

**Summary of the Cooperation Programme
Version 2.3, 20th October 2014**



**Danube Transnational
Programme 2014-2020
(INTERREG V-B DANUBE)**

Mission of the Danube Transnational Programme

The Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) is a financing instrument with a specific scope and an independent decision making body and supports the policy integration in the Danube area in selected fields under the EU Common Provisions and ERDF regulation linked to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

The strategic vision is “policy integration” below the EU-level (not duplicating efforts in policy integration at the EU-level e.g. TEN-T) and above the national level in specific fields of action. Transnational projects should influence national, regional and local policies. In order to achieve a higher degree of territorial integration of the very heterogeneous Danube region the DTP will act as a policy driver and pioneer to tackle common challenges and needs in specific policy fields where transnational cooperation is expected to deliver good results through the development and practical implementation of policy frameworks, tools and services and concrete pilot investments whereby strong complementarities with the broader EUSDR will be sought.

Needs are related to the issues how to improve institutional frameworks for cooperation, how to improve the quality of policies and their delivery and how to deliver solutions through concrete investments and smart pilot action.

The success of programme implementation will depend on targeted selection of the most relevant interventions and a further increase in the efficiency of administrative procedures and a reduction of the administrative burden for the beneficiaries.

Programme area

The programme area covers nine Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany – Baden-Württemberg and Bayern, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and five non-EU Member States (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and four provinces of Ukraine), being composed of 69 NUTS-2 regions.

Geographically, the DTP area overlaps with the territory addressed by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), comprising also the Danube river basin. It is the most international river basin in the world. The area makes up one fifth of the EU's territory and it is inhabited by approximately 114 million people. The variety of natural environment, the socio-economic differences and cultural diversity of the various parts of the area may be perceived as major challenges but actually represent important opportunities and unexploited potential.

The Danube Transnational Programme territory



INTERREG B cooperation area 2014-2020

Source: European Commission,
as proposed on 18th December 2012
Geometrical basis: GFK MACON

Priorities of the programme

The priorities of the Danube Transnational Programme are based on the specific characteristics and needs of the programme area which have been identified and agreed through an extensive programming and consultation process among the programme stakeholders and a wider ETC community. Moreover, the programming took into account lessons learned from previous programming periods, the given financial framework and the existence of suitable implementation and administration structures.

The cooperation programme is structured across five priority axes (including a priority axis for Technical Assistance) that intend to develop coordinated policies and actions in the programme area reinforcing the commitments of the Europe 2020 strategy towards the three dimensions of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Priority axis 1: Innovative and socially responsible Danube region

The priority axis includes one investment priority (1b) corresponding to the thematic objective 1 (Research and innovation). In order to contribute to the implementation of the flagship initiative “Innovation Union of the Europe 2020 Strategy” in the Danube Region countries the programme pays specific attention to a number of innovation topics of broad relevance in the cooperation area such as eco-innovation, knowledge

transfer, cluster policy, social innovation and skilled entrepreneurship including technological and non-technological innovation aspects. The social dimension in innovation (social innovation, educational aspects, and entrepreneurship skills) is given high importance. Research and innovation is interlinked with other thematic objectives addressed by the programme: TO 6 (environment including climate adaptation, innovative technologies for adaptation and risk prevention), TO 7 (promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks: innovative solutions for environmentally friendly and low-carbon transport systems and for energy security and energy efficiency) and TO 11 (administrative capacities can be enhanced through innovation).

Priority axis 2: Environment and culture responsible Danube region

The priority axis includes two investment priorities (6c and 6d) corresponding to the thematic objective 6 (Environment and resource efficiency). The programme strengthens joint and integrated approaches to preserve and manage the diversity of natural and cultural assets in the Danube region as a basis for sustainable development and growth strategies. Moreover the programme envisages investing in the creation and/or maintenance of ecological corridors of transnational relevance in the Danube region. This intervention is directly interlinked with water management and the control of environmental risk factors such as climate change and flood risks. Furthermore disaster prevention and disaster management (risk management) is addressed related to risks that are caused by non-functioning ecosystems and man-made changes in climate conditions.

Priority axis 3: Better connected and energy responsible Danube region

The priority axis includes two investment priorities (7c and 7e) corresponding to the thematic objective 7 (Transport). The cooperation programme will tackle common challenges related to environmentally-friendly (including low-noise), low-carbon and safe transport systems including inland waterways & ports and multimodal links in order to contribute to sustainable regional and local mobility, modal integration and intelligent transport. The programme intends also to support the regional connectivity and the balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas. Better management of regional mobility and better permeability of borders at the regional level should ensure that urban and rural areas benefit from the opportunities created by the major transportation networks which are developed at the European level. Moreover energy is a typical issue in which a transnational approach is essential in order to ensure the security of supply of the countries, market integration and more effective regional planning, as well as to jointly identify the most critical infrastructure developments. Regional energy planning and –coordination should be improved across the Danube region within the wider context of EU energy policy-making to safeguard the security and efficiency of energy supplies. Another aspect is the development of smart distribution systems where the programme area is still in the early stages. The programme aims to contribute within its specific scope to the development of smart energy distribution systems to make the significant investments of regions in renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and smart grids more efficient.

Priority axis 4: Well governed Danube region

The Priority axis includes one investment priorities distinguished into two specific objectives (“11a”/ERDF and “11b”/ETC) corresponding to the thematic objective 11 (Governance). Institutional cooperation and capacity is a key target and the vital element of the programme at the same time. Institutional capacity is not just a technical

matter of training civil servants, but it relates to how public authorities interact with and deliver services to businesses and citizens. "Good governance" is the basis and ultimate objective for institutional capacity building. Good governance builds trust and social capital. States with a high level of social capital tend to perform better economically. The need has been identified by the analysis to develop the capacities of the public authorities and other public and civil society stakeholders to become able to tackle more effectively the challenges of highest relevance for the region. Establishing institutional cooperation by the programme should lead to improving legal and policy frameworks, developing strategies and action plans, development of joint capacities and coordinated delivery of services in areas with major societal challenges such as labour market policies, education systems and policies, demographic change and migration challenges, inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, participatory planning process and involvement of civil society, urban-rural cooperation and partnership, cooperation on safety, justice and security issues. In addition, there is the need to improve the capabilities and capacities of public institutions and key actors involved in complex transnational project development to implement the EUSDR in a more effective way.

Last but not least the **Priority Axis 5 (Technical Assistance)** should ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the Danube Transnational programme.

The "big picture" of the DTP is presented in the following illustration.

Overview on priority axes and specific objectives of the cooperation programme



Source: Metis

Type of actions to be supported under the cooperation programme

In principle the following types of action are supported under the cooperation programme:

- Development of **common orientations, frameworks and strategies** in fields of transnational relevance where early policy development is needed (i.e. in fields which until now have not been touched by significant projects in the previous programming periods);
- Development and practical implementation of **transnational tools and services** (e.g. analytical tools, management tools, technical tools, software tools, monitoring tools);
- **Preparation of transnational investments** (infrastructure, equipment) to be subsequently financed through other sources;
- **Pilot activities** including small-scale fixed investments (of testing or demonstration nature);
- Development and practical implementation of **training and capacity building** (e.g. training seminars and courses, study visits, peer reviews);
- Accompanying **information, dissemination, capitalisation and publicity measures** to inform stakeholders and/or the general public about project activities and outcomes.

Examples of action to be supported under the programme are described in section 2 of the programme document. Furthermore the complementarities of planned interventions with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) both in the programming process as well as in the implementation phase are outlined in section 4.4 of the programme document.

Financial aspects

The implementation of Danube Transnational Programme will be supported by the European Union with an allocation of EUR 221,924,597, originating from two main sources: European Regional Development Fund (EUR 202,095,405) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (EUR 19,829,192). These amounts will be complemented by the national contributions of the countries participating in the programme.

Individual projects will receive the Union support up to 85% of their total eligible costs. The distribution of allocations from Union sources among the Priority Axis is as follows:

Priority Axes (PA)	Union support (EUR)
PA 1: Innovative and socially responsible Danube region	61,904,902.70
PA 2: Environment and culture responsible Danube region	70,764,194.03
PA 3: Better connected and energy responsible Danube region	46,425,702.64
PA 4: Well governed Danube region	28,739,154.13
PA 5: Technical Assistance	14,108,643.50

More information regarding the financial appropriations of the cooperation programme, can be found in section 3 of the programme document.

Implementation modalities

The Danube Transnational Programme will use the shared management system to manage, coordinate and supervise its implementation, meaning that the Member States and the Commission are responsible for the management and control of the programme. In short, the institutional set-up created for the programme implementation will have the following composition and main responsibilities:

Institutions	Location	Main responsibility
<i>Monitoring Committee (MC)</i>	-	Consisting of representatives of each participating country, the MC supervises the implementation of the programme and selects the projects to be financed
<i>Managing Authority (MA)</i>	Hungary, Budapest, Office for National Economic Planning	Responsible for overall programme implementation
<i>Joint Secretariat (JS)</i>	Hungary, Office for National Economic Planning	Assists the MA in its functions and act as a central contact point for potential applicants
<i>Certifying Authority (CA)</i>	Hungary, Hungarian State Treasury	Draws up and submits certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment to the Commission
<i>Audit Authority (AA)</i>	Hungary, Directorate General for Audit of European Funds	Ensures that audits are carried out on the management and control system and on operations
<i>National Contact Points (NCP)</i>	Different for each country	Complement transnational activities of the MA and JS by involving the stakeholders from the national level
<i>Controllers</i>	Different for each country	Ensure the compliance of expenditures incurred by the national partners with Community and national rules

The aim of the Danube Transnational Programme is to implement high quality, result oriented transnational projects of strategic character, relevant for the programme area, and selected through open, targeted or restricted calls for proposals. Further details and the description of the procedures part of the management and control system of the programme, can be found in the section 5 of the programme document.

Partnership principle

In order to identify mutual interests and needs, to secure commitment and ownership for the programme and ensure its smooth and practical implementation, the preparation of Danube Transnational Programme was based on the guiding elements of the partnership principle, as defined in Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

In developing the programme, relevant institutional stakeholders were consulted in order to ensure that the programme is fully in line with the national and transnational strategies. In particular close attention was paid to the coordination with the broader European Union's Strategy for Danube Region and three meetings were held with the EUSDR representatives in order to make sure that joint coordination mechanisms are in place.

Moreover, during June 2014 a wide range of public and private stakeholders was involved in national consultation events and online questionnaires, their position and opinion being duly considered in the process of drafting the content of the programme. The relevant partners involved in the preparation of the cooperation programme are described in section 9.3 of the programme document.