



# How to develop a transnational project

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# I. Project generation and support from the programme - general guidance for projects

## Project generation

Development of a transnational project is a demanding and challenging process which starts from the need to produce a change in a certain field. This identified need/challenge is to be addressed by the project idea, in order to bring the planned change.

- After the project idea is formed:
  - The funding instrument is to be searched (and not vice versa – first finding the financing instrument and then developing of the idea based on its objectives)
  - The link with the programme specific objectives needs to be checked
  - The added value that transnational cooperation brings to solving the identified problem is to be checked as well
  - The programme requirements in terms of eligibility need to be checked in order to understand if the project and the proposed partnership have potential to fulfil them

The projects are strongly encouraged (this element is part of the assessment) that the results of already implemented projects/initiatives are considered, if the case and the new proposal is built on those.

- In order to build a strong partnership, the network of Danube Region Programme (DRP) National Contact Points (NCPs) is recommended to be used. They can offer first hand support in project development, besides advising on potential interested and committed partners in their countries.
- The project idea is presented then to the identified project partners and further elaborated to include their feedback and input while observing programme rules and guidelines. It is therefore recommended to **follow the structure of application forms** (i.e. AF) to get an idea of the information to be requested and not to miss out any relevant issues.

Please be aware that in order to have the full commitment of all partners their involvement in the project development is crucial since they have the ownership of results. At the same time it is also important that each potential project partner (PP) is aware of the rules and conditions of being PP in a DRP project and its implementation.

- The lead partner (LP) of the project should be agreed at an early stage and the appointment should be a common decision of the partnership. The LP will be the one steering the project development and will prepare and submit the application form.
- Last but not least, the managing authority and joint secretariat (MA/JS) can be consulted during project development in order to have a first feedback on the project idea.

**When developing the project idea into an application form please have in mind:**

- ***Territorial analysis*** is not only the first step to be made but also one of the most important ones. In order to establish most coherent and comprehensive objectives, you need to clearly define the main characteristics of the territory in question, which your competences and expertise are, what the general context in the specific field is, what has been done so far, whether there are any on-going projects (the Territorial analysis of the Danube Region can be accessed on the website [https://www.cesci-net.eu/docs/DTP\\_3a\\_Final-Territorial-Analysis.pdf](https://www.cesci-net.eu/docs/DTP_3a_Final-Territorial-Analysis.pdf)).
- Set a ***limited number of specific objectives***, which have to be on one side, clearly linked to the programme specific objectives, and on the other side coherent, realistic and achievable in the project timeframe.
- Building on already existing or past project results is very much encouraged (as highlighted also above) as well as finding synergies with other on-going projects and initiatives, but attachment of an ***innovative character*** to your project is essential in order to strengthen the impact of activities and avoid duplication of efforts and production of almost similar results.
- In order to accomplish planned results, you need to define necessities in terms of both ***human and financial resources***. Depending on the planned activities and envisaged results, working teams covering both management and content expert positions have to be set up as well as a realistic budget in strict compliance with project activities, duration and eligibility rules.
- ***Duration of the project and calendar of actions*** are to be set in close relation to project activities and other external factors, if the case (e.g. seasonal works, appropriate measurements times etc.)
- ***Durability*** of the results needs to be ensured. The partnership shall think over already in the project development phase how they will be able to ensure the durability (from institutional, financial and political point of view) of the planned project outputs after the project end and also defining such activities in the work plan that can lead into this direction. Transnational cooperation should have a leverage effect, meaning that it has to give the possibility to multiply its results, but also a kick-off effect (for further developments and improvements).

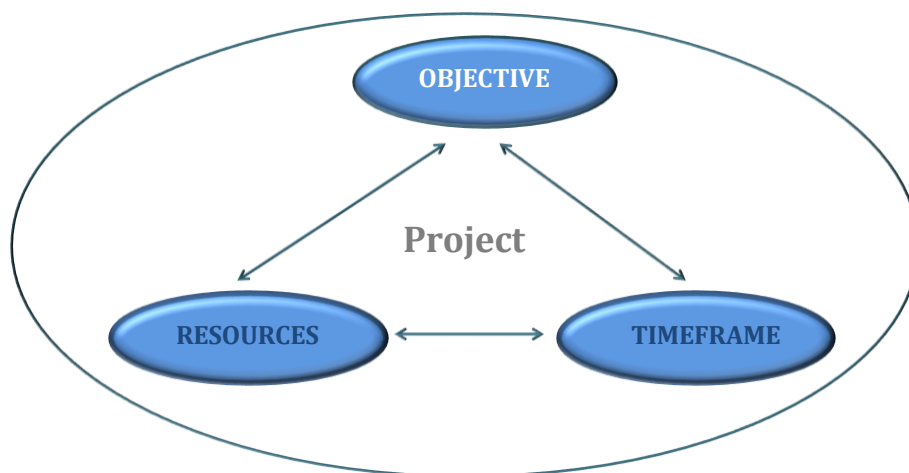


Image 1: Project triangle

## Support from the programme

The Danube Region Programme MA/JS assists and supports potential applicants throughout the development of project proposals, from the expression of interest (EoI) until submission of AF.

The MA/JS will ensure to all proposals passing the first step (in case of two-step calls) the possibility to have a bilateral meeting based on the EoI selected by the monitoring committee (MC) to be invited for the second step, where the MA/JS recommendations will follow a pre-defined structure. This will allow a fair and non-discriminatory support.

Additionally, NCPs could provide further support and complement with either bilateral meetings or with short meetings grouping similar topics.

During the **project proposal development phase**, the MA/JS with the support of NCPs and thematic experts shall:

- Organise thematic seminars/webinars explaining the core topics to be addressed, understanding the programme objectives and the needs of the Danube area.
- Provide constant information, on specific calls for proposals, including specificities thereof (type of call, submission procedure and deadlines, available budget and co-financing rates, eligible applicants and partners, contact details for additional information and support).
- Provide individual consultations to get initial feedback on the project idea and advice to be considered when preparing the application form.
- Provide useful tools to facilitate partner search/organise partner search events.

- Provide guidance for project generation.

Throughout this phase, the DRP shall ensure full transparency and non-discriminatory access to same information to interested parties regardless of their location.

## II. How to set up the partnership

Setting up a relevant and solid partnership is an indispensable precondition both for successful project application and implementation. Getting competent, reliable and committed partners on board is a challenging and time-consuming core-task of project preparation. It is strongly recommended to actively involve project partners already into project development and to establish direct and personal links among them at that early stage. Further to that – and the eligibility rules outlined in applicants manual – the following critical factors should be considered for setting up a DRP project partnership.

### General characteristics of a successful partnership

The quality of a project depends largely on an integrated composition of its partnership. A good partnership should pool all competences and capacities needed to address the project objectives and to achieve the set outputs and results in the specific geographic area where the identified need, challenge is relevant and to be addressed. Thus, a partnership should comply with the following basic characteristics:

- The project partnership should be **set up in a strategic manner** and well adapted to its purpose.
- The competences of partners (thematic and territorial) should **be closely linked to the project objectives** and all partners should be **relevant for reaching the project outputs and results**.
- The partnership should be **balanced** regarding the number of actors involved per country, distribution of project activities and responsibilities as well as related budgets. Involvement of partners coming from non-EU countries of the programme area is strongly encouraged by the programme and is part of the quality assessment (both in the first step and in the second step).
- **Policy relevance:** decision makers (e.g. ministries, etc.) should be either directly included in the partnership or involved as associated strategic partners (ASPs), or project partners should have the capacity to create strong links to relevant policy drivers.
- The **partnership size** shall reflect the **transnational character** of the DRP, yet having a large partnership shall not be the ultimate goal. A too large partnership might cause significant organisational, communication and coordination related challenges or problems and thus be cost inefficient, thus the **size of the partnership should be manageable and reasonable**. When a challenge of a certain transnational geographic area is to be addressed by the project (e.g. a river

basin), sufficient territorial coverage of that area by PPs is expected to ensure sufficient impact.

- **Multi-level governance:** In order to apply integrated territorial approach the partnership should not only consist of one administrative level (e.g. only local). The project should build on effective linkages across sectors (e.g. transport-environment) and governance levels (vertical cooperation).

## Lead partner ideal profile

Lead partners are the drivers of a project. Though both the development as well as implementation of a project is substantially based on team work, the performance of a project is very often directly linked to the one of the Lead partner. Lead partners have to cope with this challenge. Therefore, Lead partners should have the following profile:

- solid **experience in the management of EU funded projects**; experience in the management of international, transnational cooperation projects is recommended but is not mandatory and the programme encourages new organisations to apply as LPs;
- sound **institutional capacity, sufficient financial, technical and human resources**; awareness of the administrative burden which implies the lead partner role;
- in-depth **knowledge of the DRP rules**;
- **high level of commitment** of both lead partner organisation and project management team;
- **intercultural sensitivity and pro-active management approach** of the project management team;
- **thematic expertise** with regard to the project topic;
- professional **experience in the Danube region**.

Most of the above mentioned requirements are also applicable to project partners.

## Requirements for project partners

Though project partners should be generally involved in a balanced way, the concrete role of a partner can vary depending on the scope, on the kind of activities assigned (e.g. partners can act as specific objective/activity leaders) and on their capacity and/or level of experience. Before joining a partnership the following should be taken into account:

- Project partners should be committed to the project implementation and this can be considered the main asset when deciding to involve a certain institution as project partner;

- Project partners have to be **acquainted with DRP rules**. They shall have an **in-depth understanding of the project** they intend to be part of, ideally by having been involved in its development;
- Each project partner should be fully **aware of the specific role** within the project and should have sufficient **institutional, managerial and administrative capacity** needed to fulfil this role. Staff involved has to be able to speak and to write in English;
- Since no pre-financing is provided, project partners should have the **adequate financial capacity** to pre-finance the implementing of their activities, including sufficient cash-flow, keeping in mind the time-lapse between the payment of project costs and the reimbursement of these costs through the DRP;
- **Newcomers** are recommended to contact the MA/JS and/or the NCPs before joining a partnership or taking over the role of the LP in order to clearly understand the programme rules and processes;
- The **involvement of permanent staff** of the participating organisations helps the network to stay operational after closure of project activities. It also ensures that knowledge gained during the project implementation remains within the organisations;
- The **involvement of external expertise** should be considered to complement and bridge thematic gaps, technical constraints or administrative/managerial bottlenecks. External experts can play an important supportive role – especially for project partners still missing experience in transnational projects.

### III. How to develop the intervention logic

The core principle of the Danube Region Programme is result-orientation, the basis for the result-orientation approach being the “change”. Therefore, all the projects that will be approved and implemented need to embrace the same principle. The intervention logic should reflect the path of the project and the necessary steps that will lead to the envisaged change. It should be clear, simple and easy to monitor and implement.



The coherence of the project intervention logic (projects main and specific objectives, activities, outputs and results) with the programme intervention logic (specific objectives, outputs and results) is a pre-condition for a project to be funded under DRP. Projects not showing a clear link to a programme specific objective and/or not contributing to the respective programme results will not be funded in the programme's framework.

**ATTENTION:** Projects have to contribute to at least two programme output indicators to be considered eligible (unless different rules are set in a specific call).

Output RCO 87 - Organisations cooperating across borders is mandatory for all the projects

The project intervention logic is a tool that needs to show how the change will be achieved, therefore it should define:

- a clear status quo related to the project context (What is the problem?), including the causes that influence it;
- the change that the project wants to achieve;
- the specific objectives;
- the actions and the outputs that are needed in order to achieve the change, including the definition of stakeholders and target groups;
- the results and their durability.

When developing the project intervention logic the first question that should be answered is: “what positive change the implementation of my project will bring?” The answer to this question should give the project direction, based on which the main and specific objectives and the results can be defined. As the project specific objectives and results should be in line with the programme ones, the applicants should choose one programme specific objective and its corresponding result to which their project is contributing the most. Only projects contributing to the programme objectives and results will be funded by Danube Region Programme.

## How to build the project intervention logic?

- Define project results and link them to the programme intervention logic<sup>1</sup>;
- Specify the project main objective;

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the call the main objective could be also pre-set at programme level

- Choose a programme priority specific objective to which the project contributes and describe how it will contribute. It is important to secure consistency between project objectives and programme specific objectives;
- Choose the result indicators your project is addressing, quantify them and describe in more details the expected change.

## DEFINE PROJECT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES<sup>2</sup>

- The project should specify up to three specific objectives to stay focused;
- The project specific objectives need to show direct contribution to the project main objective;
- It should be possible, at least to some extent, to measure achievement of project specific objectives with project main outputs. Ideally direct link should be established.

## DEFINE PROJECT OUTPUTS AND RESULTS AND LINK THEM TO THE PROGRAMME OUTPUT INDICATORS

- Project outputs are defined in the work plan and linked to each specific objective;
- A project output is one of the main products of project activities, which can be captured by a programme output indicator and that directly contributes to the achievement of the project result. ***Project output and programme output indicator need to have the same measurement unit to be able to aggregate them (the same applies for the projects results and programme result indicators);***
- An aggregation of project outputs/ results based on programme output/ result indicators is essential for the achievement of output targets set on the [programme level](#). Project specific output/ result indicators are not accepted, because they fall out of programme intervention logic and therefore don't contribute to the achievement of programme objectives and indicators.

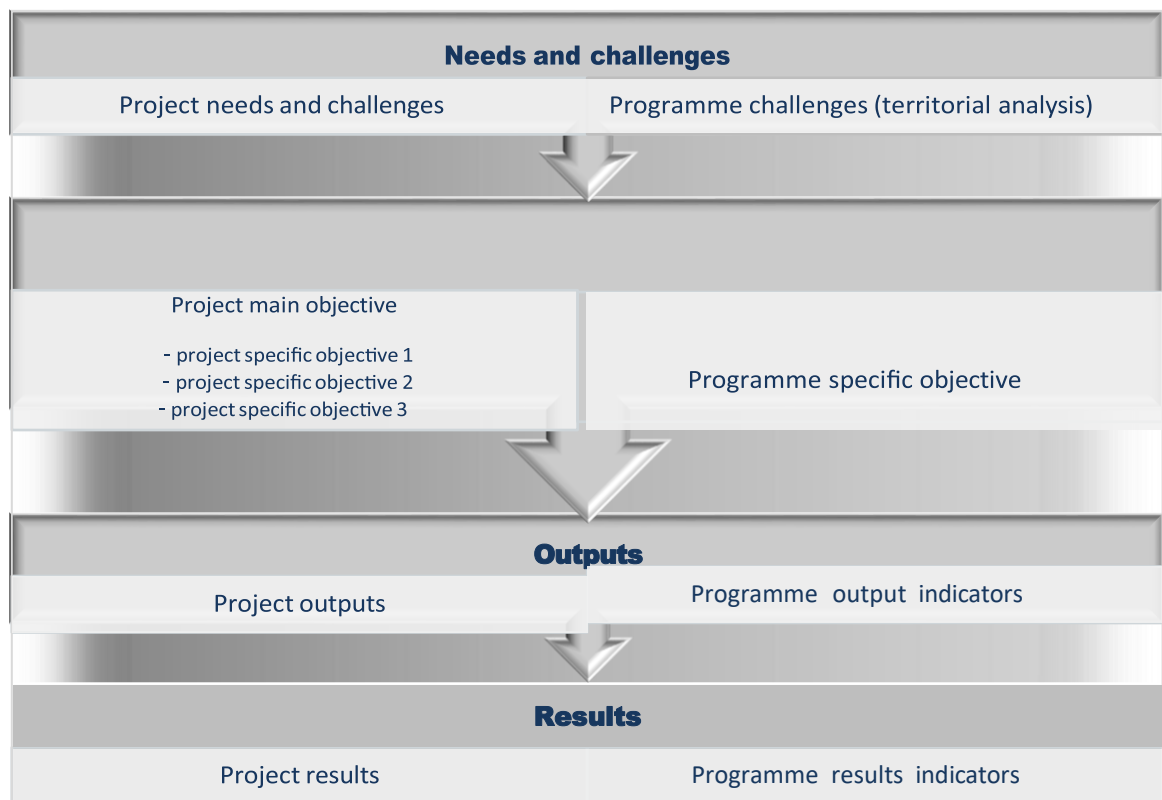
## DEVELOP THE WORK PLAN

- Project objectives, results and outputs have to be logically linked to project work plan (activities, time plan). The project work plan shall explain what needs to be done to deliver project outputs and achieve project specific objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> Depending on the call the specific objectives could be also pre-set at programme level

- The work plan is divided per each specific objective defined by the project, which is broken down into activities. The applicant shall describe all the activities that are leading to the achievement of each specific objective.
- A side-product of the project that contributes to the development of a project output can be listed as a deliverable of a set of activities, however not every activity has to have a deliverable.



## Project intervention logic glossary

Term	Definition
<b>Project main objective</b>	Describes the strategic and long term change that the project seeks to achieve for the benefit of the target groups.
<b>Project specific objective</b>	Describes the specific and immediate effects of the project and it can be realistically achieved within the implementation period.

<b>Project result</b>	Constitutes the immediate advantage of carrying out the project, telling us about the benefit of using the project main outputs. It should indicate the (territorial) change the project is aiming for.
<b>Project output</b>	It tells us what has actually been produced for the money given to the project. It can be captured by a programme output indicator, and directly contributes to the achievement of the project results.
<b>Project activity</b>	Describes a specific task performed for which resources are used. It is a work plan component which may or may not result in a deliverable or an output.
<b>Project deliverable</b>	Is a side-product or service of the project that contributes to the development of a project's main outputs.

*Programme intervention logic terminology is explained in the relevant EC regulations and guidance papers.*

## IV. How to contribute to the programme output indicators<sup>3</sup>

<b>Output indicator</b>	<b>Definition of indicator</b>	<b>Result indicator</b>	<b>Definition of the indicator</b>
RCO 83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies or action plans developed by supported projects. A jointly developed strategy aims at establishing a targeted way to achieve a goal oriented process in a specific domain.	RCR 79 Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	The indicator counts the number of joint strategies and action plans (not individual actions) adopted and implemented by organisations during or after the project completion. At the time of reporting this indicator, the

<sup>3</sup> Programme outputs/results indicators are indicators included in the Interreg programme document based on which the programme performance is measured.

	<p>An action plan translates an existing jointly developed strategy into actions.</p> <p>Jointly developed strategy or action plan implies the involvement of organisations from the partnership in the drafting process of the strategy or action plan.</p>		<p>implementation of the joint strategy or action plan does not need to be completed but effectively started. The organisations involved in take-up may or may not be direct participants in the supported project. It is not necessary that all actions identified are taken-up for a strategy/action plan to be counted in this context. The value report should be equal to or less than the value for "RCO83 Strategies and action plans jointly developed".</p>
<p>RCO 84</p> <p>Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects</p>	<p>The indicator counts the pilot actions developed jointly and implemented by supported projects. The scope of a jointly developed pilot action could be to test procedures, new instruments, tools, experimentation or</p>	<p>ISI<sup>4</sup>:</p> <p>Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders, other than organisations counted under</p>	<p>The number of organisations, <u>other than the ones involved in the partnership</u> that increased their institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project by actively participating in cooperation</p>

<sup>4</sup> Interreg Specific Indicator developed by the programmes together with INTERACT



			documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.
RCO 116 Jointly developed solutions	<p>The indicator counts the number of jointly developed solutions from joint pilot actions implemented by supported projects. In order to be counted in the indicator, an identified solution should include indications of the actions needed for it to be taken up or to be upscaled.</p> <p>A jointly developed solution implies the involvement of organisations from the partnership in the drafting and design process of the solution.</p>	RCR 104 Solutions taken up or up- scaled by organisations	<p>The indicator counts the number of solutions, other than legal or administrative solutions, that are developed by supported projects and are taken up or up- scaled during the implementation of the project or within one year after project completion. The organisation adopting the solutions developed by the project may or may not be a participant in the project. The uptake / up- scaling should be documented by the adopting organisations in, for instance, strategies, action plans etc.</p>
RCO 87	The indicator counts the organisations	ISI:	The number of organisations that increased their

Organisations cooperating across borders	cooperating formally in supported projects. The organisations counted in this indicator are the legal entities including project partners and associated organisations, as mentioned in the application form and subsidy contract.	Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across borders	institutional capacity in the thematic field of the project by actively participating in cooperation activities across borders.
RCO118  Organisations cooperating for the multi-level governance of macro-regional strategies <sup>5</sup>	<p>The indicator counts the number of legal entities supported by the programme, listed in the financing agreements, and also contributing to the multi-level governance of macro-regional strategies.</p> <p>As a concept, the multi-level governance refers to collective decision making processes where authority and influence are shared between stakeholders operating at multiple levels of</p>	RCR 84  Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	The indicator counts the organisations cooperating across borders after the completion of the supported projects. The organisations are legal entities involved in project implementation, counted within RCO87. The cooperation concept should be interpreted as having a statement that the entities have a formal agreement to continue cooperation, after the end of the supported project. The cooperation agreements may

<sup>5</sup> This indicator applies only for S.O.4.1 related to EUSDR governance support.



	governance and in different policy sectors. This concept may be customised and understood according to the context of each macro-regional strategy.		be established during the implementation of the project or within one year after the project completion. The sustained cooperation does not have to cover the same topic as addressed by the completed project.
RCO120  Projects supporting cooperation across borders to develop urban-rural linkages	<p>The indicator counts the number of projects which aim, as a primary objective, to enhance the cooperation across borders between urban and rural areas.</p> <p>The urban-rural linkages developed within the project should enable a stronger urban-rural cooperation and partnership for implementing initiatives in various key relevant policy areas.</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable

## V. How to set up an efficient project coordination

### Management structure

Setting up an efficient project coordination is mainly related to internal project organisation in terms of structure, assignment of responsibilities and clear decision making procedures so that smooth implementation of the project is ensured.

In defining the management structure of the project, the lead partner principle is to be considered meaning that one institution is designated as lead partner in accordance with programme's requirements. The LP will act as an interface between the programme (MA/JIS) and the partnership. Besides its responsibilities with regard to the implementation of content related project activities, the LP is also responsible for establishing and maintaining a sound management and implementation of the project (depending on the capacities of the LP this can be externalised or organised in-house). The LP is the one signing the subsidy contract with the MA on behalf of the partnership.

**The document governing the legal aspects agreed by partners is the partnership agreement** which has to be signed by all directly financed project partners beforehand and submitted together with the AF and which lays down the relations of the LP with the project partners, such as responsibilities and contributions to the work plan and activities, reporting requirements, financial provisions and others. The partnership agreement enters into force and produces legal consequences only once the subsidy contract is signed. The DRP will make a partnership agreement template available for the launch of the call for proposals.

Size and composition of the **management team** can vary, yet the following three key positions shall ensure a proper implementation of the project:

- Project manager (PM): is in charge with the overall management and coordination of the project implementation, daily monitoring of project progress with the support of specific objective/activity leaders, compilation of the content parts of the partner reports/project progress reports (PR/PPR) and timely submission thereof, achievement of project objectives within the planned period of time and quality control of delivered outputs. He/she also acts as an interface between MA/JIS and the project partners.
- Financial manager (FM): is responsible for permanent monitoring of all financial aspects, including internal management of funds, expenditures, spending rates, budget shifts, financial reporting, public procurements, collection of documents for the controllers.

- Communication manager (CM): is responsible for developing and implementing project communication strategy, defining communication objectives, approaches, activities and key messages to be sent out, preparation of information materials and promotion items, preparation and distribution of newsletters and press releases to identified stakeholders.

The Communication manager will also coordinate communication within the partnership by setting up internal communication rules and monitoring tools, updating the information on the project section in the DRP website etc.

The core management team will also act as permanent contact for external actors.

Similar positions as the ones mentioned above should also exist at partner level so that specific issues can be dealt with in a more efficient way.

## Decision making structure

In order to establish a clear decision making structure, a **steering committee** needs to be established from the beginning of the project.

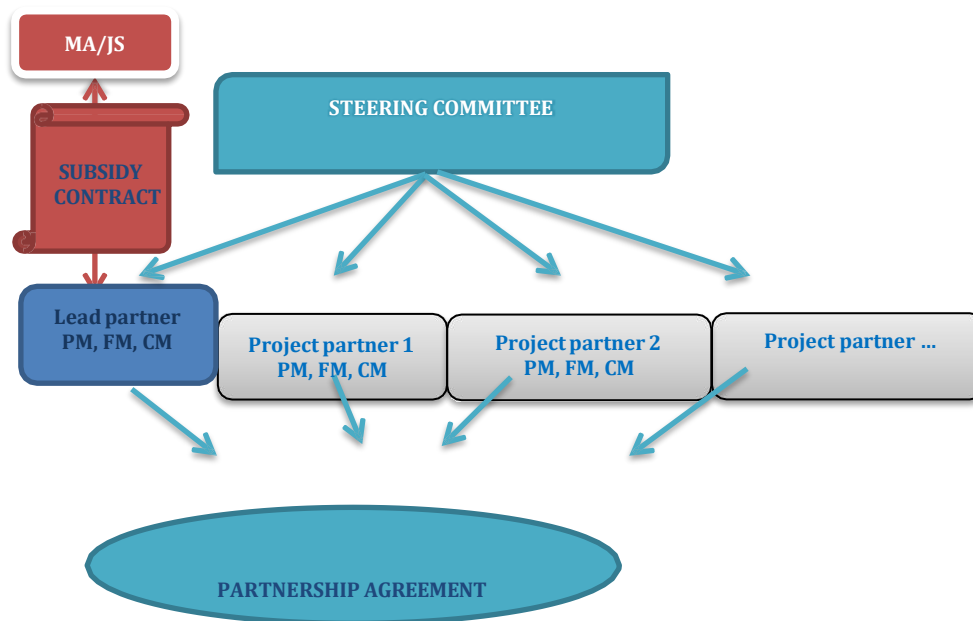
The steering committee will monitor, steer and take strategic decisions with regard to project adjustments in case of unforeseen situations. All project partners are represented in the steering committee which meets regularly (e.g. once/ twice a year).

Main tasks of the steering committee include:

- Checking if project implementation is in line with the activities and outputs foreseen in the AF.
- Validating the progress towards the achievement of project outputs.
- Review project performance in terms of implemented activities against spending.
- Take decisions with regard to project modifications (e.g. content, partnership, budget, duration), if applicable, approval for which will be requested from relevant programme bodies.

For the steering committee to act in accordance with its tasks, rules of procedure have to be established and agreed from the beginning of the project implementation.

In its activity, the steering committee will be supported by the management team able to provide details on specific issues so that the decision making process is facilitated.



## Quality management structure

The success of a project relies heavily on its internal quality management which is a sine qua non condition for the delivery of qualitative and sustainable outputs. Quality management procedures should be established already in the application phase and they must include:

- Setting up an internal quality management structure consisting of designated individual(s) in charge with proofreading, analysing and reviewing project outputs from the qualitative point of view and submission of quality reports (as part of the regular project progress reports if the case), especially related to main outputs of the project (for further details on this topic, please refer to implementation manual)
- Additionally, external written validation of project outputs (e.g. by EUSDR PACs, relevant professional organisations or associations, expert working groups etc.), besides being considered a plus, might also be requested by the MA/JS following analysis of the respective output

## VI. Communication

### Application form

- Already at the application stage, projects are expected to demonstrate how communication will help to implement the project successfully. As there is no dedicated communication work package in the application form, communication

aims and planned activities and related target audiences have to be integrated throughout the project work plan (see below).

- When developing project communication objectives in section “C. 4 Project work plan” of the application form, it is important to consider that these objectives have to be linked to the specific project objectives. When deciding on which communication objectives to choose, it is necessary to include reference to the relevant target groups. Communication objectives describe the desired changes in the target audience’s perceptions, awareness, attitudes, and/or behaviour, contributing to the accomplishment of the project specific objective.
- In section C.7.3 of the application form, applicants are expected to describe the general approach to communication of their project, describing how communication objectives, target groups, communication activities will contribute to the main project goal(s), as well as how the project partners will coordinate, communicate and share the tasks among themselves.

## Project set-up

- All projects are obliged to implement a set of standard communication tools described in this section as well as follow programme branding guidelines for acknowledging and promoting the EU support received from the Danube Region Programme in all activities;
- Each project partner has to plan enough staff and resources for the implementation of the communication activities laid down in the application form. The lead partner should appoint a **communication manager**. The communication manager should be a qualified person in charge of the planning, coordination and implementation of the project’s communication activities across all work packages and by all partners. This person will be as well the liaison with the joint secretariat on project communication issues;
- In addition to project specific communication activities, the communication manager of each project is responsible for setting up and implementing the communication tools and activities described below.

### ATTENTION:

In the EoI, as well as in the AF there is no dedicated communication work package as communication is integrated in the content of a project. In order to achieve a specific project objective, you may need to achieve one or more communication objective(s). Therefore, think of communication objectives as relevant and expected to contribute to project specific objectives and communication activities as appropriate to reach the relevant target groups and stakeholders. Communication activities are linked to thematic activities and shall not be considered as main implementation steps.

## Project websites within the programme website

**The Danube Region Programme website will include and host one website per project.** The integrated system of programme and project websites will facilitate the monitoring of project activities and it will save financial and human resources. No costs will be needed for creating and maintaining the project website since these services will be offered by the programme free of charge.

The MA/JS will give projects access information (username and password) and guidance on how to produce and upload content to their webpages. The project webpages will have the same structure for all projects allowing some flexibility to create new sub- sections according to the projects' requests. All projects need to update their webpages regularly with content designed to attract new visitors during the whole project implementation.

The micro-sites will include:

- Pre-filled information fields with data from the application form: partnership, budget, etc.;
- Dynamic information to be filled in manually by projects: project summary, project results, news and events, etc.

Projects might still develop a separate website for tools or products with a lifetime reaching beyond the project and being a project output itself and not a simple communication tool. The development of such a separate website will be subject to approval during the assessment of the project and a specific justification will be required. In the event that this separate website is approved, the project will be required to follow the programme's corporate design.

Beyond the basic website, the programme encourages the projects to develop their presence online through social media and to use digital communication tools, when relevant to their communication objectives, target groups and the communication plan in general.

### LOGOS AND VISUAL IDENTITY

The Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021 (Annex IX) requires all beneficiaries to follow a number of rules regarding the use of the logo of the European Union and the respective fund. The logo must always be visible in a prominent place and of a comparable size to other logos used. The Danube Region Programme logo already respects all the programme requirements, and all approved projects are obliged to use it on all their communication materials (both hard copy and electronic as well as to display it in events), as well as on all project partners' organizations' official websites and social media channels. Alongside the logo, a short description of the project, including its aims and results, should be provided.

**DRP projects are not allowed to develop their own project logo.** Developing a logo is costly, it has a limited lifetime and so many logos bring confusion to the audience. For this reason and in order to limit costs, projects will share the programme's brand just adding the project acronym below in the colours of the priority each project belongs to.

A specific logo might exceptionally be considered for an output/result with a lifetime going beyond the project if well justified in the application form and approved by the MA/JS.

The DRP provides a visual identity manual with rules and related templates for different materials to be followed by all projects. These documents are downloadable from the DRP website. The MA/JS will help the projects in fulfilling these rules and support them constantly in all their communication activities.

## POSTER

Within six months after the approval of the project, each project partner has to place at least one poster with information about the project (minimum size A3), including the financial support from the EU, at a location visible to the public, such as the entrance area of a building (The Regulation (EU) No 1060/2021 (Annex IX)).

The poster needs to stay visible for the whole duration of the project. The production costs of the poster need to be budgeted.

## EVENTS

At least two major events must be organised by the project to create awareness and disseminate the project results. A kick-off event should be organised within four months after the beginning of the project implementation and a final dissemination event should be organised at the end of the implementation period.

To these events, not only project partners but key stakeholders/final beneficiaries/decision-makers should attend and the audience should be as wide as possible. Some tips for a better organisation of the events will be included in the communication toolkit addressed to the approved projects. During the events, projects are encouraged to place the EU flag and ensure visibility of the programme logos.

Other activities/events can be organised by the project or the partners can decide to participate in an activity organised by someone else if relevant for the project implementation.

Projects are encouraged to think about the capitalisation opportunities with other projects and the related costs already in the application phase (joint publications, joint events, etc.).

The DRP encourages project partners to incorporate several other activities organised by the programme in their budget planning (an average participation of two-three events per year is to be budgeted). Events may include:

- lead partner seminar (only once after the project's approval);
- annual DRP events (once a year);
- communication training (at least once after the project's approval).

## VII. Environmental sustainability

The total sets of greenhouse gas emissions caused by an organisation, event, product or person define their carbon footprint.

Changes in our lifestyles, attitudes and behaviours towards more environmentally sound choices will provide a contribution to reverse this situation.

The Danube Region Programme, covering a wide area of 14 countries and over 114 million of inhabitants that agreed to interact and work together for the next years, has a considerable potential carbon footprint.

Experience of transnational programme implementation showed that two main factors, among others, directly contribute to increasing the carbon footprint of a programme: 1. excessive use of printed documents either for formal or informal use; and 2. extensive travels of the involved actors.

The actions planned to decrease the carbon footprint of the DRP are twofold. On one hand, a reduction of the printed paper needed for the implementation of the DRP and, on the other hand offsetting the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted during the travels of all actors involved in the DRP implementation.

### REDUCE – REUSE – RECYCLE PRINCIPLE

The first step towards a greener direction should be taken during the procuring process: whenever procuring for activities which will produce documents and publications in general, a clear request of using only recycled paper should be indicated in the related terms of references (ToRs).

Considering the significant number of events planned and expected to be organised throughout the project duration, it is strongly recommended to avoid distributing paper copy of materials used during the events (e.g. agenda, printout of PPTs, discussion documents in general) and make appropriate use of the electronic support.

The DRP ensures a considerable reduction of request of paper documents from the projects in all steps of implementation:

1. Application phase: application forms and all supporting documents will be requested in electronic format only.
2. Reporting phase: progress reports and declarations of validations will be requested in electronic format only. Applications for reimbursement will only need to be



provided in electronic format. Copies of deliverables will be requested in electronic format only.

We encourage using best practice procedures that stress the reduction of the used paper, its reuse and the recycling through appropriate recycling bins.

#### Reduce:

- the circulation of printed documents should be reduced by using email wherever possible;
- it is advised to always use both sides of paper. Printers and photocopiers should be set to copy double-sided as default.

#### Reuse:

- waste paper should be used and assembled into notepads;
- it is advised to use designated containers to collect part-used waste paper. This can then be fed back through faxes/printers or used for rough working.

#### Recycle:

- confidential documents should be shred and sent for recycling;
- all other used paper should be sent for recycling where possible.

## CARBON OFFSET

According to a rough estimation that considered the experience of the past programming period, a minimum of 9,400 travels are expected during the Danube Region Programme and project implementation. Therefore, it can be expected that travelling for programme/project purposes will substantially increase the carbon footprint.

The DRP strongly suggests the project partners to previously assess the need for travel and to explore the alternative options, such as conference calls, online meetings, etc.

As often travels cannot be avoided, the DRP proposes to first trying to reduce the impact of the travel by combining events together (e.g. project steering committee meeting with working group meeting and kick-off event) and/or by selecting the venue taking into consideration its accessibility (e.g. location easily reachable by train).

Another option that the DRP offers is the offsetting of the carbon emissions produced by the programme actors (programme bodies and project partners) when flying.

Carbon offsets are achieved through financial support of projects carried out by organisations that act as service providers of CO<sub>2</sub> compensation that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases in the short- or long-term.

**Costs for compensating the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are eligible for co-financing at programme level.** Project actors are advised to read carefully the chapter on the eligibility of expenditures to make sure that programme rules are followed when purchasing carbon offsetting.