

## EUSDR Report June 2012

### PRIORITY AREA 7 *TO DEVELOP THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY THROUGH RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES*

*[General remarks:*

- *Please base your drafting on concrete facts and examples. Vague and general comments (e.g. "the situation is progressing favourably and quite rapidly") should be avoided.*
- *Please bear in mind that a main aim of the report is to illustrate what is happening (i.e. increasing/ decreasing/ changing...) because of the Strategy.*
- *If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us in DG Regional Policy. If you leave a section blank, please justify why.]*

#### **1. OVERALL PROGRESS**

##### **1.1. State of play**

*[Work done so far on policies, actions and projects; Any lessons learned, positive or negative; Next steps/ challenges? What, if anything, is missing in order to achieve the planned goals? Please describe the most important outcomes and explicitly highlight events/ discussions/ results that are happening or being speeded up because of the Strategy. Please also be as concrete as possible, while bearing in mind that progress that may seem obvious to you may not be obvious to outsiders.]*

The PA7 Steering Group has started its work on coordination PA7 priorities and their implementation in the Danube macro-Region just after the first Steering Group meeting held in the late June 2012. Since then the main focus was put in regard to policy level recognition of the PA7 targets, actions and possible funding, as well as on the networking with the most relevant stakeholders who are seen to vastly support reaching defined targets, such as EC DG Research&Innovation, DG Education&Culture, Joint Research Centre - JRC, South-Eastern Cooperative Initiative – SECI, Institute for Danube Region and Central Europe – IDM, Central European Exchange Program for University Studies – CEEPUS, Knowledge Economy Network – KEN, Central European Initiative – CEI, Danube Rectors’ Conference – DRC, Alpe-Adria Rectors’ Conference – AARC and many other universities, research and business organizations from the Danube Region.

#### **PA7 POLICIES**

Right at the Kick-Off meeting in June 2012, the Steering Group has adopted leading policies and principles that will shape its work in the future, relaying them on three pillars: **excellence, complementarity and networking**. For the same meeting the SG members have collected first inputs on the subject of centres of excellence and smart specialization in their countries and micro-regions, while the input regarding funding possibilities for R&D projects, mobility schemes, as well as “brain drain” vs. “brain circulation” was provided on later meetings.

#### **PA7 TARGETS**

The list of targets was extended at the third SG meeting and, at the moment, it counts the set of following targets, principally in line with umbrella strategy EUROPE 2020, also expected to be reached by the Danube Region countries before year 2020:

- To invest 3% of GDP in Research and Development by 2020
- Broadband access for all EU citizens in the Region by 2013
- Increase the number of patents obtained in the Region by 50%
- Greater share of EU population age 30-34 with tertiary education – aiming towards 40% by 2020
- To reach 20% of academic mobility by 2020.

## PA7 PROJECTS AND SUPPORT

Shortly after the first activities were taken and first project proposal arrived at the address of PACs and SG members, the PACs and PA7 Steering Group has started to analyse the possibilities and mechanisms for “project labelling” (Letters of Recommendations). That discussion has opened the new issue and put PA7 in slightly different position on the subject of scale, number and possible funding of the projects which are supportive towards the PA7 targets, comparing to other more infrastructure-oriented EUSDR priority areas. Namely, it became obvious that the list of stakeholders and possible project leaders includes not only relevant ministries and governmental institutions from the Danube Region countries, but the long list of education institutions, research organizations, clusters, civil society and business organizations from the entire region. Moreover, the available funds include EC funds for education, research and ICT, many regional, joint and national funds, which support projects in the fields of importance for PA7 targets and actions.

After several sets of discussion during the meetings and e-mail correspondence, the new approach to recommending projects was proposed. In terms of PA7 targets and actions the SG decided to mobilize stakeholders to develop large scale projects, involving more Danube Region countries and producing visible impact in the entire Region. Beside the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF), which was recognised as flagship project at the very beginning and linked with the Technical Assistance Grant, several other projects, among some of which were mentioned in the EUSDR Action Plan for PA7, have been considered to be given the label of PA7 flagship project.

As one of the conclusions from the SG meeting IV the SG will adopt the guidelines for PA7 flagship projects listing clear set of several conditions (involving more Danube Region countries, strong impact in the Region, fully developed application with clear structure, partnership and funding etc) a project has to fulfil in order to be recognised as PA7 flagship project. It will be annexed to the Rules of Procedure.

## POLICY LEVEL RECOGNITION

Alongside with those “large” Danube projects, the PA7 will welcome many other projects which will contribute reaching regional targets and would like to be well informed on them and their progress, as well as their possibilities to become larger projects and involve more countries during the upcoming years.

This was one of the conclusions of the third SG meeting. After the discussion, the SG defined its position concerning letters of recommendation and labelling, following the

meeting of PACs and NCPs in Bucharest, where it was acknowledged that not all PAs should go for letter of recommendation and labelling, but instead should focus their work on policy level recognition of the targets and actions.

Following both conclusions in April 2012 Prof. Miroslav Veskovc in his power of PAC has participated in the meeting with high representatives of EC DGs: Mr. Colin Wolfe, DG Regio, Mr. Dimitri Corpakis, DG Research&Innovation and Mr. Claus Körner, DG Education&Culture, regarding policy recognition of PA7 targets in future calls for projects coordinated by DGs present at the meeting and possible PA7 SG participation in the programmes' committees.

### ROADMAP FOR ACTION AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

At the previous SG meetings and via the e-mailing the SG members have discussed on several occasions the draft documents of the Roadmap for PA7 Actions and the Rules of Procedure. Both documents were adopted during the fourth SG meeting held in Vienna in June 2012. The first document - the Roadmap for PA7 actions (annex 1) defines milestones, outputs, deadlines, responsible institutions/persons, as well as flagship projects and possible funding in function of reaching PA7 targets and implementing actions listed in the Action Plan. Future steps of the PA7 SG are listed in the document. The SG agreed to make the Roadmap document live and update it regularly, especially in reference to the period 2014-2020.

The other one – Rules of Procedure (annex 3) sets main procedures how Steering Group works and makes decisions to enable effectively coordination of activities in regard to strengthening Knowledge Society in the Region.

### OBSTACLES AND SHORTCOMINGS

On the side of the obstacles and shortcomings faced so far, there were times when it seemed that the Steering Group was not coherent and that its power greatly depends on the role and position of each member in its home institution/country. Moreover, there are some countries which have never participated in the meetings or have attended only one meeting, being also invisible in online discussions. These issues were discussed during the joint NPCs and PACs meeting in Bucharest in February 2012, after which there were apparent more improvements in that context. However, there is still open space for upgrading. First of all for better representation in the meetings and in the time between the meetings, as well as for more focused, more intensive and more frequent communication among SG members, plus between the SG members, on one side, and policy makers and stakeholders in their home countries, on the other. It would lead to enhanced networking and efficient complementarities of the actions which are being realized by different stakeholders in the Region. Furthermore, the good communication between SG members and policy makers/stakeholders in their countries is crucial for all policy level actions, such as establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF), improvement of competitive regional research infrastructure, joint mobility schemes, development of regional smart specialization strategies, etc. Moreover, better representation of national ICT authorities in the future work of the Steering Group should give stronger support to fulfilling the ICT set of actions defined in the Action Plan and developing clear steps to their operational implementation.

Also for some countries and stakeholders the “Three No” of the EUSDR, mainly the one in connection with the financing of the activities within the Danube Strategy, has raised doubt on the subject of the assets of the Strategy and evoked questions due to the facts

that even without the Strategy scientific-research projects did apply for support (more or less successfully) from existing European grant schemes. To overcome these issues the strong support and understanding of the Strategy on behalf of national policymakers are precondition for better utilization of the present legislative, existing supportive institutions as well as the available (and not always utilized) financial mechanism.

## THE STRATEGY – IMPORTANT OUTCOMES

The Strategy has definitely accelerated the idea of the Danube Region INCO.NET and the future Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF), the enrichment of academic mobility scheme under the existing CEEPUS programme and starting new joint university studies. The Strategy has also given more light to the requirement of writing and adopting regional smart specialization strategies (with expert support from the JRC) and to the better linking and networking among all relevant stakeholder institutions. Moreover, it has brought together representatives from Danube Region countries to discuss and support together the large scale projects in the field of education, research and ICT. The value of the relevant projects will not be judged only by the specific expertise in lays upon, but through the involvement of a number of Danube Region countries and regional impact they can produce. The networking and joint actions are gaining more and more focus because of the Strategy.

## MAIN NETWORKING AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The list of activities and meetings attended by PACs and SG members aiming to present and promote EUSDR PA7 includes 4 SG meetings and a number of events that have built up grounds for future intensive joint work and starting new, both small and larger scale projects:

- *May 2011 – PA7 PACs meeting in Bratislava; topics: coordination of the PA7 and meeting with the representatives of the Slovak Government*
- *May 2011 – Joint meeting of NCPs and PACs PA7, Godollo, Hungary*
- *May 2011 – meeting of the Slovak Steering Group for PA7, Bratislava, Slovakia*
- *May 2011 – hand-over meeting PA7, Bratislava, Slovakia*
- *May 2011 – meeting of the steering Platform on research for Western Balkan Countries PA7, Ohrid, Macedonia*
- *May 2011 – Coordinator PA7 1<sup>st</sup> Expert workshop Twin region, Vienna, Austria*
- *May 2011 – Coordinator PA7 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Danube Region Strategy Labgroup, Budapest, Hungary*
- *June 2011 – Consultation meetings PA 7, Bratislava, Slovakia*
- ***June 2012 – First PA7 Steering Group meeting in Novi Sad, Serbia***
- *June/July 2011 – First General Assembly of the Danube Civil Society Forum, Eisenstadt, Austria*
- *August 2011 – PA7 PACs meeting in Bratislava; topics: coordination of the PA7*
- ***September 2011 – Second PA7 Steering Group meeting in Bratislava, Slovakia***
- *September 2011 – Consultation meeting TA and Flagship project DRRIF, Bratislava, Slovakia*
- *September 2011 – Coordinator PA7 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Danube Academic Conference, Vienna, Austria*
- *October 2011 – “Developing Bio-based Economy – Contributions and Needs of the Danube Region”, conference held in Brussels*

- *October 2011 – PA7 PACs meeting in Bratislava*
- *December 2011 – Conference “The Paradox of the Bologna Process – Education, Mobility and Employment in the Danube Region”, held in Vienna*
- *December 2011 – January 2012 – several meetings Prof. Veskovic held with Dr Erhard Busek, the coordinator of the South-Eastern Cooperative Initiative – SECI and president of the Institute for Danube Region and Central Europe – IDM*
- *January 2012 – PA7 Coordinator consultations meeting, Vienna, Austria*
- *February 2012 – Slovak SG meeting for PA7, Bratislava, Slovakia*
- *February 2012 – 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of EUSDR NCP and PAC, Bucharest, Romania*
- *February 2012 – the Danube Rectors’ Conference Presidency meeting, with discussion on Danube Strategy and special emphasize on the academic mobility in the Region*
- *February 2012 – Meeting with Ms Elisabeth Sorantin, Secretary General of the Central European Exchange Program for University Studies regarding new possibilities for enhancing mobility in the Region*
- *March 2012 – Conference “Higher Education development TRENDS”, held on Kopaonik mountain, Serbia.*
- *March 2012 – Third PA7 Steering Group meeting in Pecs, Hungary*
- *March 2012 – Conference „EUREKA for smart regions” Pecs, Hungary*
- *March 2012 – Coordinator PA7 Danube Financing Dialogue, Vienna, Austria*
- *March 2012 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Danube Academies Conference, Smolenice, Slovakia*
- *April 2012 – Workshop “Business–Academia partnership for reviving EU growth”, CEI and KEN, held in Ljubljana*
- *April 2012 - Conference “Scientific Support to the Danube Strategy - Environment protection, irrigation and agricultural development, navigability, energy production and European governance”, JRC, Brussels*
- *April 2012 – Project partners meeting “Master of Danube Studies”, Ulm*
- *April 2012 – Meeting with high representatives of EC DGs: Mr. Colin Wolfe, DG Regio, Mr. Dimitri Corpakis, DG Research&Innovation and Mr. Claus Körner, DG Education&Cluture, regarding policy recognition of PA7 targets in future calls for projects coordinated by DGs present at the meeting.*
- *May 2012 - Conference in Munich organized by Bavarian State Chancellery, where Prof. Veskovic presented his experience as PAC in implementation of EUSDR with special reference to the Knowledge Society*
- *June 2012 - The Week of Innovative Regions WIRE2012 Conference, Krakow, Poland*
- *June 2012 – Working meeting with high representatives of Joint Research Centre regarding PA7 and JRC flagship projects and collaboration, Brussels*
- *June 2012- Coordinator PA7 meetings with the Slovak State Secretary (MoE SR) and the Office of Government SR, Bratislava*
- *June 2012 - Coordinator PA7 representing on a Conference presentation of new Danube institute, Munich, Germany*
- *June 2012 - Next Generation Bio-fuels, preparatory meeting, Central European Initiative, Trieste*
- *June 2012 - Preparatory Brainstorming meeting INCO-NET Danube Region, Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI), Vienna, Austria*
- *June 2012 - Fourth PA7 Steering Group meeting in Vienna.*

“SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT TO THE DANUBE STRATEGY”

**Kick-off event "Science for the Danube Strategy", 25 January 2012, Sofia**

An initiative “*Scientific support for the Danube Strategy*” aiming at providing a strong scientific base for the implementation of this Strategy was launched by the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Academies of Sciences of four countries in the Danube region in Budapest in November 2011, during the Fifth edition of the World Science Forum. A letter of intent for closer cooperation was signed by the JRC, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS), the Romanian Academy (RA) and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS). Later on in January 2012 representatives from the parties to the Initiative have met in Bulgaria to identify the key priorities of the scientific cooperation. In February the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OAW) joined the initiative, while the Bavarian Academy of Sciences (BAdW) followed in March.

The high level conference “*Scientific support to the Danube Strategy: Environment protection, navigability, energy production, irrigation and agriculture development and European governance*” was held in April 2012 in Brussels and brought together 100 attendees, among whom policy makers, the scientists and interested stakeholders, including Maros Sefcovic, vice president of the European Commission. Attendees discussed key challenges in implementing the EUSDR, focusing on the four pillars of the initiative: environmental protection, irrigation and agricultural development, navigability and energy production. The need for better European governance in the area, as already identified by the European Council was also addressed, and concrete cooperation and coordination actions were discussed.

The Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic also joined the Initiative at the conference.

The main recommendations regarding the scientific support to the Danube Strategy resulting from the conference can be summarised as follows:

- Need for a **trans-disciplinary and transnational cooperation involving all relevant actors**, including the scientific community (Sciences Academies, Universities and other research organisations), the policy makers at EU, national and regional level as well as the industry;
- Need to **identify and focus on a limited number of key priorities**;
- Need to obtain a **better overview of all research, initiatives and resources** which are available and to **gather the existing research results** on the Danube Region in a structured and harmonised data set which could be used by policy makers across the Danube Region and will serve as a starting ground for the launch of large-scale projects in the future.

Some of the countries have already launched a mapping of running projects at bilateral and EU level between Danube countries in order to identify the areas where additional partnership is needed (Austria, Bulgaria)

The initiative is open to other National Academies of the Danube Region countries and relevant research bodies from the region to join in, contribute and benefit from the common activities of the partnership.

## **1.2. Process**

*[Work done so far on governance: PACs, Steering Groups, links with stakeholders; Significant changes in your work/network approach resulting from the Strategy (e.g. larger networks, more visibility), including any problems encountered and any solutions found; Publicity measures (such as website, stakeholder seminars, publications, ...) etc..]*

The coordination of the PA7 is led jointly by Slovakia, represented by Dr Lubomir Faltan, Vice-president of the Slovak Academy of Science and Serbia, represented by Prof. Dr Miroslav Veskovic, Rector of the University of Novi Sad. PACs have undertaken so far a number of activities on coordination and promotion of PA7 targets and actions, through networking and involvement of relevant stakeholders, both prominent experts and organizations (other PAs, education institutions, research organizations, clusters, civil society and business organizations), aiming to encourage applicable institutions and organization to link and start joint projects towards development of Knowledge Society in the Danube Region.

Representatives of the Countries of the Danube Region have established a Steering Group for the implementation of Priority Area 7 - "To develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies" in order to advise and assist Serbia and Slovakia in their capacity as PACs, for the smooth implementation of PA 7 and to ensure that suitable actions are anchored all over the region and in all participating states. More details on role of the Steering Group are available in the document Rules of Procedure (annex 4).

There are three types of membership in the SG:

- Members nominated by the Partner States (appointed by relevant ministries for education, science and research) with a right to vote (max two representatives per each EUSDR Partner State, with a right of one vote per country)
- Other regular members with an observer status (relevant international organizations and Coordinators of other Priority Areas, specially PA 8 and PA 9)
- Invited members with an advisory capacity (European Commission: DG REGIO, DGRESEARCH and INNOVATION, DG EDUCATION and CULTURE, etc.)

The list of the PA7 Steering Group members is attached (annex 3).

So far four SG meetings were held: in June 2011 in Novi Sad, Serbia, September 2011 in Bratislava, Slovakia, March 2012 in Pecs, Hungary and June 2012 in Vienna, Austria.

In the work of the Steering Group there is a significant discrepancy in the involvement, motivation and activity among SG members. At the meetings held so far there was serious lack of active participation on behalf of some partner states. Then again, there are states very keen to speed up activities and strengthen Danube Strategy in practice. Among the most active countries are Hungary, Austria, Slovakia and Serbia, as well as Baden Württemberg. Aiming to drive attention to the issue, Prof. Veskovic has expressed his concerns during the joint NPCs and PACs meeting in Bucharest in February 2012, after which the practical assistance of the DG Regio was requested in order to enhance more active participation of all the partner states. Some improvements have evolve, however there is still open ground for more effective involvement of some parties.

Under the subtitle *State of play* please find list of the most important meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences that were attended by PACs and SG members in order to give wide publicity to the Danube Strategy and especially to the Priority Area 7.

Moreover, PA7 process may refer also to the stages of evolvement of the PACs and SG work:

- At the common meetings of the coordinators of the PA7, with the assistance of Ms. Eva Nussmueller, EC DG Regio, the project of Technical Assistance for the PA7 was elaborated together with specific (the flagship) project DRRIF (July – August – September 2011)

- The result of the SC meetings in Novi Sad and Bratislava was also the informal call for proposals focusing on networking among research and educational subjects of the Danube Region in form of the joint projects which will offer solutions to the most relevant issues in the Region
- PACs have collected (besides the TA project and the DRRIF project) 19 projects (List of the projects is available in the Annex 2) which applied for the formal support of the PA7, as projects which do comply with the needs of the Danube Region.
- During the IV Steering Group meeting the Roadmap for PA7 actions and the Rules of Procedure were adopted, shaping the future work of the SG.

Problems and challenges faced in the process of coordination:

- ✚ The participation of the representatives of the member states at the SG meetings was very low, mainly in Novi Sad and in Bratislava
- ✚ The majority of the 19 project proposals applying for the formal support did not, except from Meritor point of view, include complete information about the project, in the sense of evaluation criteria (mainly within which grant scheme they would like to apply for financial support, a detailed specification of partners is missing and their preliminary acceptance at the project, implementation period of the project)
- ✚ As well as it was not clear what kind of value will have the Letter of Recommendation for projects accepted by the SG PA7, from the side of the relevant grant scheme, in which the projects are applying for a grant.

### 1.3. Funding

*[Work done so far on funding: use of existing funds, new financial instruments, etc..]*

As highlighted previously, there are some exceptional conditions in the very centre of the PA7 targets and actions, which give different light to the nature of applicable institutions, relevant projects and funding. Going straight to the point, PA7 targets and actions do not only involve states, ministries and government organizations, but primary are expected to be implemented by the long list of institutions and organizations (including universities, research institutes, NGOs, business organizations, etc) that are recognised to be project leaders and network within the Danube Region. Being unable to reach PA7 targets only though several large scale projects for which full involvement of Danube countries and formal approval of the SG is crucial, but at the same time encouraging many smaller ones and going towards targets through their synergy have enlighten the SG of the need to gain policy level recognition of the PA7 targets and actions.

In the attempt to gain policy level recognition in the framework of funding schemes of the EC (e.g. EC community and structural programmes), Prof. Veskovic, in his power of PAC, has initiated formal meeting with high representatives of relevant EC DGs: DR Regio, DG Research&Innovation and DG Education&Culture asking for recognition of PA7 priorities in the future calls for funding and access to program committees. The meeting with Mr. Colin Wolfe, DG Regio, Mr. Dimitri Corpakis, DG Research&Innovation and Mr. Claus Körner, DG Education&Cluture, held in April in Brussels was the first one dealing with the need for policy recognition of PA7 targets in future calls for projects coordinated by DGs.



Regarding research and innovation projects there is emerging idea on establishment of INCO.NET for the Danube Region that will release new possibility for funding. The Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund should join and coordinate some of the available funds for bilateral, regional, as well as national resources, in addition to attracting applicable EU funding schemes. On the other hand, building upon good practice of the CEEPUS programme funding, more intensive mobility flows are expected, designed especially for the Danube Region countries.

To offer the short overview of the present and possible future funding scheme:

- The EU sources (DG REGIO) Technical Assistance Grant finance present coordination activities of the PACs and financially support the feasibility study for the specific project DRRIF (Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund),
- Projects applying for Recommendation Letter should apply for financing within the existing financial grant schemes on European, regional or national level,
- If in the future it would be possible to evolve the DRRIF (as financial support scheme building on the positive experience of the BONUS)
- Policy level recognition - for the future it is possible the Danube Region would become an official regional structure of the EU with supporting financial mechanisms from the side of the EU for enforcing the ideas of the Danube Strategy.

#### **1.4. Next steps**

Activities within the PA 7 are defined in the Roadmap for PA7 actions, annexed to this Report.

Special attention would be given to the start up of the DRRIF project, which is delayed due to complications within the procurement process (problem with the selection of the public procurer). At the present the problem is solved and the whole dossier necessary for the public procurement will be submitted for publication at the European Official Journal.

Also, closer collaboration with the PA8 PACs and Steering Group is agreed in order to gain better utilization of available resources and recognition of Danube Strategy in the region and among relevant stakeholders.

## 2. PROGRESS BY TARGET

[Remark: Please link the actions of the Action Plan to the targets proposed. If this link is difficult to establish, please indicate what needs to be done/ what is planned to solve this. Please also link the projects to the actions.]

### 2.1. "TO INVEST 3% OF GDP IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BY 2020"

#### 2.1.1. Action: "To cooperate in implementing the flagship initiative "Innovation Union"<sup>1</sup> of the Europe 2020 Strategy" in the Danube Region countries"

Progress in the implementation of the action:

##### **Milestone n°1: Identify the centres of excellence and potentials for smart specialization in the Danube Region**

- **Work:** Each country should enlist its centres of excellence, including existing and potential ones (closely linked to action – **TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE**), present the state of the art regarding PA7 targets and analyse national strategy/plan for upcoming period to 2020 in reference to regional/national smart specialization strategy/ies.  
✓ **Output:** List of centres of excellence, State of the art regarding PA7 targets (EU 2020 targets in relevant fields),  
→ **Responsible:** SG members, PA8 SG members; **Deadline:** 30/09/12
- **Project:** Creation of the Danube Region Reference-Data and Services Infrastructure (Danube RDSI)  
✓ **Output:** Comparable and harmonised scientific data on various issues (such as water and soil quality, population, landscapes...etc.) related to the Danube Region  
→ **Funding:** EU grants; **Responsible:** Joint Research Centre; **Deadline:** 01/04/13

##### **Milestone °2: Establish a peer-review mechanism of regional smart specialization strategies in the Danube macro-region**

- **Work:** Support writing regional smart specialization strategies (for each micro-region in the Danube macro-region, or national with special reference to each micro-region, as well as beyond micro-regions) as one of the preconditions for access to future EU cohesion funds, in close cooperation with Joint Research Centre (JRC):
  - Smart Specialisation peer-review workshop, September 28, 2012, Pisa, Italy
  - Raising awareness and disseminating knowledge on the concept of smart specialisation and the process of establishing smart specialisation strategies, November 2012
  - Danube Region peer-review workshop where the specific regions from the Danube Region would present their strategies and discuss them, March 2013The work should be carried out in coordination with Joint Research Centre (JRC), as well as with national and international PA8 SG members.  
✓ **Output:** drafting Regional Smart Specialization Strategies  
→ **Responsible:** PACs, JRC, SG members and PA8; **Deadline:** 30/09/13

List of projects associated with the action:

- **Creation of the Danube Region Reference-Data and Services Infrastructure (Danube RDSI)**  
✓ **Output:** Comparable and harmonised scientific data on various issues (such as water and soil quality, population, landscapes...etc.) related to the Danube Region  
→ **Funding:** EU grants; **Responsible:** Joint Research Centre; **Deadline:** 01/04/13

<sup>1</sup> The "Innovation Union" – turning ideas into jobs, green growth and social progress (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1288&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>)

**2.1.2. Action: "To coordinate better national, regional and EU funds to stimulate excellence in research and development, in research areas specific for the Danube Region"**

Progress in the implementation of the action:

**Milestone n°3: Identify national, regional and EU funds for research and innovation**

- *Work:* Each country should provide information (internet-links or lists of funding sources and/or programmes) about its national, bilateral and regional funds for research and innovation, including funding possibilities and priorities, while EC DG Regio + InterAct should prepare the overview of the research and innovation EU funding possibilities (with the special emphasize on budget framework for 2014-2020)
  - ✓ *Output:* Overview of funding possibilities - collection of links to sources of information on the national, bilateral, regional and EU funds for research and innovation
  - *Responsible:* SG members, DG Regio + InterAct; *Deadline:* 30/09/12

**Milestone n°4: Call for tender to find partner organization for establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF) – PA7 Flagship Project**

- *Work:* PACs should open call for project on the establishment of DRRIF and select the best project application
  - ✓ *Output:* project applications, selected project for the establishment of DRRIF
  - *Responsible:* PACs, SG members; *Deadlines: for opening call:* 01/09/12, *closing call:* 31/10/12, *selecting the partner/project:* 30/11/12

**Milestone n°5: Feasibility study for the establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF<sup>2</sup>) – PA7 Flagship Project**

- *Work:* SG members should adopt feasibility study on the establishment of DRRIF developed by the partner organization elected in the milestone n°4
  - ✓ *Output:* Feasibility study for the establishment of DRRIF
  - ✓ *Final output:* recommendation on phases, timeframe and relevant outputs in the process of establishing the DRRIF
  - *Responsible:* PACs, organization elected in Milestone n°4, SG members; *Deadline for submitting report:* 15/10/13

**Milestone n°6: Establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF)**

- *Work:* PACs and the SG should monitor the implementation of phases, in reference to the adopted timeframe and relevant outputs in the process of the establishment of the DRRIF. Support and lobby for funding mechanisms (e.g. "common pots") for funding future R&I in the Danube Region (based on the Milestone n°3 outputs)

The DRRIF should provide relevant procedures and documents for managing the first call for projects

  - ✓ *Output:* Establishment of the DRRIF, funding mechanism for the first call and drafting the first call
  - *Funding:* Specific project of the PA TA; *Responsible:* PACs, DRRIF, SG members; *Deadline:* 15/07/14

List of projects associated with the action:

- **Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund – DRRIF** ( full description will be in annex 2)

<sup>2</sup> DRRIF should establish network and partnership of key agencies funding research, with the aim to deepen the understanding of conditions for science-based progress of the Danube Region, and should be operated in close connection with the scientific and management actors, based on experience with BONUS 2003-2008.

On the latter stages DRRIF could involve research funding organizations from all Danube Region states and run calls for multilateral research projects within the framework of the EUSDR priorities and actions. Each country should be involved in design of collaborative Danube Region R&I projects, following experience of BONUS 2009-2011.

Finally, the DRRIF should be recognised by EC as new research and development programme for science-based management of the European regions, in particular Danube Regions, based on experience of BONUS 2010-2016.

## 2.2. "BROADBAND ACCESS FOR ALL EU CITIZENS IN THE REGION BY 2013"

### 2.2.1. Action: "To develop and implement strategies to improve the provision and uptake of Information and Communication Technologies in the Danube Region"

Progress in the implementation of the action:

#### **Milestone n°11: Define feasible mechanisms to support projects that improve computer literacy in the Danube Region**

- *Work:* Analyse the current status of the computer literacy in the Danube Region, provision and uptake of ICT and define mechanisms to support projects that will improve the current conditions.
  - ✓ *Output:* Feasible mechanisms to support projects that improve computer literacy and ICT uptake in the Danube Region
  - *Responsible:* Relevant ministries, SG members, SG Working Group for ICT; *Deadline:* 01/12/12
- *Projects:*
  - **"To build upon the existing projects to promote the Information Society in lagging or in rural areas<sup>3</sup>".** This could be done by encouraging stakeholders of the Danube Region to join existing EU projects<sup>4</sup>.
  - **"To build upon the existing projects to promote the Information Society for SMEs<sup>5</sup>".** This could be done by encouraging stakeholders of the Danube Region to join or build upon existing EU projects<sup>6</sup>
  - **"To provide ICT based training for the general public, especially for prioritized target groups such as low-income, elderly or disabled".** The e-Hungary Public Internet Access Points, setting the frame for several projects, could serve as an example. Among others, the programme e-Consultants, provides educational ICT training and thus fosters the digital competences of the general public. (Lead: Hungary)
  - **"Integration of Roma people in economy and society of the Danube Region countries"** - Support ICT education of Roma youth and provide them with regular access to the Internet.
- ✓ *Output:* Project applications
- *Funding:* EU grants; *Responsible:* Bavaria, Andrassy University Budapest; *Deadline:* 01/01/13

List of projects associated with the action:

- **"To build upon the existing projects to promote the Information Society in lagging or in rural areas<sup>7</sup>".** This could be done by encouraging stakeholders of the Danube Region to join existing EU projects<sup>8</sup>.
- **"To build upon the existing projects to promote the Information Society for SMEs<sup>9</sup>".** This could be done by encouraging stakeholders of the Danube Region to join or build upon existing EU projects<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The CADSES programme (INTERREG IIIB) has financed two important projects in this fields: TELEACCESS (creation of telecenters to support access to the Information Society in rural areas) and EMBRACE (network of SMEs providing tools to their members such as e-commerce facilities).

<sup>4</sup> In particular, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme foresees the possibility to have partners joining an existing project.

<sup>5</sup> The CADSES programme (INTERREG IIIB) has financed two important projects in this fields: EMBRACE (network of SMEs providing tools to their members such as e-commerce facilities) and ELISA (e-learning platform for SMEs). Also, the CIP-ICT Policy Support Programme is supporting the RFID-ROI-SME project which aims at raising awareness of European SMEs on the potential of RFID to foster their integration into global competition while enhancing their productivity.

<sup>6</sup> In particular, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, PROGRESS and LLL foresee the possibility to have partners joining an existing project.

<sup>7</sup> The CADSES programme (INTERREG IIIB) has financed two important projects in this fields: TELEACCESS (creation of telecenters to support access to the Information Society in rural areas) and EMBRACE (network of SMEs providing tools to their members such as e-commerce facilities).

<sup>8</sup> In particular, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme foresees the possibility to have partners joining an existing project.

<sup>9</sup> The CADSES programme (INTERREG IIIB) has financed two important projects in this fields: EMBRACE (network of SMEs providing tools to their members such as e-commerce facilities) and ELISA (e-learning platform for SMEs). Also, the CIP-ICT Policy Support Programme is supporting the RFID-ROI-SME project which aims at raising awareness of European SMEs on the potential of RFID to foster their integration into global competition while enhancing their productivity.

- **“To provide ICT based training for the general public, especially for prioritized target groups such as low-income, elderly or disabled”**. The e-Hungary Public Internet Access Points, setting the frame for several projects, could serve as an example. Among others, the programme e-Consultants, provides educational ICT training and thus fosters the digital competences of the general public. (Lead: Hungary)
- **“Integration of Roma people in economy and society of the Danube Region countries”** - Support ICT education of Roma youth and provide them with regular access to the Internet.

#### 2.2.2. Action: “To draw up internet strategies”

Progress in the implementation of the action:

*[There are no concrete milestones linked to this action so far. It is expected to update the Roadmap during next SG meetings, especially those from the ICT set of actions, where better representation of experts in the SG is expected.]*

List of projects associated with the action:

→ *[Name of the project; a full description will be in annex 2.]*

#### 2.2.3. Action: “To use e-content and e-services to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public and private services”

Progress in the implementation of the action:

##### **Milestone n°12: Identify availability of infrastructure for e-contents and e-services and best practices in the Danube Region**

- *Work:* Identify e-contents and e-services, especially e-government, e-education, e-culture, e-health, e-business and e-inclusion, to improve public services (faster, more effective, more efficient and more accessible, saving resources on the side of the provider and user) by analysing availability of technical infrastructure such as broadband and technical equipment, capacity building and exchange of best practices regarding the design and implementation of e-content.
  - ✓ *Output:* Document “Availability of infrastructure for e-contents and e-services and best practices in the Danube Region”
  - *Responsible:* SG Working Group for ICT, relevant ministries, group of experts, DR Information Society; *Deadline:* 01/04/13
- *Projects:*
  - **“To increase the use of electronic signatures/ e-identification for e-commerce and e-administration”** in cooperation with authorities in the Danube Region, in line with the November 2008 Action Plan on e-signatures and e-authentication<sup>11</sup>. This also aims to ensure that electronic signature and authentication applications are interoperable across borders, following the Large Scale Pilot project STORK where many of the regions Member states are partners<sup>12</sup>. It should enable a cost-effective and a more expedient conduct in the provision of public services across the region. Experiences of the project S.A.F.E could be useful, especially with regard to the implementation phase.<sup>13</sup> (Lead: proposed by Slovenia)
  - **“To promote the availability of e-Government services across the region”**. This can act as a catalyst for the development of the whole region via e.g. projects designed to promote and facilitate cross-border e-Procurement such as the PEPPOL (Pan-European Public Procurement On-Line) project.<sup>14</sup> An overall vision for this project can be obtained through the Ministerial Declaration on e-Government<sup>15</sup> and the forthcoming EU e-Government Action Plan. (Lead: proposed by Slovenia, Baden Württemberg)

<sup>10</sup> In particular, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, PROGRESS and LLL foresee the possibility to have partners joining an existing project.

<sup>11</sup> COM(2008) 798, 28.11.2008

<sup>12</sup> [www.eid-stork.eu](http://www.eid-stork.eu)

<sup>13</sup> S.A.F.E. - Secure Access to Federated E-Justice/E-Government

<sup>14</sup> [www.peppol.eu](http://www.peppol.eu)

<sup>15</sup> November 2009, <http://www.egov2009.se/wp-content/uploads/Ministerial-Declaration-on-eGovernment.pdf>

- ***“To promote the availability of e-Health services across the Region”***. The Danube Region should aim at replicating and scaling up the preliminary results of the Large Scale Pilot project epSOS<sup>16</sup> aiming at developing, testing and validating interoperability of patient summaries and e-prescription across national borders, as well as of the Netc@rds project<sup>17</sup> aiming at facilitating access to and reimbursement of unplanned healthcare services received abroad. This would contribute to ensuring patient safety, increase efficiency of healthcare and support the economy. This action would be particularly relevant due to the high touristic nature of the Danube Region and the high mobility of citizens in the area (Lead: to proposed by DG Information Society).

**Milestone n°13: Analyse conditions for development of e-Commerce and identify best practices in Web Services and e-Commerce**

- **Work:** Each country should enlist legal requirements, rights and responsibilities of companies and entrepreneurs who want to trade goods through the Internet. Available e-commerce services of banks, postal operators and credit card companies, and their costs will be explored and compared as well. Other potential obstacles that inhibit widespread development of e-commerce will be identified through inquiries of SMEs who are involved in e-commerce, or could be interested in e-commerce. Current workforce for development of web services and e-commerce in DRCs will be examined in terms of the number of companies developing web services, their numbers of employees and productivity. Outsourcing activities will be included in the analysis. Also, the number of web sites, their quality and security will be analyzed and compared for different countries. Important indicators such as the percentage of companies having web sites with different features will be included in the report

✓ **Output:** Comprehensive list of conditions for development e-commerce in DRCs and their comparison and Recommendations of Best Practices for Web Services and e-Commerce, business opportunities in e-Commerce and best practices in Web Security”.

→ **Responsible:** Relevant ministries and chambers of commerce, group of experts from universities and companies who were involved in the web development; DG Information Society, SG Working Group for ICT (responsible for assembling a common document with a comparison of practices);  
**Deadline:** 01/07/13

List of projects associated with the action:

- ***“To increase the use of electronic signatures/ e-identification for e-commerce and e-administration”*** in cooperation with authorities in the Danube Region, in line with the November 2008 Action Plan on e-signatures and e-authentication<sup>18</sup>. This also aims to ensure that electronic signature and authentication applications are interoperable across borders, following the Large Scale Pilot project STORK where many of the regions Member states are partners<sup>19</sup>. It should enable a cost-effective and a more expedient conduct in the provision of public services across the region. Experiences of the project S.A.F.E could be useful, especially with regard to the implementation phase.<sup>20</sup> (Lead: proposed by Slovenia)
- ***“To promote the availability of e-Government services across the region”***. This can act as a catalyst for the development of the whole region via e.g. projects designed to promote and facilitate cross-border e-Procurement such as the PEPPOL (Pan-European Public Procurement On-Line) project.<sup>21</sup> An overall vision for this project can be obtained through the Ministerial Declaration on e-Government<sup>22</sup> and the forthcoming EU e-Government Action Plan. (Lead: proposed by Slovenia, Baden Württemberg)
- ***“To promote the availability of e-Health services across the Region”***. The Danube Region should aim at replicating and scaling up the preliminary results of the Large Scale Pilot project epSOS<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> [www.epsos.eu](http://www.epsos.eu)

<sup>17</sup> [www.netcards-project.com](http://www.netcards-project.com)

<sup>18</sup> COM(2008) 798, 28.11.2008

<sup>19</sup> [www.eid-stork.eu](http://www.eid-stork.eu)

<sup>20</sup> S.A.F.E. - Secure Access to Federated E-Justice/E-Government

<sup>21</sup> [www.peppol.eu](http://www.peppol.eu)

<sup>22</sup> November 2009, <http://www.egov2009.se/wp-content/uploads/Ministerial-Declaration-on-eGovernment.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> [www.epsos.eu](http://www.epsos.eu)

aiming at developing, testing and validating interoperability of patient summaries and e-prescription across national borders, as well as of the Netc@rds project<sup>24</sup> aiming at facilitating access to and reimbursement of unplanned healthcare services received abroad. This would contribute to ensuring patient safety, increase efficiency of healthcare and support the economy. This action would be particularly relevant due to the high touristic nature of the Danube Region and the high mobility of citizens in the area (Lead: to proposed by DG Information Society).

### 2.3. “INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PATENTS OBTAINED IN THE REGION BY 50%”

#### 2.3.1. Action: “To strengthen the capacities of research infrastructure”

Progress in the implementation of the action:

##### **Milestone n°7: Identify competitive research infrastructure in the Danube Region**

- *Work*: Each country should list its competitive research infrastructure and capacities to support Danube region innovation system, including existing EU and national programmes and initiatives which should be used as basis (should be done in coordination with other PAs)
  - ✓ *Output*: Comprehensive list of competitive research infrastructure and capacities for regional innovation system
  - *Responsible*: SG members; *Deadline*: 01/12/12
- *Projects*: To establish pilot project on Joint International Research Centre for advanced studies focusing on research topics related to the Danube River (pilot project proposed by Romania).
  - ✓ *Output*: Pilot project - proposed by Romania on a research centre focusing on research topics related to the Danube River.
  - *Funding*: EU grants; *Responsible*: Romania, SG members; *Deadline*: 01/06/13

##### **Milestone n°8: Agree on regional innovation system and target scientific areas with the most potential in the region**

- *Work*: Based on the outputs from the milestone n° 7, the SG with participation of DG Regio, DG Research&Innovation and DRRIF, should discuss and agree on the most relevant scientific areas in the Danube Region to focus on in the development of Regional Innovation Strategy, in reference to available funding possibilities for research and innovation listed in Milestone n°3.
  - ✓ *Output*: Regional Innovation System Strategy
  - *Responsible*: PACs, SG members, DG Regio, DG Research&Innovation, DRRIF; *Deadline*: 01/04/13

#### 2.3.2. Action: “To stimulate the emergence of innovative ideas for products and services and their wide validation in the field of the Information Society, using the concept of Living Labs”

Progress in the implementation of the action:

##### **Milestone n°14: Stimulate the emergence of innovative ideas for products and services using the concept of Living Labs**

- *Work*: Each country should support and stimulate linking relevant stakeholders (linking businesses, universities and public administration) and emergence of innovative ideas in the Danube Region
  - ✓ *Output*: List of Living Labs in the Region
  - *Responsible*: SG members, PACs, PA8; *Deadline*: 01/01/13
- *Projects*:
  - **“To promote innovation and business' success in new markets”** The project aims to foster and support the development of a more widespread innovation culture in and for new markets, including the initiatives to stimulate the creation of new markets, the diffusion of new technologies, enhancement of intellectual property protection and standards and impact assessments of new legislative or regulatory proposals on innovation.

<sup>24</sup> [www.netcards-project.com](http://www.netcards-project.com)

- **“Danube Creative Cluster”** The project envisages the following activities:  
 Establishment of a centre base in terms of premises, technologies and human resources for development of final creative product ready for market launch;  
 Development of a network among all points for exchange, development information, services for creation of transnational creative products. The network will extend also to existing institutions such museums, universities, musical houses, theatres, crafts and design associations reviving them for a new life;  
 Development of a database with creative and innovative potential;  
 Establishment of a financial engineering instrument for support of creative and innovative ideas and products, and their launch;  
 Common management and promotion of the final products, brand strategy and brand design. (Lead: Serbia).

List of projects associated with the action:

- **“To promote innovation and business' success in new markets”** The project aims to foster and support the development of a more widespread innovation culture in and for new markets, including the initiatives to stimulate the creation of new markets, the diffusion of new technologies, enhancement of intellectual property protection and standards and impact assessments of new legislative or regulatory proposals on innovation.
- **“Danube Creative Cluster”** The project envisages the following activities:  
 Establishment of a centre base in terms of premises, technologies and human resources for development of final creative product ready for market launch;  
 Development of a network among all points for exchange, development information, services for creation of transnational creative products. The network will extend also to existing institutions such museums, universities, musical houses, theatres, crafts and design associations reviving them for a new life;  
 Development of a database with creative and innovative potential;  
 Establishment of a financial engineering instrument for support of creative and innovative ideas and products, and their launch;  
 Common management and promotion of the final products, brand strategy and brand design. (Lead: Serbia).

**2.4. “GREATER SHARE OF EU POPULATION AGE 30-34 WITH TERTIARY EDUCATION – AIMING TOWARDS 40% BY 2020”**

**2.5. “TO REACH 20% OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY BY 2020”**

**2.4/5.1. Action: “To strengthen cooperation among universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points”**

Progress in the implementation of the action:

**Milestone n°9: Analyse potentials to strengthen cooperation among education and research institutions in the Danube Region**

- **Work:** Each country should prepare the state of the art regarding education and research programmes related to the Danube Region and joint programmes of common interest, including mobility schemes for students and researchers in the Danube Region, joint research projects, exchange of best practices (e.g. in implementing the Bologna process), or developing innovative education programmes for target groups new to universities (e.g. lifelong learning programmes for older citizens).  
 SG members should collect comprehensive information on possible funding schemes and programmes (e.g. EU programmes Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo da Vinci, Jean Monnet Programme, *Central European Exchange Program for University Studies* (CEEPUS) etc.) to support strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions and make best use of existing



structures like the Danube Rectors' Conference and Alpe-Adria Rectors' Conference.

✓ *Output:* Comprehensive overview on the state of the art and funding possibilities for strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions

→ *Responsible:* PACs, SG members, relevant DGs and organizations; *Deadline:* 01/10/12

- **Projects:** To strengthen the university mobility in the Danube Region within the CEEPUS exchange programme

✓ *Output:* Flagship project for enhancing academic mobility in the DR

→ *Funding:* EU and national grants; *Responsible:* PACs, SG members, CEEPUS; *Deadline:* 01/09/13

#### **Milestone n°10: Establish system to support strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions in the Region**

- **Work:** Prepare the unique system for providing support to initiatives on strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions in the Danube macro-Region

Activities leading to recognition of EUSDR PA7 actions on EC policy level and among priorities for EU funding schemes coordinated by EC DR Regio, EC DG Research&Innovation and EC DG Education&Culture.

✓ *Output:* 1) Guidelines for coordinated support to cooperation among education and research institutions in the Danube Region; 2) PA7 actions recognised on EC policy level in calls for funding coordinated by EC DG Research&Innovation, EC DG Education&Culture and relevant agencies (e.g. EACEA).

→ *Responsible:* PACs, SG members, EC DR Regio, EC DG Research&Innovation and EC DG Education&Culture; *Deadline:* - *Guidelines:* 01/01/13, *Policy level recognition:* before opening each relevant call and in the process of adopting new operational programmes

- **Projects:** Pilot (flagship) projects (first two listed in the Action plan):

- ***"To promote the exchange of students and scientists in the Danube Region"***. The project BAYHOST promotes, identifies and coordinates the exchange of students and scientists in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe through scholarship programmes and projects. Furthermore, the BAYHOST Danube Forum is dedicated to the exchange between the career services in the countries of the Danube Region, exchanging best practices and success stories. (Lead: Bavaria)

- ***"To emphasise Danube Region specifics in the curricula of university programmes"***. A pilot project is being proposed by the Andrassy University Budapest. A specific added value may lie in the development of study joint programmes with other universities of the Region, on topics of particular Danube Region relevance. EU programmes such as TEMPUS or Jean Monnet should be used. (Lead: Andrassy University Budapest)

- ***„Danube River REsearch And Management DREAM“*** ...from Basic Research to Knowledge Society was developed with strong links to PA 1A (Mobility – Waterways), PA 02 (Energy), PA 04 (To restore and maintain the quality of waters), PA 05 (Biodiversity, Landscapes, Quality of Air and Soils) and PA 06 (Environmental Risks). The project consists of five activities, distributed over all Danube countries, two universities / research institutions per country working in RIVER RESEARCH and MANAGEMENT (especially River Engineering, Hydraulic Modelling/Engineering, Ecohydraulics). (Lead: Austria, Romania and Serbia).

✓ *Output:* Project applications

→ *Funding:* EU grants; *Responsible:* Bavaria, Andrassy University Budapest, Austria, Romania and Serbia; *Deadline:* 01/01/13

List of projects associated with the action:

- ***"To promote the exchange of students and scientists in the Danube Region"***. The project BAYHOST promotes, identifies and coordinates the exchange of students and scientists in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe through scholarship programmes and projects. Furthermore, the BAYHOST Danube Forum is dedicated to the exchange between the career services in the countries of the Danube Region, exchanging best practices and success stories. (Lead: Bavaria)

- ***"To emphasise Danube Region specifics in the curricula of university programmes"***. A pilot project is being proposed by the Andrassy University Budapest. A specific added value may lie in the development of study joint programmes with other universities of the Region, on topics of particular Danube Region relevance. EU programmes such as TEMPUS or Jean Monnet should be used. (Lead:

Andrassy University Budapest)

- **„Danube River REsearch And Management DREAM“** ...from Basic Research to Knowledge Society was developed with strong links to PA 1A (Mobility – Waterways), PA 02 (Energy), PA 04 (To restore and maintain the quality of waters), PA 05 (Biodiversity, Landscapes, Quality of Air and Soils) and PA 06 (Environmental Risks). The project consists of five activities, distributed over all Danube countries, two universities / research institutions per country working in RIVER RESEARCH and MANAGEMENT (especially River Engineering, Hydraulic Modelling/Engineering, Ecohydraulics). (Lead: Austria, Romania and Serbia). ( full description will be in annex 2)

## ANNEXES

- Annex 1: Roadmaps to implement each action
- Annex 2: Projects approved by the Steering Group
- Annex 3: List of the PA7 Steering Group members
- Annex 4: PA7 Steering Group Rules of Procedure
- Annex 5: Steering Group meetings minutes (I, II, III and IV)

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

<b>Name of the project</b>	<i>DANUBE REGION RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUND – DRRIF</i>
<b>Action related</b>	<i>“To coordinate better national, regional and EU funds to stimulate excellence in research and development, in research areas specific for the Danube Region”</i>
<b>Countries involved</b>	<i>PA7 Steering Group reflecting representation of all EUSDR countries</i>
<b>Funding</b>	<i>First stage – Feasibility study and establishment of the Fund: Amount 289.474 EUR, financed through Technical Assistance Grant (Specific Project)</i>
<b>Stage of implementation</b>	<i>Under implementation (more details available in the Report text and annexes)</i>
<b>Description</b>	<p><i>Specific project - To support cooperation and excellence in the Danube Region by working towards the establishment of a Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF) should result in development of a conceptual and organisational framework of the DRRIF based on consultations with stakeholders and adaptation based on their inputs: the Feasibility Study.</i></p> <p><i>The DRRIF should evolve on the best practice of the BONUS project.</i></p> <p><i>Further results will include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>- study on absorption capacities of regional networks with a focus on mapping of existing clusters and networks,</i></li> <li><i>- study on possible thematic areas based on interviews, co-publication analysis and network analysis,</i></li> <li><i>- report on the synergies with SEE-ERA.NET PLUS and other stakeholders and cooperation activities in the Danube Region,</i></li> <li><i>- report on the exchange and lessons learnt in cooperation with other macro-regions.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The expected result is the provision of political will among Danube countries as the administrative and technical prerequisites for establishing Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund. The results will be used to establish a sustainable fund to support research, technological development and innovation in the Danube Region in order to build capacities of research, higher education and innovative businesses to increase their competitiveness and to support networking in the Danube Area.</i></p>
<b>Involvement of the</b>	<i>PACs, namely Dr Lubomir Faltan, Slovak Academy of Sciences</i>

<b>PACs</b>	<i>coordinates the public procurement procedure for electing partner organization, while other PAC and the SG are involved in monitoring of the process and other policy level decisions</i>
<b>Next steps</b>	<i>Once the feasibility study is published Danube Countries will be invited to join the DRRIF and redirect some of their research funds in the DRRIF.</i>

<b>Name of the project</b>	<i>Danube River REsearch And Management (DREAM) ... from Basic Research to Knowledge Society</i>
<b>Action related</b>	<i>“To strengthen cooperation among universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points”</i>
<b>Countries involved</b>	<i>All Danube Region countries Lead: Austria, Romania and Serbia</i>
<b>Funding</b>	<i>Expected costs: 69,6 mil. €, Funding EU and other regional and national funding schemes</i>
<b>Stage of implementation</b>	<i>Planned.</i>
<b>Description</b>	<i>There is an urgent need to integrate use and protection of the Danube River in a sustainable way. Research is of fundamental importance to derive monitoring strategies, modelling and engineering solutions to improve measures suited to reach a win-win situation between economic use and environmental protection of the Danube River. This will be strongly related to the Danube River Basin Management Plan.</i>
<b>Involvement of the PACs</b>	<i>The SG is familiar with the project proposal, while supports the project structure as a model for other to apply for the PA7 flagship label.</i>
<b>Next steps</b>	<i>The lead partners (BOKU, Austria) will develop project application and build on the network of project partners.</i>  <i><u>Timeline:</u></i> <i>2012: Submission of a proposal to Danube Strategy (Jan), structural funds etc. (Apr), general planning for infrastructure (May-Dec), formation of the network of Danube River Research Institutions (Sep-Nov)</i> <i>2013: Start of Danube River Research Institutions network (Jul), purchase of equipment for field work, simulation tools (Apr-Oct), detailed planning and legal permits for lab infrastructure (Jan-Dec) and research vessel / diving shaft (Jan-Dec)</i> <i>2014-2015: Implementation of lab infrastructure and research vessel / diving shaft (Jan-Dec), operation of cluster/network of river engineering simulation tools, network of field study sites along the Danube River, network of Danube River Research Institutions (Jan-Dec)</i> <i>2015: Begin of operation of infrastructure (Dec)</i>

Other project proposals, planned in the Action Plan are listed in the Roadmap for the PA7 action without full description available in the Annex as PACs do not have more information on concrete project proposals from the project leaders.

A number of project proposals are submitted to PACs and the SG, however most of them are only in the stage of the project idea, and on their formal approval as PA7 flagship project will be decided on the next Steering Group Meeting when the SG will adopt the guidelines for PA7 flagship projects (listing clear set of several conditions e.g. involving more Danube Region countries, strong impact in the Region, fully developed application with clear structure, partnership and funding etc), as an annex to the Rules of Procedure.

Project ideas, diverse in the project scope, proposed consortium and funding, that were submitted to the PACs and SG prior to the IV Steering Group Meeting include:

- Workshop on the Assessment of Cultural Challenges in the Danube Region within the Context of the EU Strategy, UNIBIT - State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Bulgaria and IDM - Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Austria
- Internationalization of Danube Rectors Conference University Campuses, lead University of Novi Sad
- Increasing Mobility in the Danube Region, lead University of Novi Sad
- Smart specialization in the South East Europe (SMARTSEE), Institute for Economic Research (IER)
- University-based Lifelong Learning and Use of ICT, especially ELearning, for Fostering Older Adults' Social Participation in the Danube Region, Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education (ZAWiW) of Ulm University
- Danube Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, Andrásy Universität Budapest Danube Institute for Interdisciplinary Research
- Intercultural Dialogue, Faculty of Humanities of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE BTK)
- Danube Era Net actions, Ministry of National Economy
- Research Infrastructure improvement in the Danube macro region, Ministry of National Economy
- Global Change Atlas of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Institute of Geography, Member of the Romanian Academy, Faculty for Geosciences of the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich,
- Regional Center for monitoring of extremenatural events in Danube region, Tiraspol State University GIS Laboratory, Moldavia
- Values and dimensions of Intercultural Education, International University of Moldavia, Training and Social Research Institute, Philological and Intercultural Research Institute
- Development of the educational curriculum in environmental management based on the EU environmental Directives in the Free International, Danubius University, Galati, Romania
- "ACHIEVE" – Academic Web-site for Regional Cooperation in Achieving Faster Economic Training in the Danube Region, Economic Sciences Faculty, Free International University of Moldavia (ULIM)
- The Implementation of a Joint Master's Degree Program in the Field of Intercultural Communication Services and Tourism within the Universities of the Danube Region, Moldavia State University

- The Creation and Implementation of a Joint Program for Doctoral Formation in Humanities in the Universities of Moldavia, Romania and Ukraine, Moldavia State University
- EDIC – European Documentation and Information Centre for facilitating the European integration of the Republic of Moldavia, Tiraspol State University, Moldavia
- CoDoSEC - Centre of Development of Students' Entrepreneurial Competencies
- Tiraspol State University, Moldavia
- The Education Network in Geographic Information Technology in Danube region (ENGITDR), Technical University of Moldavia
- Environmental Education and Environmental Initiatives towards Society, National Forest Centre, Slovakia
- Memorials of historical events – the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Transcarpathian State University, Ukraine, University of Miskolc, Hungary
- Danube region knowledge network for healthy living and active aging - DARE:HEAL, University of Maribor
- Regional Interactive Educational Network (RIEN), European Centre Maribor (ECM)