



Danube Region Programme

Call announcement for the EUSDR seed money facility (SMF) call for proposals

27 November 2023

1. Introduction

Danube Region Programme (DRP) is launching the **SMF call for proposals granting financial support for project development under the programme specific objective 4.1.**

The seed money facility (SMF) is a tool for kick-starting development of strategic projects and large-scale initiatives for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) (<https://danube-region.eu/>). These strategic projects can later on apply for funding by other financing instruments. Through the SMF, applicants shall develop projects that are addressing the EUSDR Action Plan. The development phase funded by the SMF covers the analysis of the needs and challenges addressed by the main project, the preparation of the work plan for the main project, the setting up of the partnership as well as the analysis of the possible funding instruments for the main project. Selected additional preparatory activities necessary for the project development can also be funded, to a limited extent, by the Danube Region Programme, in case needed.

2. Objectives and priorities

All SMF projects submitted for the support of the EUSDR have to *develop complex strategic transnational projects contributing to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region to be funded by any funding source available in the region.*

The DRP offers its financial support in achieving the above mentioned objective, in line with the provisions of its Specific Objective 4.1.



Proposals submitted under the SMF call shall be aligned to at least one EUSDR Priority Area (PA) and shall clearly address the EUSDR Action Plan and targets (link to EUSDR action plan: <https://danube-region.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/EUSDR-ACTION-PLAN-SWD202059-final-1.pdf>; link to EUSDR targets: <https://danube-region.eu/about/targets/>).

3. Funds allocated for the call and co-financing

The programme will allocate for this call 3,600,000.00 euro Interreg Funds. Maximum EU contribution per EUSDR PA: indicative EUR 300,000.00 Interreg Funds.

- Maximum project budget:
 - EUR 50,000.00 Interreg Funds (if only the 3 mandatory outputs are addressed)
 - EUR 100,000 Interreg Funds (if additional preparatory activities included besides the 3 mandatory outputs)

The maximum EU contribution to the projects is a co-financing rate of 80%.

4. Project structure (outputs of the projects)

The SMF projects are output-based projects. This means that the Lead Applicants will have to describe in the Application Form the activities that are leading to the development of pre-defined project outputs.

Besides those pre-defined outputs, the partnership will have to plan the budget for costs related to control (in case of decentralised systems) and a maximum of 100 EUR as costs for printing the mandatory poster per each partner.

In order to support the applicants and to ensure a harmonised approach, the Programme has pre-defined the types of outputs that each project has to deliver.

Output 1: Report on the state of play in the addressed field, including inter alia:

- Description of the situation in the field and EUSDR countries concerned including:
 - Overview of past and current activities in the field and of complementary projects that were/are implemented;
 - Description of the existing challenges and gaps, which will be addressed by the new initiative.



- Description of the target groups addressed by the future project and their needs.

Output 2: Main project work plan, containing:

- A work plan, describing activities, outputs and expected results of the main project;
- The composition of the potential project partnership;
- An indicative budget plan for the main project.

Output 3: Report on funding possibilities, presenting:

- The analysis of funding sources for the main project;
- A road map defining steps to be taken after the seed money project is finalised.

Besides the mandatory outputs the programme finances additional preparatory activities that are necessary for development of complex projects with impact in the Danube region.

Examples of additional preparatory activities (non-exhaustive list):

- ✓ community and stakeholders consultations
- ✓ socio-economic studies
- ✓ participative planning
- ✓ preliminary designs

5. Timeframe

The call is open from **27th November 2023 until 29th March 2024**.

The SMF call for proposals of the Danube Region Programme is organised in one- step procedure where the applicants have to submit an application package including a fully developed Application Form (AF).

The **Application Form** (AF) has to be submitted to the joint secretariat through Jems by 29 March 2024, 14:00 Central European Time (CET).

An earlier submission of the documents is recommended.



6. Duration of projects

The duration of projects must not exceed **12 months**. This limit applies for the operational phase of the project and does not comprise the preparation phase. The estimated starting date of the projects is May 2025. Project implementation may start earlier depending on the number of received applications.

7. Lead Partner principle

Each project has to appoint a lead partner (LP) who is responsible for preparation and submission of the application form as lead applicant. In case of approval of the project, the lead partner takes over the full responsibility for management, communication, implementation, and coordination of activities among the involved partners. The lead partner bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership. The lead partner is also the link between the project and the managing authority/joint secretariat (MA/JS) of the programme.

The following types of entities can be lead partners:

- Local, regional, national public bodies/ bodies governed by public law (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)
- International organisations
- Private **non-profit** bodies

The LP can be either from a DRP EU Member State or from a DRP non-EU Partner State.

EXCEPTION: applicants coming from Ukraine can participate only as project partners.

8. Eligible partners

The following types of entities, officially registered in the programme area¹, are eligible to apply:

- Local, regional, national public bodies/ bodies governed by public law (including EGTCs registered in one country of the programme area)
- International organisations
- Private bodies (non-profit organisations and private enterprises / private profit-making organisations)

¹ Exceptions for geographic eligibility described in detail in section II.2.3 of the DRP Applicant's Manual



9. Partnership requirements

The programme covers 14 countries, 9 of them are EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Germany: Baden Württemberg and Bavaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and 5 Non-EU Partner States (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine with four provinces: Chernivetska Oblast, Ivano-Frankiviska Oblast, Zakarpatska Oblast, Odessa Oblast²). As a general rule, EU financing is only provided to project partners located in the programme area³.

Each project has to involve minimum two and maximum five directly financing partners from at least two different countries of the programme area: the lead partner and at least one project partner. At least one partner must be a beneficiary from an EU Member State of the programme area

Applicants located outside the programme area but within the EU are not eligible to apply for funding as project partners in the SMF call.

10. Call documents

The following documents, part of the application package, are compulsory to be submitted by **29 March 2024, 14:00 CET**:

- Online Application Form
- Declaration of co-financing (for all directly financed partners)
- State aid declaration (for all directly financed partners)
- Partnership Agreement
- Declaration for International Organisations (only if applicable)
- Associated strategic partner (ASP) declaration (only if applicable)
- LP confirmation and signature

The listed annexes of the AF are to be signed, stamped, if applicable, by the legal representative of the respective entity and the scanned versions of each documents are to be uploaded to the Application annexes section in Jems.

² *DRP will cover the entire territory of Ukraine provided that the part of the operations implemented outside programme area (the UA regions not officially involved in the programme) directly contribute to the objectives of the programme. (Reg. (EU) 2021/1059, Art.37)*

³ *Exemptions from this rule may apply to partners in Germany and Ukraine and are specified in the Applicants Manual (under II.2.3).*



11. Programme Language

The official language of the programme is English. Therefore, all communication between applicants and the MA/JS is carried out in English. Information in the application form as well as official correspondence must be communicated accordingly.

12. Relevant documents

The application package and all relevant information about the programme are available on the programme website: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu>.

The following official programme documents are to be read before the submission of a proposal:

- **Danube Region Programme document (IP):**
- **Seed Money Facility Programme Manual⁴:**
- **Guidelines for filling in the AF (November 2023)**

The programme and the EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) provide tools (e.g. individual consultations) and events (e.g. thematic seminars, info days) to facilitate the generation of project proposals and to support applicants in the project proposals development process.

For general advice on the programme, on the eligibility requirements and on the national rules, please contact your [National Contact Point](#).

The MA/ JS contact person for the call is Johannes Gabriel, gabriel.johannes@interreg-danube.eu who offers information and advices on the technical part of the call, while for advices related to the thematic scope of the project, please contact the EUSDR PACs <https://danube-region.eu/contact/priority-area-coordinators/>.

⁴ *The eligibility of expenditure is regulated by Programme Manual therefore the Manual on Eligibility of expenditure is not applicable to SMF.*