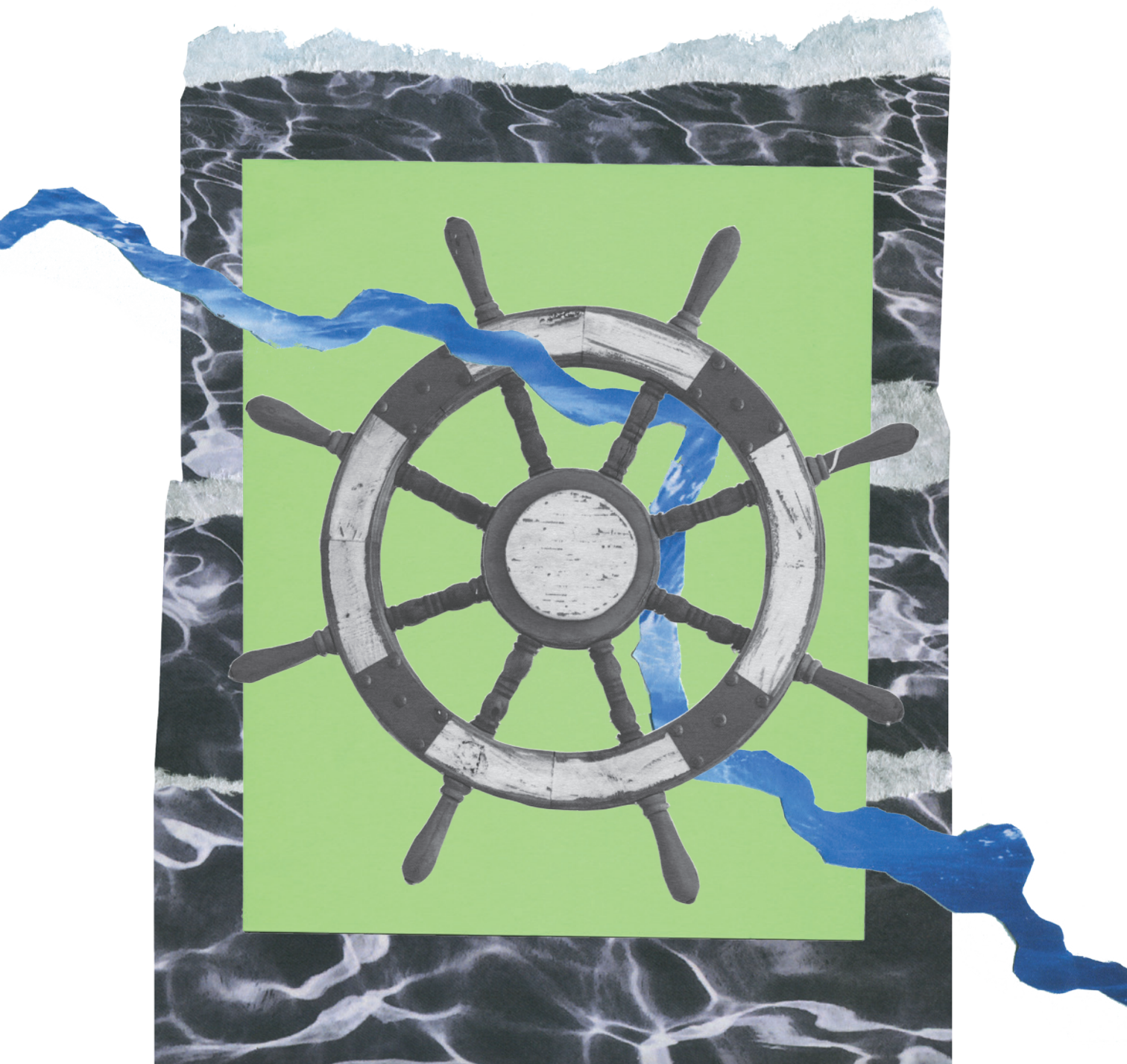


Danube Region: PA10

Institutional Capacity and Cooperation
Activity Report October 2015



PA10: What we do best

Working for a better life for the people
in the Danube Region



One of the advantages of the European Union: the possibility to travel freely from the Danube Springs to the Black Sea. And even visiting neighbouring countries like Serbia, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine is easily done. Travelling through the countries of the Danube

Region, one is immediately aware that they share huge economic potentials as well as a great natural and cultural heritage. But many also face structural and social problems leading to dramatic differences in the quality of life of their population.

These problems are especially crucial for those living at the edges of societal development: youngsters facing unemployment, elderly people living precariously on low pensions, many members of marginalized communities – like the Roma – excluded from schooling and social security

systems, villages and cities emptied by mostly economic emigration.

The European Union is not only catering to a Common Market, but is also based upon solidarity among its members. In case of the Danube Region, solidarity as well with candidates and neighbouring countries. Thus, the Union underpins efforts to improve the living conditions with joint public action across borders and with a huge amount of public subsidies under the framework of EU Regional, Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy.

Due to unstable political, social and administrative structures, some countries of the Danube Region are unable to profit fully from the available funding. This is preventing growth and furthering economic and societal inequality.

To tackle that problem a new political instrument, the Macro-Regional Strategy, was developed.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) was initiated in 2011. The EUSDR, which at its core is a political program of the 14 participating states, should create a new momentum through a broad range of harmonised activities. They can lead to better spending of European funding for investments in the future of the Region, thus bringing prosperity and better living conditions to its citizens.

In the framework of this initiative, the City of Vienna (Austria) and the Center for Excellence in Finance

(Slovenia) work together. There aim is to step up institutional capacity and cooperation of the macro-region.

The implementation of political and administrative reforms necessary for a shared, modern Danube Region is often difficult, all the more so in transition countries. So a strengthened civil society and local actors are of crucial importance. Only this can bolster social justice, social innovation and democracy on all levels of governance.

A Strategy is a success when it addresses the real issues at hand, and connects them to the needs of the respective audience or clients. In the case of EUSDR, success is, to quote Vienna's Mayor Michael Häupl, that the people living in the Danube Region feel that they live a better life.

Priority Area 10 (PA10) proposes to work towards accelerating socio-economic and political-administrative reforms, aiming at a modern Danube Region with its citizens as their main focus. Therefore, an effective Danube Strategy project should always consist of three parts: the technical solution, the capacity building element and the social innovation impact.

The Center of Excellence in Finance on behalf of Slovenia joined forces with the City of Vienna in 2011. It was the year when the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region started. We have come a long way - adapting the focus, our work structure, and most of all, widening the outreach and impact of our endeavours.

Today, the stakeholders of our Priority Area include an immense variety of actors: civil society organizations, Danube Region project promoters, ministries, financial institutions and authorities in charge of EU funding, European Commission, international organizations, regional initiatives, city administrations, universities and many others. Our success is also a reflection of the rewarding collaboration between the City of Vienna and the Center of Excellence in Finance from Ljubljana in what we do best - using the extensive network of the Danube cities and regions for exchange and cooperation, developing capacities in administrations and public financial management and also fostering the implementation of civil society and local actors organisations in the governance of the EUSDR.

Priority Areas (PAs) of the EUSDR

- PA1A Mobility - Waterways
- PA1B Mobility - Rail - Road - Air
- PA02 Energy
- PA03 Culture & Tourism
- PA04 Water Quality
- PA05 Environmental Risks
- PA06 Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soil
- PA07 Knowledge Society
- PA08 Competitiveness
- PA09 People & Skills
- PA10 Institutional Capacity and Cooperation
- PA11 Security

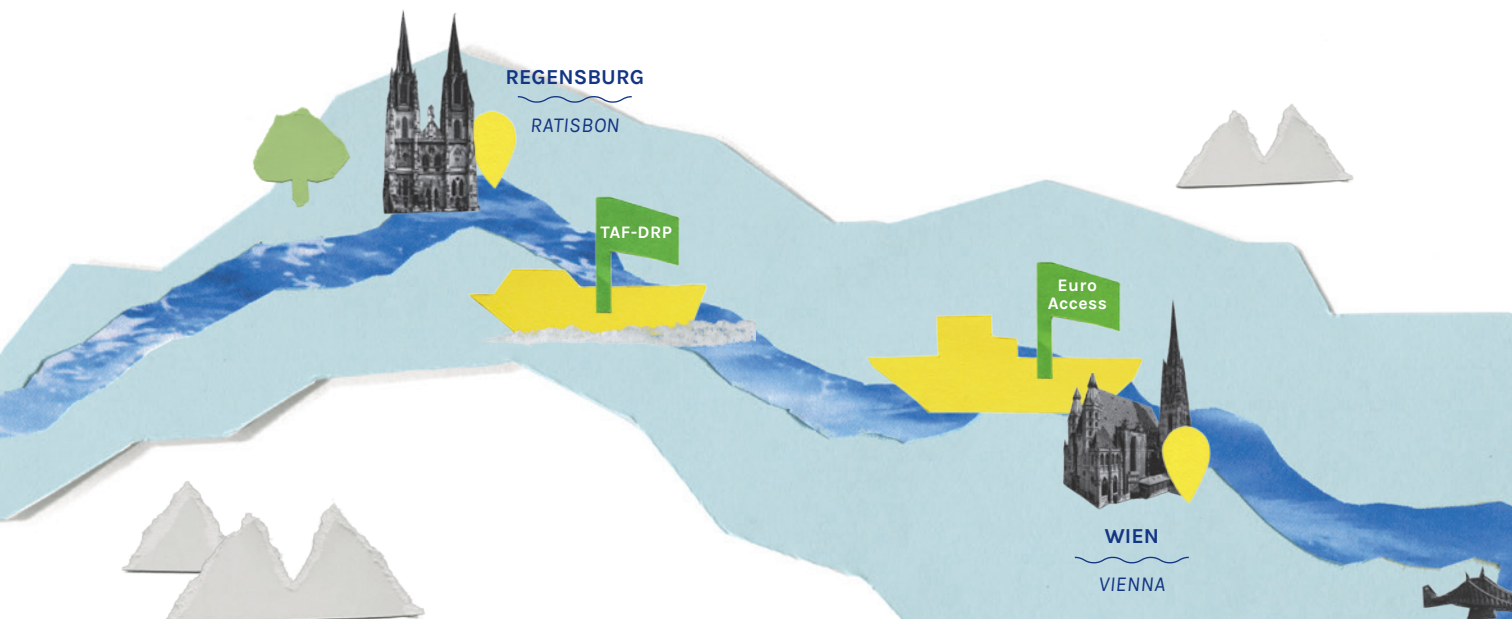
Foreword by



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Austria



PA10: Go with The Flow!

The Danube Region consists of fourteen countries. They are in need to step up their institutional capacity and increase the level of cooperation

Challenges on The River

The Danube is the most international river in the world. Hence, cooperation is required – not only among the fourteen countries in its river basin, but also among regions, cities, communities, and the citizens.

The Danube Region consists of countries and regions in need to step up their institutional capacity and increase the level of cooperation. Among them, there are huge disparities in terms of rule of law, transparency, democracy, the market economy, and political stability. Some suffer from macro-economic imbalances.

Efficient administrations are a prerequisite for reforms and effective investments. Therefore, stepping up institutional capacity is key for making the Danube Region a smart, sustainable and inclusive macro-region. Their citizens deserve well-functioning administrations and focused investments that create an added-value.

The challenges in the Danube Region are insufficient development of e-government, high complexity in the relations between different layers of government, lack of transparency, and administrative weaknesses. Public sector wages are lagging behind the private sector. And there are administrative and regulatory barriers related to investment

planning, as well as a need for decentralization. Tackling these issues in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) requires the optimization of public management practices and cooperative structures on all levels.

Moreover, a structured bottom-up process and the involvement of the civil society can contribute to project development, openness, the institutional memory and institutional capacity. Cooperation should optimize governance. It could lead to unfolding the urban and regional potentials and thereby achieve and sustain the balanced development of the region and foster territorial, social and economic cohesion.

The Danube Region has a heritage of political transformation. This shapes the countries and their relation between each other. What has been done during the last decades on the Rhine River shore - building a peaceful and wealthy Europe for the future generations - was not only a new supranational economic and legal framework, but also a common decision to cooperate across borders. The Danube deserves this too. Like solid institutions, the engagement of citizens is crucial for innovation in the region in an open and transparent way. In quickly changing administrative environments, the involvement of civil society can also greatly contribute to the institutional memory of a country.

It thereby ensures continuity and openness. Nevertheless, a structured dialogue with civil society actors still remains a challenge in many of the Danube countries.

Targets to Step up The Region

The 14 countries of the Danube Region have set joint targets in order to step up institutional capacity and cooperation.

This should make the governments more effective, increase their regulatory quality and reduce corruption. One target is to involve civil society in the entire process of the EUSDR implementation.

The public should be familiar with the concept of macro-regional strategies. European projects have to be implemented first and foremost where people live.

This means mainly cities and metropolitan areas. Well-functioning governments, the involvement of civil society organizations as well as the cities should ultimately lead to a better use of EU funding, for the benefit of the citizens in the Danube Region.





Instruments to Unlock the Waves of Progress



Capacity Development

Public administrations are faced with many challenges: One is political instability. This can lead to weak leadership and weak public governance, bureaucracy, corruption, austerity and uncompetitive reward systems for public officials.

The Danube Capacity Development Platform aims to improve the quality of public service and to optimize governance mechanisms for international cooperation.

Better public administration means better economic performance, higher environmental sustainability, and lower income inequality. It strongly affects the competitiveness and growth of our economies and fortifies citizens' trust in public institutions. This trust has been decreasing in the last years due to an economic downturn.

Urban Policies

One thing has to be emphasized: the importance of cities to the Danube Region. More than 80 million of the 120 million inhabitants here live in cities. There are more

capital cities on the Danube than any other river. This makes it the most international river in the world.

However, not only capital cities are important for the territory, but also a great number of other large and medium sized cities, smaller towns and regions. There is a clear demand by stakeholders for more coordination between all of the EU policies with an urban dimension. The balanced urban and regional structure offers much potential for sustainable development.

Therefore, adequate use should be made of strengthened regional and local authorities. This requires efforts in improving transnational, national, regional and local governance systems.

On 10th June 2015 ministers responsible for regional development of the EU adopted conclusions on the next steps towards an EU urban agenda. Tackling challenges on the urban level is of utmost importance when it comes to making the Danube Region an innovative region and boosting its capacity for future generations.

Priority Area 10 is working to establish the Urban Platform Danube Region. It should work as a common tool for cities and metropolitan regions in the framework of the EUSDR in order to strengthen existing networks and support project development.

Local Actors Involvement

The Danube Region cannot become more competitive without the involvement of its citizens. They know best what the region needs. Local NGOs can provide consistent expertise, e.g. in the field of sustainable development and environmental policies. An open and transparent Danube Region will greatly benefit from a strong civil society.

This also matters with regard to project development or e.g. active citizenship. The Danube Region is in dire need of true "Danubians", people, who are committed to the EUSDR and propose alternative views on how to develop it further. Priority Area 10 pro-

vides a Danube-Local Actors Platform. It can be a common tool for civil society representation in the framework of the EUSDR.

Innovative Financing

The Danube Region countries lag behind in the absorption of EU funds. This is true mainly due to administrative capacity challenges, such as project planning and execution, frequent changes in legislation and inconsistent political ownership.

Priority Area 10 nurses some projects in the Danube Region. Their aims and operating principles are shown in this brochure (page 8 ff). Two of these projects offer seed money to kick-start projects and technical assistance to develop project ideas into projects. And there is the Danube Financing Dialogue, a networking platform. As new kid on the block comes EuroAccess, an online EU financing search tool.

All these initiatives comprise the Financing and Investment Platform of PA10. It will involve policy- and decision-makers into the implementation of the projects in the Danube Region.

Four Initiatives in the Danube Region



TAF-DRP: Bring in the consultants!

There are ideas & there are funds. But, how to connect the two?

A lot of project ideas in the Danube Region never get started. Main reason: lack of money. But actually there are lots of funds for projects. But not many project promoters take them.

Why? According to a feasibility study published in 2011 one of the reasons for this low absorption rate of EU-funds is that organisations in need of funding lack the technical capacities to develop project proposals and applications.

The majority of beneficiaries are organisations with a high technical and financial capacity. Small or unexperienced organisations, e.g. NGOs, often do not take the risk of applying for funding. This way, many valuable project ideas never get realised.

To tackle the problem the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP) was set up. It is an instrument for small and unexperienced project idea owners and shall foster the development of project ideas

first and foremost. With the help of consultants a project idea can be formed into a fundable/bankable project. It is a method to fill the gap between available funds and organizations in need of funding.

How TAF-DRP works

The total allocation to TAF-DRP is EUR 1.350.000,00, financed to 95 % by the European Commission. The remaining 5 % come from the City of Vienna. It is coordinated by PAC10, the City of Vienna with the involvement of all Priority Areas of the EUSDR.

The Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) for Danube Region Projects (DRP) fills the gap between project idea owners and available funding sources by providing consultant services. The services are financed by the facility.

There is a pool of consultants. Their selection was conducted via a European tender procedure in 2013. Three thematic lots were pre-defined and three consortia selected. Applicants must realise their project ideas and commit themselves to conduct project activities

even after the support by the facility is completed. TAF-DRP is a pilot initiative, organised in two phases.

After phase one, its management and implementation was evaluated externally. The results and recommendations of this evaluation were put into action during the second phase. This procedure should guarantee the greatest sustainable impact of the facility on the EUSDR.

Project ideas supported by TAF-DRP shall:

1. Contribute to fulfilling objectives of the Action Plan of the EUSDR
2. Have a high relevance for the aims of the EUSDR and the respective Priority Area. Project ideas addressing more than one aspect or action of the EUSDR or the Priority Area are favoured for receiving support
3. Show a macro-regional dimension, contributing to the integration of the region. A macro-regional dimension is best shown by a broad partnership structure
4. Have a sustainable impact on the region

TAF-DRP Calls

2 closed and 1 open call for proposals were organised:

The first call was in May 2013. It opened the possibility to PACs to suggest and support project idea owners contributing the most to achieving the aims of their respective Priority Area.

The second call was in February 2014.

All in all 35 projects were selected, covering all 12 Priority Areas and 13 Danube Region countries. Today 109 partners from the entire Danube Region are participating in TAF-DRP, 34 within the first call and 75 within the second call.

The third call: After having evaluated TAF-DRP I (Calls 1 and 2) it was decided to conduct an open procedure for TAF-DRP II (the third call for Proposals). The call was launched on May 20th 2015 yielding 22 applications from 12 EUSDR countries in 9 Priority Areas. 17 projects have been selected for TAF-DRP support.



Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP)

START: Why now?



There is no lack of project ideas in the Danube Region. But most of them suffer from a lack of funding

The promoters of ideas need help to initiate their projects, and especially to implement transnational projects with a macro regional impact. Major needs are facilitation of project preparation and small project support.

To kick-start project development and to facilitate the financing of transnational projects the National Contact Points of the EUSDR agreed 2013 to provide financial

support. For this purpose, the pilot initiative START - Danube Region Project Fund was established. It aims at providing Seed Money.

To cover the project expenses from the beginning, beneficiaries receive an early pre-financing of 50% of the total grant. The Seed Money principle shall help small organizations especially.

How START works

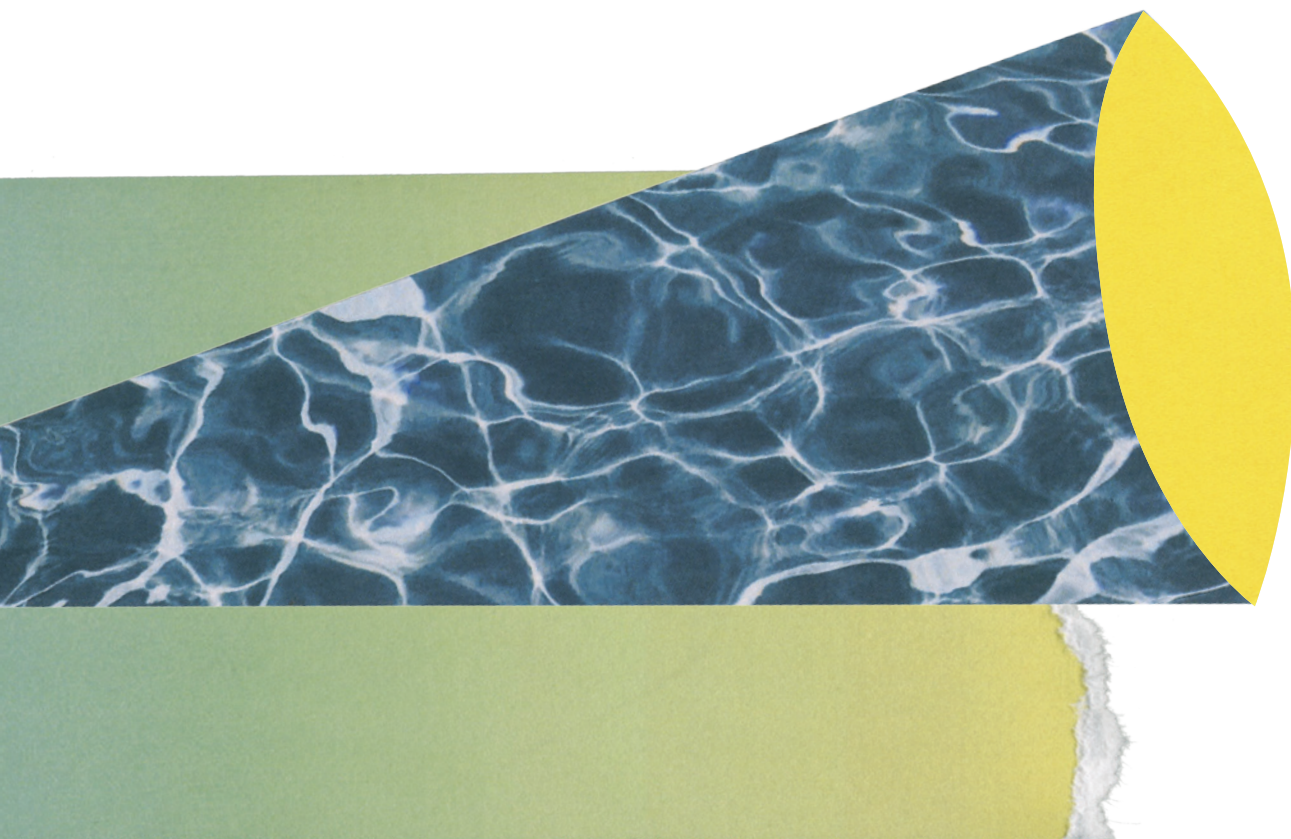
The total allocation to START is EUR 1,350,000. It is coordinated by PAC10, the City of Vienna with the involvement of all Priority Areas of the EUSDR.

It is financed for 95% by the European Union and for 5% by the City of Vienna. It covers up to 90% of individual project costs, the remaining part

must be co-financed. Projects supported by START can't be financed from other EU-Funding sources.

Activities supported by START shall:

- Contribute to fulfilling objectives of the Action Plan of the EUSDR, in particular to the roadmaps of the 12 Priority Areas. It should increase the visibility of the Strategy in the Danube Region
- Address all regions and thematic priorities of the Strategy
- Support the establishment of network and cooperation activities, transfer of know-how, people-to-people actions, etc.
- Strengthen the region on several levels



START Calls

2 open calls for proposals were organised:

The first call for proposals was open from July 18th 2014 until September 17th 2014.

There were 871 applications from all Danube Region Countries. Out of which 25 projects were selected (2,87%), 2 from each Priority Area (except 3 in PA09).

The 25 Lead Partners come from 12 Danube Region countries. In total 123 Lead and Project Partners are involved in the implementation of the

START projects, covering all 14 Danube Region Countries.

The START projects of the first call are implemented between March 1st 2015 and March 31st 2016. The individual projects last between 6 and 12 months.

The START contribution ranges between EUR 20.000,00 and EUR 39.600,00. The percentage of START lies between 72% and 90% of the total project budget.

The second call for proposals was open from May 20th 2015 until July 8th 2015. There were 205 applications from all 14 Danube Region Countries. 24 projects were selected, 2 from each Priority Area.

The START projects of the second call will be implemented between November 1st 2015 and July 31st 2016. The individual projects will last between 6 and 8 months.

The START contribution will range between EUR 10.000,00 and EUR 20.000,00. The percentage of START is max. 90% of the total project budget.

The results so far

The high number of applications reflects the need of small scale funding programmes in the Danube Region. Small organizations especially profit from the Seed Money initiative. It is important that after 2016 a Seed Money Initiative will be continued in the Danube Region.

Developments in



Examples of ongoing projects



Mine Wetlife

The environmental quality of the territory, degraded by mining in the residential area Nováky-Ko, shall be improved. A new interconnection of the city and provincial area could create an active form of population relaxation. With TAF-DRP, the beneficiary found possible partners and available financial mechanism in order to pursue a joint research project.

PA addressed

PA04 – Water Quality,

Location of the project partners:

Slovakia

Costs of TAF-DRP Services

24.840,00 EUR

Project Duration

06.2014 – 12.2014

Contact

vranovska@vuvh.sk



Training4Ports

Danube ports are continental gateways. Training-4Ports conducts a survey. It addresses the existing competences of the labour force, the available qualification and training resources, the institutional framework, as well as the labour force expectations. It aims to set up a common model of a competency-based training system. The training contributes to the increased quality of port services and improves the reputation and the accessibility of jobs in ports.

PA addressed

PA01a Mobility – Waterways,

Location of the project partners:

Romania / Ukraine / Moldova

Total Project Budget (START)

48.297,08 EUR

START Contribution

81,16%

Project Duration

01.03.2015 – 29.02.2016

Contact

office@danube-ports.ro



CDCP Roma

Changing common discourses and practices towards Roma populations is the foremost aim. The project tries to revise the population's attitudes towards Roma inclusion at national and European level. And show decision makers the possible gains of investing in Roma populations. It stresses the costs of their exclusion and the added value of their integration.

PA addressed

PA09 – People & Skills,

Location of the project partners:

Hungary / Romania / Bulgaria / Slovakia

Costs of TAF-DRP Services

24.528,00 EUR

Project Duration

06.2014 – 12.2014

Contact

moravcsik.laszlo@maltai.hu

the Danube Region



DanReGeo-therm-DATA

The project provides scientifically based information on the deep geothermal potential of the Danube Region. It should enhance the sustainable use of the untapped resources. The project received support by TAF-DRP to process the project idea into an actual project submission. Within the framework of START, DanRe-Geotherm examines the details of data access and data policy as a key factor to the success of the overall project.

PA addressed

PA02 – Energy,

Location of the project partners:
Hungary / Bosnia / Croatia / Czech Republic / Romania / Serbia

Total Project Budget (START)

43.800,00 EUR

Costs of TAF-DRP Services

24.930,00 EUR

START Contribution

89,95 %

Project Duration

01.12.2013 – 15.11.2014

Contact

nador.annamaria@mfgj.hu



DAirNet

The Project shall improve the mobility and economic integration through a new air transport connection within the Danube Region. Aim of the Project: definition of a short, medium and long term action plan for the improvement of air transport connectivity, including other possibilities such as heliport network and general aviation development within the region.

PA addressed

PA01b – Mobility: Rail-Road-Air,

Location of the project partners:
Serbia / Slovenia

Costs of TAF-DRP Services

25.020,00 EUR

Project Duration

06.2014 – 12.2014

Contact

oljav@sf.bg.ac.rs



Authentic Danube

Delivering tourism excellence for visitors and industry

Helping tourism service providers by enhancing their access to global markets and cooperation with governments, private businesses, educational and research institutes and NGOs. The START project focuses on the development and testing of a certification scheme.

PA addressed

PA03 – Culture and Tourism,

Location of the project partners:
Bulgaria / Serbia / Austria

Overall Project Costs

approximately 400.000,00 EUR

Total Project Budget (START)

44.127,00 EUR

START Contribution

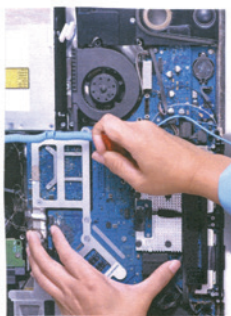
86,12 %

Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.12.2015

Contact

dimitar.marinov@authenticbulgaria.org



CSDanube

Cybersecurity in the Danube Region

So far there has been no activity linking the individual national CSIRT teams (Computer Security Incident Response Team) in the Danube Region. There are many common issues including the need to safeguard critical infrastructure or protect against a possible attack. The project aims at setting up an information flow to strengthen cooperation in the region.

PA addressed

PA11 - Security,

Location of the project partners: Czech Republic / Austria / Croatia / Moldova / Serbia / Slovakia.

Total Project Budget (START)

45.770,00 EUR

START Contribution

84,12 %

Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

Contact

jiri.prusa@nic.cz



HelpTeam Ukraine

Capacity building and improved cooperation of volunteer rescue teams for better flood and emergency protection

Since the reorganization of the Ministry of Civil Protection of Ukraine 2013, Rescue and Civil protection services fall into the governance of the regions. The START project aims to transfer knowledge from Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia to Ukraine. The country should be able to purchase equipment and build training centres for volunteer rescuers in the region of Transcarpathia at a later stage.

PA addressed

PA05 - Environmental Risks,

Location of the project partners: Ukraine / Slovakia / Czech Republic / Hungary.

Overall Project Costs

8.000.000,00 EUR

Total Project Budget (START)

43.664,00 EUR

START Contribution

88,63 %

Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

Contact

mikenagorkin@gmail.com



STURGENE

Ex-situ survey to preserve sturgeon genetic diversity in the Middle and Lower Danube

Reviving the highly endangered sturgeon population in the Danube by restocking programmes from ex-situ facilities (outside natural habitats) into their natural habitats. The project received TAF-DRP support in 2014 and START funding in 2015, this support having a crucial role to launch preliminary activities for implementation.

PA addressed

PA06 - Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soil,

Location of the project partners: Bulgaria / Serbia / Romania / Ukraine.

Overall Project Costs

STURGEON 2020 (Part of Key topic 4) approximately 4.000.000,00 EUR

Costs of TAF-DRP Services

20.775,00 EUR

Total Project Budget (START)

43.759,00 EUR

START Contribution

89,81 %

START Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

Contact

crisrina.sandu@dstf.eu



SIRA DANUBE

Smart and Innovative Rural Areas – Connect Centres of Competences

The aim is to foster the competitiveness of Danube rural areas by enhancing the institutional set-up and appropriate means to capitalize knowledge and innovation by SMEs. For this, Centers of Competences and a transnational network of partners from the whole Danube Region shall be established. START funds helps to develop the complete project proposal for funding within the Danube Transnational Programme.

PA addressed

PA08 – Competitiveness of enterprises,

Location of the project partners:

*Germany / Romania / Serbia /
Bulgaria / Slovenia / Hungary.*

Overall Project Costs

approximately 3.000.000,00 EUR

Total Project Budget (START)

54.465,00

START Contribution

71,97 %

Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.12.2015

Contact

angelika.thomas@uni-hohenheim.de



WORTH

Pulsating water jet as an orthopedic technique without thermal and mechanical damage of large joints with minimal traumatizing impact on patient

Developing and implementing a surgical technique for orthopedic revision surgeries. It should supersede usual techniques that damage human tissue and cause traumatic effect. START funds helped to create an international working team in order to prepare a feasibility study as well as an application for H2020 funds.

PA addressed

PA07 – Knowledge Society,

Location of the project partners:

*Czech Republic / Slovakia / Serbia /
Germany / Croatia.*

Total Project Budget (START)

37.394,54 EUR

START Contribution

74,88 %

Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

Contact

sergej.hloch@ugn.cas.cz



B-CAP

Building capacities in the Danube Region

Combining building capacity in the educational sector and the restoration of historical buildings in Romania. Youth and elderly are educated in these fields to foster development by increased touristic use of the freshly renovated buildings. START funding contributes to developing the concepts and financing strategies for education, restoration and tourism.

PA addressed

PA10 – Institutional Capacity and

Cooperation,

Location of the project partners:

Austria / Romania.

Overall Project Costs

3.500.000,00 EUR

Total Project Budget (START)

42.756,00 EUR

START Contribution

78,82 %

Project Duration

01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

Contact

reiter@lrsocialresearch.at

DFD: Where do my credits come from?



From banks, obviously. But will they talk to small enterprises and start-ups?

Small and medium-size enterprises, start-ups, public organizations, local authorities and other promoters in the Danube Region try to start projects, that they need money for. It should come from financial institutions from the entire Danube Region.

But how? This is where the Danube Financing Dialogue (DFD) comes in. It is hosted by the Danube Region's National Banks. The Dialogue shall stimulate the match-making of entrepreneurial financing needs and financing possibilities.

How DFD works

Responsible for implementation is the Priority Area 10 Coordinator of EUSDR (EU Strategy for the Danube Region) represented by the City of Vienna. The operative part is done by the Vienna-based, consulting and service company Metis GmbH. The EUSDR aims to boost smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

For this purpose, the European Commission implements the Danube Financing Dialogues (DFD), a series of international conferences hosted by the Danube Region's National Banks.

DFD merges the business promoter's needs and the existing funding sources and

financing products. It raises awareness about existing investment opportunities in the Danube Region, both private and public. And it aims to foster regional integration, in political and economic terms.

bankers, investors and other institutions offering investment opportunities.

The next Danube Financing Dialogue will take place in Bratislava on 23rd and 24th May 2016. Information can be found under www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/danube-financing-dialogue-dfd

Danube Financing Dialogue (DFD)

The results so far

An external evaluation of the DFD confirms the success of this initiative. Participants state that it is a unique opportunity to bring together entrepreneurs with leading financial institutions.

Four successful events have been organized so far in Vienna, Belgrade, Bucharest and Zagreb. A wide range of match-making opportunities were on offer, such as business-to-business meetings and small group discussion on the latest trends in financing business ideas.

Furthermore, DFD offers concrete support for project stakeholders and provides a range of different tools for networking. Thus, it stimulates the realization of projects.

The DFD targets the entire Danube Region from West (Vienna) close to the Black Sea (Bucharest) and down to the Balkan countries (Serbia and Croatia). So far 4 match-making events reached approximately 700 participants from 14 Danube countries and visitors from neighbouring countries.

Around 50 speakers (high-level public authorities, bankers, business experts and representatives of European funding agencies) provided first hand information. More than 60 business ideas have been presented. About 43% made up of small and medium sized enterprises, start-ups and other project promoters. 36% were stakeholders of the EUSDR and 21% consisted of

Euro Access: The Importance of Having Access

One of the challenges in the Danube Region is low absorption of EU funds

There is a large variation in the Danube Region: EU member countries, candidates, potential candidates, and EU neighbouring countries. They vary in a lot of things except one: The absorption of EU funds is quite low.

Why is this so? For one thing, constraints in using EU funds originate in insufficient administrative capacity. Second, an inadequate knowledge of how to prepare and implement projects hinders the use of EU funds.

So far, there is no central information point on EU funding in the Danube Region. And potential beneficiaries are not aware of the eligibility for funding of their project idea.

In this context, a new database will be launched at the beginning of 2016: EuroAccess Danube Region. This initiative is funded by the European Commission until the end of 2016.

How Euro-Access works

EuroAccess encompasses the most relevant EU-programmes for the Danube Region. The main objective is the development and maintenance of a user-friendly database. It will include important information on EU-funding relevant for the Danube Region between 2014 and 2020.

With this tool it should be possible to find the right EU-programme for each type of organization and project in the Danube Region.

The database lists – depending on the programme – almost all current calls of proposals under the aforesaid EU-programmes (some programmes such as Horizon 2020 open too many calls to cover them all).

These programmes cover 7 very different topics. They correspond to the priorities of the European Union in the funding period 2014 – 2020.

The right tool for project promoters

The search-tool is built from the point of view of potential applicants. Any organization developing a project can enter the criteria of its project idea, such as thematic focus, funding area, applicant's type of organization, and type of funding.

According to these criteria, the database delivers a list of adequate EU-programmes and calls. A detailed description of the programme helps in recognizing the adequacy with one's project idea.

The submission requirements are pointed out as well. And a newsletter informs continuously on the opening of new calls on topics, as defined by the user.



What EuroAccess covers

The EU-programmes

concerning the Danube Region in the funding period 2014–2020 are listed under:

www.euro-access.eu

Topics: environment & climate change, science & research, education & youth & culture, health & sports, employment & social policies, infrastructure & transports, energy.

The search-tool shall:

- Enhance the access to EU-funds and raise the rate of EU-funded projects
- Point on EU-funds relevant for the Danube Region
- Keep the list of calls for proposals up-to-date through regular screening of EU-funds
- Ensure better coordination of funding



Stad**t**  **Wien**



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