

Action: ***"To cooperate in implementing the flagship initiative "Innovation Union"¹ of the Europe 2020 Strategy" in the Danube Region countries "***

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

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

- *Work:* Each country should list its centres of excellence, including existing and potential ones (closely linked to action– **TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE**)
✓ *OUTPUT:* LIST OF CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE
→ *Responsible:* SG members; *Deadline:* 30/09/12
- *Projects:* An independent study to identify regional smart specialization potentials
✓ *Output:* List of regional smart specialization potentials of the Danube Region and in the Danube Region
→ *Funding:* EU grants; *Responsible:* PACs, Joint Research Centre; *Deadline:* 31/03/13

Milestone n°2: 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 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:* Collection of links to sources of information on the national, regional and EU funds for research and innovation

→ *Responsible:* SG members, DG Regio + InterAct; *Deadline:* 30/09/12

Milestone n°3: Establish a peer-review mechanism of regional smart specialization strategies

- *Work:* Each country should present state of the art regarding PA7 targets and analyse national strategy/plan for upcoming period to 2020 in reference to regional smart specialization strategies and support writing regional smart specialization strategies as precondition for access to EU cohesion funds.
 - peer-review workshop, September 2012
 - raising awareness and disseminating knowledge on the concept of smart specialisation and the process of establishing smart specialisation strategies, November 2012

¹ 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>)

- Danube region peer-review workshop where the specific regions from the Danube region would present their strategies and discuss them, March 2013
The work should be carried out in coordination with national and international PA8 SG members.
✓ *Output:* State of the art regarding PA7 targets (EU 2020 targets in relevant fields), Regional Smart Specialization Strategies

→ *Responsible:* PACs, JRC, SG members and PA8 SG members; *Deadline:* 31/03/13

- *Projects:* To establish monitor (peer-review) mechanism of regional smart specialization strategies (proposed by Joint Research Centre)
✓ *Output:* Project application

→ *Funding:* EU grants; *Responsible:* Joint Research Centre, PACs, SG members; *Deadline:* 31/12/12

Milestone n°4: Call for tender to find partner organization for establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRIFF) – 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; *Deadlines:* for opening call: 31/03/12, electing project: 31/05/12

Milestone n°5: Feasibility study for the establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF²) – PA7 Flagship Project

- *Work:* PACs should open call for a feasibility study on the establishment of DRRIF and select the best application
✓ *Output:* applications for carrying out feasibility study on the establishment of DRRIF, contracting of feasibility study for the establishment of DRRIF

✓ *Final output:* recommendation on phases, timeframe and relevant outputs in the process of establishing the DRRIF

² 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.

→ *Responsible: PACs; Deadlines: for opening call: 31/05/12, electing project: 31/07/12*

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

- *Work:* PACs should monitor the implementation of phases, in reference to the adopted timeframe and relevant outputs in the process of the establishment of the DRRIF.
✓ *Output:* Flagship project DRRIF (first phase established)

→ *Funding:* Specific project of the PA; *Responsible:* PACs, DRRIF; *Deadline:* 30/04/13

Milestone n°7: DRRIF – first call for proposals and design of R&I projects

- *Work:* DRRIF and SG should agree on funding mechanisms for projects and “common pots” for funding R&I in the Danube Region (based on the Milestone n°2 outputs), while DRRIF should provide relevant procedures and documents for managing the first call for projects
✓ *Output:* funds available, call for project applications

→ *Responsible:* DRRIF, PACs, SG members; *Deadline:* 30/06/13

Milestone n°8: Implement the projects

- *Work:* DRRIF selects the best project applications and monitors their implementation
✓ *Output:* list of project selected and project monitoring reports, project reports

→ *Responsible:* DRRIF, PACs, SG members; *Deadline:* start of the work 30/09/13
- *Projects:* Project applicants (regional R&I networks) should start to implement projects
✓ *Output:* Innovations, new Danube Region R&I networks

→ *Funding:* EU grants; *Responsible:* Contractors + DRRIF; *Deadline:* 30/09/12

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS:

- ***To establish a peer-review mechanism of regional smart specialisation strategies***
- ***To create a Danube research area through coordination of funds***

- Action: ***"To strengthen the capacities of research infrastructure".***
- Action: ***"To strengthen cooperation among universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points".***

Milestone n°9: 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:** 01/09/12
- **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, PACs; **Deadline to start implementation:** 01/06/13

Milestone n°10: 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°9, 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. The overview of the research and innovation EU funding possibilities (with the special emphasize on EU budgetary framework for 2014-2020) prepared as Milestones n°2 should be used.
✓ **Output:** Regional Innovation System Strategy

→ **Responsible:** PACs, SG members, DG Regio, DG Research&Innovation, DRRIF; **Deadline:** 01/01/13

Milestone n°12: 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, common 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).
- **Work:** Enlist existing funding schemes and programmes, such as the EU programmes Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo da Vinci or the Jean Monnet Programme and Central European

Exchange Program for University Studies (CEEPUS) 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 region
 - *Funding:* EU and national grants; *Responsible:* PACs, CEEPUS; *Deadline to start implementation:* 01/04/13

Milestone n°13: 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 Region, including activities leading to recognition of EUSDR PA7 actions on EC policy level and among priorities for EU funding schemes with EC DR Regio, EC DG Research&Innovation and EC DG Education&Culture.
 - ✓ *Output:* 1) Scheme 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; *Deadlines:* 01/04/13
- **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 Andrássy 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: Andrássy 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*

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS:

- *To establish joint international research centres for advanced studies*
- *To promote the exchange of students and scientists in the Danube Region – CEEPUS, BAYHOST*
- *To emphasise Danube Region specifics in the curricula of university programmes*
- *Danube River REsearch And Management DREAM*

Action:	<i>“To develop and implement strategies to improve the provision and uptake of Information and Communication Technologies in the Danube Region”</i>
Action:	<i>“To draw up internet strategies”</i>
Action:	<i>“To use e-content and e-services to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public and private services”</i>
Action:	<i>“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”</i>

Milestone n°14: 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 areas³”.*** This could be done by encouraging stakeholders of the Danube Region to join existing EU projects⁴.
 - ***“To build upon the existing projects to promote the Information Society for SMEs⁵”.*** This could be done by encouraging stakeholders of the Danube Region to join or build upon existing EU projects⁶

³ 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).

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

⁵ 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.

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

- ***“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

Milestone n°15: 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:** 01/01/13

- **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-authentication⁷. 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 partners⁸. 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.⁹ (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.¹⁰ An overall vision

⁷ COM(2008) 798, 28.11.2008

⁸ www.eid-stork.eu

⁹ S.A.F.E. - Secure Access to Federated E-Justice/E-Government

¹⁰ www.peppol.eu

for this project can be obtained through the Ministerial Declaration on e-Government¹¹ 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 epSOS¹² aiming at developing, testing and validating interoperability of patient summaries and e-prescription across national borders, as well as of the Netc@rds project¹³ 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°16: 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:** 01/04/13

Milestone n°17: Stimulate the emergence of innovative ideas for products and services using the concept of Living Labs

¹¹ November 2009, <http://www.egov2009.se/wp-content/uploads/Ministerial-Declaration-on-eGovernment.pdf>

¹² www.epsos.eu

¹³ www.netcards-project.com

- *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; *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.*
 - ***“Danube Creative Cluster”*** *The project envisages the following activities:*
 1. *Establishment of a centre base in terms of premises, technologies and human resources for development of final creative product ready for market launch;*
 2. *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;*
 3. *Development of a database with creative and innovative potential;*
 4. *Establishment of a financial engineering instrument for support of creative and innovative ideas and products, and their launch;*
 5. *Common management and promotion of the final products, brand strategy and brand design. (Lead: Serbia).*