



EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) Priority Area Water Quality Water-related funding

2022

THE EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION

The Danube Region represents one fifth of the European Union's total area and is home to more than 115 million inhabitants. The region is comprised of 9 EU (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) and 5 accession/candidate countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine). The states show significant regional disparities in economic and social development. To increase growth and strengthen cooperation at a macro-regional level, the European Union in 2011 established the EUSDR. Nine years after the adoption of the EUSDR, the Danube Strategy was revised to align it with the new priorities and challenges of the region and better link the Danube strategy's actions with the new EU priorities like the European Green Deal.



Key challenges to be tackled by the EUSDR are manifold: besides the fact that the participating countries are at vastly different stages in terms of their economic development, nearly all the members are faced with different environmental issues. Cross-border cooperation in managing environmental issues is one of the priorities of the EUSDR and it represents the second, Environmental Pillar of the Strategy (apart other pillars of connectivity, strengthening socio-economic aspects and enhancing prosperity through better security and capacity-building.)



Pillars and Priority Areas, Photo credit: <https://danube-region.eu/>

FOCUS ON FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Cooperation between the Danube Countries has entered a new phase with even stronger focus on funding opportunities and specifically on more efficient use of funds in recent years. In 2015 in their Joint Statement the Ministers in charge of EU Funds, European Affairs or European Integration agreed that the success of the EUSDR implementation requires the alignment of relevant programmes and use of these EU Funds in line with the EUSDR Priority Areas and targets. In 2017 in the Council conclusions on the implementation of EU Macro-Regional Strategies recalled that all relevant EU and national funding sources should be mobilized by the participating countries and their regions to ensure that adequate funding is available to implement the strategies and achieve the expected results, and as such, *called the participating countries and their regions to ensure a better alignment of the ESI Funds programmes, IPA and ENI funds and macro-regional strategies, and to make best use of all other available funding sources (national, regional, municipal, private etc.).* Practices in the 2014-2020 programming and implementation period have shown that a better coordination may require going beyond traditional administrative boundaries, and the will from different levels of government to co-operate and co-ordinate actions to achieve shared goals and strengthen complementarities and synergies between different instruments. In 2019 a Guidance Paper on *embedding the Danube Strategy into EU programmes* was prepared with support of the Danube Strategy Point and the EUSDR embedding tool was compiled.

Parallel, nine years after the adoption of the EUSDR, the Danube Strategy was revised to align it with the new priorities and challenges of the region and better link the Danube strategy's actions with the new EU priorities like the *European Green Deal*. The *revised Action Plan of the Danube Strategy* was published on 6 April 2020.

Embedding remains high on the agenda of all macro-regional strategies

The Ministers responsible for the implementation of the EUSDR, gathered in October 2020 at the occasion of the 9th Annual Forum of the EUSDR in Zagreb, agreed to support the process of embedding the EUSDR objectives and actions into the Partnership Agreements and 2021–2027 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), programmes, equivalent instruments for non-EU countries as well as centrally managed EU programmes. EU financial means targeted to the EUSDR objectives are key factors in improving the coherence and well-being of the participating states of the Danube Region. The 2021 Slovak EUSDR Presidency has been strongly promoting the embedding process and published a discussion paper *'from words to actions'* on further potential tools and processes for embedding.





THE PRIORITY AREA WATER QUALITY ACTIVE IN THE ALIGNMENT OF FUNDING

The Danube has the most international river basin in the world: it stretches over 2,800 km across Europe. The Danube Basin covers an area of over 800,000 km², over 19 countries. The drainage area of the Danube is also influenced by two major mountain chains: the Alps and the Carpathians. Water management is therefore a central issue to the Danube Region, as water does not recognize borders and its management requires strong coordination and cooperation.

Hungary, together with Slovakia has been assigned to coordinate the water quality issues in the EUSDR and to ensure integrated water management towards reaching the good quality of waters in the Danube River Basin. The main decision-making body of the Priority Area is the *Steering Group*, comprised of representatives from all Danube Region countries.

To address the challenges related to water quality the coordination of EUSDR Priority Area Water Quality (PA4) chosen the following tools: cooperation with relevant institutions; alignment of funding; facilitating project implementation and networking towards setting up project consortiums. One of the most important tasks of EUSDR PA4 is therefore to facilitate the alignment of funding. The aim is to assist the improvement of water quality by incorporating the tasks/standards of the EUSDR to the documents and operational programs of the European Structural and Investment Funds as well as other financing frameworks. The EUSDR PA4 contributed to facilitate the alignment of funding in a structured and systematic way and made effective actions to embed the priority interventions to the EU programs of the “2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework” and beyond, in the new programming period as well.

Consultation options facilitating the alignment of funding

The EUSDR PA4 adopted its alignment of funding document already in 2014; it regularly organizes stakeholder conferences and workshops to disseminate information about different funding programs and to provide platforms for stakeholders for cooperation and networking for the sake of establishing future consortiums.

Interested stakeholders can have an opportunity to obtain support from the PA4 Coordination teams, PA4 Coordinators and from the PA4 Steering Group to collect information about different funding possibilities, networking options and opportunities for forming partnerships for relevant calls, visit us at <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/>.



A great tool for assisting research on the relevant funding program has been set up, originally by Institutional Capacity&Cooperation Priority Area (PA10) within the Danube Strategy: *EuroAccess*, an online tool for searching EU funding options. Potential project implementers can search for suitable sources of EU funding. EuroAccess collects calls for proposals in the Danube Region. It collects and streamlines funding data from more than 350 EU funding programmes and calls for project proposals. All new open calls are announced online and can be subscribed to via a regular newsletter.



Impact in decision-making and the importance of macro regional approach during project selection

To support embedding macro regional needs into funding programs, the representatives of the Danube Region Strategy are sitting as observers/members in different monitoring committees of several relevant programs, namely different operative, transnational or cross border programs to ensure that the views and interests of macro-regionals stakeholders are heard and that their opinions are taken into consideration, as early as in the program planning phase.

The above cross cutting impact is twofold as several regional and EU-wide funding programmes created their rules concerning how they are taking the macro-regional approach into account during the programme implementation to contribute to the macroregional objectives. At the same time, funding programs recognized – especially those under the INTERREG umbrella – the benefit of their strengthened cooperation with a macro-regional strategy (MRS), namely the long-term sustainability of project results provided through the permanent political and professional framework of an MRS. In many case the substantial relevance with the macro-regional aims is an added value and projects could receive valuable points during the evaluation process. The connection with an EUSDR Priority Area (PA) cannot be more securely confirmed and stated towards the funding instruments than with the help of a [Letter of Recommendation \(LoR\)](#) received from the Strategy itself.





The project labelling procedure within the Environmental Pillar of the EUSDR

The Environmental Pillar of the EUSDR established a common procedure for labelling projects. The same method applies for the labelling process under Priority Areas Water Quality (PA4), Environmental risks (PA5) and Biodiversity & landscapes (PA6). Project Leaders (with agreement of Project Partners) shall submit the description of the project on the joint Project Data Sheet of EUSDR Environmental Pillar containing fundamental project information and relevance. The sheet shall be completed in English and shall be submitted via e-mail to at least one of the two co-coordinators of the concerned Priority Area. Submission of project (idea) descriptions is continuous. The labelling of a project is carried out through consensual decision of the Steering Group (SG) members of the concerned PA. Decisions are taken at SG meetings or through written procedures.

In practical terms, **nearly 40 Danube basin water related projects** and ideas were introduced in the frame of the Steering Group (SG) as the high-level working group of the Water Quality Priority Area SG meetings since 2011. Projects were introduced to the SG, assisted to be set up or selected for different funding instruments from general EU funding possibilities to specific EUSDR funding. The EUSDR PA4 coordination team regularly informs its stakeholders of the different funding possibilities.

However, a LoR does not automatically imply that financing is granted to the project. In order to get financing projects must comply with the governing rules of the financing source and must successfully pass the specific evaluation phases. Nevertheless, a LoR makes obvious that the project idea is highly accepted by the relevant sectoral organizations of the 14 countries in the Danube region.

Danube Flagships

In 2022 Danube Strategy Flagships were identified indicating projects or processes that contribute to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, to have a clear macro-regional dimension and a multi-level governance approach. They are of high importance for the Danube Region's economic, social, and territorial cohesion and for improving the quality of life in the Danube Region. In the case of EUSDR PA4 three flagship processes were identified and selected in 2022: climate change, migratory fish, and emerging substances.



Photo: pexels

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR TRANSNATIONAL WATER PROJECTS TIPS COLLECTED BY DANUBE REGION STRATEGY WATER QUALITY PRIORITY AREA

FINANCING WATER NEEDS IN THE EU

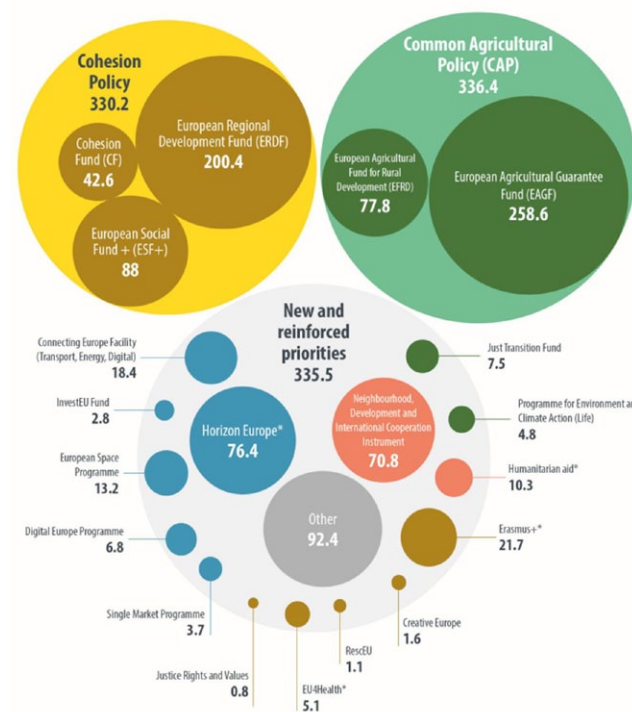
Usually no specific heading for water

There are no specific programmes financing exclusively water needs in Europe. However, several funding possibilities exist that could be appropriate to finance different water-related projects, under different headings from different *Environmental Operative Programmes* available in Member States to sector-specific programmes or within different decentralized funding programmes via regional, inter-regional or national channels.

The starting point for the financing possibilities that is establishing the frame for EU financing is Council Regulation 2020/2093 laying down the *Multiannual Financial Framework* (MFF) for the years 2021 to 2027. As a result, €1.074 trillion [in 2018 prices] is available for beneficiaries of EU funding during the seven years period of 2021-2027. Agreements to be signed between the European Commission and individual EU countries to set out the national authorities' plans on how to use EU funds in shared management in 2021-2027, in line with the *Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 on Common Provisions*.

Funds from the ERDF are allocated in three categories of regions (less developed, more developed, in transition), some countries benefit from the *Cohesion Fund*, some regions with specific needs receive dedicated funding (outermost regions and sparsely populated), and all countries benefit from the *Just Transition Fund*. In the ERDF investments aiming at reducing every form of pollution, such as air, water, soil, noise and light pollution, should be supported.

All amounts in € billion (2018 prices)



Source: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/mff2021-2027-ngeu-final/>

EU level
Regulatory Framework

National level
Partnership Agreement

National/Regional level
Operative Programmes

THE MOST IMPORTANT EU PROGRAMMES FOR WATER- SPECIFIC NEEDS ARE

CENTRALIZED PROGRAMMES



Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is the EU's ambitious research and innovation programme for 2021-2027, with a budget of €95.5 billion. It tackles climate change, helps to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth. The programme facilitates collaboration and strengthens the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing EU policies while tackling global challenges. It supports creating and better dispersing of excellent knowledge and technologies. Within the second Pillar, Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, 6 clusters were presented, including: Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment. The programme has a specific research mission for water issues, such as "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030". Within the 2022 call in HORIZON EUROPE the project proposal DALIA (Danube Lighthouse Innovation Action) was awarded funding with a lead partner Hungarian Water Directorate.

- Relevant websites, contacts: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en
- <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>
- <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html>



* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

The LIFE programme

The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. It has been running since 1992 and has co-financed more than 5,500 projects across the EU and countries outside the EU. LIFE has four new sub-programmes: nature and biodiversity, circular economy and quality of life, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and clean energy transition.

In the MFF heading Natural Resources and Environment the LIFE Programme focuses on the environmental priorities. The LIFE programme aims to facilitate the shift towards a sustainable, circular, energy-efficient, renewable energy-based, climate-neutral and resilient economy, protect, restore and improve the quality of the environment, including the air, water and soil, halt and reverse biodiversity loss and tackle the degradation of ecosystems.

The programme supports demonstration, best practice, coordination and support actions, capacity building, and governance projects. This includes large scale Strategic Integrated Projects and Strategic Nature projects, which support the implementation of environmental and climate plans, as well as programmes and strategies developed at regional, multi-regional or national level. Its total budget of 2021-2027 is € 5.43 billion (current prices). Average project size for traditional projects: 2-5 years and in between € 2-10 million.

To apply: https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life/life-calls-proposals_en





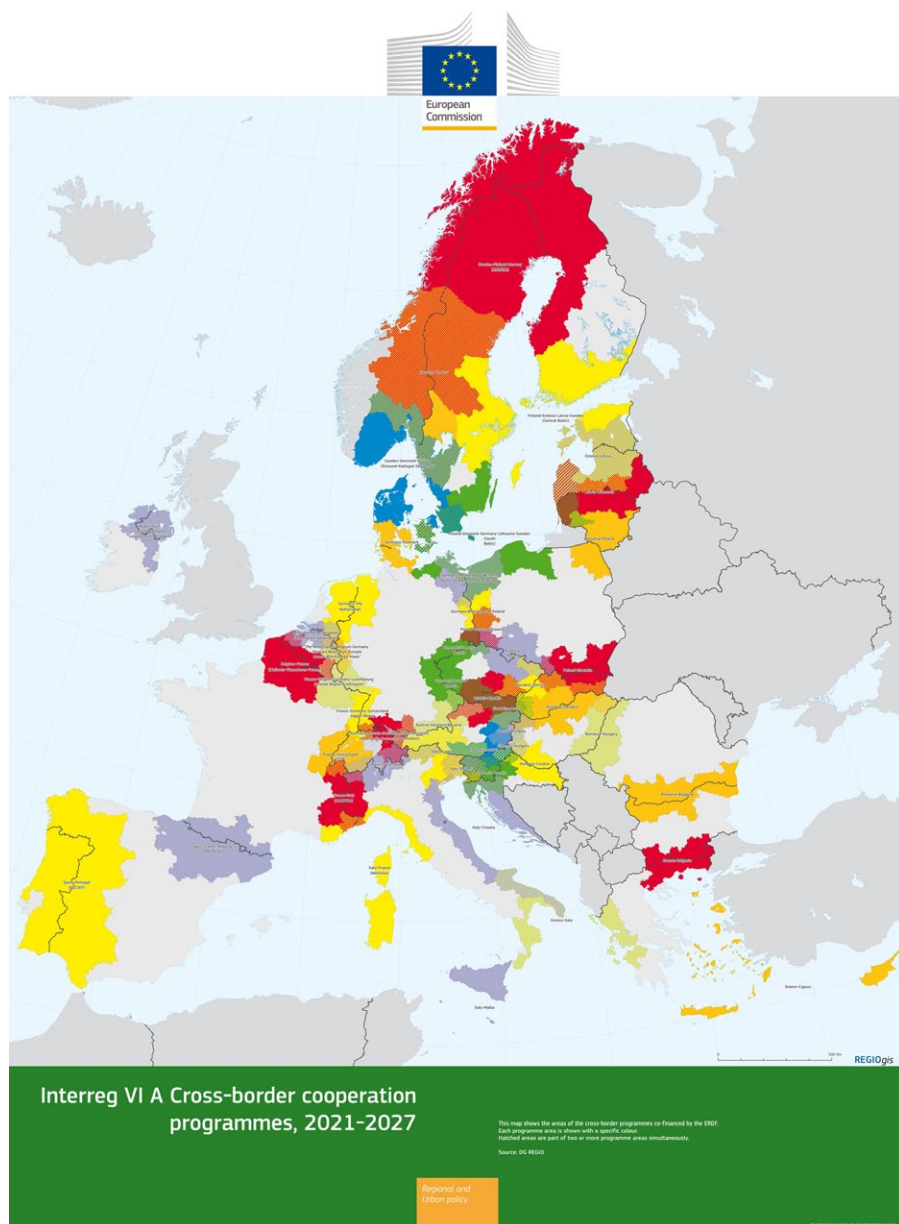
TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

European Territorial Cooperation, better known as Interreg, is one of the goals of cohesion policy. It provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different member states. It aims at helping to ensure that borders are not barriers, bringing Europeans closer together, helping to solve common problems, facilitating the sharing of ideas and assets, and encouraging strategic work towards common goals. All this demonstrates its clear European added value. Interreg is built around four strands of cooperation: cross-border (Interreg A), transnational (Interreg B) interregional (Interreg C) and outermost regions' cooperation (Interreg D). The latter one is not relevant for EUSDR.

A) Interreg A programme

73 Interreg A programme supports *cross-border programmes* within the EU and at EU's external borders with a budget of € 6.5 billion. Out of these 73 programmes (such as ie. (Interreg VI-A) Austria-Germany/ (Interreg VI-A) Romania-Bulgaria or (Interreg VI-A) Slovenia-Austria) 49 programmes are set in the EU, 10 Interreg IPA programmes and 14 Interreg NEXT programmes, implemented at the borders with Neighbouring countries of the EU. The Interreg A programmes support cooperation between NUTS III regions from at least two Member States lying directly on the borders or adjacent to them. This aims to tackle common challenges identified jointly in border regions and to exploit the untapped growth potential in border areas, while enhancing the cooperation process with a view to strengthening the overall harmonious development of the Union. Each programme is different, but, they are tackling common handicaps – especially risk prevention and emergency response activities- to more integrated cooperation approaches aiming at exploiting together untapped potential to boost economic development in often peripheral regions. Water management issues are not primarily financed in this brand, but there are some examples of support.





Cross border programmes

Most new programmes were approved by the EC in 2022, only few remain to be approved:



<http://www.si-hr.eu/en2/>



<https://huskroua-cbc.eu/>



Romania-Ukraine
ENI-CROSS BORDER COOPERATION

<https://www.ro-ua.net/en/>



Romania-Republic of Moldova
ENI-CROSS BORDER COOPERATION

<https://ro-md.net/en/>



Hungary-Croatia
Cross-border Co-operation Programme

<http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/>



<http://www.si-hu.eu>



<http://www.si-at.eu/en2/>



<https://www.skhu.eu>



<http://www.interreg-athu.eu/hu/>



<http://www.romania-serbia.net>



<http://interregrobg.eu>



<http://www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com/>



<https://www.sk-at.eu>



<https://www.interreg-bayaut.net/interreg-2021-2027>



<http://www.si-hr.eu/en2/programme/ip-si-hr-21-27>



<https://www.interreg-hr-ba-me.eu/>



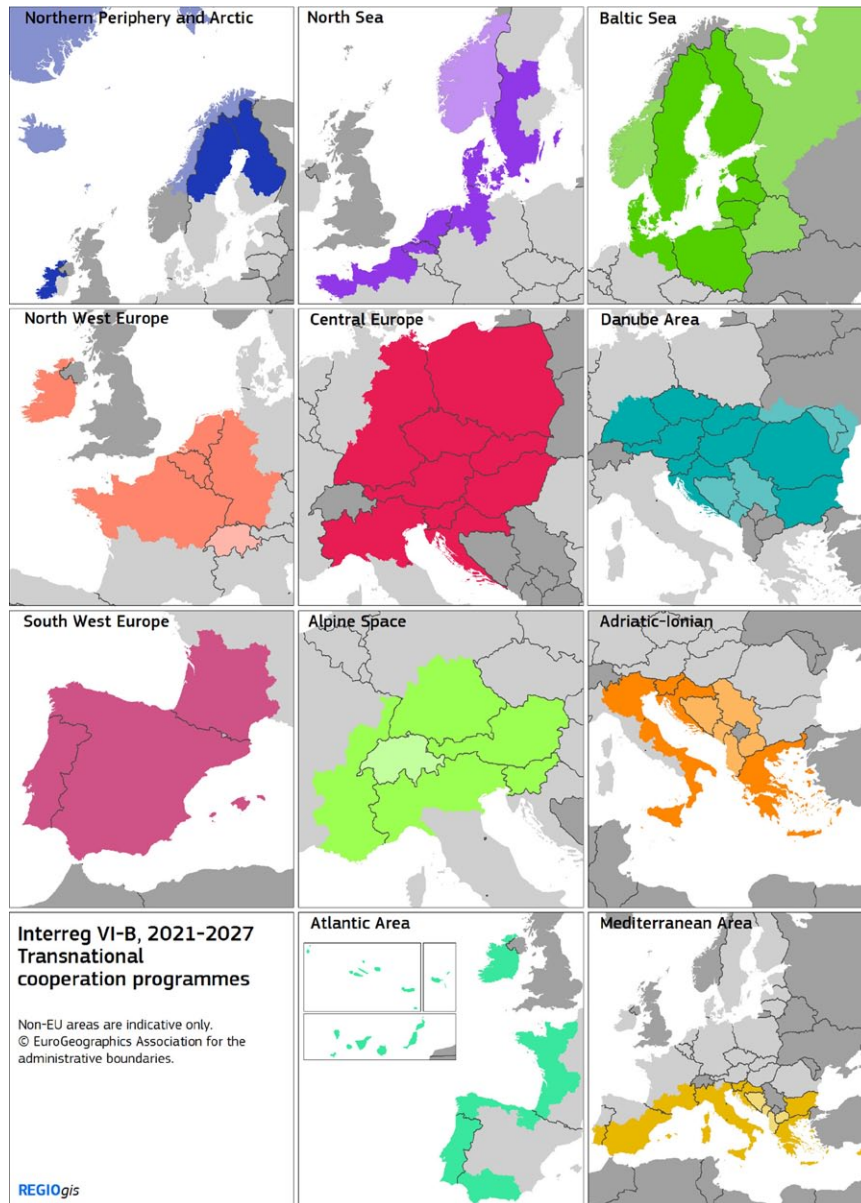
<https://www.interreg-croatia-serbia.eu/>



<https://interreg-rohu.eu/hu/>



<https://www.at-cz.eu/at/forderperiode-2021-2027>



B) Interreg B programme

14 transnational cooperation programmes continue to support cooperation activities at larger scale in Europe and beyond. Interreg B programme supports a macro-regional strategy or a sea-basin strategy, where at least 80 % of the ERDF contribution and, where applicable, part of the external financing instruments of the Union allocations under priorities other than for technical assistance shall contribute to the objectives of that strategy.

Three of them are benefiting of a large IPA contribution, namely the programme Interreg IPA Adrion, Interreg Danube Region and Interreg Euro-Med. All those programmes are allowing cooperation between EU Member States and IPA countries. (Also, to mention Interreg NEXT Black Sea Basin.)

Transnational cooperation programmes have dedicated specific objectives and priorities focusing on water and nature protection. From Interreg B programmes the Danube Programme is relevant with the total budget of € 213 million for the current period.



Danube Region Programme 2021-27 thematic scope



PRIORITY 2: A greener, low-carbon Danube Region

Implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

2. 1. Support greening the energy and transport sectors in the Danube Region by enhancing the integration of renewable energy sources.
2. 2. Promoting climate change adaptation capacities in the Danube Region and disaster management on transnational level in relation to environmental risks (taking into account ecosystem-based approaches).
2. 3. Sustainable, integrated, transnational water and sediment management in the Danube River Basin ensuring good quality and quantity of waters and sediment balance.
2. 4. Protecting and preserving the biodiversity in ecological corridors and eco-regions of transnational relevance in the Danube Region.

In the Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 **Priority 2 – A greener, low carbon Danube Region, Specific Objective 2.2 (SO.2.2)** intends to promote climate change adaptation capacities in the Danube Region and disaster management in relation to transnationally relevant environmental risks (floods, droughts, accidental pollution of rivers, wild fires), taking into account ecosystem-based approaches. SO 2.2 supports among others:

- Coordinated, harmonised efforts on transnational river(basin) scale to prevent flood risks, or drought, including application of nature-based solutions (exploring the potentials of floodplain restoration measures can fit SO 2.2, if specifically focusing on flood management).
- Harmonised, joint planning, monitoring and alert systems.

Projects financed in the framework of SO 2.2 are expected to directly contribute to the objectives of EUSDR, especially to the actions and targets of PA5.

In the *Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 Priority 2 – A greener, low carbon Danube Region, Specific Objective 2.3 (SO 2.3)* covers: Sustainable, integrated, transnational water and sediment management in the Danube River Basin ensuring good quality and quantity of waters and sediment balance. Accordingly, water management actions supported in the frame of SO 2.3 shall focus on the



main transboundary river(-basin)s of the DRB, following a territorially integrated, cross-sectoral approach and shall take into consideration the potential negative effects of climate change.

- ▶ Strengthening capacities for prevention and mitigation of water pollution or for restoration of good quality of transnational water bodies.
- ▶ Harmonising management practices between water management, agriculture, environment, navigation, hydropower and flood protection to improve the quality and quantity of water and sediment in transnational river systems, taking into consideration the potential impacts of climate change.
- ▶ Transnational coordination of water supply management, especially in relation to basin-wide importance of groundwater bodies.

SO 2.3 support measures that strengthen cooperation of key stakeholders in order to improve policies and institutional capacities (e.g. by integrated strategies, action plans, policy and sectorial dialogs, trainings), harmonising management processes (e.g. management plans), elaborating and pilot testing joint solutions (e.g. monitoring, forecasting tools, data bases), which are:

- ▶ *Ensuring harmonised data availability by more effective monitoring and modelling systems for improving transnational water management measures.*
- ▶ *Strengthening institutional, management and technical capacity to prevent and mitigate water pollution or to restore good quality of water with special regard to hazardous and emerging substances pollution, agriculture and waste water management, taking also into account the possible impacts of climate change on the quality of water.*
- ▶ *Improving sediment balance and related morphodynamics, or exploring the potentials of reconnection of adjacent floodplains / wetlands in order to improve water quality, in transnational water bodies.*
- ▶ *Developing harmonised, joint monitoring and modelling system(s) in order to better understand the transboundary groundwater systems of Danube River Basin.*
- ▶ *Defining joint strategies and harmonised measures, elaborating and adopting innovative solutions in relation to water exploitation and protection ensuring balanced use of water, taking also into account the impacts of climate change for future water demand.*

- ▶ *Ensuring harmonised data availability, adaptation of integrated strategies, plans and solutions in connection to climate change induced increase of low water periods on the main transnational rivers of DRB, affecting sediment transport, navigation, hydropower management and the ecosystem.*

Projects financed in the framework of SO 2.3 are expected to directly contribute to the objectives of EUSDR, especially to the actions and targets of PA4.

In the **Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 Priority 2** – A greener, low carbon Danube Region, **Specific Objective 2.4 (SO 2.4)** covers protecting and preserving the biodiversity in ecological corridors and eco-regions of transnational relevance in the Danube Region. The geographic focus of the supported cooperation projects within Specific Objective 2.4 are broader, transnational ecological corridors, transboundary ecological regions, water habitats, wetlands along major transnational rivers and depending on the thematic focus, they shall strive for an integrated territorial approach involving other key sectors beyond environmental and nature protection relevant in the specific context and area. The addressed main thematic focus areas are the following:

- ▶ Transnational cooperation for the improvement of ecological connectivity between habitats, nature protection areas along transnationally relevant ecological corridors of the Danube Region and for transnational conservation and restoration measures for endangered umbrella species as well.
- ▶ Creation and strengthening of networks of cooperation in relation to the ecological regions and among protected areas.
- ▶ Coordinated and harmonised measures within transnationally relevant ecological regions ensuring resilience and adaptation to climate change to reduce its impacts on biodiversity.



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME



In the policy objectives 2021-2027 for the water projects the Greener, carbon free Europe objective is most relevant.

Partnership minimum requirements:

3 financing partners from 3 DRP countries

- ▶ number of countries to be involved ensuring broad territorial impact in DR
- ▶ number of PPs ensuring thematic and territorial relevance and competence in a coherent mix and balanced way
- ▶ integration of non-EU countries - utmost importance!!!
- ▶ „INTERREG funds” = equal participation of non-EU partners

Interreg Programme
Danube Region



Co-funded by
the European Union



**First call
for proposals**

DRP 1st Call

Major novelties in DRP 2021-2027:

- ▶ EU contribution to projects is 80%
- ▶ Use of Interreg funds (ERDF, IPA and NDICI funds are pooled together in a single pot)
- ▶ Lead Partners can be both from EU and non-EU countries (exception: Ukrainian organisations can participate in the 1st call for proposals only as project partners)

www.interreg-danube.eu

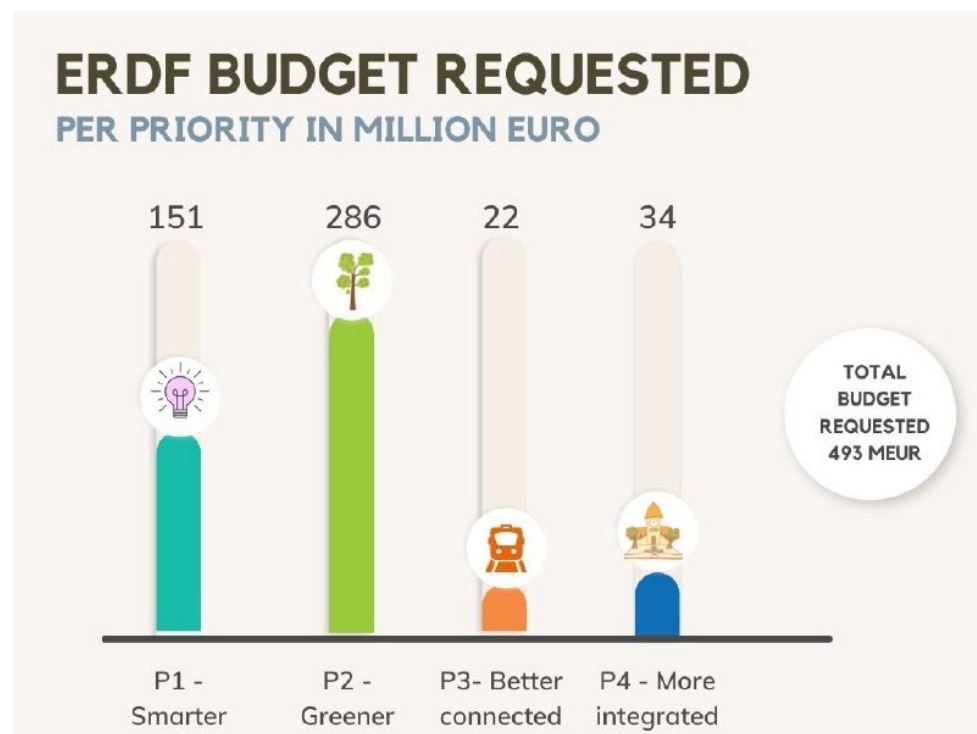


GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME



Interreg Central Europe

Last open call closed on 23rd February 2022, second call for standard projects planned in March 2023.



Altogether, 256 project proposals passed the formal checks. 143 project proposals passed the relevance filter. Final decision is expected in December 2022.

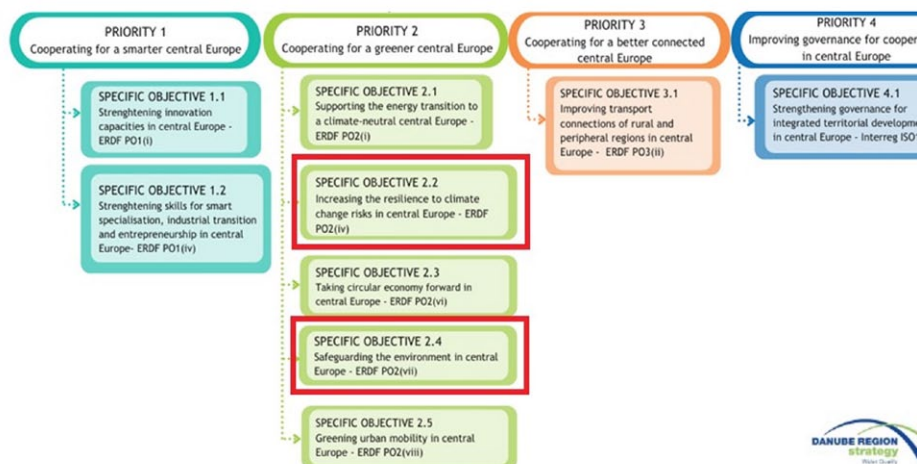
Total programme budget for projects to support transnational cooperation projects with around 224 million Euros.

Eligible partners (territorial and institutional eligibility criteria);

- ▶ National, regional and local public bodies
- ▶ Private institutions, including private companies
- ▶ International organisations under national law and, with restrictions, under international law
- ▶ Minimum partnership requirements:
- ▶ At least 3 partners from 3 countries

www.interreg-central.eu

4 Priorities and 9 Specific Objectives



SO 2.1 Supporting the energy transition to a climate-neutral central Europe

- Smart integration of carbon-neutral solutions across sectors
- Renewable energy sources
- Energy efficiency of buildings and public infrastructures
- **Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from industry and other sectors**
- Energy planning at local and regional levels
- Energy demand management and behavioural change
- Financing schemes for energy efficiency and renewable energy investments
- Energy poverty

SO 2.2. Increasing the resilience to climate change risks in central Europe

- Climate change resilience and adaptation measures
- Climateproof landscape and urban planning
- Resilience to weather extremes and related hazards (rainfall events, floods, landslides, heat, draughts, water scarcity, wildfires etc.)
- Risk awareness, prevention and management
- Socioeconomic and health-related impacts of climate change

SO 2.3. Taking circular economy forward in central Europe

- **Waste prevention and management, recycling and recovery of resources and raw materials**
- **Repair and reuse**
- Circular economy value chains
- **Clean production processes and closed loop systems**
- Sustainable product design (e.g. eco design) and product development processes
- **Behavioural changes of producers, consumers, public buyers etc.**

SO 2.4. Safeguarding the environment in central

- Biodiversity conservation and recovery, including urban green spaces
- Protection of natural heritage, ecosystems and valuable areas incl. Natura 2000 sites
- **Reduction of environmental pollution (air, water, soil, noise, light etc.) and their human health impacts**
- Integrated environmental management and sustainable use of natural resources
- Sustainable land management and landscape planning that optimize human activities with biodiversity protection and enhancement measures
- **Ecosystem services (e.g. production of food and water, clean air, recreational benefits)**
- **Restoration of degraded ecosystems**
- Sustainable tourism and the valorisation of natural heritage



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMME



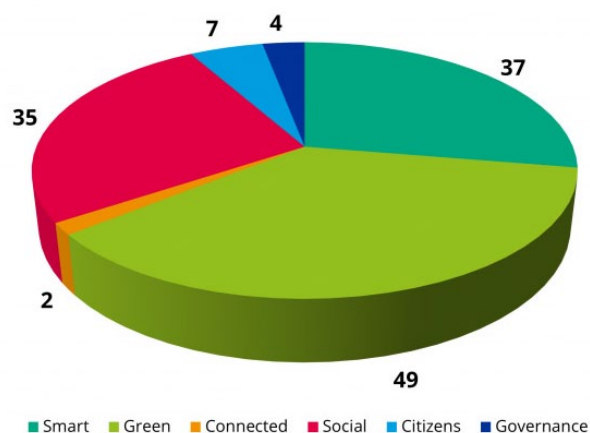
The programme is to support projects in five thematic EU priorities and one non-thematic issue on better governance:

- ▶ Smart
- ▶ Green
- ▶ Connected
- ▶ Social
- ▶ Citizens
- ▶ Governance



The first call was open from 5 April to 31 May 2022 and 134 proposals were received. €1,432,730.5 was the average ERDF budget per project proposal.

Project proposals submitted in each topic in the first call:



The average total budget per project is 1-2 MEUR:

- ▶ EU member state partners receive up to 80% of project activities;
- ▶ Private non-profit organisations can receive 70% of their cost refunded.

The second call will open from 15 March to 9 June 2023.

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/apply-for-the-call>

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/>



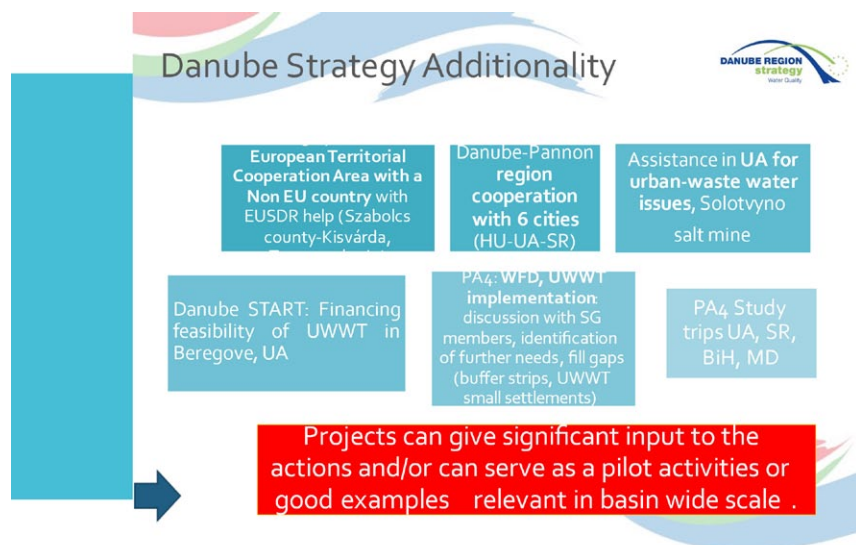
COMMON FEATURES OF INTERREG „WATER PROJECTS”



Links to EUSDR PA4

- ▶ „Soft” type of measures are supported (harmonised, joint strategies, plans, solutions developed and tested in pilot actions, capacity building)
- ▶ No major infrastructures financed
- ▶ Reasonable mix of activities with clear thematic focus
- ▶ Focus on main transboundary river(-basin)s of the DRB (water management, flood management, accidental pollution, etc.)
- ▶ Territorially integrated, cross-sectoral approaches
- ▶ Taking into consideration potential negative effects of CC

Danube Strategy Additionality



How EUSDR contributes to the prosperity of the Danube Region?

- Cooperation in the preparation, implementation and capitalisation process of international projects as well as in dissemination of the results,
- Focus on project funding, post 2021, embedding of EUSDR objectives into EU funding schemes,
- Strengthening capacity building, preparing studies, organizing workshops and conferences.....and much more!

Projects can give significant input to the actions and/or can serve as a pilot activities or good examples relevant in basin- wide scale.

Different possibility

The *International Visegrad Fund* is a donor organization established in 2000 by the governments of the Visegrad Group countries – Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The Fund supports regional cooperation of civil society organizations, in seven main areas including Environment. The Fund's annual budget is 10 million € provided by equal contributions of the V4 governments. There are three regular calls for applications open 30 days before the deadlines of submission on 1 February, 1 June, 1 October.



MANY FURTHER OPTIONS:



To find out [more about EU funding](#), please visit.



The lead partner of the project of DTP PAC2 PA04 that financed this brochure is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.
Brochure compiled in November 2022 by Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper, senior expert, EUSDR Water Quality Priority Area

Disclaimer

This document reflects only the author's view and neither the European Commission nor the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contains. Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF) with the financial contribution of partner states and institutions. More information about the EU Strategy for the Danube Region „Water quality” Priority Area:

<https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/>