
Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP) | 5-6 March 2019 | Vienna (AT)

Welcome from PAC 10 Vienna

- Claudia SINGER welcomes the members of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP) on behalf of the Coordination of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” (PAC10), as the new Coordinator of PA10 from the City of Vienna. Further Mr. Michal Polak was introduced as new associate at the office of PAC 10 Vienna.
- The agenda for the 9th Meeting of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP) (see annex 2) was presented and adopted by the participants
- The participants had no objections to the request for approval that the meeting was only recorded for the purposes of drafting the minutes.
- PAC 10 asked for permission to share contact details among the EUSDR PA10 D-LAP members, as networking becomes more and more important and assured that the data will not be used for any other purposes. Furthermore, PAC10 pointed out that the permission can be revoked if deemed necessary. Nobody objected.

Tour de table

Introduction of all participants (List of participants see annex 3)

EUSDR Updates

EUSDR Priorities of the Romanian Presidency

- Tamara IVANER presented the priorities and main objectives of the Romanian Presidency of the EUSDR (see annex 4) and highlighted two events that will be organised in the course of the presidency: The **8th EUSDR Annual Forum** will take place in Bucharest (RO) from **27-28 June 2019**, as well as a meeting of ministers of economy. Tamara IVANER pointed out that the Danube Participation Day 2019 will take place on the 26 June as a side event of the EUSDR Annual Forum.

Revision of the EUSDR Action Plan - State of Play

- Robert LICHTNER presented the updates concerning the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan. (See annex 5)
- Irene LUCIUS, Iva TARALEZHKOVA and Stefan BARTH pointed out that the revision procedure excluded the position from civil society organisations so far, as the process mainly involved national and thematic coordinators of the EUSDR. Valentin CIUBOTARU suggested using the format of National Participation Days to consult civil society at national or regional level. Tamara IVANER suggested that the participants could send their feedback via e-mail to her. Claudia SINGER indicates that the participants will have the opportunity to provide input to the revised actions of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” in the course of this meeting.

EC report on the implementation of macro-regional strategies

Claudia SINGER presented the results and EC recommendations of the 2nd Report on the implementation of the four macro-regional strategies drafted by the European Commission and published in January 2019. (Annex 1.)

Update on Civil Society Involvement in the EUSDR

- Irene LUCIUS reported on a meeting with DG Regio taking place in November 2018 and presented the objectives, main topics for discussion and the response of DG Regio regarding the involvement of civil society in the EUSDR. (annex 6)
- Otto SCHWETZ indicated that the mobilisation of media would be crucial to accompany the efforts of stakeholders in their attempt to influence the political level of the EUSDR. Iva TARALEZKOVA suggested that CSOs should contact and inform the members of the European Parliament to gain more influence.

National Participation Days 2018/2019

- Igor STUDENNIKOV presented information about Ukraine's 3rd National Participation Day in the EU Danube Strategy held on 3 October 2018 in Odessa. The 3rd NPD Ukraine was combined with the 2nd Donor Conference "Danube Financial and Capacity Building Dialogue" and focused on discussing funding opportunities for the implementation of EUSDR-related activities in Ukraine. The event brought together more than 70 participants mostly from the 4 regions of Ukraine covered by the Danube Strategy and Kyiv as well as people from Romania, Moldova, Austria and UK. Due to the participation of representatives of a few EU grant-making programmes, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Ukrainian-Austrian Association and other financial and business support institutions a dynamic discussion on how to improve the dialogue between the donors and the actors which carry out their activities in the EUSDR priority areas. One of the key point was whether the priorities of the EU-funded and other programmes really meet the EUSDR. Igor STUDENNIKOV pointed out positive changes in terms of the improvement of the EUSDR coordination system in Ukraine. A new national coordinator in the rank of Deputy Minister of Regional Development was appointed at the beginning of 2019 that accepted Igor STUDENNIKOV's idea of the creation of an expert advisory group on the EUSDR, which is considered to be a good opportunity for ensuring Ukraine's active participation in the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan.
- Valentin CIUBOTARU briefly summarised the results of the National Participation Day in the Republic of Moldova (annex 7).
- Iva TARALEZKOVA informed about the National Participation Day in Bulgaria as well as about EUSDR Danube Participation Day 2018. Her advice concerning the financing of National Participations Days is to find external resources (e.g. other international partners).
- Daniela STOJKOVIC reported on the 3rd National Hearing in the Republic of Serbia. (annex 8)
- Miklos BARABAS shortly reported on the National Hearing in Hungary.
- Concerning *the Future of National Participation Days*, Stefan LÜTGENAU informed the participants, that already in 11 out of 14 countries National Participation Days have been organised. They are seen as single opportunity and one of the few possibilities to bring the Danube Strategy on the ground- to bring in ideas and to network. However, although the organisation of participation days is often financially supported with small amounts by a few organisations, a certain amount of money is needed for the future. Mr. LÜTGENAU supported the idea of Mr. CIUBOTARU to use the NPDs to discuss the revision of the action plan and asked all participants to promote and support the National Participation Days. Last point was the overview of upcoming National Participation Days.

Danube Participation Day 2019 (see annex 1)

- Claudia SINGER presented the preliminary concept for the 6th Danube Participation Day (DPD) that will be held from 26 June 2019 in Bucharest.
- Stefan LÜTGENAU reported that they would like to have younger people active on the DPD, as the DPD will focus on youth Civil Society actors and the challenge of raising the involvement of young citizens amongst other topics- it is important to have an event focusing on a balance of youth and political participation. They will have a look on already existing institutions and processes, like mentioned by Enikö HÜSE-NYERGES and Snezana FILIPOVIC. Stefan BARTH introduced his colleagues from Agapedia, being responsible for communication and for the work with youth: Ms. Iryna GUMENCHUK and Ms. Liliana GUSU. Further, he invited all participants to contact younger parliamentarians (if they know any), to promote the DPD and maybe bring them to Bucharest. Moreover, he asked not to forget, that Civil Society are not just the well organised NGOs, they are often grass roots organizations. Ms. SINGER pointed out (as the D-LAP is not just addressing local actors, but also governmental actors on national and regional level), that it is also important to show examples of cooperation between state actors at local or regional level and non- state actors, especially, when talking about participatory governance. Moreover, she invited all participants to send their information, ideas and contributions for the DPD.

Policy Updates & Funding information for civil society, cities & further local actors (annex 1)

- Claudia SINGER shared a few EUSDR PA10 Activities and tasks for 2019 such as the PA 10 policy recommendations on Sound Local Management & a study on Functional/Metropolitan Regions in the Danube Region. Furthermore, Claudia SINGER presented the EuroCities Initiative 'Inclusive Cities for All: Social Rights in My City' and current funding opportunities for local actors like the B-Solutions call, Interreg Central Europe call-Capitalisation through Coordination, and Europe for Citizens – Action Programme call. Finally, Claudia SINGER pointed to the EuroAccess Macro Region funding database that provides customised up-to-date information on EU funding for project promoters.

Revision of the EUSDR Action Plan – Topics & next steps for Priority Area 10

Presentation of cross-cutting topics with other Priority Areas

- Claudia SINGER presented the state of play within Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” and summarised topics and challenges that could be addressed in cooperation with other Priority Areas (the list is non-exhausted and can be regularly up-dated):
 - **Evidence-based decision making** (with Priority Area 7 Knowledge Society)
 - **Developing funding and investment instruments** (with Priority Area 8 Competitiveness)
 - **Roma inclusion at local level** (with Priority Area 9 People and Skills)
 - **Youth participation** (with Priority Area 9 People and Skills)
 - **Fighting Trafficking in Human Beings** (with Priority Area 11 Security)

Presentation of proposals for Actions in Priority Area 10

- Claudia SINGER presented the results of proposals (annex 7) for Actions in Priority Area 10 (as developed with the EUSDR PA10 Steering Group members). The actions were thematically clustered to 1) Institutional Capacity Building 2) Multi-level Governance, and 3) Funding. The participants of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP) discussed and developed proposals for important topics and

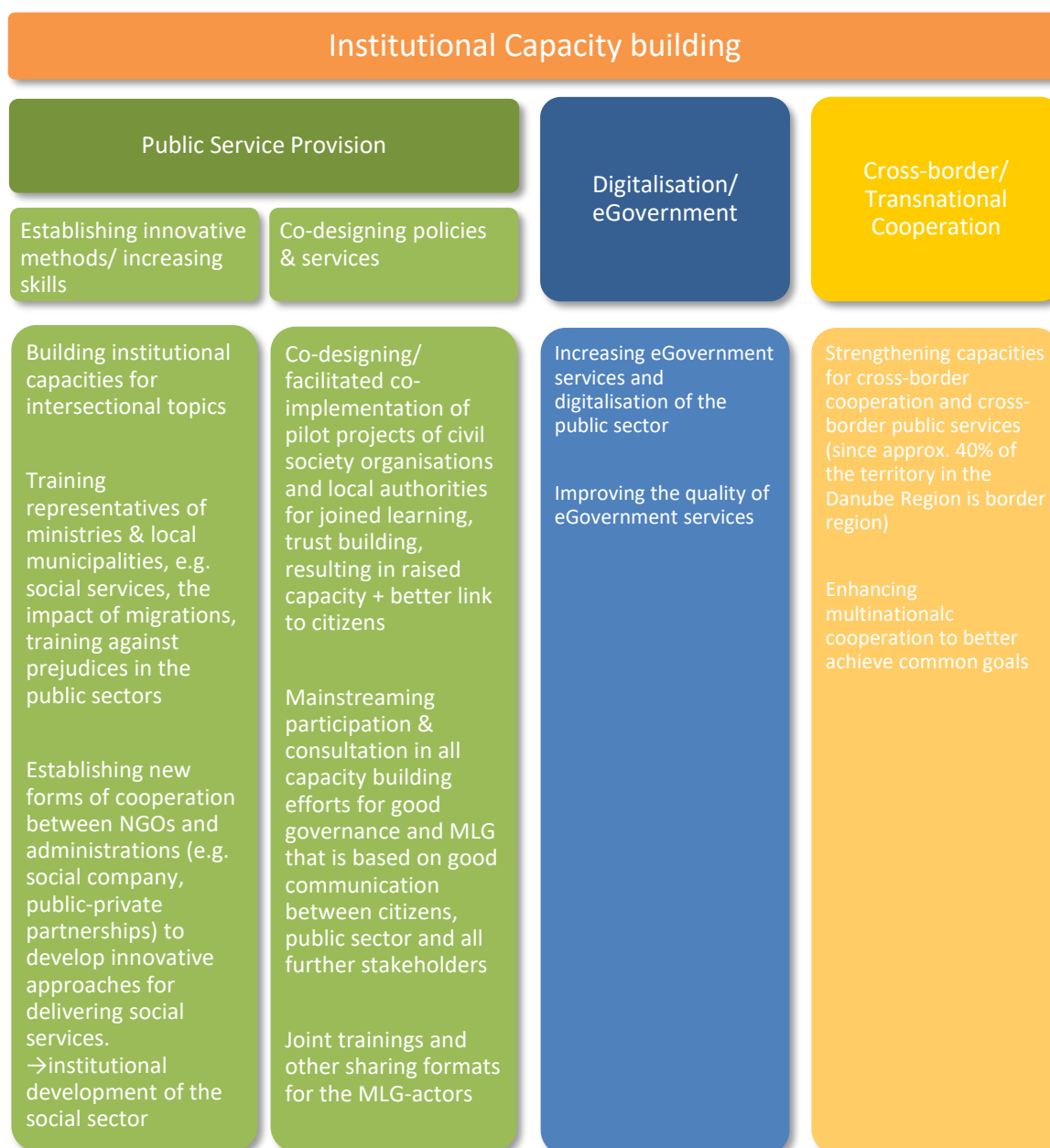
activities that should be considered for implementation within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region/Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation”.

Group Discussion on Institutional Capacity Building

PA 10 Actions (as proposed in January 2019)

- I. To improve institutional capacities in order to provide high-quality public services
- VII. To enhance capacities of cities and municipalities to facilitate local and regional development

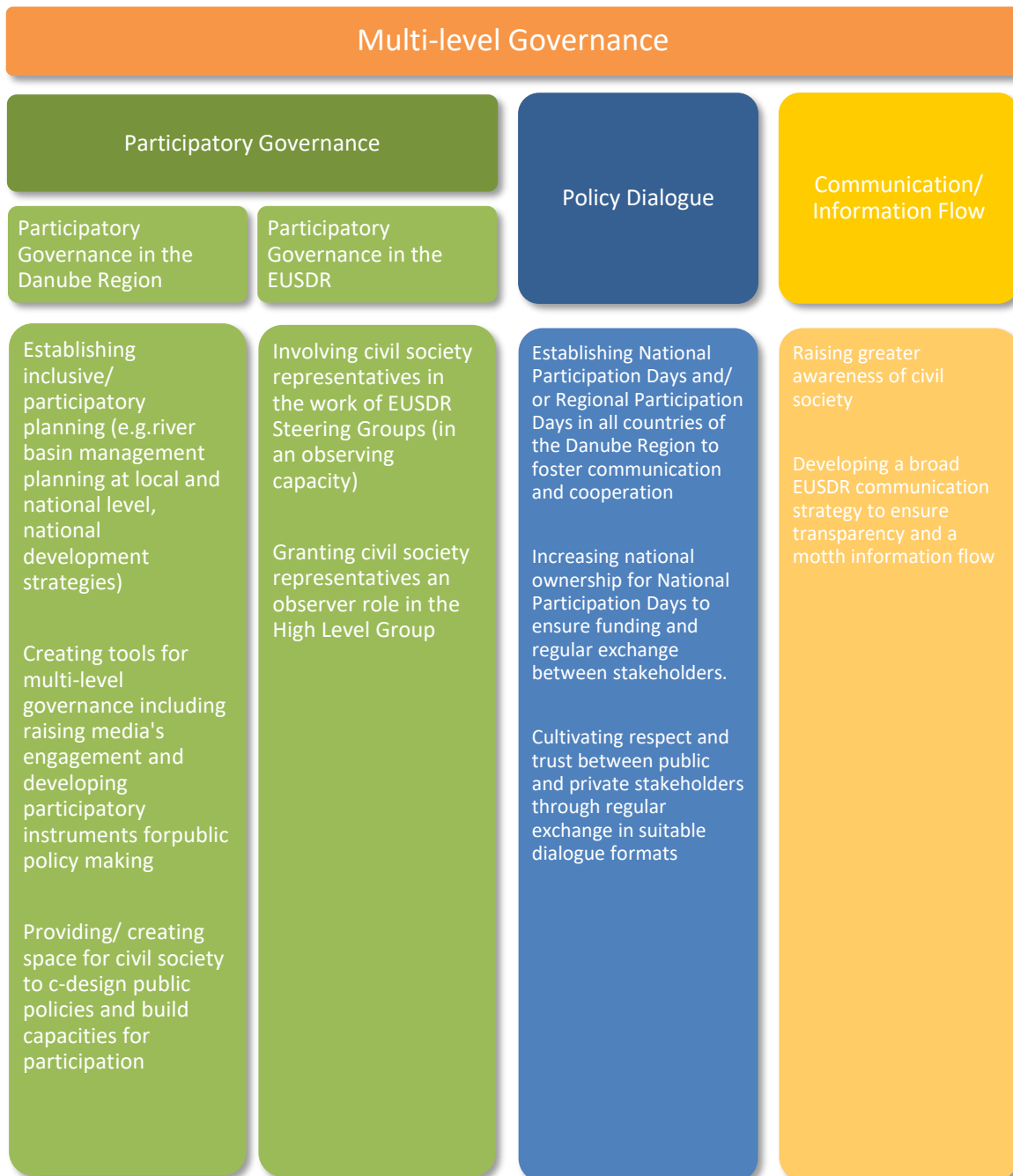
Main outcomes of the D-LAP group discussion:



Group Discussion on Multi-level Governance

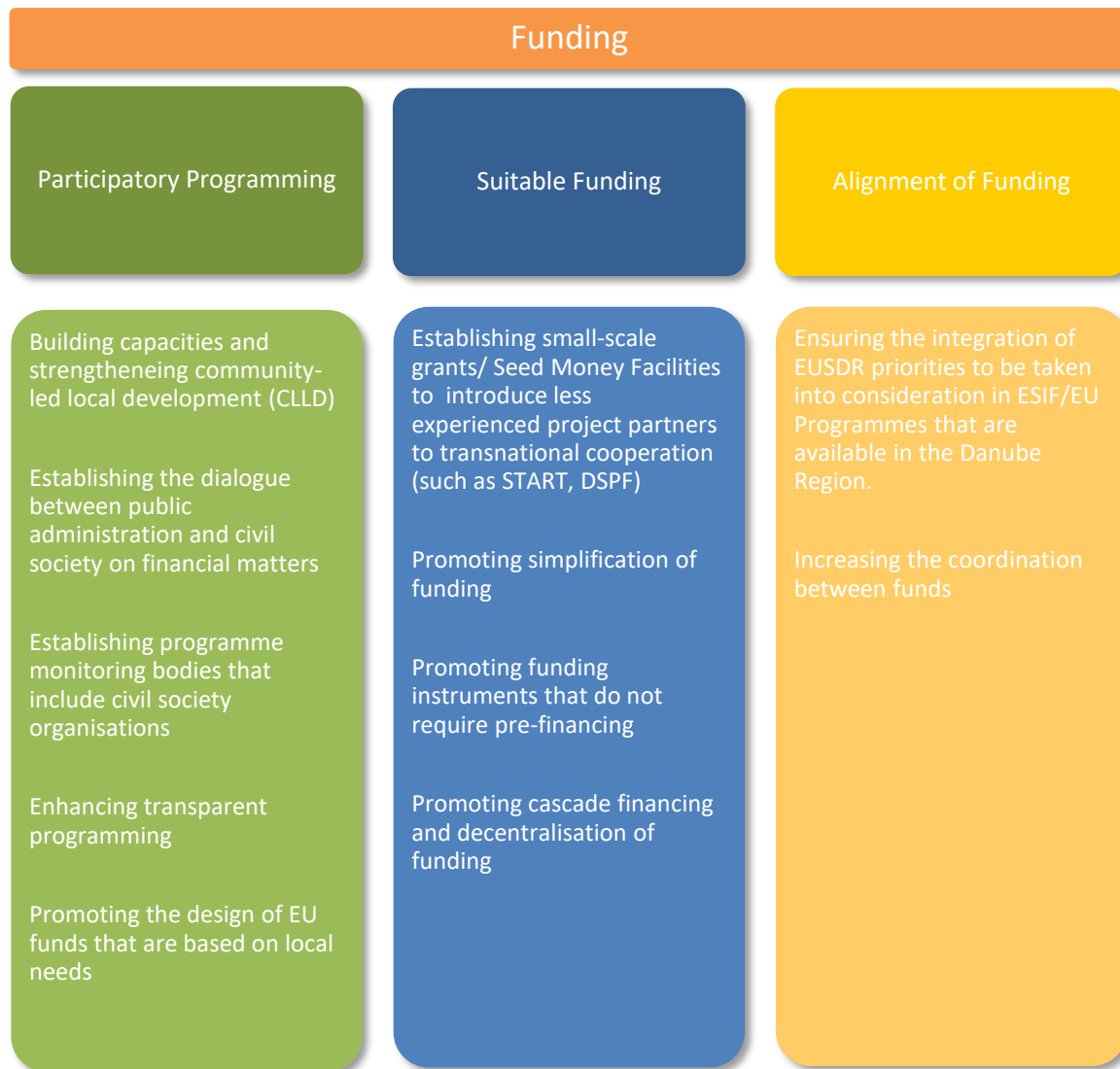
- V. To foster cooperation built on mutual trust between state and non-state actors
- VI. To strengthen the involvement of civil society and local actors

Main outcomes of the D-LAP group discussion:



Group Discussion on Funding

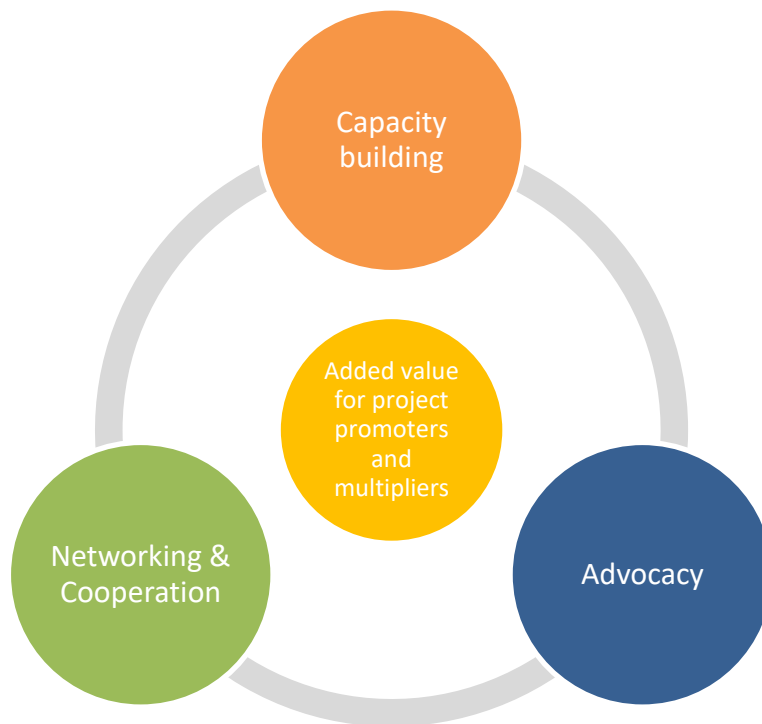
- II. To review bottlenecks relating to the low absorption rate of EU funds
- III. To support better coordination of funding
- IV. To test and support innovative funding solutions (for local actors and civil society)



Expectations on the future cooperation within the Danube Local Actors Platform

- Against the background of the revised EUSDR Action Plan, the members of the Danube Local Actors Platform discuss needs, expectations and requirements for the future cooperation within the D-LAP with a particular view on the following dimensions:
 - the Project Partner/Multiplier perspective
 - the Project perspective and
 - the stakeholder perspective

How can the Danube Local Actors Platform support project partners & multipliers to contribute to the EUSDR Action Plan?



Capacity building

- Exchanging good/best practices to inspire and encourage project promoters
- Enhancing awareness and knowledge about developments in the EUSDR
- Sharing information on funding, policies, initiatives etc. from the Danube Region and beyond
- Strengthening capacities for communication and project development

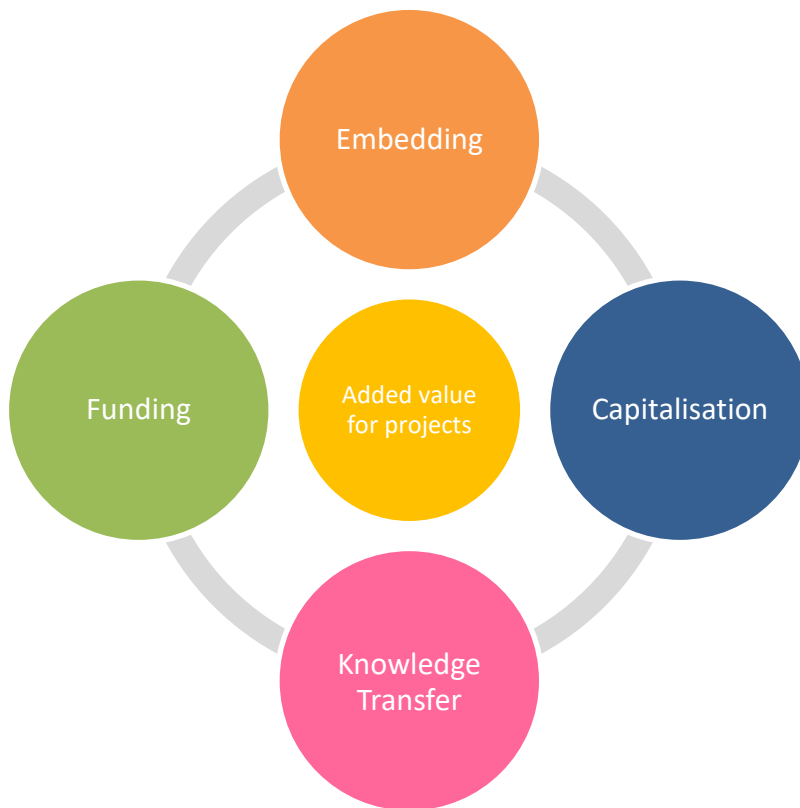
Networking & Cooperation

- Providing a platform to build trust
- Stimulating exchange between local actors, civil society and academia
- Supporting public-private dialogue
- Continuing support for National Participation Days & Danube Participation Days

Advocacy

- Fostering the link between D-LAP & EUSDR core governance

How can the Danube Local Actors Platform support projects to be stronger embedded in the strategy and/or policy processes in the Danube Region?



- Embedding
- Enhancing communication on D-LAP project results to feed them into policy processes in the EUSDR/Danube Region and ensuring information flow between D-LAP and Steering Group
- Strengthening the integration of innovative projects/initiatives into the Danube Strategy
- Enhancing the communication/exchange/training on tools and topics based on the EUSDR Action Plan in order to better link project ideas to the topics addressed in the Danube Strategy
- Ensuring

Capitalisation

- Identifying and exchanging good practices of local actors and civil society
- Promoting thematic events/group discussions to share best practices and facilitate synergies

Knowledge Transfer

- Improving the visualisation of topics and initiatives (e.g. use of maps, icons etc.) to improve understanding and overview of initiatives and progress in the Danube Region
- Using databases with potential partners for upcoming projects and/or project ideas

Funding

- Organising meetings with funders/donors (e.g. donors conferences)

How can the Danube Local Actors Platform support stakeholders to shape the institutional capacity and multi-level governance in the Danube Region?



Policy Formulation

- Developing (political) messages stating needs and perspectives from local actors and civil society.
- Formulating positions towards decision-making bodies in the EUSDR.

Policy Dialogue

- Creating/Establishing a sounding board for multi-sectoral dialogue
- Facilitating bottom-up discussions and sharing information
- Creating new communication channels for local actors and civil society

Stakeholder Representation

- Advocating involvement of civil society and local actors in the governance structure of the EUSDR

Outlook by Claudia Singer

- Claudia SINGER thanks all the participants for their active participation in the discussion and for the input provided as well as the speakers for their inspiring presentations. The results of the discussions will be used to further develop the revised actions of the EUSDR Action Plan and for the future development of the D-LAP.



- End of Meeting -