with the ICPDR OM.
16-17 December 2013 Bratislava, Slovakia	The Safeguarding of Drinking Water Supply – Challenge for the Danube Region	Participation and presentation of PA4 (NCP-HU) at the Drinking Water Conference
27-28 February 2014 Vienna, Austria	ICPDR HYMO TG	Participation and presentation of PA4 at the 12 th HYMO TG mtg,
6 March 2014 Budapest, Hungary	JRC discussion	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 Vienna, Austria	NCP-PAC meeting-	Presenting the current state of play of PA4, discussing

Key activities conducted		
Date	Activity	Description of the event
		the governance draft document
25-26 March 2014 Ljubljana, Slovenia	ICPDR 6 th APC meeting	Participation and presentation of PA4 (Early warning feasibility presented)
6-7 March 2014, Bucharest	Workshop Fish Migration at the Iron Gates I&II	Discussion of key fish migration experts from FAO, Universities and administrations on the required steps for the establishment of fish migrations aids for sturgeons at the Iron Gate Dams I&II between Romania and Serbia.
28 March 2014 Budapest, Hungary	SG7 PA4	Presenting all 4 studies related to A5 and A7, the feasibility study for A2, JRC projects
3-4 April 2014 Koblenz, Germany	ICPDR 19 th MA EG	Discussion of proposal for automatic monitoring system
7-9 April 2014 Bratislava, Slovakia	ICPDR 9 th NTG and 20 th PM EG meeting	Buffer strips and p-free detergents studies presented
5-6 May 2014 Zagreb, Croatia	ICPDR 39 th RBM EG	Participation and presentation of the Hungarian NCP-Government Commissioner.
13 May 2014	Adoption of PA4 project for PA10 EUSDR TAF-DRP assistance	Project “Utilization of the Unique Wetlands in Undermined Area Novaky-Kos” adopted for financial support from PA10 in the 2nd call to project document preparation
May 2014 Vienna, Austria	Meeting of ICPDR and NCPs (HU, SK, RO)	Discussion about the Joint paper for the harmonisation of the ICPDR/ EUSDR activities
19-20 June 2014 Sophia, Bulgaria	12th ICPDR Standing Working Group Meeting	Standing Working Group Meeting, presenting the current state of play of PA4
26-27 June 2014 Vienna, Austria	EUSDR Annual Forum-	Participation of PACs4 on the Annual Forum Policy workshop organised by PA4 at the Danube Cosmos
11 July 2014 Vienna, Austria	START - Danube Region Project Fund – PA1	Practical workshop on START programme – rules and decision making process
8 September 2014 Vienna, Austria	ICPDR, NCPs, PA5 and PA4 meeting	Meeting about the Joint Paper on Cooperation and Synergy on EUSDR Implementation;
8 September 2014 Vienna, Austria	ICPDR, PA4, A meeting	Meeting of PA4, ICPDR and A regarding further steps in PA4 activities implementation
14 October 2014, Bratislava, Slovakia	PA4 SG8 meeting	Discussion about PA4 on-going issues, progress to be presented (details see in Chapter 4)
30-31 October 2014, Munich Germany	40th RBM EG meeting	PA4 PAC4 presentation about the progress achieved by PA4 – outcomes of the SG8
4 th November 2014, Szolnok, Hungary	Ceremonial inauguration of the Tisza Office	Facilitated by the EUSDR PA4 and the ICPDR PS the Tisza Office – among other – will help the organisation of the ICPDR Tisza Group activities
21 November 2014, Budapest, Hungary	Sediment Meeting	Project proposal preparatory meeting, organised by the Budapest Technical University and facilitated by PA4, PA5 and the ICPDR
26-27 November 2014, Szolnok, Hungary	21st Tisza Group meeting	In line with the updated Memorandum of Understanding of the Tisza Group signed in 2011, supported also by PA4 a meeting has been organised to continue the work of the ICPDR Tisza Group
8-10 December 2014 Vienna, Austria	ICPDR 17 th Ordinary meeting	1) Discussion about the ICPDR on-going activities, special focus on the Final Draft of the 2 nd Danube River Basin Management Plan– Update 2015 ; 2) Final adoption of the EUSDR/ICPDR Joint Document; 3) PA4 PAC presentation about the on-going PA4 activities.

Key activities conducted		
Date	Activity	Description of the event
26-27 January 2015, Vienna, Austria	2 nd Stakeholder Conference organised by PA10	Strengthening the urban dimension of the Danube Region – Urban Platform Danube Region
28-29 January 2015, Ispra, Italy	JRC ISPRA mtg	The Danube water nexus: assessment benchmarking and water scenarios: presentation about the PA4 activities.
13 February 2015, Stuttgart, Germany	PAC meeting	Annual forum, PAC financing discussions
18 February 2015, Brno, Czech Republic	3 rd Blue Danube Workshop	Discussion of objectives and methodology of project dealing with reducing pharmaceutical residues in the Danube River
19 February 2015, Budapest, Hungary	PA4-ICPDR – Sava Commission Joint meeting	Discussion of joint activities relevant for PA4
20 March 2015, Vienna, Austria	Practical workshop to the START programme	Information about the 2 nd call
25 March 2015, Bratislava, Slovakia	NC-SK-PA meeting	Meeting of NC SK with the priority areas
8 April 2015, Budapest, Hungary	Sediment workshop	Project preparation with the organisational team, assisted by the ICPDR and PA4.
22-23 April 2015	Water Resource Protection Conference	Conference on water resources protection organised by PA4 SK.
23-24 April 2015, Prague, Czech Republic	41st RBM EG meeting	Discussion on the updated draft of the DRBM Plan – Update 2015 and presentation about the PA4 activities in the frame of the meeting
8 May 2015, Brussels, Belgium	PAC meeting	DTP consultation on targets and procedures
12-13 May 2015, Cluj Napoca, Romania	Tisza Group Meeting	Project preparation, Tisza RBM Plan state of play.
2-3 June 2015, Zagreb Croatia	13 th StWG ICPDR	Discussion about ICPDR activities with special focus on the 2 nd Danube River Basin Management Plan Update 2015 and Tisza Group activities.
9 June 2015, Budapest, Hungary	PA4 SG09	PA4 activities presentations, Nexus presentations, PA4 relevant projects.
10-12 June 2015, Jahorina, BiH	Visit to Non-EU Countries	Alternative waste water treatment for small rural settlements and phosphates
16 June 2015, Novaky Slovakia	MINE WETLIFE meeting	Meeting of the project partners regarding project ‘Utilisation of Unique wetlands and Lakes in Undermined Areas’
24-25 June 2015, Budapest-Bratislava-Vienna	NCP-PAC meeting: The Floating Conference, Danube River	Strategic concept, EUSDR in the OPs, Communication needs, financing of PACs, Annual Forum.
2 July 2015, Zagreb, Croatia	ICPDR Stakeholder Conference (Voice of the Danube), Zagreb, Croatia	ICPDR event, discussion with stakeholders, including PA4, of draft Danube River Basin Management Plan – Update 2015
9 July 2015, Belgrade, Serbia	Meeting with Non-EU country representatives in specific PA4 relevant topics.	Discussion about the alternative waste management technologies.
10 July 2015, Bratislava, Slovakia	NC-SK-PA meeting	Meeting of NC SK with the priority areas
14 July 2015, Budapest, Hungary	Tisza project preparatory workshop	First meeting with the potential project partners towards the development of the JointTisza project proposal.
15 July 2015, Solotivno, Ukraine	Meeting with Non-EU country representatives in specific PA4relevant topics.	Discussion about the possible environmental risks management options of the Solotivno Salt Mine area
16 July 2015,	Meeting with Non-EU country	Discussion about the current status of the Uzhgorod

Key activities conducted		
Date	Activity	Description of the event
Uzhgorod, Ukraine	representatives in specific pa4 relevant topics.	waste management system and investigating the necessity and related possibilities of the future reconstruction.
17-18, September 2015, Szolnok-Budapest, Hungary	Tisza project preparatory workshop	Second meeting with the potential project partners towards the development of the JointTisza project proposal.
29-30 September 2015, Bratislava, Slovakia	Meeting with Non-EU country representatives in specific pa4 relevant topics	Discussion on waste water treatment in Moldova and Trans Carpathian region, drinking water supply and possibilities of cooperation in water sector
19 October 2015, Budapest, Hungary	Sediment project preparatory meeting	Discussion towards finalisation of Danube Sediment Project Proposal
20 October 2015., Bratislava, Slovakia	PA4 SG10	The meeting was focusing on the actual work of the priority area, the achievements, relevant projects as well as the organisation of workshops, side events in the frame of the Annual Forum.
21-22 October 2015., Bratislava, Slovakia	42. RBM EG meeting	The meeting was focusing on the finalisation of the DRBM Plan. PAC4 was presenting PA4 state of play.
27-28 October 2015	Joint Research Centre Event	This event was organized at the occasion of the 4 th Annual Forum in Ulm. The PA 4 actively participated at the Water Workshop and at the panel discussion devoted to mutual cooperation between EUSDR and JRC
29-30 October 2015, Ulm, Germany	EUSDR Annual Forum	Participation and organisation of workshops in specific topics relevant for PA4. (Workshops on Protecting the environment in the Danube Region: ‘Integrated horizontal co-operation’, Improvement and cooperation possibilities in the water sector: Improvement and cooperation possibilities in the water sector with non-EU countries; Setting water management priorities until 2021 - The ICPDR Danube River Basin Management Plan- Update 2015)

4. HOW WAS THE ACTION CARRIED OUT?

The project has a **tripartite governance** ensuring wide spectrum of the development of the actions.

The project co-beneficiaries are the Hungarian and the Slovakian Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).

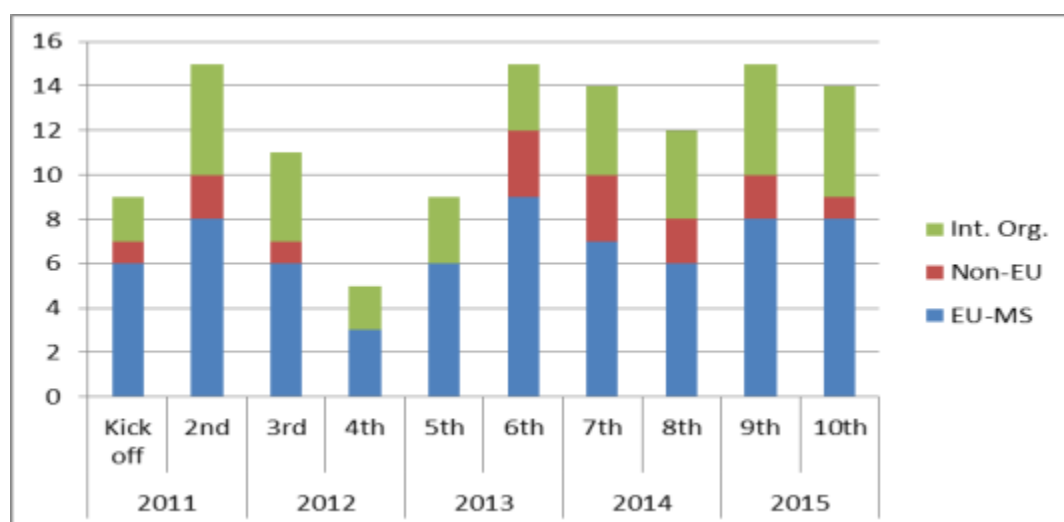
The Priority Area Coordinators are László Perger PAC Hungary (as of October 2014, and since the start of the project until September 2013) in between Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper was the Acting PAC Hungary between February-September 2014, Otto Andras Szabo as of December 2013-February 2014) and Mr Vladimír Novák, Director General of Water Section from the Slovakian Ministry of Environment, the new PAC from Slovakia (as of June 2015, prior to the date Dušan Čerešňák, beforehand Andrea Vranovska was the PAC4 from Slovakia as of September 2013 and Radoslav Bujnovsky before.). The ICPDR is represented by Ivan Zavatsky, Executive Secretary since September 2013, replacing the former secretary Philip Weller.

The implementation of the actions (a) to facilitate a stable, effective, inclusive and innovative governance system for this priority area and (b) to support the ICPDR as its work very much complementary to the one of the priority area ‘to restore and maintain the quality of waters’ have been carried out during the project period. The implementation of the project facilitated the

identification of common objectives and synergies between the work of PA4 SK-HU PAC Teams and the ICPDR.

The joint work between EUSDR and ICPDR has been facilitated via **trilateral meetings, usually to be held twice a year**. To harmonise the mutual interest and efforts of the EUSDR and ICPDR working for the implementation of Water Framework Directive (EU WFD) a ‘**Joint Paper on Cooperation and Synergy for the EUSDR**’ was being prepared through 2013-2014 and it was adopted in 2014 as the first structured step towards the coordination of common activities. As a next step a **joint PA4 workplan** was established, which outlined the specific elements of the mutual work in case of each institution. The **work progress have been discussed in both the ICPDR and priority area platforms** in the frame of ICPDR high level, expert groups and PA4 steering group meetings.

The **Steering Group** of PA4 meets twice a year. For better and more effective coordination and more over for saving money, as well, the PAC coordinators strive to organize back-to back meetings with ICPDR, such as happened in 2013 and 2015. The participation of the SG members was improving as a result that part of the current Technical Assistance budget is dedicated to the travel and accommodation costs of SG members from non-EU countries to ensure participation. The bellow table indicates the number of countries and organizations presented at each SG meeting.



Cooperation between PA4 and relevant institutions next to the ICPDR such as Sava Commission, Joint Research Centre and UNEP Carpathian Convention are important. During the project period PA4 **facilitated relevant policy processes** in line with the already existing policy developments to reach objectives of PA4 outlined in the Action Plan. Discussion and meetings have been organised with relevant main policy actors concerning water quality and sub basin issues including the UNECE - Helsinki Convention, Carpathian Convention, ICPDR, Sava Commission JRC, GWP-CEE and REC.

PA4 is one of the priority areas where special emphasis has been taken on the process of **alignment of funding**. It was facilitated already in the frame of the SG5-6 meetings back in 2013 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 periods. In line with the agreement the PAC Teams together with the ICPDR, facilitated the set-up of project consortiums related to priority issues (e.g. sediment and Tisza sub-basin issues) and also supported the development of project proposals to be submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme.

Alignment of funding



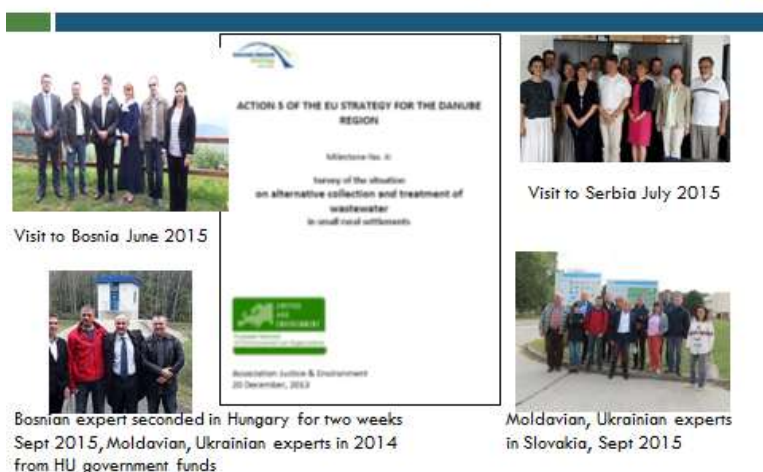
1. Alignment of funding document for priorities PA4, June 2014;
2. Collecting information on funding possibilities since SG6;
3. Disseminating information on project funding, DTP invites;
4. Project generation, networking.



The Priority Area 4, being the first of all priority areas of EUSDR adopted a list of intervention areas, where the top priority topics for EUSDR PA4 were identified that can help all programmers and administrations for the sake of alignment of funding.

Another significant goal (also in a long term period) is the **stronger involvement of the non-EU countries** in the EUSDR implementation. The priority area PAC teams took specific emphasis on the **involvement of Non-EU MS** in the EUSDR process. Based on the discussions with the ICPDR two priority topics have been determined to be further investigate and focus: (1) urban waste water treatment plans and their status in the Non-EU countries and (2) phosphate in detergents. To investigate about this topic the PA4 PAC Teams have organised study visits to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and met with Moldavian and Ukrainian experts.

Visits for UWWT Survey



5. HOW HAS THE PROJECT MET THE OBJECTIVES OF THE BUDGET HEADING?

According to the budget heading the TA covered personnel costs to facilitate PAC activities (PAC's assistants). The budget also covered costs of travels to facilitate cooperation between relevant institutions and to disseminate project results. The TA also covered service contracts and supported project proposal development. Steering group meetings held in Budapest, Vienna and Bratislava were also facilitated and budgeted from TA2. More information and detailed budget can be found in the financial tables. (**Annex 1 and Annex 2**). The project used its budget according to its budget line.

6. THE TRANSNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE PROJECT

The project has **tripartite governance, which includes** the Hungarian and Slovakian PACs and the ICPDR.

The EUSDR involves 14 countries (9 out of them are EU MSs) in its process. Each priority area has to guarantee the maintenance of the transnational dimension and involving the Danube countries in its activities. The PA4 PACs recognised the importance of the involvement of international organisations in the implementation process working on relevant issues to ensure the effective utilization of already existing knowledge, information and for the better involvement of the Danube countries.

ICPDR is also a platform where all Danube countries are involved and the ICPDR expert group meetings offered valuable possibilities to discuss issues relevant from the EUSDR PA4 point of view. The joint cooperation of PA4 PAC Teams (Hungary and Slovakia) and the ICPDR within the project created good opportunities to the common work and facilitated the wider involvement of the Danube countries. Furthermore, the established cooperation system between PA4-ICPDR was indicated by the EC as an example for cooperation in the case of PACs cooperating with the Carpathian Convention.

Another significant goal (also in a long term period) is the stronger involvement of the non-EU countries in the EUSDR implementation. In line with this objective in the second half of 2014 Hungary offered a one-month period for a secondment from Moldova, and a one month period for a secondment of Bosnia in the second half of 2015. The secondment programme ensured a rich technical programme in the field of water management and governance. As agreed among the partners, PAC4 visits to Non-EU countries were also carried out, specifically related to alternative waste water treatment and phosphates issues to Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2015 and to Serbia in July 2015. Moldavian and Ukrainian experts were visiting the SK PAC team and water organizations in September 2015. Please see further details in chapter 7.4.

PA4 furthermore offered financial assistance to Non EU members participating in its SG meetings.

The PA4 ensures the involvement of the Danube countries via the following tools/activities:

- Steering Groups meetings;
- Cooperation with the ICPDR;
- Cooperation with other relevant institutions;
- Study visits to and support of Non EU countries;
- Dissemination outcomes of PA4.

6.1. Organisation of the Steering Group meetings



5th Steering Group meeting: The SG meeting was held on 5th June, 2013 in Bratislava and it aims were mostly to discuss on the integration of “A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources” to the work of PA4, discuss and agree about the strengthened cooperation with DG ENV, to get informed about the plans of JRC for the scientific support of PA4 and decide about cooperation, to inform SG members about the progress on the establishment of Danube Programme (Transnational Fund), review of progress and state of tasks drawn up in roadmaps, amend/modify roadmaps and to issue Letter of Recommendation/Merit for nominated, debated and agreed projects. The meeting provided a possibility to discuss on recent activities related to PA4 and to share information on the planned events till the end of 2013 (Scientific Stakeholder Seminar in Budapest back to back the Danube Day, Budapest Water Summit on 8-11 October 2013, next SG meeting with possible organization of back to back ICPDR meeting).

6th Steering Group meeting: The 6th Steering Group meeting was held on 12th December 2013 in Vienna, organised back to back with the 16th Ordinary meeting of the ICPDR¹. 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.

¹ The meeting was held in Vienna in the Balassi Intézet – Collegium Hungaricum (Wien) (1020 Wien, Hollandstrasse 4).

7th Steering Group meeting: The meeting was held on 28th March 2014 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Budapest, Hungary, organised back to back with the Steering Group meeting of the PA5. 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 2.1.2.). *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.

8th Steering Group meeting: On the 14th October 2014, the 8th Steering Group meeting of PA4 has been organised in Bratislava, Slovakia. During the meeting the recent activities related to PA4 done by ICPDR and Sava Commission were presented, the Joint Document of Cooperation between PA4 and ICPDR was presented and discussed, the START project proposals, were presented and decision was made about selecting the top 4 projects for the submission to the Priority Area 10. The recent activities related to PA4 were further presented, providing information on the planned events and the participants were informed on Workplan for 2014-2015. Finally detailed information was provided to the SG members with the help of Danube Transnational Programme expert about project financing possibilities.

9th Steering Group meeting: On the 9th June 2015, the 9th Steering Group meeting of PA4 has been organised in Budapest, Hungary aiming at to give an overview about the ongoing activities of the priority area on water quality (PA4) of the EUSDR, the ICPDR and the Sava Commission and to explore on financial options by introducing the new financial programmes, specially the Danube Transnational Programme and the LIFE Programme. Next to the introduction of financial programmes the meeting also served as a platform to introduce new project initiatives closely linked to PA4 activities and to present cooperation with several Nexus partners. The meeting was hosted by the Hungarian General Directorate of Water Management. Close to thirty participants from eleven countries were present at the meeting including seven steering group members as well. The SK and HU PAC Teams, the ICPDR, the Sava Commission, the GWP-SEE, the Baden Württemberg Ministry of the Environment and Climate Protection and Energy Sector, the Danube Water Programme and Carpathian Conventions representatives as well as project representatives were also present at the meeting.

10th Steering Group meeting: On the 20th October the 10th Steering Group meeting of PA4 has been organised in Bratislava, Slovakia, back to back with the RBM Expert Group of the ICPDR. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss about the implementation of the actions outlined in the roadmap of PA4 and discuss on actual tasks and next steps. Important element of the meeting was the discussion about the planned projects relevant to the priority area. The PAC team introduced the main organisational issues related to the Annual Forum (29-30 October 2015) and Stakeholder Forum (19-20 November 2015). In the frame of the meeting two project ideas received letter of recommendations. (JoinTisza and SANDANUBE.) The meeting further provided a possibility for the SG members to learn about the new DSP Office and its activities, to update knowledge about DTP financing, ICPDR-Sava Commission activities and to hear about the PA4 visits organized to No-EU countries.

We are pleased to report that our SG meetings are becoming more and more co-operative; we are providing a platform for wide discussions and ensure participation of our strategic partner organizations. SG members generally find the meetings very informative; especially prefer wide information about finances, project possibilities and networking. SG members shared their view that

they appreciate holding meetings back to back with other events (especially with ICPDR meetings) and appreciate our assistance for financing Non-EU member representatives. Please see the bellow table demonstrating member state participation at our SG events.

PA4 SG data: countries



Countries' Participation



PA4 Steering Group meetings



6.2. Cooperation with the ICPDR

The following main actions have been carried out jointly with the ICPDR:

- Adoption of the EUSDR/ICPDR Joint Document – Joint Paper on Cooperation and Synergy for the EUSDR Implementation;
- Trilateral meetings to discuss on the joint activities;
- Development of a Joint Workplan;
- Participation in ICPDR Expert Group meetings and participation of ICPDR experts in PA4 Steering Group Meetings to share information and discuss common issues;
- Strengthening sub basin activities by the establishment of the National Tisza Office and organisation of the 21st and 22nd ICPDR Tisza Group meetings – see details in chapter 8;
- Organisation of Tisza project proposal development meetings and development of the JoinTisza project proposal – Submission of the EoI to the DTP 1st Call – see details in chapter 8;
- Facilitating the sediment project proposal development process and development of the Danube Sediment project proposal – Submission of the EoI to the DTP 1st Call – see details in chapter 8;

6.2.1. Adoption of the EUSDR/ICPDR Joint Document

To ensure the coordination of all relevant activities of the EUSDR PA4 and 5, a paper on the ICPDR-EUSDR PA4 and PA5 coordination has been developed. It was adopted in November 2014 by PA4 and PA5, it was adopted by the ICPDR in December 2014. The paper builds upon already existing approaches and proposes some new practical elements for collaboration, including ways to initiate and develop projects to implement the EUSDR and the Action Plan.

The main objectives of the document are:

- ✓ Outlining mandates;
- ✓ Setting clear overview on the separation of tasks and responsibilities;
- ✓ Seeking for options/procedures on how to make the best of both frameworks through complementarity and coordination synergy.

The document describes several options about how to reinforce synergy such as (1) Strengthening the network; (2) Closer coordination; (3) Early consultations; (4) Meeting efficiency; (5) Innovative approaches; (6) Mutual recognition and visibility (7) Cross-sectoral cooperation; (8) Strategic guidance and coordination; (9) Priority setting; (10) Alignment of funding.

6.2.2. Trilateral meetings to discuss on the joint activities- Meeting with the ICPDR Permanent Secretariat

As a follow up activity of the joint paper and the first ICPDR-EUSDR technical meeting held on the 8th September 2014 in Vienna, another trilateral meeting has been organised on the 19th February 2015. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss on the joint activities relevant for 2015 and to prepare for the 9th Steering Group meeting. The trilateral meeting was hosted by the Hungarian General Directorate of Water Management. The SK PAC Team (*Mr Dusan Ceresnak, Ms Andrea Vranovska, Ms Alena Kurecova*), the HU PAC Team (*Mr Laszlo Perger, Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper, Ms Diana Heilmann*), the ICPDR (*Mr Raimund Mair, Mr Adam Kovacs*) and the Sava Commission (*Mr Samo Groselj*) representatives were present at the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting was attached in the progress report of this project.

Additional trilateral meetings will be organised in the following years as well. (The next one is on 3 February 2016, in Bratislava.)

6.2.3. *Development of a Joint Workplan*

For the 8th Steering Group meeting, based on contribution from the Hungarian and Slovakian PA4 coordinators as well as from the experts of the ICPDR and ISRBC a workplan has been developed to list the main ongoing activities of priority area 4 (*Water quality*) in line with the Roadmap actions. The main objective of the workplan and timetable is not to repeat the elements of PA4 roadmap but to include those activities, which are

- under implementation,
- financially covered or planned to be covered and
- relevant for the Danube countries.

The workplan gives a realistic time-schedule on the actions planned and actions under implementation. The workplan and timetable creates the basis of reporting and gives a transparent overview on the ongoing activities.

The intention is to update the workplan/timetable before the steering group meetings in line with the actual progress and newly financed elements of the Roadmap. The workplan has been updated prior to the SG9 and SG10 meetings and changes have been communicated in the frame of the SG meetings.

6.2.4. *Participation in ICPDR high level and expert group meetings to share information and discuss common issues*

In line with the ICPDR-EUSDR PA4/PA5 joint paper and according to the on-going activities of the PA4, experts of the priority area coordination team participated in the main high level (Heads of Delegation) yearly and expert group meetings as follows:

- 18-19 June 2013, 11th ICPDR STWG meeting;
- 27-28 February 2014, 12 ICPDR HYMO meeting;
- 3-4 April 2014, ICPDR 19th MA meeting;
- 7-9 April 2014, ICPDR NTG and PM meetings;
- 5-6 May 2014, ICPDR 39th RBM EG meeting;
- 19-20 Jun 2014, ICPDR STWG meeting;
- 8 September 2014, ICPDR PA4 bilateral meeting;
- 30-31 October 2014 40th RBM EG meeting;
- 26-27 November 2014, Szolnok 21st Tisza Group meeting;
- 9-10 December 2014, Vienna, Austria, 17th Ordinary meeting of the ICPDR
- 23-24 April 2015 41st RBM EG meeting;
- 12-13 May 2015, Cluj-Napoca 22nd Tisza Group meeting (active involvement of PA4 in the meeting organisation);
- 2-3 June 2015, Zagreb, Croatia, 13th StWG meeting of the ICPDR;
- 2 July 2015, Zagreb, Croatia, ICPDR Stakeholder Conference;
- 21-22 October 2015, Bratislava, Slovakia, 42nd RBM EG meeting.



Cooperation: results are already visible



Signed cooperation document



Bi-annual meetings,
PAC participation at
ICPDR EGs



Opening of the Tisza Office



Joint Workplan of Priority Area 4



Joint project preparations

6.3. Cooperation with other relevant international organisations

The Sava Commission is an important partner of PA4. The commission is responsible for two sub-actions and four milestones of the PA4 Roadmaps for A2M8 (Implementation of the Sava River Basin Management Plan), A2M9 (Update of the Sava River Basin Analysis) and A2M10 (Development of the 2nd Sava River Basin Management Plan), also responsible for A3M5 (Establishment and completion of the SavaGIS– the elaboration of the Sava Hydrological Information System – Sava HIS – which is an important component of SavaGIS, was facilitated by the Technical Assistance via ICPDR). The members of the Sava Commission are always invited and actively participate at the SG meetings of PA4 and proactively involved in technical workshops, conferences to share their useful and effective experience and operation with PA4 experts. Sava Commission also participated in the trilateral meetings (PA4-ICPDR-Sava Commission).

The UNEP Carpathian Convention is a sub-regional treaty to foster the sustainable development and the protection of the Carpathian region. The Convention was signed by seven Carpathian States (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, and Ukraine). The PA4 is strengthening the future joint cooperation via the Tisza River Basin activities. In the frame of the Annual Forum PA4 workshop on ‘Integrated horizontal cooperation’ in 2015 a Joint Declaration has been signed between ICPDR Tisza Group and Carpathian Convention among others to strengthen their cooperation, especially in the Tisza sub-basin which most of part is covered and overlapped by the territory of the Carpathian Convention, to cooperate in the field of education and awareness raising of the local communities in the Tisza River Basin as well as to strengthen relationship between mountain sustainable development in the Tisza river basin and Tisza river basin management by further elaboration the topics of the future enhanced cooperation to develop and implement joint, coordinated and complementary activities and projects. The Carpathian Convention also participates in the JOINTISZA project consortium as an associated strategic partner.

The Joint Research Centre 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 PA4 invited the water nexus leaders to the SG in June 2013 to provide an overview and to discuss the nexus. 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. The JRC held its Annual Event in the same city, as the 4th EUSDR Annual Forum, on 27-28 October 2015, in Ulm, Germany. The purpose of the event was to show the excellence and relevance of the research and support activities executed by DG JRC in cooperation with its partners from Danube macro-region aiming at to impact scientific, economic social and environmental development, shortly to provide scientific support to the EUSDR. The core element of the Annual Event was a panel discussion, with six EUSDR Priority Areas coordinators (among others PAC4 HU), moderated by Prof Miroslav Veskovic, JRC. In case of the Water Nexus, as was emphasized, Water is a general priority and the Danube River basin is the best example of context where strong transnational collaboration is needed.

The PA4 also cooperated with Global Water Partnership, which was founded in 1998 to foster integrated water resources management (IWRM), WWF-Hungary and with the Regional Environmental Centre in the topic of Tisza sub-basin activities. All three international organisations are project partners in the JOINTISZA project.

6.4. Support of Non-EU countries

In line with this objective in the first half of 2015 Hungary and Slovakia supported to the Non-EU countries to enable wider participation in the meetings, as well as with joint cooperation of the PA4 PAC Teams (HU and SK), ICPDR and Sava Commission study visits were organised in the specific topics. Please see further details in p. 7.3

6.5. Development of dissemination documents

The following main dissemination activities were completed in the reporting period:

- Participation in conferences, workshops;
- New website established;
- Reprint of the brochure on PA 4 activities in English. The brochure was updated, printed and distributed on Bratislava conference;
- Water Management Journal – Special Issue devoted to PA4 EUSDR, June 2014, bilingual EN-SK;
- Article in the Danube Watch ‘Regional efforts to restore water quality’ issue 2015/1;
- Website – new website launched in January 2015; (<http://www.danubewaterquality.eu/news>)
- Printed A4 folder for papers have been prepared.

Taken into account that there is a strong need to inform as wider scale of actors as possible PA4 (together with PA2 and PA5) has updated its website. The updated website was available from mid-December 2014.



7. CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THE PARTNERS

The partners ensured during the progress period the smooth implementation of the activities and also made steps towards achieving the goals outlined in the Action Plan.

Both the PAC Teams (Hungary and Slovakia) and the Priority Area with help of SG Members and ICPDR worked together without any problems.

Similar to the previous year practices the organisation of SG meetings was done by the hosting PAC. The documents of SGs were drafted by one of the partners (SK or HU), then through some refinement steps, on a consensus base the final and agreed documents were made. The SG meetings were held on a rotating base in Bratislava and Budapest. The 10th SG meeting was held back to back with the ICPDR 41st RBM EG meeting. The decision on the venue and help on accommodation, etc. was done by the host; the documents for the SG meeting were prepared mutually.

Important step have been achieved also within the Tisza sub-basin cooperation. Supported by the Ministry of Interior and the Middle-Tisza District Water Directorate and facilitated by the team of the priority area 4 the 21st and 22nd Tisza Group meeting have been organised. The 21st Tisza Group meeting was hosted in Hungary, Szolnok and the 22nd was hosted in Romania, ClujNapoca. The objective of the activity was to continue the work of the ICPDR Tisza Group towards the development of the update of the Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan.

Another important role/task of the priority area coordinators is to facilitate the project proposal developments in line with the actions of the Roadmap. During the progress period, organised by the Budapest Technical University and also facilitated by PA4, and ICPDR a meeting has been organised on the 8 April 2015, in Budapest, Technical University. On 26 May 2015 a bilateral meeting has been organised, facilitated by the EUSDR HU NC to help and clarify specific question related to the SEDIMENT project proposal. Additional two workshops have been organised to prepare the JOINTISZA project proposal. The project proposals have been developed and submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme in 2015.

7.1. Strengthening sub basin activities by the organisation of the 21st and 22nd ICPDR Tisza Group meetings

National Tisza Office established: On the 4th November 2014 organised by the Middle-Tisza-District Directorate and National Directorate for Water Management (Hungary), facilitated by the Hungarian Ministry of Interior and EUSR PA4 and PA5 experts, the National Tisza Office has been established and was ceremonially opened in Szolnok, in the heart of the Tisza River Basin. The National Tisza Office main role – among others – is to help with the coordination of the ICPDR

Tisza Group activities and to help with the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by high representatives of the Tisza countries in 2011 in the frame of a Ministerial meeting

21st ICPDR Tisza Group meeting: As a next step on the 26-27 November 2014 the 21st ICPDR Tisza Group meeting has been organised by the National Tisza Office, facilitated by the EUSDR PA4 and ICPDR PS experts. *The main focuses of the Tisza Group discussion were (1) Report “Progress in the Implementation of the Joint Programme of Measures in the Tisza River Basin” (2) 2013 Update of Tisza Analysis Report (TAR) (3) 2nd Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan*

Next to the above-mentioned documents the following issues have also been presented:

- Hungary informed the participants about the ceremonial inauguration of the national Tisza Office, 4th November 2014, Szolnok, Hungary, and about their initiative on the issue of the ‘Memorandum of Understanding towards ensuring the coordination activities for the continuation of the ICPDR Tisza Group work’
- Joint Declaration of the ICPDR Tisza Group and the Carpathian Convention
- Utilisation of the fund allocated by the ICPDR via EUSDR PA4 Technical Assistance budget for the elaboration of the JoinTisza project proposal.

In the frame of the 17th Ordinary meeting of the ICPDR Heads of Delegations the progress of the ICPDR Tisza Group activities and the main outcomes of the 21st ICPDR Tisza Group meeting have been introduced. The ICPDR also took note that Hungary would ensure the support of the ICPDR Tisza Group activities by the National Tisza Office in Szolnok in coordination with ICPDR PS.

Facilitated and helped by the National Tisza Office (Szolnok) and EUSDR PA4 PAC Team, **the 22nd ICPDR Tisza Group meeting** has been organised in 12-13 May 2015 in ClujNapoca, Romania. *The main focuses of the Tisza Group discussion were (1) 2013 Update of Tisza Analysis Report (TAR); (2) 2nd Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan*

The following issues have also been presented:

- Utilisation of the fund allocated by the ICPDR via EUSDR PA4 Technical Assistance budget
- Tisza Project concept to be further developed and submitted in the frame of the Danube Transnational Programme

In the frame of the 13th Standing Working Group meeting of the ICPDR the progress of the Tisza Group activities and the main outcomes of the 22nd ICPDR Tisza Group meeting have been introduced.

The Heads of Delegations took note on the steps achieved in the process of the development of the joint document of the up-dated Tisza Analysis Report and updated ITRB Management Plan as well as took note of the draft Tisza Project Proposal Concept and asked the Tisza Group to develop a project proposal from the funds allocated via ICPDR Technical Assistance to also support the preparation of the updated ITRB Management Plan in coordination with the ICPDR Expert Groups.

The EUSDR PA4 will further facilitate the ICPDR Tisza Group activities jointly with the ICPDR PS and will support the Szolnok Office where needed.

7.2. Set up project consortiums, monitoring project results

7.2.1. Organisation of Tisza project proposal development meetings

On the 14 July 2015 and 17-18 September 2015 project preparatory meetings were organised to develop the JOINTISZA project proposal.

Following the 1st preparatory workshop of 14th July at OVF, Budapest, Hungary the 2nd meeting was organised in at the National Tisza Office at the Middle Tisza Water Directorate in Szolnok. In the 2nd workshop all of the interested and potential partners participated including international organizations as ICPDR, Carpathian Convention, REC, GWP-CEE, WWP, and national organisations as the Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests and National Administration" ApeleRomane" (RO), Water Research Institute and Slovak Water Management Enterprise (SK), Jaroslav Cerni Insitute and PWC Vode Vojvodine (SRB), US Embassy at Budapest, OVF, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and KÖTIVIZIG (HU).

As the main outcomes of the meetings the Expression of Interest (EoI) document has been submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme 1st Call under Specific programme objective 2.1 ‘Strengthen transnational water management and flood risk prevention’. The title of the proposal is ‘*Strengthening cooperation between river basin management planning and flood risk prevention to enhance the status of waters of the Tisza River Basin*’. The project will focus on interactions of two key aspects, the river basin management (RBM) and flood protection, taking into account the relevant stakeholders who have pivotal role in the Tisza RBM planning process. The main aim of the project is to further improve the integration of the water management and flood risk prevention actions in the next RBM planning cycle, in line with the relevant EU legislation. The project will be elaborated by means of joint actions of five countries (UA, SK, HU, RO, RS) sharing the Tisza River Basin. A joint transnational strategic document will be the main output of the project in which measures facilitating the harmonization of related national regulations will be outlined, so that the updated Integrated Tisza RBM Plan will be developed.



JOINTISZA (flagship)project
preparatory workshops-
reinitiated by HU NC



Preparatory meetings

- 14 July 2015, Budapest;
- 17-18 September 2015, Szolnok-Budapest.

Expectations

- ITRBMP Update (with revised TAR and combined with TFRMP and drought issues);
- Focusing on, over the DTP Manual rules, the EUSDR PA4 and 5 measurable targets and expectations of the ICPDR Tisza Group.

Achievements

- Consortium composed with 17 Partners (incl. 5 ASP) covering the 5 Tisza countries;
- Impressive numbers of international institutions;
- Common preparatory works
- Submitted to DTP in 2015.



7.2.2. Facilitating the sediment project proposal development process

Financial support is ensured by PA4 for the main leader Budapest Technical University for the facilitation of the project proposal development. The ICPDR provided financial support to the project development and set aside funds from TA2 budget. The Bavarian Research Alliance was also helping the proposal development process.

In the frame of the progress period project preparatory workshops have been organised in April and October 2015, in Budapest Hungary, with the participation of the potential project partners and in October with the participation of work package leaders. Details of the Work packages and main expected results were discussed and agreed. The project proposal has been developed during the progress period to be submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme.

As the outcome of the joint work the Expression of Interest (EoI) document has been submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme 1st Call under Specific programme objective 2.1 ‘Strengthen transnational water management and flood risk prevention’. The title of the project is *Danube Sediment Management - Restoration of the Sediment Balance in the Danube River* (Acronym: *Danube Sediment*). The main objective of this project is to improve Water and Sediment Management as well as the Morphology of the Danube River. The main results are towards the improvement of navigation conditions, reduced flood risks, sustainable river system and durable hydropower production by a better and sustainable sediment management in the Danube Basin. The main outputs are key contributions to the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan by developing the first Danube Sediment Management Guidance comprising measures to be implemented and a Sediment Manual for the stakeholders consisting of approaches how to implement the measures.



DANUBE SEDIMENT

(flagship) project proposal

financial support provided by the HLL NC



Preparatory meetings

- More than two years preparation work.

Main objectives

- To improve Water and Sediment Management with survey of morphology of the Danube River.

Expected results

- Improved inland navigation conditions, reduced flood risks, sustainable river system and sustainable hydropower production and ecosystems.

Expected outputs

- The first Danube Sediment Management Guidance comprising measures to be implemented;
- A Sediment Manual for the stakeholders.

Achievements

- A Consortium composed with 26 partners (incl. 12 ASP) covering not only the all (9) Danube riparian countries;
- International institutions (JRC, WWF, GWP CEE, ICPDR).
- Submitted to DTP in 2015



7.2.3. Organisation of 2nd workshop on Blue Danube project

On December 3, 2014 the 2nd workshop on Blue Danube project was organised in the Water Research Institute in Bratislava, Slovakia. The project Blue Danube serves as preparatory project for the bigger project. The main aim of the Blue Danube project is the preparation of the project

“Development of concepts for reducing the accumulation of pharmaceutical residues in the Danube River”.

Main objectives of the second workshop were to introduce the companies and institutes participating in the project; to discuss the development of specific technical concepts for water management using nano-scale materials; to define the next steps and possible working options in relation of the project implementation and to clarify the work packages and distribute the responsibilities among the project partners.

7.2.4. Elaboration of sturgeon project proposal

The Technical Assistance allowed making important progress in support of the PA4 target “Secure viable populations of Danube sturgeon species” – a topic which is also shared with PA6 and the Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF). Via ICPDR support was provided for the elaboration of a LIFE project proposal for the restoration of sterlet populations in the Upper Danube, which was successful and financed by LIFE. In the frame of the project ex-situ sterlet breeding stations will be constructed during 2016 in Vienna and operated throughout the upcoming years, serving as a nucleus for similar actions also in other regions of the Danube basin. This was further facilitated via the elaboration of a feasibility study on “Ex-situ measures for Danube River Sturgeons (Acipenseridae)” addressing the whole Danube River Basin which was also financed by the Technical Assistance via ICPDR. The feasibility study provided key contributions for the project “STURGENE” financed by EUSDR Start.

Finally, support was provided for the workshop “Fish migration at the Iron Gates I & II”. The workshop allowed for discussion of key fish migration experts from FAO, Universities and administrations on the required steps for the establishment of fish migration aids for sturgeons at the Iron Gate Dams I & II between Romania and Serbia, in particular the required steps for the intended feasibility study on this issue.

All these actions are in line with the Strategy and Programme “Sturgeon 2020” elaborated in the frame of the EUSDR.

7.3. Study visits

7.3.1. PA4 Team Study visits to Non-EU countries

In line with the outcomes of the discussion between PAC4 Teams, ICPDR and Sava Commission (on the 19 February 2015) PA4 visits are to be organised to non-EU countries in the topic of alternative waste water treatment for small settlements and phosphates free detergents. This activity is a follow-up action related to the development of a legal research document, which was prepared in 2013-2014 analysing the situation in the Danube basin on alternative collection and treatment of wastewater in small rural settlements and another study related to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents for the utilization of PA4. The Roadmap of Priority Area 4 of the EUSDR contains Action 5 “To promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements” and Action 7 „to legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of Phosphates in detergents”. The current activities are aiming at achieving objectives indicated in these milestones. As agreed by the PA4 SG the recommendations of the studies should be further developed and especially the situation of the non-EU countries should be further examined.

The examined countries in the first round were:

- Bosnia-Hercegovina
- Serbia
- Ukraine and Moldova

Outcomes of the visits were:

- Update of the country situation and specifics.
- Identification of needs and possible projects to be set up.
- Discussion on possible partners for waste water treatment projects, both for small settlements and also for bigger projects and to assist in looking for financial assistance.
- Based on the findings recommendations will be made in 2016.

The first study trip was organised to BiH on 10-12 June 2015. The Bosnian contact point was Mr. Bosko Kenjic. A background paper has been developed related to the topics based on the study of PA4, the ICPDR DRBMP as well as based on results published on the website of the Danube Water Programme. The background paper has been sent to the Bosnian experts. The next study trip was organised to Serbia on the 9 July 2015. The Serbian contact point was Ms Dragana Milovanovic.

In 29-30 September 2015 the Slovakian PAC Team organised a meeting with Ukrainian and Moldavian experts. The topics of the meeting were discussed to the participants prior to the meeting. On the base of discussion, the meeting focused on waste water treatment, drinking water supply and possibilities of cooperation in water sector. The participants appreciated the legislation overview as well as the practical advices regarding EU legislation transformation. The participants from Ukraine were from Water supply and treatment companies and Moldovan experts were from Basin Water Management Authority in Moldova.

This action is a joint work with ICPDR experts. PA4 would like to obtain the experience gained through other programs (DWP and BW) and PA4 communicated the first results of the study visits at the EUSDR Annual Forum in order to raise political attention on the existing challenges.

As an additional important step the Hungarian EUSDR National Coordinator organised a bilateral meeting with the Ukrainian partners (involving decision makers, experts and regional county leaders in the discussion process) to explore on the development needs in particular related to the area of drinking water, wastewater and solid waste management and to discuss on possible financing possibilities for Ukrainian projects fall within the scope of the EUSDR. The outcomes of this meeting are aimed to be summarised in the final summary document of the study visits.

During the 9th and 10th SG meetings it was stressed that two topics were agreed to be further investigated this year focusing on wastewater treatment planning and P-free detergents related policy processes in the Non-EU countries. However the EUSDR roadmap is mainly focused on wastewater treatment facilities in small rural settlements (smaller than 2000 PE) it was suggested to deal also with the problems of larger cities taken into account that the main challenges in Non-EU countries are linked to the non-existing or strongly perished waste water treatment facilities.

Visits for UWWT Survey



Visit to Bosnia June 2015



Bosnian expert seconded in Hungary for two weeks
Sept 2015, Moldavian, Ukrainian experts in 2014
from HU government funds



Visit to Serbia July 2015



Moldavian, Ukrainian experts in Slovakia, Sept 2015

Sub-Carpathian visit for protection of the Tisza River (15-16 July, 2015 Slatina-Uzghorod)



Main goal

- To protect water quality of the Tisza River by reason of the
 - Slatina salt mine catastrophe very close seated to the Tisza River;
 - Non-eligible treated wastewater (120.000-150.000 m³/day) coming from the obsolete UWWTPs (4 cities).

Findings

- Urgent and utmost help needs to
 - stop the harmful progress;
 - manage better contaminations sources.

Solutions

- CleanRiver project - feasibility study for improvement of wastewater treatment facilities in Ukraine (promoting by the EUSDR START Programme).



- EIB is ready to support the cross-border environmental issues (400 million euros are separated for them).



8. ICPDR SPECIFIC ACTIONS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

The following key documents were under elaboration and/or published by the ICPDR and related organisations:

- The draft Danube River Basin District Management Plan – Update 2015 has been launched for public consultation in December 2014 and was finalised in December 2015;
- The Joint Danube Survey 3 final report has been published;
- Project proposal development activities;
- Support for sub-basin activities

8.1.1. Development of the DRBMP Plan – Update 2015

The EU Water Framework Directive requires the elaboration and regular update of Integrated River Basin Management Plans on the basin-wide level. The 1st Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBM Plan) was adopted in 2009 and is now updated. According to public consultation requirements, a draft for the updated Plan was elaborated by the Danube countries in the frame of the ICPDR and adopted in December 2014 for launching public consultation. The DRBM Plan – Update 2015 was finalised in December 2015 setting the objectives, strategic priorities and agreed measures for the Danube River Basin and for the management period 2015 until 2021. The DRBM Plan – Update 2015 was elaborated in close coordination with the 1st Danube Flood Risk Management Plan according to the EU Floods Directive.

The DRBM Plan-Update 2015 was adopted by the Danube countries in December 2015 at the 18th Ordinary Meeting and will be endorsed on 9 February 2016 at the Danube Ministerial Conference organised by the ICPDR.

8.1.2. Development of the scientific report of the JDS3 – action carried out by the ICPDR

The ICPDR is organising on a 6-years basis Joint Danube Surveys (JDS) with participation of experts and scientists from the Danube countries. JDS is the world's biggest river research expedition of its kind, further catalysing international cooperation between the Danube countries and the European Commission, united through the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The main objectives of JDS are to collect information on parameters not covered in the ongoing monitoring programmes, 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.

For the 3rd JDS the practical sampling was carried out in summer/autumn 2013, followed by an extensive analysis stage which was in the meantime completed. The JDS3 scientific report was finalised and adopted by the Danube countries in December 2014.

8.1.3. Project proposal development related activities

The Technical Assistance Grant which the ICPDR received in support of EUSDR implementation was used for consultancy services in support of EUSDR related projects and their preparation. The ICPDR discussed the use of the funds at its 11th and 12th Standing Working Group Meetings in June 2013 and June 2014, where it was decided that priority actions in relation to sediment management and sturgeons, as well as on the Tisza and Sava sub-basin initiatives should be supported.

Resources of the Grant were used for the sturgeon topic, facilitating a Technical Workshop on sturgeon migration at the Iron Gates which was held in Bucharest, as well as for supporting the preparation of a LIFE project application on sturgeon conservation measures, which was submitted in October 2014 and successfully financed by LIFE. Furthermore, a feasibility study on “Ex-situ measures for Danube River Sturgeons (Acipenseridae)” addressing the whole Danube River Basin was also financed by the Technical Assistance via ICPDR. The feasibility study provided key contributions for the project “STURGENE” financed by EUSDR Start.

With regard to the Tisza and Sediment Management, the elaboration of project proposals was facilitated by ICPDR via the Technical Assistance. Project proposals on both topics were submitted under the autumn 2015 call of the Danube Transnational Cooperation Programme.

8.1.4. Support for sub-basin activities

Activities to strengthen transboundary cooperation on water management in sub-basins of the Danube region are on-going. Support for the elaboration of the JointTisza Project Proposal was provided by the Technical Assistance via ICPDR. Details have been outlined above.

Furthermore, another important action under PA4 is the establishment and completion of the SavaGIS in the frame of the International Sava River Basin Commission. As a key component of the system, the ICPDR facilitated via the Technical Assistance the development of the Sava Hydrological Information System (Sava HIS). Sava HIS provides a tool for collecting, storing, analyzing and reporting hydrological and meteorological data to be used for decision-making in all aspects of water resources management. The exchange of quality controlled data and information is an essential element for the undertaking of different activities ranging from flood forecast and warning to the various aspects of water resources management.

With regard to other sub-basin activities, the project “Environmental protection of international river basins (EPIRB)” has been started in 2012 and funded by the EU (ENPI). Among the five selected pilot river basins in the Black Sea region, the Prut River has also been chosen, where Moldova and Ukraine developing a joint River Basin Management Plan according to the EU WFD requirements and in close exchange with the ICPDR.

In the Danube Delta, a project financed by the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is focusing on improved cross-border cooperation and to build capacities for introducing a river basin approach for the management of natural resources in the Danube Delta Region. The draft Danube Delta Analysis Report (DDAR), including the evaluation of important water management issues of the region, is under finalisation.

9. AUTO-EVALUATION SO FAR

Successes:

From management point of view the following main achievements can be summarised

- A clear need was formulated to strengthen on-going cooperation between PA4 and relevant institutions such as ICPDR and ISRBC. The Joint Document, adopted in December 2014 by all parties creates a good basis for the joint work. The joint document on cooperation between PA4/ PA5 and ICPDR can serve as a model to other priority areas on how to set up further links with relevant organisations. PA4 and ICPDR have set already several steps, jointly organised in the spirit of the agreed document. **The Joint Document and related follow-up actions (between the EUSDR/ICPDR) contribute in long term to reach goals and create synergies, as well as to establish valuable results and outputs.**
- Compared to the earlier (last) years **significant step have been reached in the involvement of the Danube countries in the PA4 activities.**
- PA4 and ICPDR organised **successful workshops** in the frame of the Annual Forums both in 2014 and in 2015, which facilitated the dissemination of project results.
- The updated website serves as a good sample for other priority areas as well.

From professional point of view the following main achievements 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. PA4 and ICPDR developed a **joint workplan** for the easier overview of the on-going actions, which might be a help in the long term management of the activities. The workplan is a ‘living document’ and should be further

extended in line with the newly submitted and/or approved projects or further specified actions.

- Projects can give significant input to the actions and/or can serve as pilot activities or good examples relevant in basin wide scale. As PA 4 relevant ‘flagship’ projects, **two project proposals (EoI) have been submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme to support the implementation** of priority topics such as the sediment and sub-basin (Tisza River Basin) issues.
- The Sava Hydrological Information System (Sava HIS) was developed in the frame of the International Sava River Basin Commission as an important component of SavaGIS.
- A successful sturgeon project proposal was elaborated, financed by LIFE, and further pre-requisites for sturgeon conservation were developed.
- The **study visits to the Non-EU countries** and the organised meetings with Non-EU countries experts contributed to better understand and search for possible solutions related to waste water treatment plans and phosphates in detergents.
- Cooperation started with the UNEP Carpathian Convention – signature of the **Joint Statement between ICPDR Tisza Group (represented by the ICPDR Secretariat) and UNEP Carpathian Convention.**

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

- 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). In the frame of the Steering Group meetings the PA4 PACs took emphasis on to gain knowledge and information about the available funds (2014-2020 periods) and also invited project leaders to present their project ideas relevant for the PA4 roadmap activities.

Future management, professional and financial needs

- The PA4 seeks for further options to strengthen cooperation with Non-EU countries and to facilitate their involvement in the EUSDR implementation in the coming years. Discussion should be held within the Steering Group about the future role of the EU countries clearly isolating themselves from the priority area activities.
- There are still some countries where there is a need to better mobilise the experts and policy makers, through diplomatic bodies to attend in PA4 meetings, activities.
- It is also and still an important task to ensure the exchange at national level between PA4 Steering Group Members and experts in the ICPDR Expert Groups, taking into account the significant topical overlap.

Possible Risk factors

- No budget available in the future to support Non-EU countries to participate in PA4 meetings (SG meetings, Stakeholder forums/Conferences).

10. CONCRETE OUTPUTS SO FAR – JOINT ACHIEVEMENTS

Joint achievements

Adoption of the ICPDR-EUSDR PA4 & PA5 Joint Paper on Cooperation and Synergy for EUSDR Implementation /ICPDR Joint documents and its annexes (annexes not attached to this report):

- Annex 1: ICPDR structure and responsibilities
- Annex 2: EUSDR structure and responsibilities
- Annex 3: Overview table ICPDR activities and related Danube Strategy actions–organigram of EUSDR PA4/PA5;
- Adoption of the Multiannual Work Plan of EUSDR PA4;
- Successful organisation of trilateral meetings in September 2014 and February 2015 to discuss on the joint activities;
- Development of dissemination documents to summarize the outcomes of the labelled projects (activity to be finalised in 2016);
- Development of dissemination documents to give an overview on the future financial funds for the financial period of 2014-2020 (activity to be finalised in 2016);
- Tisza National Office – also supported by PA4 - established in HU, Szolnok to support among others ICPDR Tisza Group activities. The office also facilitated the development of the EoI of the JOINTISZA project together with the PA4 PAC Team and ICPDR;
- Strengthening sub basin activities by the establishment of the ICPDR Tisza Office and organisation of the 21st and 22nd ICPDR Tisza Group meeting;
- Participation on ICPDR expert group meetings to share information and discuss common issues;
- Organisation of sediment project proposal development workshops and development of the project proposal – submission of EoI into the Danube Transnational Programme (DanubeSediment);
- Organisation of Tisza project proposal development workshop and development of project proposal – submission of EoI into the Danube Transnational Programme (JOINTISZA).
- Organisation of study visits to Non-EU countries to further investigate on issues of waste water treatment facilities and P-free detergents.
- Article in the Danube Watch ‘Regional efforts to restore water quality’ issue 2015/1;
- Website – new website launched in January 2015; (<http://www.danubewaterquality.eu/news>).
- Development of the Danube River Basin Management Plan – Update 2015
- Development of the Scientific report of the JDS3 – action carried out by the ICPDR;
- Elaboration of LIFE sturgeon project proposal and feasibility study on ex-situ conservation measures – action carried out by the ICPDR;
- Development of the Sava Hydrological Information System (Sava HIS) in the frame of the International Sava River Basin Commission and supported by ICPDR, as an important component of SavaGIS;
- Successful organisation of workshops in the frame of the Annual Forums – Vienna, Austria and Ulm, Germany.

Meetings organised, decisions made:

- Organisation of the 21st and 22nd ICPDR Tisza Group meetings;
- Organisation of trilateral meetings of the NCPs, Priority Area Coordinators and the ICPDR;
- Organisation of trilateral meetings with the PACs, ICPDR and the Austrian SG member;
- Organisation of the 8th Steering Group meeting where the main financial options for 2014-2020 have been introduced;

- START call – 40 projects were submitted for PA4 out of which the best 15 projects were selected by the PACs and the best four projects were selected by the Steering Group and were submitted to PA10 recommending for financial support;
- Organisation of a Sediment project proposal development meetings and related proposal development;
- Organisation of a Tisza project proposal development (including two workshops);
- Moldavian expert visit to Hungary;
- Bosnian water managers’ visit to Hungary.
- Organisation of the 9th and 10th Steering Group meetings where the main financial options for 2014-2020 and 13 project ideas linked to PA4 action plan have been introduced;
- Study visit to BiH (10-12 June 2015);
- Study visit to Serbia (9 July 2015)
- Study visit of Moldovan and Ukrainian experts to Slovakia (29-30 September 2015).

ICPDR specific achievements

- Danube River Basin Management Plan Update 2015 -action carried out by the ICPDR;
- Development of the Scientific report of the JDS3 – action carried out by the ICPDR;
- Project proposal development related activities on sediment management (joint action), sturgeons, Tisza (joint action) and Sava sub-basin initiatives
- Development of Danube Delta sub-basin Analysis Report is ongoing in the frame of the EPIRB project.
- Development of Prut Management Plan is ongoing (the Ukrainian part of the Prut sub-basin is already completed)

11. PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

As it was already introduced earlier the following main dissemination activities are on-going or achieved currently:

- Participation in conferences, workshops;
- Reprint of the brochure on PA 4 activities in English. The brochure was updated, printed and distributed on Bratislava conference;
- Special issue of Water Management Journal devoted to PA4 EUSDR, June 2014;
- Article in the Danube Watch ‘Regional efforts to restore water quality’ issue 2015/1;
- Article “EU Danube Strategy – Recent activities in priority area on water quality” in Sava News Flash No 15, May 2015;
- Article “Water Resources Protection” in Water Management Journal 5-6/2015;
- Website – new website launched in January 2015(<http://www.danubewaterquality.eu/news>);
- Printed A4 folders for papers have been printed.

12. LESSONS LEARNT


- **The Joint Document and related follow-up actions (between the EUSDR/ICPDR) contributes in long term to reach goals and create, establish valuable results, outputs.**
- Compared to the earlier (last) years **significant step has been reached in the involvement of the Danube countries in the PA4 activities.**
- PA4 and ICPDR organised **successful workshops** in the frames of the Annual Forum 2014 and 2015, which facilitated the dissemination of project results.
- The updated **PA4 website** serves as a good sample for other priority areas as well.

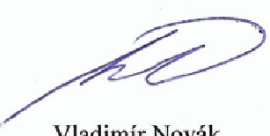
- The Steering Group can serve as a suitable platform to spread information about possible project proposal relevant from PA4 point of view and to seek for partners from specific countries;
- The **study visits in NON-EU countries** were valuable tools to explore more information on specific issues related to waste water management treatment and phosphate detergents.
- The countries appreciated the SG meeting organiser (in case of SG6 and SG10) for arranging the meetings back to back with the ICPDR RBM EG meeting.
- The Steering Group can serve as a suitable platform to spread information about possible future funds toward supporting the PA4 actions.
- **Tisza National Office** – also supported by PA4 - established in HU, Szolnok gave valuable support in the organisation of the ICPDR Tisza Group meetings. The office also facilitated the development of the EoI of the JOINTISZA project together with the PA4 PAC Team and ICPDR.
- In the frame of the 18th OM of the ICPDR Heads of Delegations acknowledged the Technical Assistance for the Tisza countries from EUSDR PA4 via ICPDR to develop a joint project proposal.
- Compared to the earlier (last) years significant step has been reached in the involvement of the Danube countries in the PA4 activities. However, there are still some countries where there is a need to better mobilise the experts and policy makers, through diplomatic bodies.
- It is also still and an important task to strive to ensure participation of the same experts who are acting in the ICPDR Expert Groups and in the PA 4 SG Meetings, as well.

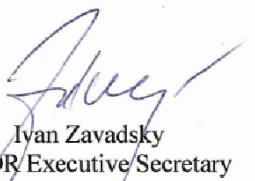
13. FURTHER PLANS AND FOLLOW-UP

In line with the workplan developed during the project period the PA4 is implementing the Roadmap and the related actions. The Team established within the PAC will continue its work in the coming year in close cooperation with the ICPDR and relevant international organisations.

Budapest-Bratislava-Vienna, 3 February 2016


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Further co-operation



1. **Sub-basin co-operation:** Tisza Office Official Inauguration: 4th November 2014, Szolnok- PA4 to focus also on other sub basins,
2. **Strategic cooperation (CC, PA4 set as example with Synergies document, DTP regarding workplan and targets),**
2. **Non- EU co-operation:** further study tours, scholarships, interns—highly appreciated by Non EU countries
3. **Education co-operation:** elaboration of a cooperation platform for educational institutions offering water-management studies in the Danube Region;
4. **Financial co-operation-** planned further funding events (PA4 as an example for alignment of funding);
5. **Networking-** plans to create networking shared platforms.

Next steps



- **Building partnerships** with new partners (CC, EPI Water: invitation for Water Innovation EU Conference, targeting hosting LIFE Water Quality Platform in 2016, EPI Water innovation events in 2017 in Budapest);
- PA4 to continue **assisting Non EU Countries;**
- PA4 to be even more visible, **focus on dissemination;**
- PA4 to **take a lead:** to continue **assist in the alignment of funding,** network and to prepare and implement projects TOGETHER.
- **VISION: Linking policy with projects, MAKE THE STRATEGY**



BE PROACTIVE and MAKE IT HAPPEN!

14. ANNEXES Attached to this report (not submitted with previous reports)

Paper copies:

Annex 1: Payment request

Annex 2: Financial tables

Electronic copies:

Annex 3: EoI_DTP_DanubeSediment

Annex 4: EoI_DTP_JOINTisza

Annex 5: Ex-situ-feasibility study

Annex 6: LIFE14-NAT_AT_000057 project document

Annex 7: SavaHIS FinalReport

Annex 8: Summary minutes of the 10th SG meeting PA4

14. ANNEXES ATTACHED TO PREVIOUS REPORTS

	List of documents	Document annexed in previous reports
1	Summary minutes of the 6th SG meeting PA4	Annex 3 of the third year's progress report of EUSDR PA4 - 30 June 2014 (June /2013-Jun /2014)
2	Summary minutes of the 7th SG meeting PA4	Annex 4 of the third year's progress report of EUSDR PA4 - 30 June 2014 (June /2013-Jun /2014)
3	Alignment of Funding document adopted by PA4	Annex 5 of the third year's progress report of EUSDR PA4 - 30 June 2014 (June /2013-Jun /2014)
4	Summary minutes of the 8th SG meeting PA4	Annex 1 of the Project Progress report(June /14-Dec/14)
5	Joint Document on the cooperation between EUSDR PA4/PA5 and the ICPDR	Annex 2 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
6	Summary of the outcomes of the 21 st ICPDR Tisza Group meeting	Annex 3 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
7	Workplan of PA4 (in line with the action plan of the Roadmap)	Annex 4 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
8	Program and summary minutes of the Moldavian secondment period	Annex 5 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
9	Program of the Bosnian water expert's visit in Budapest	Annex 6 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
10	Notes and minutes of the meeting between EUSDR PA4-ICPDR experts in Vienna (AT)	Annex 7 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
11	Minutes of the 2nd Blue Danube Workshop –	Annex 8 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
12	Presentations of the SG meetings	Annex 9 of the Project Progress report (June 14-Dec ember 14)
13	PA4-ICPDR-Sava Commission expert meeting 19.02.2015, Budapest	Annex 4 of the 4 th Annual Report of EUSDR PA4 (June 2015)
14	Minutes of the 2nd and 3rd meetings of the Blue Danube project	Annex 5 of the 4 th Annual Report of EUSDR PA4 (June 2015)
15	PA4 team visits in the Non-EU countries: Bosnia-Herzegovina	Annex 6 of the 4 th Annual Report of EUSDR PA4 (June 2015)
16	Summary minutes of the 9th SG meeting PA4	Annex 9 of the 4 th Annual Report of EUSDR PA4 (June 2015)
17	Workplan of PA4 (actualised for the 9th SG meeting)	Annex 11 of the 4 th Annual Report of EUSDR PA4 (June 2015)