

Report to the European Commission

Implementation of the EUSDR Priority Area 6

To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils

Reporting period

July 2013 – June 2014



June 2014.

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1. OVERALL PROGRESS

1.1. State of play

1.1.1. Work on the policies

Continuity within the approach of Priority Area 6 (PA6) characterizes the reporting period July 2013 – June 2014, with progress in some elements, new thematic additions and some minor drawbacks. It can be stated that the work in PA6 reached a sound stability and positive routine. For a more detailed description of the PA6 implementation process, please refer to the last report. Keywords are still: integrative and bottom-up approach.

Concrete measures, activities and conferences on EUSDR policy that PAC6 has undertaken or participated at, in the period from July 2013 till now comprise the following:

28-29 October 2013, Bucharest (RO): 2nd Annual Forum of the EUSDR. The major event of the EUSDR brings the opportunity to present the state of play and to exchange with other key actors from the EUSDR as well as with representatives from the policy level, stakeholders, NGO's, organisations and others. PA6 actively participated in the workshop "Green Danube Region" and presented the process and progress, emphasizing the bottom-up and integrated approach. Additionally, PA6 highlighted the fact that a missing link between activities on the ground and the policy level has been identified and answers to fill this gap will be researched by a feasibility study (see below). The annual forum was also an excellent opportunity to present the finalized strategy and programme "Sturgeon 2020", which also found positive resonance on level of EC and several other participants.

2 November 2013, Ulm (DE): Federal Conference of Paneuropean Youth (Paneuropean Union). The overall key topic of the event was entitled "EU Danube Strategy – Europe grows together". PAC6 (BY) presented EUSDR and PA6 in a key note speech. Other speakers and panelists, which included among others EU Commissioner Guenther Oettinger and two Members of EP, emphasized the added value

of the EUSDR for the integration process within the EU on basis of concrete projects and activities. PAC6 could contribute to the discussions by bringing in an insight view.

30 November 2013, Niederalteich (DE): 22nd International Danube Congress. The Danube Congress has a long history in Bavaria and is mainly organized and conducted by Bavarian NGO "Bund Naturschutz" (BN). PAC6 was invited to present the objectives and processes of PA6 and EUSDR in general, which brought the good opportunity to further connect to local and regional stakeholders and to further extend the cooperation. The invitation was based on the close cooperation within the working group for the "Masterplan Bavarian Danube" (see below).

10-11 December 2013, Vienna (AT): ICPDR Ordinary Meeting. At the 16th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR, activities of the ICPDR expert groups were presented and their proposed decisions were accepted. Priority Area 6 (HR) gave joint presentation of the PA4, PA5 and PA6 emphasizing connection between EUSDR and ICPDR and possibilities for further cooperation. PA6 presented the state of projects in which the ICPDR is involved and their possible connection with EUSDR. Excellent cooperation with Priority Area 6 was highlighted and officially recognized. Discussion about overlapping EUSDR and ICPDR was useful and the need for demarcation of their activities in order to avoid duplication of work and activities.

4-5 February 2014, Zagreb (HR): Joint Statement Working Group meeting (ICPDR, Danube Commission, Sava Commission). For the second time, PAC6 participated at the meeting and jointly presented with PAC1a the proposal to further improve the process on working level. The EUSDR has been established to better coordinate policies and actions. The multiple use of rivers and inland waterways makes close coordination necessary and also obvious, therefore strong interfaces between Priority Areas 1a and 6 are needed. The Joint Statement principles as such need not necessarily be reviewed; they "just" need to be implemented. PA1a and PA6 are interested in smoother and more concrete implementation of the Joint Statement principles and a higher

acceptance and faster realization of the projects. Both PACs are offering further support and facilitation in the Joint Statement process within the scope of their PAC mandate. The concrete proposal made was to meet for an informal brainstorming session on the future of the Joint Statement process, involving DG-MOVE, DG-Environment, DG-REGIO, Danube Commission, Sava Commission, NGOs and industry representatives. Purpose of the meeting shall be to discuss and develop concrete activities based on the needs of the involved actors, facilitated by EUSDR/PACs, including the screening possibilities for future financing for these activities. The proposal was welcomed by the participants and the above mentioned meeting took place on **8 May 2014** in Vienna. Outcomes of this meeting are currently being processed and were very intense as e.g. proposal for offering trainings for practitioners and an overall guidance on the implementation. Both PACs could facilitate the further process.

19 February 2014, Brussels (BE): Danubeparks presentation to EC. In order to present the activities of the Danubeparks 2.0 project and network and also to discuss its potential contributions on the policy level, Danubeparks organised and conducted a “Danubeparks Day in Brussels” with meetings with representatives of the European Parliament and of DG Regio and DG Environment. PAC6 took part in the meeting with the DG’s as well in its coordinating role between projects and policy level. The way forward by Danubeparks can be considered as best practice when it comes to methods to be used in order to fill the gap between concrete activities and measures and political discussions and shaping of directives and regulations on level of EC.

24 March 2014, Brussels (BE): First meeting of the revised GIIR – Green Infrastructure Implementation and Restoration working group. The objective of the Working Group is to support the implementation of actions of the GI Strategy¹ and to provide a platform for sharing best practices on GI deployment. The Working Group will also address the linkages between the

restoration of degraded ecosystems and the deployment of GI. PAC6 (HR) presented the importance of EU Macro-Regional Strategies as a fundamental platform for GI, as in the case of the Danube and Adriatic Strategies could provide knowledge transfer towards non-member states.

26-27 June 2014, Vienna (AT): 3rd Annual Forum of the EUSDR. 3rd Annual Forum with its plenary sessions focused on economic improvement, social inclusion and good governance of the EUSDR. PAC6 participated in joint workshop with PAC1a *Crossing borders, crossing sectors*, on promoting cooperation between navigability and nature protection sectors and providing support to *Joint Statement*² process. Joint declaration of Ministers of foreign affairs from EUSDR countries and European Commission was adopted.³

Table 1: Events related to policy level with participation of PAC6

DATE	VENUE
28-29 October 2013	2 nd Annual Forum EUSDR, Bucharest (RO)
2 November 2013	Federal Conference of Paneuropean Youth (Paneuropean Union), Ulm (DE)
30 November 2013	22 nd International Danube Congress, Niederalteich (DE)
10-11 December 2013	16 th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR, Vienna (AT)
4-5 February 2014	Joint Statement Workgroup by Danube Commission, ICPDR, Sava Commission, Zagreb (HR)
19 February 2014	Danubeparks 2.0 presentation at EP, EC, Brussels
24 March 2014	Meeting of the Green Infrastructure Implementation and Restoration (GIIR) working group, Brussels (BE)
26-27 June 2014	3 rd Annual Forum of the EUSDR

² Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin

³ <http://www.icpdr.org/main/icpdr-highlighted-3rd-eusdr-annual-conference>

¹ Green Infrastructure (GI) (COM(2013) 249 final)

1.1.2. Improvements compared to previous report

- Stabilisation and continuity gained
- Best practice by Danubeparks by making direct connection to EP and EC level
- New impulses to Joint Statement Group by joint efforts of PAC6 and PAC1a

1.1.3. Outline on the future

Working at the interface between activities and projects and policy level, PAC6 together with its key contacts identified a clear gap between these

two layers, which implies certain difficulties to keep the momentum and to fulfil the claim of the EUSDR to consequently integrate existing actors and civil society in the implementation and to link them with the policy level. In many countries of the Danube Region, PA6-related topics concerning biodiversity and nature protection are not considered with the same importance than others. EUSDR however defines all 11 (12) Priority Areas with the same importance. Therefore it became a goal of PA6 to find ways to overcome this traditional perception by using the EUSDR as given legitimisation (more details on this see chapter 1.2.1.)

1.2. Process

1.2.1. PAC6 organisation, Steering Group, PA6 Stakeholder Network

PAC6 cooperation: The cooperation among the PACs of PA6 is continuously carried out well and in a sound complementary way in terms of regional focus, stakeholder involvement and interrelation with national, EU and international policies and regulations. The exchange between PACs is functioning well by e-mail communication on a daily basis and by organising PAC6 meetings when needed.

The **PA6 Steering Group (SG)** remains active as reported before. The participation of SG members in the meetings varies, as well as their involvement in steering the PA6 process. The fifth Steering Group meeting took place in Zagreb on 3 April 2014. The Steering Group has been enlarged by the integration of additional observers, which partly participated at the Steering Group meeting.

*Austria (AT), Bosnia & Herzegovina (BA), Bulgaria (BG), Czech Republic (CZ), Germany (DE), Croatia (HR), Hungary (HU), Moldova (MD), Montenegro (ME), Serbia (RS), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), Romania (RO), Ukraine (UA)

Table 2: Attendance to Steering Group meetings

Country*	1 st Meeting 20 June 2011 Munich	2 nd Meeting 24 - 25 Oct. 2011 Zagreb	3 rd Meeting 14 June 2012 Munich	4 th Meeting 6 March 2013 Zagreb	5 th Meeting 3 April 2014 Zagreb
DE	x	x	x	x	x
AT	x	x	x	x	
CZ					
SK			x		
HU	x	x	x		x
SI		x	x		
HR	x	x	x	x	x
RS				x	x
BA		x			
ME					
RO	x	x		x	
BG					
MD					
UA					
DG ENV	x	x	x		
DG REGIO	x	x	x	x	x
PAC4		x			
PAC5					
ICPDR		x	x	x	
Carpathian Convention		x		x	x

1.2.2. PA6 Stakeholder Network – Feasibility Study and next steps

The idea of a **PA6 Stakeholder Network** has already been mentioned in the previous report and was intensely further followed in the current period. Most importantly, a feasibility study on the potentials and needs of a Stakeholder Network on Biodiversity in the Danube Region, closely related to Priority Area 06 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region / EUSDR has been contracted by PAC6 (BY). The starting point and main assumptions were that networking supranational, national and local stakeholder could significantly improve the impact and visibility of PA6 related topics. Single and isolated activities on local and regional level will be transferred to a transnational framework which raises their significance. A strong stakeholder network could raise the efficiency, coordination and visibility of the individual activities and the linkages of a stakeholder network to the policy level can be attained more easily than by single and individual activities. Also the policy level could benefit from a direct contact point to address when it comes to PA6-related activities (also after and beyond EUSDR). Thus, the stakeholder network shall close the gap between policy level and implementation level on topics with PA6 relevance. In this context it has to be stated that the intention of the “Stakeholder Network” goes beyond the mere networking of relevant as the often missing link to the policy level shall be closed as well.

The study clearly pointed out that the demand and commitment for an international Stakeholder-Network uttered by the Stakeholders themselves is very high. The success very much depends on the organization and localization in order to find broad acceptance and to safeguard its efficient work. In this respect, it is crucial to find wise ways to include already existing. By the means of a coordinated and targeted relation and exchange between Steering Group and network, a more effective and more strategic implementation of single objectives and targets of PA6 will be enabled due to the creation of a new thematic layer between the EUSDR and the “implementation ground”. In the Danube Region much knowledge and competence in already existing networks, NGOs and organizations exists. The network must build on this by

communication measures and a sufficient flexibility in the organizational framework. Double and parallel structures must be avoided, synergies and pooling to be strived for.

The study was finalized by March 2014. On 27 May 2014 a first brainstorm meeting with the key contacts of PA6 took place in Vienna in order to discuss and reflect on the main findings of the study and also to further define the needs, requirements and next steps. The key contacts represent the current four main pillars of PA6 implementation: Biodiversity, Green Corridors, Soil Protection and Sustainable Development & Awareness Raising. The process will continue in the second half of 2014 and will be part of the further PA6 work for the upcoming years. The electronic version of the study is included to this report as annex, including a short English summary.

1.2.2. Joint Pillar II Stakeholder Workshop

The second Joint Pillar II Stakeholder Workshop took place on **11-12 September 2013** in Budapest, entitled “**Transboundary water issues in a macro-regional context: the Danube basin**” and jointly organised by PACs 4, 5 & 6. The aim of the conference was to provide an overview about scientific results and methods which are essential to the implementation of the water-related goals of the EUSDR: innovative methods, new models and strategies will be presented which constitute the main contribution of science and innovation to the Danube Strategy.

1.2.3. Integrative approach with other PACs

11-12 March 2014, PAC-NCP Meeting, Vienna (AT). The meeting brought together some of the key actors of the EUSDR, including PACs, NCPs, EC and important partners, such as the Danube Transnational Programme. From point of view of PAC6 it has to be stated, that there is a strong need of internal cooperation and horizontal organizational structure on level of PACs, which most probably will remain also in the future in order to enfold the full potential of the EUSDR. A too sectorial implementation approach might even lead to an internal competition when it comes to first call for projects e.g. in the Danube Transnational Programme. PAC6 will therefore

continue with its integrative content-oriented approach.

Table 3: PAC and EUSDR related events with participation of PAC6

DATE	VENUE
11-12. Sept. 2013	2nd Joint Pillar II Stakeholder Conference/Workshop, Budapest (HU)
3. December 2013	TAF DRP Revision Workshop, Vienna (AT)
11.-12. March 2014	PAC/NCP Meeting, Vienna (AT)
3. April 2014	5 th PA6 Steering Group Meeting, Zagreb (HR)
27. May 2014	1 st PA6 Stakeholder Network Brainstorming Meeting, Vienna (AT)

1.2.4. Progress made since the last reporting period on the governance of PA

- Continuity in PA6 cooperation
- Contracting a Study on needs and requirements of a PA6 Stakeholder Network, including first follow-up meeting and development of next steps
- Clearer focus of PA6 range of topics defined, based on needs and key contacts

Potentials for improvements:

- Horizontal exchange and cooperation on level of PACs definitively has strong potential for improvement and will be further promoted by PAC6.

1.2.5. Outline on the future regarding PA governance

Further exploring the options of the Stakeholder Network, including ways for permanent funding. PA6 will continue to strengthen horizontal PA-exchange, preferably by concrete project developments, and identifying the needs to design the internal cooperation.

1.2.6. Work on actions and projects

Also on actions and projects, continuity describes the activities of the past year best for PA6 best, along with new project developments and a new Task Force on the topic of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). Continuity could be achieved within the Danube Sturgeon Task Force by a fourth meeting in February 2014 and by support from the TAF-DRP. The Bavarian Task Force on maintaining and developing biodiversity along the Bavarian stretch of the Danube laid the ground for finalising the “Masterplan” as a mid-term vision and action plan to pursue the objectives.

Fourth Danube Sturgeon Task Force meeting in February 2014 (Vienna, Austria).

The international Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF) jointly finalised its main programme “Sturgeon 2020” in July 2013. It consists out of an overall framework prepared for policy makers, presenting briefly the sturgeons as flagship species of the Danube River Basin and the key measures required for their conservation. Furthermore, the program “Sturgeon 2020” is a living document focused on six key topics, describing the measures required to achieve a successful implementation of the conservation and revival of sturgeon populations in the Danube River Basin and the adjacent Black Sea Region. The six key topics include

- Acquiring political support for sturgeon conservation
- Capacity building and law enforcement
- In-situ conservation
- Ex-situ conservation
- Socio-economic measures in support of sturgeon long-term vision and an action plan with six key topics, including

The full program can be downloaded at the DSTF-Website www.dstf.eu and was also presented at the 2nd Annual Forum of the EUSDR in Bucharest 2013.

The DSTF also successfully applied for support within the 1st call of the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF DRP), coordinated by PAC10. The support granted was

used for an in-detail project preparation investigation and researches in legal issues, which is necessary to develop main projects in the next couple of months and in the light of the new EU funding period 2014 – 2020. During the fourth DSTF meeting on 6-7 February 2014 in Vienna, content details of the TAF DRP mandate were discussed with the consultant directly. Further topics were a possible alliance with PA3 on ecotourism (facilitated by the GIZ, who were present in the meeting as well) and the future of the DSTF organisation (linked with the researches on a PA6 Stakeholder Network). As a result, concrete project proposals linked to the six key topics are currently under development and key contacts for the key topics were defined.

In September 2013 a separate project development meeting took place in Munich with the topic of in-situ research on sterlet populations in the border region of Bavaria and Austria. The project has been approved by the Interreg A Programme Bavaria – Austria and shall be connected to Sturgeon 2020.

Masterplan for Bavarian Danube

Two further meetings of the integrative Bavarian working group had been carried out in the second half of 2013, in which the basis for the “Masterplan Bavarian Danube” had jointly been developed. The working group includes representatives of NGOs as well as local and regional authorities and administration, which is remarkable and an achievement of the EUSDR momentum, including the PAC6 role of the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection. The Masterplan is currently (June 2014) in its finalisation phase and will be concluded most probably in September 2014. Its objective is to develop a mid- and long term vision for the Bavarian Stretch of the Danube with focus on enhancing biodiversity and nature protection as well as with an action plan, based on a detailed deficit analysis and pilot projects. A close exchange with regional authorities will be safeguarded within the finalisation process. For the first time, a comprehensive plan will be developed as a framework for individual projects. The structure of the Masterplan is comparable to “Sturgeon 2020” and the respective blueprint will be used –when appropriate- also by other sub Task Forces.

Cross-sectorial Workshop from DANUBEPARKS and NEWADA duo

In October 2013, a cross-sectorial workshop of the projects Danubeparks and Newada duo took place in Hainburg (AT). These two projects represent the objectives of PA6 and PA1a, therefore the two respective PACs were invited to the workshop to present and discuss the vision and approach of a cooperative and integrative implementation of the EUSDR especially in this respect. The purpose of the workshop was to deeper understand the respective needs, interests and requirements of nature protection related issues and the one from the navigation sector. A joint project development for a follow-up project was concretely discussed on the issue of maintaining Danubian Islands as specific areas for nature protection and biodiversity on the one side and to tackle them properly as obstacles for inland navigation on the other side. Beside the thematic discussion, this workshop was a direct contribution to the new ways of cooperation which can be enabled by using the EUSDR momentum.

Work on Soil Protection, deepened cooperation with SONDAR

In December 2013, PAC6 met with representatives of the Government of Lower Austria and IAD in St. Pölten to brainstorm about future activities as follow-up from the successful SONDAR projects on soil protection and public awareness. Several strategic ideas were developed, based on the SONDAR experience so far and the need and interest to extend them to a larger scale in the Danube Region, specially addressing EUSDR and PA6 as framework. Furthermore, the topic of IAS had been discussed intensely, which resulted in a separate meeting in March 2014. Beside the thematic discussion, the brainstorm meeting deepened the good relationship between the project representatives as main driving forces in the soil topic and PAC6. Furthermore, PAC6 participated in the 21st Conference of the Working Community of the Danube Regions on 26.-27. March in Tulln, which reunites the sustainability working group in cooperation with the Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region and the SoPro Innovation Agency. The conference focused on “Sustainability and socio-ecological production as an incentive for regional economy in the Danube regions.” PAC6 participated in a Panel

Discussion, together with PAC8, and highlighted the EUSDR / PA6 contribution to the process of SONДАР, its follow-ups and specifically the issue of social production, which generally also reflects the integrative approach of PA6.

First meeting of Working Group on Invasive Alien Species (“DIAS”)

In March 2014, IAD representatives organised a first brainstorm meeting with IAD experts from four Danube Countries and PAC6 to discuss activities and possible projects on the topic of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). Due to the broadness of the topic, scoping and framing a realistic background for EUSDR-related activities was one of the priorities of the meeting, as well as to define next steps. On policy level, the “*Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species*” [COM (2013) 620 final] provides an excellent framework, the future activities should adapt and contribute to. It is foreseen to organise an international symposium on the topic with experts from the Danube Region to better describe the status quo of current research and combatting activities and define most urgent needs for potential projects, which shall be elaborated in a next step afterwards. As a result from the meeting, a new Task Force was born, called DIAS (Danube Invasive Alien Species).

Apart from the above mentioned meetings, some more project development meetings took place:

- Danube Soya project: Discussion on possible relationship to the Danube Soya project with EUSDR.
- LENA: project on relation of demographic change and nature protection issues in the Danube Region

1.2.7. Improvements compared to previous report

Continuity, stabilisation and new additions describe best the improvements made compared to previous report. As mentioned above, the organisational and methodological experience made within the DSTF and with Sturgeon 2020 lead to a kind of PA6 blueprint for similar activities in different topics. To develop a mid-or

long-term vision combined with a detailed action plan proved to be a promising way to develop concrete activities more strategically and including the policy level from the beginning.

Table 4: Events related to projects and project development with participation of PAC6

DATE	VENUE
16 September 2013	3. Strategy Development meeting "Masterplan Bavarian Danube", Neuburg (DE)
24 September 2013	Project development meeting with representatives from Upper Austria and Bavaria on Sterlet protection (Interreg A), Munich (DE)
09 October 2013	Project development meeting with Matthias Krön (Danube Soya Association) on Danube Soya, Munich (DE)
16-17 October 2013	Cross-sectoral Workshop from DANUBEPARKS and NEWADA duo, new project development, joint presentation with PAC1a, Hainburg (AT)
27 November 2013	4. Strategy Development meeting "Masterplan Bavarian Danube", Munich (DE)
02 December 2013	Meeting with Government of Lower Austria on SONДАР follow up, St. Pölten (AT)
06-07 February 2014	4th Meeting of the Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF), Vienna (AT)
27 February 2014	Project Development meeting with WWF (DE) on Demographic Change and Ecology, Munich (DE)
06-07 March 2014	First meeting of Working Group on Invasive Alien Species ("DIAS"), Budapest (HU)
26 March 2014	Conference of the Working Community of the Danube Regions, SONДАР, Tulln (AT)
04 June 2014	Working meeting on finalization of Masterplan Bavarian Danube, Munich (DE)

1.3. Funding

1.3.1. Preparing the next funding period

Danube Region Programme: In the recent reporting period, the programming process for the next funding period 2014-2020 is far advanced, the ETC programmes are supposed to submit the CPs to the EC this year. The programme development of the new ETC Danube Transnational Programme, which covers the entire area of the Danube Region made good progress from viewpoint of PAC6. Specifically, a detailed discussion on the future relationship between the programme and the EUSDR, including the potential involvement of EUSDR bodies (PACs, NCPs) took place in a quite constructive and cooperative way. It is very favourable that the Danube Transnational Programme underlines its willingness to support EUSDR and PACs by different measures. A close cooperation including regular working meetings on level of PACs and Programme bodies would be favourable as well, details on this are expected to be discussed in the 2nd half year of 2014. PAC6 introduced a proposal to include the PACs in the project assessment and at the same time to keep the independency and final decision on projects to the Programme Committee by the means of a specified weighting of the PACs evaluation (which shall only reflect the contribution of the project application to one or more Priority Areas). This proposal would also be an alternative to the current but unsatisfactory system of issuing Letter of Recommendations by the PACs, which do not have a direct impact to the final project selection and which (still) do not follow a harmonized system among the PACs (see comments on this in the previous report).

In general, good ways must be found for cooperation and synergies between Programme and Strategy and to keep the individual competence and independency at the same time. A good opportunity for joint discussions and exchange of opinions was the informal working meeting with ETC Danube Transnational Programme with EUSDR representatives, including PAC6. Further opportunity for exchange was the PAC/NCP meeting in Vienna (March 2014), mentioned already above. Despite

these good developments, there might be a danger of too high expectations towards the Danube Transnational Programme from side of the EUSDR. The ETC programme is limited in overall available funds and at the same time, quite a long list of projects which has been developed in the past three years in all Priority Areas are waiting for the first call for projects. It is obvious that not all of the projects can be approved and this can lead to frustration and even competition among Priority Areas. To overcome this potential risk, horizontal exchange among the PACs could contribute to merge certain project ideas and to develop more integrative projects, which cover not only one PA. Another way out of the dilemma is to focus not only on the ETC Programme, even though it might be the most obvious one, but to apply at other EU programmes as well, depending on the topic of the project of course and for Countries to include EUSDR (PA 6) priorities in their national (*mainstreaming*) operational programs .

The 1st draft of the Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020 includes Priority Area 6 targets through priority axis 2 Environment and Culture responsible Danube region (with the details provided in the Roadmap (annex 1).

Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects: The two first calls in the TAF DRP were successfully implemented by the colleagues from PA10. PA6 applied in total with four projects; all of them were selected as beneficiaries. The consultants support, granted by the TAF was highly welcomed by the stakeholders and project applicants and generally the procedure proved to be a success story. In a technical seminar in February 2014, the experiences and lessons learned from the first call were reflected by the PACs and the TAF DRP responsible colleagues. As the way for project application, selection and also the “award” by consultancy service is quite unique and unusual, the procedures needed to be developed from the scratch, but has been well done by PAC10 and the associated EuroVienna. In two cases, the TAF DRP also attracted newcomers to EUSDR and PA6 in Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is an added value on its own.

The following projects were approved within PA6:

Call 1:

- Sturgeon Protect – Applicant: Institute of Biology Bucharest, Romania
- Sustainable management of forests as a key to mitigation of climate change effects – Applicant: FORZA, Uzhorod, Ukraine

Call 2:

- I-Econetics – Applicant: WWF Danube Carpathian Programme Vienna, Austria
- Sava Ecotours – Applicant: Agency for Development of SME of Srbac Municipality, Srbac, Bosnia and Herzegovina

The announcement of the new START initiative for granting Seed Money for project development processes is considered to be very promising and useful as well and will be further followed.

1.3.2. EUSDR Priority Area 6 Targets in the 2014-2020 Regional Policy

Europe 2020 as EU's growth strategy for the decade 2010-2020 with the main aim to make smart, **sustainable** and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. This is underpinned by EU's Regional policy and Regulation of ERDF, where 11 thematic objectives could be grouped under these three priorities.

Priority Area 6 targets could directly and indirectly benefit from 3 thematic objectives (T.O.) under the priority of sustainability: T.O.4 Shift to a low-carbon economy⁴, T.O.5 Climate

⁴ Investment Priority e) promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories, in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility and **mitigation-relevant adaptation measures**

change adaptation and risk management and prevention⁵ and T.O.6 Environmental protection and resource efficiency.

T.O.6 supports direct investments in PA6 Targets mainly through Investment priority 6d: **protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000 and green infrastructure**, but quite relevant could also be 6c (conserving, protecting, promoting and developing **natural and cultural heritage**) and 6e (taking action to **improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution** and promote noise-reduction measures).

For financing biodiversity related actions (in line with PA6 targets) horizontal integration was proposed, such as inclusion of environment/energy/climate into innovation (smart specialisation strategies - RIS3), Sustainable Urban Development (opportunity for Green Infrastructure), which is specifically important for more developed regions, given the low level of financing available outside the thematic concentration. Also one of the potential way of horizontal integration of biodiversity is including them through Thematic Objectives other than TO6 (i.e. climate change adaptation, research, innovation, business development, employment, training, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and the ecosystem based approaches).

Art. 8 of the Common provisions regulation (CPR)⁶ regarding sustainable development indicates that MS and the EC shall ensure that environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and

⁵ Investment Priority a) supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including **ecosystem-based approaches**;

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

adaptation, **biodiversity**, disaster resilience, and risk prevention and management are promoted in the preparation and implementation of Partnership Agreements and programmes. Also, in Annex I. Common Strategic Framework⁷ under chapter 5.2. on sustainable development, MS and managing authorities are invited to direct investments towards the most resource-efficient and sustainable options, avoid investments that may have a significant negative environmental or climate impact, and supporting actions to mitigate any remaining impacts, take a long-term perspective when 'life-cycle' costs of alternative options for investment are compared, increase the use of green public procurement and that investments shall be consistent with the water management hierarchy and with the waste hierarchy.

Currently, national OPs are being finalized and shall be submitted no later than 22nd July 2014 (3 months from the PA submission). According to DG REGIO, in OPs received so far, Invasive Alien Species aspects and Green infrastructure approach are included in a good number of OPs⁸.

In line with commitments laid down in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, EAFRD regulation proposes a number of measures with direct or indirect benefits to biodiversity conservation. Support to nature conservation is also integrated into European Maritime and Fishery Fund with the main target to protect and restore marine biodiversity and ecosystems in the framework of sustainable fishing activities.

1.3.3. *European territorial Cooperation*

European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), as described in chapter 1.3.1. provides opportunities for funding biodiversity conservation across borders and regions, especially in the context of

⁷ The Common Strategic Framework (CSF) shall, in accordance with Article 10, and in compliance with the priorities and objectives laid down in the Fund-specific Regulations, provide strategic guiding principles in order to achieve an integrated development approach using the ESI Funds coordinated with other Union instruments and policies, in line with the policy objectives and headline targets of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and, where appropriate, the flagship initiatives, while taking into account the key territorial challenges and specific national, regional and local contexts.

⁸ Biodiversity, Natura 2000 & Green Infrastructure in the 2014-2020 Regional Policy, Presentation by Mathieu Fichter (DG REGIO)

the macro regional strategies (Danube territorial cooperation programme and EUSDR).

1.3.4. *Special EU programmes*

Horizon 2020 and LIFE offer direct contribution to the PA6 targets. For Horizon 2020, first calls for proposal were published in December 2013 and included some calls relevant for biodiversity, specifically related to MAES and restoration. Reflections on the identification of priorities for the next Work Programme 2016 – 2017 have started. 'Nature-based Solutions' has already been highlighted earlier as a potential thematic priority area for the future. LIFE programme in its multi-annual work programme for 2014-2017 includes traditional projects on nature and on biodiversity, and integrated projects. Integrated projects will implement environmental or climate plans or strategies required by specific Union environmental or climate legislation, including Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) and River Basin Management Plans. According to Article 10(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 ("LIFE Regulation"), at least 55 % of the budgetary resources allocated to projects supported by way of action grants under the sub-programme for Environment shall be dedicated to projects supporting the conservation of nature and biodiversity. The LIFE multiannual work programme for 2014-2017 also includes financial instruments, one of which is the Natural Capital Financing Facility to which the LIFE sub-programmes for Environment and Climate Action contribute 60 million €.

To help authorities and stakeholders in the Member States and regions with practical support to enable an efficient and successful implementation of measures on nature and green infrastructure through Cohesion Policy, EC has developed a Guide to Multi-Benefit Cohesion Policy Investments in Nature and Green Infrastructure⁹.

1.3.5. *Improvements compared to previous report*

- Good improvement in ETC Danube Transnational Programme preparation and exchange with EUSDR representatives.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/guide_multi_benefit_nature.pdf

- Successful implementation of two calls of the TAF DRP.

1.3.6. Outlook on the future

Several relevant funding programmes will start their application procedures in the next coming months. This will be a crucial time for the EUSDR, as expectations are very high. A more regular exchange between Funding Programmes and PACs would be desirable.

PACs will follow up on the integration of EUSDR PA 6 objectives in the national mainstreaming OP after their final adoption

Explore further financing of the coordination of PA6 through in Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020 under Specific Objective 12 *Improve the governance of EUSDR and complex transnational project development* (Priority Axis 4).

1.3.7. Priority Area 6 Targets and Actions in relation to global and EU biodiversity conservation objectives

As PACs presented at the 5th Steering Group Meeting (3 April 2014, Zagreb), PA6 targets are strongly linked to EU biodiversity Strategy for 2020¹⁰ and hence to the global Strategic plan for biodiversity 2011-2020 and the *Aichi* Targets¹¹. The connections of the targets and actions are shown in Table 4.

¹⁰<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

¹¹<http://www.cbd.int/sp/>

Table 4. Priority Area 6 Targets and Actions in relation to global and EU biodiversity conservation objectives

PA6 – EUSDR Targets and Actions	EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 Targets	CBD – Aichi Targets
<p>Target 1</p> <p><i>to halt the deterioration in the status of all species and habitats covered by EU nature legislation and achieve a significant and measurable improvement, adapted to the special needs of the Danube region by 2020.</i></p> <p>A01 To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity</p> <p>A02 To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively</p> <p>A03 To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered animal species</p> <p>A07 To decrease input of pesticides into the environment of the Danube Region</p> <p>A13 To decrease air pollutants</p> <p>A14 To raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers for sustainable regional development</p> <p>A15 To educate children and young people</p> <p>A16 To build capacities of local authorities in the environment-related matters</p>	<p>Target 1</p> <p>Fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives</p>	<p>Strategic Goal A:</p> <p><i>Address the underlying cause of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society.</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 1</p> <p><i>By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.</i></p> <p>Strategic Goal C:</p> <p><i>Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 11</p> <p><i>By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascapes.</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 12</p> <p><i>By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.</i></p>

<p>Target 2</p> <p><i>by 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems, including degraded soils.</i></p> <p>A01 To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity</p> <p>A05 To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different biogeographic regions and habitats</p> <p>A09 To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)</p> <p>A10 To ensure appropriate treatment of solid waste</p> <p>A11 To create standardised and compatible information on land cover on transnational basis</p> <p>A12 To raise awareness about soil protection</p>	<p>Target 2</p> <p>Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services</p>	<p>Strategic Goal B:</p> <p><i>Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use.</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 8</p> <p><i>By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 10</p> <p><i>By 2020, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning</i></p> <p>Strategic Goal D:</p> <p><i>Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 15</p> <p><i>By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15% of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.</i></p> <p>Aichi Target 14</p> <p><i>By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.</i></p>
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<p>Target 3</p> <p><i>secure viable populations of Danube sturgeon species and other indigenous fish species by 2020.</i></p> <p>A03 To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered animal species</p> <p>A04 To explore together opportunities of reviewing the Convention Concerning Fishing in the Waters of the Danube</p>	<p>Target 1</p> <p>Fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives</p>	<p>Aichi Target 12 (Strategic Goal C)</p> <p><i>By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained</i></p>
<p>Target 4</p> <p><i>by 2020, Invasive Alien Species and their pathways are identified and prioritised, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and pathways are managed to prevent the introduction and establishment of new Invasive Alien Species.</i></p> <p>A06 To reduce the spread of invasive alien species (IAS)</p>	<p>Target 5</p> <p>Combat Invasive Alien Species</p>	<p>Aichi Target 9 (Strategic Goal B)</p> <p><i>By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment</i></p>

ANNEX 1

ROADMAPS TO IMPLEMENT EACH ACTION

Implementation of the EUSDR Priority Area 6

“To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils”

ROADMAPS TO IMPLEMENT EACH ACTION – progress report
for the period from June 2013- June 2014

Rationale: The following text provides the progress on the roadmap in the period June 2013- June 2014. The roadmap produced as the part of the 1st report by PA6 in June 2012¹ gives a detailed overview on each milestone including deadlines, rationale, countries involved and future activities. Continued progress is shown within 2nd Report Roadmap from June 2013² and the following text.

Action 1: “To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity”

Action 6.1 “To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity”

In 2010, EU Heads of State and Government at the Spring European Council adopted a long-term vision and a headline target for European biodiversity beyond 2010. The European Commission is currently developing a strategy outlining the way to achieving the 2020 biodiversity target. Actions under the Danube Strategy will fully contribute to the implementation of the post-2010 EU biodiversity strategy to halt biodiversity loss and ecosystems services' degradation and to restore them in so far as feasible.

Milestone n°6.011: Assessment made for EUSDR region on update and revision of national biodiversity strategic documents (NBSAPs) in line with CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Milestone n°6.012: Follow up on implementation framework for EU Biodiversity 2020 strategy

Milestone n°6.013: Assessment made for Danube Region on progress achieved towards Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Aichi Biodiversity Targets

<p><i>Progress since the last reporting period</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Revisions of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) for Danube countries are still in progress. According to Aichi Biodiversity Target 17, each country has to develop, adopt and effectively implement updated NBSAP by 2015.³ (n°6.011, n°6.013) ■ For 7 Danube region countries Fifth National Report (5NR) has been submitted to date (BA, BG, CZ, DE, HR, HU and MD). In decision X/10⁴, the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the CBD requested Parties to submit their 5NRs by 31 March 2014. Submitted 5NRs are available on CBD webpage⁵. The 5NR will also contribute to the development of the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-4)⁶ (n°6.011, n°6.013) ■ January 2014, Minsk (Belarus) CBD Workshop for Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia on the Preparation of the 5NR took place. From Danube Region following countries participated: BA, BG, HR, HU, RS and UA). Workshop documents could be found on the CBD web page⁷(n°6.011, n°6.013) ■ May 2014, Vilm (Germany) Regional Workshop on Resource mobilization for
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¹ <http://www.danube-region.eu/about/key-documents>

² <http://www.danube-region.eu/about/key-documents>

³ <http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/about/latest/>

⁴ <https://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12276>

⁵ <http://www.cbd.int/reports/search/>

⁶ Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO) is the flagship publication of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is a periodic report that summarizes the latest data on the status and trends of biodiversity and draws conclusions relevant to the further implementation of the Convention. The reports are based on different types on information including national reports, scientific literature, information from the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and supplementary studies.

⁷ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=RW5NR-CEECAI-01>

	<p>Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (n°6.011, n°6.013)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PACs are following work outlined in the CIF (<i>Common Implementation Framework</i>) as the governance structure to underpin the effective delivery of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the work of the working groups (WG) in 2013/2014 on progress towards the implementation Strategy targets which are directly contributing to the PA6 biodiversity related targets (n°6.012) (detailed information provided in the Table 4 of this Report) ■ Follow on the mid-term review of implementation of EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 to be developed by EC (DG ENV). As data sources, 5th National Reports to CBD will be used, as well as MS Reports according to Habitats and Birds Directives. (n°6.012)
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	Following the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the <i>Aichi</i> Biodiversity Target 17, by 2015, each Party has to develop, adopt as a policy instrument, and commence implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment on update and revision of national biodiversity strategic documents should be prepared in the IV. quarter 2015 (after the proposed deadline for revision of national NBSAPs , October 2015) Due to the strong connection between Targets from EU biodiversity strategy for 2020 and PA6 Actions, PACs will continuously follow activities of the working groups established under the EU 2020 biodiversity strategy in the Common Implementation Framework (CIF) as the framework for monitoring, assessing and reporting on progress towards reaching the biodiversity related PA6 targets ■ 12th CBD Conference of parties will be held in Pyoengchang, South Korea, 6-17 October 2014 with the participation of PAC6
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EUSDR countries are actively involved in revision of national biodiversity strategic documents in line with CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and <i>Aichi</i> Biodiversity Targets. (GEF eligible countries: BA, HR, RS and SI are using the GEF funds and will fully update NBSAPs by the end of 2014. Revisions of national biodiversity strategic documents include conduction of national projects which contribute to this PA6 Action.

Action 2: “To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively”

Action 6.2 “To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively”

Natura 2000 sites designated under the Birds and Habitats directives, as well as other protected sites should in principle have their own management plans or some other kind of contractual framework. But in practice, they often work in isolation and not efficiently enough. The effective management helped by transnational cooperation (networking) is necessary. The action should include exchange of experience and capacity building for protected areas/Natura 2000 sites administrations; community involvement; visitor management and tourism development; coordinated management planning, implementation and evaluation. It is also indispensable to increase public awareness about Natura 2000 sites and protected areas, with the help of e.g. the National Ecological and Rural Networks or the European Network for Rural Development. The action could be implemented e.g. through the existing Danube Network of Protected Areas and the Carpathian Networks of Protected Areas. ALPARC can serve as successful examples.

Milestone n°6.021: Follow up on reports prepared by EC for management of N2000 in Danube Region on implementation of conservation measures

Milestone n°6.022: Build capacity among riverine countries in Danube region

Milestone n°6.023: Assessment made for Danube Region according to assessment of conservation status and effectiveness of measures (management framework of Natura 2000 sites) for period 2007-2012 due to in 2013 prepared by the MS/COM

Milestone n°6.024: Follow up on financial instruments available for financing N2000 network in next programming period 2014 - 2020 to assess adequate financing of Natura 2000 activities in EUSDR region

✓ **Milestone n°6.025:** To establish Mura Drava Danube bilateral Biosphere Reserve Hungary-Croatia

Milestone n°6.026: To establish Mura-Drava-Danube MAB Reserve Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and Serbia

✓ **Milestone n°6.027:** DANUBEPARKS II - Anchoring the Danube River Network of Protected Areas as driver for transnational nature conservation strategies at the Danube

<p><i>Progress since the last reporting period</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ According to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the Birds Directive, Member States have submitted their progress reports (biogeographical assessments) on implementation of the Nature Directives, which are currently available for public view⁸. The EU biogeographical assessments⁹ performed by the EEA and the ETC/BD are under development and will become available for public view and consultation during the second quarter of 2014. (n°6.023) ■ The first draft of the Danube Transnational Programme (Danube 2014-2020) is developed and is currently (June, 2014) up for public consultations in Danube programme countries. In general, it includes PA6 targets which are summarized under Specific Objectives 3 & 4¹⁰ (under Priority Axis 2 – Environment and culture
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⁸ <http://bd.eionet.europa.eu/article17/reports2012/>

⁹ Article 17 requires Member States to report every six years about the progress made with the implementation of the Habitats Directive

¹⁰ S.O.3: Natural and cultural heritage valorization, & S.O.4. Restoring and managing ecological corridors

	<p>responsible Danube Region). Danube programme is planned on being submitted to the European Commission in September, 2014. (n°6.024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workshops on Financing Natura 2000 took place in each EU Member State. Guidance Handbook on Financing Natura 2000 and a toolkit to assess the consistency between the PAFs and the Operational Programmes have been developed (September, 2013). As the new funding regulations for the LIFE Programme¹¹ and Horizon 2020 as well as the European Structural and Investment Funds, updated draft version on the Guidance Handbook for financing Natura 2000 in 2014-2020 is being developed.¹² ■ Follow up on the information provided through CBD preliminary reporting framework for Strategy for resource mobilization to report on and monitor resources mobilized for biodiversity at the national and global levels, Global Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for Resource Mobilization seeks to provide information on status and trends in biodiversity financing and assist in the dissemination of funding knowledge and know-how related to biodiversity. The draft report is available electronically at: http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/wgri/wgri-05/information/wgri-05-inf-04-en.doc ■ MS have prepared Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs)¹³ with the objectives to strengthen 'integration' through strategic planning; with an aim of identifying priorities for Natura 2000 management; improving awareness about socio-economic benefits from Natura 2000; identifying and assessing forms of funding for Natura 2000. PAFs are received from all Danube Region MS.¹⁴ ■ Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP) developed by PA10 had two calls in this reporting period. PA6 could apply in total with four projects; all of them were selected as beneficiaries. The consultants support, granted by the TAF was highly welcomed by the stakeholders and project applicants and generally the procedure proved to be a success story.¹⁵ ■ To help authorities and stakeholders in the Member States and regions with practical support to enable an efficient and successful implementation of measures on nature and green infrastructure through Cohesion Policy, <i>Guide to Multi-Benefit Cohesion Policy Investments in Nature and Green Infrastructure</i> is produced.¹⁶ ■ Within bilateral biosphere reserve Mura-Drava-Danube joint monitoring of biodiversity is in preparation, between management authorities. Realised project on revitalisation of Drava River habitats in Hungary have been presented. (n°6.025) ■ Continuation of work set out by working group on agriculture and biodiversity strategy. The aim of the group is to develop a series of recommendations to improve the integration of biodiversity aspects, particularly Natura 2000 management, in agriculture and thus enhance the state of species and ecosystems linked and affected by agriculture, supporting the task of the program officers that are in charge, at national and regional level, of developing and implementing the rural development programmes. ■ The 3rd Meeting of the International Working Group and Coordination Board for Mura-Drava-Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve was held on 18-19
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¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/about/index.htm#mawp>

¹² <http://www.financing-natura2000.eu/the-guidance-handbook-for-financing-natura-2000-in-2014-2020/>

¹³ Obligation from the Article 8 Habitats

directive(<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992L0043:20070101:EN:HTML>)

¹⁴ Exceptionally Croatia, as a new MS, does not have developed PAF since the precondition as set in the Habitat Directive includes designation of special areas of conservation (SAC) with information about the conservation objectives, status of species conservation and priority measures, with the obligations under the Directive (6 years at most after the adoption of the SCI areas).

¹⁵ Project proposals approved for TAF-DRP are listed in the Report.

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/guide_multi_benefit_nature.pdf

	<p>September 2013 in Vienna (Austria) (n°6.026)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In 2013, with assistance of the WWF, the concept of the pentilateral Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve (Five Countries – Three Rivers – One Vision) participated in the first "European River Prize" contest, and was selected among the first four out of 20 applications (n°6.026) ■ DANUBEPARKS 2.0.: Within the second phase cooperation among nature conservation management organisations has been further strengthened, a constructive dialogue among water way management organisations has been launched through workshops, and important monitoring actions took place targeting key species like the Little Ring Plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>), Sand Martin (<i>Riparia riparia</i>) or the White-tailed Eagle (<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>) along the whole river. Ensuring the long term sustainability of the initiative is among the main objectives for the future. This entails among others the mobilisation of different sources of funding, and the establishment of a coordination body that is able to support the cooperation of partners and to serve as the ambassador of protected areas along the Danube, independently from project financing. (n° 6.027) ■ DANUBEPARKS presented itself to Members of the European Parliament and staff from the Commission's DGs Environment and Regional Policy¹⁷
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the framework of the new financing period (2014-2020), EUSDR countries as an integrated part of national partnership agreements and operational programmes could take opportunity to mainstream biodiversity targets effectively. ■ Accordingly, programmes of territorial cooperation (ETC, CBC, IPA, ENI), provide platform to support projects with transnational impacts contributing to the PA6 Actions. ■ Follow the establishment of the Danube transnational programme as one of the financing tools for achievement of PA6 targets.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Follow on the opportunities for financing biodiversity, especially PA 6 objectives from programmes of territorial cooperation (ETC, CBC, IPA, ENI), especially Danube transnational programme for all Danube countries ■ Relating to the ESI funds for 2014-2020 (ERDF; EARDF; EMFF) and IPA following the adoption on partnership agreements and national mainstream operational programmes assess the inclusion of the biodiversity specific objectives for all Danube countries,
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Example of good coordination, cooperation and consultation among riverine countries are projects labelled by PA6: Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura – Drava – Danube and Danubeparks 2.0. ■ In the framework of the new financing period (2014-2020), EUSDR countries are developing national projects for co-financing from EU funds and programmes contributing to PA6 actions, concurrently contributing targets of EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020, Europe 2020 Strategy and CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

¹⁷ <http://www.danubeparks.org/?story=418>

Action 3: *To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered¹⁸ species*

Action 6.3 *To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered species* Enhanced protection of the remaining natural ecosystems, such as the Danube Delta or the Carpathians, wetlands restoration, afforestation of non-arable land, protection of marginal forests, bioremediation of highly impacted areas, supported by environmental research, are desirable. This is also crucial for endangered animal species protection, such as the Danube sturgeon, brown bears, wolves, lynx and wild horses living in the Danube Delta. Research, inventory, and monitoring of species and habitats of European and national importance are important parts of this action. Conflicts with humans and illegal trade in wild animals should also be addressed.

Milestone n°6.031: Follow up on assessment made by MS and EC applicable for Danube Region to improve knowledge of ecosystems and their services in the EU

Milestone n° 6.032: Follow up on assessment made by MS and COM on strategic framework to set priorities for ecosystem restoration to identify priority restoration project for EUSDR region

✓ **Milestone n°6.033:** Sub-Strategy on Sturgeon Conservation

✗ **Milestone n°6.034:** Reproduction of populations of rare and endangered fish species – a necessary condition for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Ukrainian-Slovak transborder area of the Tisa river basin. Short title: “Fish: joint basin – joint solutions”

Milestone n°6.035: Elaboration of Masterplan Bavarian Danube to protect and enhance biodiversity

<p><i>Progress since the last reporting period</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2nd Discussion paper <i>Indicators for ecosystem assessments under Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020</i>¹⁹ was published in February 2014. It can be used at European and Member State's level to map and assess biodiversity, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services according to the Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services (CICES v4.3). (n°6.031) ■ PACs are actively following the Working Group on Mapping and Assessment on Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) with the main objective to support the implementation of Action 5²⁰ of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 by the EU and its MS. Synergies between MAES WG and FP7 related projects (e.g. OpenNESS, OPERA, MARS) are established. (n°6.031) ■ High-Level Conference on the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and the Services they provide (MAES) was held in Brussels, May 2014. It gave a lot of visibility to the work in achieving Action 5 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 and it generated a lot of interest in the Member States among relevant stakeholders. (n°6.031) ■ Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is taking role in exchange of views, expertise and experience to support implementation of MEAs as well as other related initiatives. (n°6.031)
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¹⁸ The Action is modified in a way to broaden the term of endangered species and to limit it only on animal species.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/ecosystem_assessment/pdf/2ndMAESWorkingPaper.pdf

²⁰ *Improve knowledge of ecosystems and their services in the EU (MS, with the assistance of the EC, will map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services in their national territory by 2014, assess the economic value of such services and promote the integration of these values into accounting and reporting systems at EU and national level by 2020)*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Milestone n°6.034 will be excluded in the following reports. Although recognized in the first reporting period as a project idea that is contributing to this action, the project was not approved for funding. (n°6.034) ■ Sturgeon 2020 Strategy was presented at 2nd Annual Forum, in Bucharest (RO), and Danube Sturgeon Task Force is continuously working on implementation of the Program Sturgeon 2020. (n°6.033) ■ Meeting of Bavarian Stakeholder Group including NGOs and authorities took place in order to further elaborate the envisaged Masterplan for Bavarian stretch of Danube. Finalisation of Masterplan, which includes a strategy and action plan, is currently ongoing (June 2014). (n°6.035)
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Further cooperation between stakeholders dealing with restoration of ecosystems and ecosystem services and endangered species of the Danube Region is expected with a full support of the PACs. ■ Follow up on Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) activities, according to its Work programme and set out Objectives.²¹(especially Objective 2 on strengthening the science-policy interface on biodiversity and ecosystem services at and across subregional, regional and global levels) ■ Follow up on Pan-European 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity endorsed by pan-European countries and is the pan-European response to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its global <i>Aichi</i> biodiversity targets which provides direct support for pilot activities, improved regional cooperation for policy development and implementation and the identification of priority themes of common pan-European interest, contributing to this PA6 action not only for EU MS but also non-MS. ■ In new ERDF Regulation²², defined investment priority 6.4.: <i>protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures</i> gives a platform for integration of biodiversity, including <i>ecosystem services</i> into OPs, hence supporting the achievement of the PA6 Target 2²³.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In the next reporting period PACs will also follow preparation of the MS and EC assessment on mapping and assessing the state of ecosystems and their services, support implementing of the projects regarding this action, and contribute to better endangered ecosystems status in the Danube Region. ■ Finalisation of Masterplan Bavarian Danube, which shall be connected with other PA6 relevant activities in the Danube Region.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wetland restoration in the Mura-Drava-Danube area²⁴ ■ Activities deriving from Sturgeon 2020 – a programme for the protection and rehabilitation of Danube sturgeons ■ Morava-Dyje floodplains²⁵ and Untere March-Auen - Restoration of the Lower Morava floodplains²⁶

²¹ <http://www.ipbes.net/work-programme.html>

²² Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

²³ By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems, including degraded soils.

²⁵ <http://www.danube.panda.org/wwf/web/search/details.jsp?pid=98494>

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=4070

	<p>In this reporting period some Life projects contributing to this Action, were approved for co-funding. PACs will appropriately explore the possibility of cooperation with the project holders.</p>
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Action 4: *To explore together the appropriateness of reviewing the Convention Concerning Fishing in the Waters of the Danube*

Action 6.4 *To explore together the appropriateness of reviewing the Convention Concerning Fishing in the Waters of the Danube*

A Convention on fishing in the waters of the Danube river was signed in 1958 and has been in force since then. However neither recent geopolitical changes in the area nor policy developments related to the protection of the environment or to sustainable fishing have been reflected in the Convention. The parties to the Convention should examine this.

Milestone n°6.041: Built cooperation, if appropriate, among parties regarding review of the Convention

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Danube region countries Parties to the Convention Concerning Fishing in the Waters of the Danube did not indicate any activities in this reporting period.
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Possibilities of using the Convention on the EUSDR level should be raised on higher political level with an aim of all Danube Region countries signing the Convention.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Further action is needed by the Danube region countries Parties to the Convention Concerning Fishing in the Waters of the Danube ■ Further explore the synergy with PA4 action <i>to reduce existing water continuity for fish migration in the Danube basin</i>
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	

Action 5: *To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats*

Action 6.5 *To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats*

The habitats (including Natura 2000 sites) can better keep and enhance their value, if they are interconnected and this is the way to ensure that ecosystem services are being kept provided. The action could include scientific research to find new ways for connecting habitats, consultations with relevant communities and stakeholders, careful and integrated spatial planning to develop and apply practices and technologies for economic investments and infrastructural development benefiting biodiversity. Construction of e.g. ecobridges, eco-ducts and ecological "stepping stones" should be part of a planning of infrastructure building.

Milestone n°6.051: Assessment made to identify activities to be implemented in Danube Region countries from EU Green Infrastructure Strategy to best fit the EUSDR targets

Milestone n°6.052: Follow up on implementation of green corridors projects identified in EUSDR Action Plan

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following the adoption of a Green Infrastructure Strategy²⁷, new working group on implementing the Action 6 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 has been established – Green Infrastructure Implementation and Restoration (GIIR). The main objectives of the WG are: to support the implementation of actions of the GI Strategy, to provide a platform for sharing best practices on GI deployment, and to address the linkages between the restoration of degraded ecosystems and the deployment of GI. Green infrastructure as such is recognized as a great potential for mainstreaming biodiversity into other sectors and is mostly included in national OPs. ■ Project regarding green corridors in mountainous Danube Region has been approved for TAF-DRP and <i>Letter of Recommendation</i> of the EUSDR PA6 (ECONETICS, applicant WWF DCP). Communication with PAC1b on cooperation is still on-going.
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In new ERDF Regulation²⁸, defined investment priority 6.4.: <i>protecting and restoring biodiversity, soil protection and restoration and promoting ecosystem services including NATURA 2000 and green infrastructures</i> gives a platform for development of projects and integration of biodiversity into OPs
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following the work of WG GIIR directly related to the target 2 of EU biodiversity Strategy thus directly contributing to the PA 6 target “By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems, including degraded soils.” ■ Follow up on the Joint Declaration of Intent on the European Green Belt²⁹
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project ECONETICS (Maintaining Ecological Networks in Mountainous Regions - A Critical Contribution to Green Infrastructure in the Danube Basin) is labelled at the fifth Steering Group Meeting. ■ Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura – Drava – Danube

²⁷ Green Infrastructure (GI) (COM(2013) 249 final)

²⁸ Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

²⁹ <http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/>

Action 6: To reduce the spread of invasive alien species (IAS)

Action 6.6 To reduce the spread of invasive alien species (IAS)

The action would assess the impact of IAS on the ecosystems in the Danube region, identify environmentally friendly ways to control their development, promote research to identify ecologically sound ways to keep their population under control or eliminate them and raise public awareness about the danger of IAS.

Milestone n°6.061: To assess the effectiveness of IAS legislation in EUSDR region analysing implementation on new legislative framework on IAS in EUSDR region

<p><i>Progress since the last reporting period</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The European Commission has published a proposal for a Regulation³⁰ on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. The proposal seeks to address the problem of invasive alien species in a comprehensive manner so as to protect native biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as to minimize and mitigate the human health or economic impacts that these species can have. The proposal is for three types of interventions; prevention, early warning and rapid response, and management. A list of invasive alien species of Union concern will be drawn up with Member States using risk assessments and scientific evidence. ■ At EU level Invasive Alien Species issue is addressed especially according to achieving the CBD Aichi Target 9³¹. ■ Joint Research Centre of the European Commission developed the European Alien Species Information Network (EASIN)³². It aims to enable easy access to data and information on Alien Species (AS) in Europe from existing on-line databases to assist policy makers and scientists in their efforts to tackle AS invasions. ■ ICPDR is addressing the IAS as significant water management issue for whole Danube Region through an update of River Basin Management Plan and research activities such as 3rd Joint Danube Survey (JDS3). Thus, Guidance paper on IAS, draft black list of IAS and the map of the most aggressive species are in preparation.
<p><i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following the adoption of the new legislative framework on IAS proposal is to assess the effectiveness of IAS legislation in EUSDR region by analysing implementation on new legislative framework on IAS on national level
<p><i>Outline for the future</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment of effectiveness of implementation on new legislative framework on IAS on national level ■ Follow up on Operational plan of the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership (GIASIP)³³ on the issue of pathways of introduction, prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (IAS). ■ In March 2014, International Association for Danube Research (IAD) representatives organised a first meeting with IAD experts from four Danube

³⁰ Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species /* COM/2013/0620 final - 2013/0307 (COD) */

³¹ By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

³² <http://easin.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

³³ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=5099>

	<p>Countries and PAC6 to discuss activities and possible projects on the topic of Invasive Alien Species (IAS). As a result from the meeting, a new Task Force was established - DIAS (Danube Invasive Alien Species). It is foreseen to organise an international symposia on the topic with experts from the Danube Region to better describe the status quo of current research and combatting activities and define most urgent needs for potential projects.</p>
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ R-PAS (Ragweed Pollen Alarm System for the Danube region) project labelled at fifth Steering Group Meeting ■ Mostly national based projects contributing to the overall Action 6.6.

Action 7: *To decrease the input of pesticides into the environment of the Danube Region*

Action 6.7 *To decrease the input of pesticides into the environment of the Danube Region*

To reduce the contamination of the Danube Region with pesticides, the countries of the Danube Region should use efficiently the possibilities of the Pesticide Framework Directive (PFD) establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides. PFD outlines aims and effective ways to reduce both the total amount of used pesticides and the toxicity of pesticides. The action should especially be focused on the development of ambitious programs and concepts for a reduction of pesticides in general or in specific areas as well as on the initiation of hot spot management or restrictions for the application of pesticides, e.g. by establishing buffer strips or compensating areas.

Milestone n°6.071: *work will be defined in the next reporting period*

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All Danube Region EU MS have developed National Action Plans³⁴ with objectives and timetables set out to reduce risks and impacts of pesticide use.
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support project development connected to this action. ■ Follow up on ICPDR and PA4 activities and projects related to input of pesticides into the environment of the Danube Region
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pesticide Framework Directive (PFD) and its implementation in all Danube Region countries.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	

³⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/pesticides/sustainable_use_pesticides/national_action_plans_en.htm

Action 8: *To remove safely obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals in the area of Danube Region*

Action 6.8 *To remove safely obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals in the area of Danube Region* and implementing the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Resolution on Improvement of health through sound management of obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals, adopted at the 63rd World Health Assembly (WHA) which took place in May 2010 in Geneva.

Milestone n°6.081: *work will be defined in the next reporting period*

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention was held in Geneva from 14 to 15 May 2014. The Bureau of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, among other things, reviewed progress made in implementation of the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its sixth meeting and discussed the preparation of the seventh meeting of the Conference to be held back to back with the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel and Rotterdam conventions in 2015.³⁵
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support project development connected to this action.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Update this action or revise it
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	

³⁵ <http://chm.pops.int/TheConvention/ConferenceoftheParties/Bureau/COPBureau2014/tabid/3690/mctl/ViewDetails/EventModID/1126/EventID/468/xmid/11645/Default.aspx>

Action 9: *To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)*

Action 6.9 *To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)*

The conservation of ecosystems and natural assets, along with the assertion of a sustainable growth perspective contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life and employment opportunities for local population. The aim is the development of coordinated spatial planning policies focusing on the protection and at the same time sustainable development of the functional geographical areas, based on its strengths and potential.

Milestone n°6.091: BIOREGIO Carpathians - Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians

Milestone n°6.092: Carpathian Convention Working Group on Spatial Development

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 2nd CNPA / BioREGIO Carpathians Midterm Conference was held in Tatranská Javorina, High Tatras Region, Slovakia. Representatives of protected areas and other stakeholders acting in the Carpathian Region met to exchange experience and ideas for future cooperation.³⁶
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communication and knowledge exchange between Carpathian Convention Working Groups and PA6 Steering Group should be recommended.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As Project BIOREGIO Carpathians lays ground for further activities in implementation of transnational spatial planning and development policies, hence it will contribute to this action.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ BIOREGIO Carpathians ■ Project ECONETICS (Maintaining Ecological Networks in Mountainous Regions - A Critical Contribution to Green Infrastructure in the Danube Basin) is labelled at the fifth Steering Group Meeting and receives support from TAF DRP (2nd call) ■ Innovative Alps-Carpathians Corridor re-establishes a major migration route for wild animals (Austria, Slovakia)

³⁶<http://www.bioregio-carpathians.eu/news-details/items/id-2nd-cnpa-conference-back-to-back-with-the-bioregio-carpathians-project-midterm-conference.html>

Action 10: To ensure appropriate treatment of solid waste

Action 6.10 To ensure appropriate treatment of solid waste

Integrated waste management systems should be established and implemented on national, regional and local level. The development of waste management centres for municipal and non-hazardous waste is needed, as well as rehabilitation and closure of incompliant landfills and highly polluted and contaminated sites and wild dumps. The action should also include awareness-raising about the needs of reducing and recycling waste.

- ✱ **Milestone n°6.101:** SMIWASTRES (“Transfrontier collaboration for establishment of efficient System for Municipal and Industrial Waste Treatment on the basis of their Sorting”)

Milestone n°6.102: To develop Solid waste management strategies

Milestone n°6.103: Identify, agree on, design and implement the projects at the Upper Tisza Region floodplains

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ milestone n°6.101 will be excluded in the following reports. Although recognized in the first reporting period as a project idea that is contributing to this action, the project was not approved for funding (by the ENPI Joint Operational Program). (n°6.101) ■ The Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan (ITRBMP)³⁷ recognizes the problem of solid waste in the Upper Tisza section of the Tisza River Basin (page 105). During the period (2009-2011) the ICPDR Tisza Group also led the implementation of a UNDP/GEF project to facilitate the development of the ITRBMP. In the frame of this project three demonstration pilot projects³⁸ had also been implemented to demonstrate problems relevant to the basin. (n°6.103)
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Horizontal approach between PA4 and PA8 (Environmental Technologies and Energy Efficiency Working Group) and PA6 should be developed.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support project development connected to this action.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Relation with PA4 projects (Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan). The EUSDR PA4 activities are strongly linked to the ICPDR Tisza Group objectives. The Priority Area 4 Action 2 is aiming at to strengthen cooperation at sub basin level (including the Tisza River Basin). To reach this objective a project proposal have been developed in 2011 and will be updated in 2014 aiming to implement the ITRBMP and further strengthen the TRB cooperation.

³⁷ <http://www.icpdr.org/main/activities-projects/towards-itrbm-plan-component-1>

³⁸ <http://www.icpdr.org/main/activities-projects/upper-tisza-demonstration-project-component-2-undpgef-tisza-msp-selected>

Action 11: To create standardised and compatible information on land cover on transnational basis
Action 6.11 To create standardised and compatible information on land cover on transnational basis

Within the Copernicus Programme, one of the main services that will be available is a land monitoring service. However, rather limited information on land resources is available for the Danube Region. Actions should thus focus on the possibilities to collect harmonised land cover information from national sources and to create standardized and compatible information on land cover on transnational basis.

Milestone n°6.111: To collect harmonised land cover information

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The 2012 version of Corine³⁹ Land Cover (CLC) is the first one embedding the CLC time series in a structural context of the Copernicus programme.
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ CLC has a wide variety of applications, mainly in the domains of environment (changes in habitat types coverage), but also in agriculture, transport and spatial planning.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Follow up on Corine Land Cover datasets. CLC mapping is being regularly updated in European countries every six years so changes in land cover could be monitored. ■ Follow up on ICPDR activities related to the Danube GIS has evaluated some elements of this issue. For calculation of harmonized inventory of point and diffuse sources of pollution, for pressures assessment and scenarios calculations, information on land cover have been collected and assessed. Input data (also information for calculating erosion, run off, land use, etc) are updated and new scenarios calculations are expected to be available for assessing the effect of agricultural measures implemented in the Danube Region Basin.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	

³⁹ CORINE - COOrdination of INformation on the Environment

Action 12: To raise awareness about soil protection

Action 6.12 To raise awareness about soil protection

This action could be achieved in cooperation with the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA), including more than 100 members from 7 Member States. Further partnerships in the Danube Region should be initiated on communal level and in the educational domains.

Milestone n° 6.121: SONDAR - Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region⁴⁰

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ In December 2013, PAC6 met with representatives of the Government of Lower Austria and IAD in St. Pölten to develop future activities as follow-up from the successful SONDAR projects on soil protection and public awareness. Several strategic ideas were developed, based on the SONDAR experience so far and the need and interest to extend them to a larger scale in the Danube Region, specially addressing EUSDR and PA6 as framework. ■ PAC6 participated in the 21st Conference of the Working Community of the Danube Regions on 26-27 March in Tulln, which reunites the sustainability working group in cooperation with the Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region and the SoPro Innovation Agency. The conference focused on “Sustainability and socio-ecological production as an incentive for regional economy in the Danube regions.” PAC6 participated in a Panel Discussion, together with PAC8, and highlighted the EUSDR / PA6 contribution to the process of SONDAR, its follow-ups and specifically the issue of social production, which generally also reflects the integrative approach of PA6.
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ possible extension of SONDAR activities to a larger scale in the Danube Region, specially addressing EUSDR and PA6 as framework.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PACs through the SG will try to establish contacts with soil protection experts and invite them to apply their project proposals to the Steering Group.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ SONDAR - Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region

⁴⁰<http://www.sondar.eu/>

Action 13: To decrease air pollutants

Action 6.13 To decrease air pollutants

All Danube region countries have signed the Convention on long-range transboundary air pollution. In compliance with this Convention, there is a need to report about the level of air pollutants in the region. The action should concentrate on data collection and reduction measures.

Milestone n° 6.131: Upgrading and further development of the monitoring network on air pollutants

Milestone n° 6.132: To take measures to gradually reduce the pollution, along the limit values for certain pollutants

<p><i>Progress since the last reporting period</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ FAIRMODE (<i>Forum for Air quality Modelling</i>) is currently chaired by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The Roadmap⁴¹ was developed which summarizes the FAIRMODE work-plan for the next three years (2014-2016). ■ EK has adopted Clean Air Policy package (December 2013)⁴². The package updates existing legislation and imposes further limits on harmful emissions from industry, traffic, energy plants and agriculture, with a view to reducing their impact on human health and the environment. The package consists of the following documents: a communication entitled "A new clean air programme for Europe", outlining measures to ensure that existing targets are met in the short term, and new air quality objectives for the period up to 2030 (18155/13); a revised national emission ceilings directive with stricter national emission ceilings for the six main pollutants (18167/13); a draft directive to reduce pollution from medium-sized combustion installations (18170/13); and a proposal for Council decision on the acceptance of the Amendment to the 1999 Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone (18165/13) ■ State of play of the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period ratification. The Commission briefed the Council on the state of play of the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period ratification (7019/14). Ratification of the Doha Agreement by the EU and its member states is necessary to help to ensure its formal entry into force as an international agreement. The Commission proposed in November 2013 proposals for a legislative package to allow this ratification and its technical implementation. According to the Commission, a timely ratification in early 2015 would enhance the credibility of the EU and its member states in the UN climate negotiations.
<p><i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: Investment priority 6.5. <i>actions to improve the urban environment, regeneration of brownfield sites and reduction of air pollution</i>, gives a platform for improvement of air quality and development of air pollution monitoring and management system⁴³.

⁴¹ <http://fairmode.jrc.ec.europa.eu/about.roadmap.html>

⁴² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/clean_air_policy.htm

⁴³ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/proposals_2014_2020_en.cfm#2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ FAIRMODE (<i>Forum for Air quality Modelling</i>) enables cooperation in the field of atmospheric modelling, ensures the exchange of knowledge and the best practices. It is challenge to develop related modelling systems that encompass gridded emission inventories, environmental input data, and meteorological and chemistry models on the operational level. ■ The EMEP programme (<i>European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme</i>) enables collaboration with a broad network of scientists and national experts that contribute to the systematic collection, analysis and reporting of emission data, measurement data and integrated assessment results. The collaboration can be established through four different Task Forces ⁴⁴within EMEP providing a floor for discussion and scientific exchange. ■ Cooperation and exchange of information can be further developed in the field of natural sources contribution assessment. Results of models and measurements can be applied in order to relate concentrations with the sources or source regions. ■ Neighbouring countries cooperate in the field of air quality protection and management.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gather reports about the level of air pollutants in the region ■ Analyse if the implementation of the air quality plans can serve as starting point for EUSDR cooperation options (e.g. exchange of methods and best practice experience) ⁴⁵. ■ To implement number of measurement to reach compliance with air quality directives and to cover 100 % of urban population by air quality information ■ To be in compliance with Air Quality Directive IPR (e-reporting) ⁴⁶ ■ Follow up on the FAIRMODE meetings/projects, development and application of modelling systems. ■ Follow up on EMEP meeting/projects, management of EMEP network and data, participation in modelling and measurements intercomparison studies. ■ Future strengthening of cross-border cooperation regarding Air Quality issues supported by PACs.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ FAIRMODE - <u>Forum for Air quality Modelling</u> ■ EMEP - The European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme ■ COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology ■ Project proposal Mapping of critical deposition of eutrophication and assessment of impact on biodiversity – under preparation (Croatia)

⁴⁴ <http://www.emep.int/>

⁴⁵ Follow-up of the „Luftreinhalteplans Ulm“ [*Air quality plan for Ulm*] (November 2012), Implementation of EU Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe. Basis is the Elaboration of „Luftreinhalteplans Ulm“ (May 2008) and implementation of the measures

⁴⁶ <http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/650>

Action 14: To raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers of sustainable regional development

Action 6.14 To raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers of sustainable regional development

It would increase the perception of preserved nature as a valuable asset. Promotion of green, soft and eco-tourism is envisaged as a part of this action.

Milestone n° 6.141: Keep updated INTERACT portal on EUSDR regarding best available information on PA6 activities, projects and financing mechanism

Milestone n° 6.142: Implement stakeholder awareness communication activities for Natura 2000 in EUSDR region parallel with COM/MS communication campaign on Natura 2000

Milestone n°6.143: Organisation of stakeholders seminars and workshops and conferences

Milestone n°6.144: Implementation of Green Danube Network project

Milestone n°6.145: Follow up on the visibility activities across all identified EUSDR PA6 projects

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pillar II Stakeholder Workshop is organized with the title Transboundary water issues in a macro-regional context: the Danube basin, (11-12 September 2013, Budapest). (n°6.143) ■ www.danube-region.eu INTERACT web page for PA6 is regularly maintained and updated. (n° 6.141) ■ To further promote Natura 2000 ecological network concept across EU, in line with the Action 3 of the Target 1 from the EU Strategy for Biodiversity for 2020 „Natura 2000 award” was established. 163 applications from almost all MS applied for all 5 categories: Conservation, Socio-economic benefit, Communication, Reconciling interests/perceptions, Networking and cross-border cooperation. Award ceremony was held on 21 May 2014⁴⁷ in Brussels. (n° 6.142) ■ Natura 2000 communication platform supports Natura 2000 site managers, policymakers, civil society organizations and land managers in their efforts to achieve favourable conservation status of Europe’s most precious habitats.⁴⁸ (n° 6.142). EUSDR Member states have national Natura 2000 webpages⁴⁹.
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	Follow on the activities in the Danube counties set out in Action 3 of the EU biodiversity strategy to increase stakeholder awareness and involvement and improve enforcement.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue working on raising awareness of the general public and stakeholders on Danube strategy actions and events. ■ Further development of PA6 stakeholder network (see report) ■ n°6.144 might be linked to PA6 stakeholder network
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting project LENA (Local Economy, demographic change and nature conservation in the Danube Region) development with an objective of promotion of green jobs and sustainable development.

⁴⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/awards/award-ceremony/index_en.htm

⁴⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index_en.htm

⁴⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/db_gis/index_en.htm

Action 15: To educate children and young people

Action 6.15 To educate children and young people

Since there is a growing pressure on biodiversity and natural resources become scarcer, there is a particular need to educate the young generation. This should cover the services provided by ecosystems, value of natural assets and benefits for conservation of biodiversity. Part of the action could be devoted to the introduction of environmental education into the educational curricula of the Danube countries.

Milestone n° 6.151: In line communication activities from communication campaign on Natura 2000 further develop and promote activities including children and young people

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Natura 2000 communication platform⁵⁰ enabled communication and raised awareness of Natura 2000 ecological network but there is a space for including children and young people awareness raising and education, as for example Children's Corner for successful Life projects⁵¹
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ To increase stakeholder awareness and involvement especially in regards to education of children and young people Danube Region MS will follow on the activities and outlines proposed by the EU biodiversity strategy for 2020⁵².
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Further follow the communication campaign on Natura 2000 work on to identifying activities that promote activities including children and young people. ■ Follow up on ICPDR's Public Participation Expert Group (PP EG) activities related to communication and participation issues. These include public consultation measures for the Danube River Basin Management and Flood Risk Management Plans, publications and outreach initiatives such as Danube Day⁵³ or environmental education, especially with regards to educating young people and children (Danube box, Danube Art Master and similar).
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	Mostly small scale national projects contribute most effectively to the achievement of this action.

⁵⁰http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/platform/index_en.htm

⁵¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/toolkit/comtools/goodexamples/childrenscorner.htm>

⁵² As defined in Action 3a in COM (2011) 244 final

⁵³<http://www.danubeday.org/>

Action 16: To build capacities of local authorities in the environment-related matters

Action 6.16 To build capacities of local authorities in the environment-related matters

Local authorities are primarily responsible for the implementation of environment related matters, such as waste or protected areas management. Often, they lack knowledge and capacities to develop projects in the environmental area. Under this action, the local authorities would be provided with training, an expert group helping regions and cities resolving problems would be established, and networks for exchange of good practices.

Milestone n°6.161: Implement guidance document to improve understanding of the key sector of EU nature legislation

<i>Progress since the last reporting period</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PACs continued to build strong horizontal approach with other Pillars of the Danube strategy (especially to PA1a <i>To improve mobility and intermodality – inland waterways</i>) and are participating in <i>Joint Statement</i>⁵⁴ follow up meetings. An idea on providing a platform to support Joint statement process was raised by the PACs 1a and 6 at the Joint statement follow up meeting in Zagreb, February, 2014. ■ Guidance document on electricity, gas and oil infrastructures & Natura 2000 is under preparation. Other guidance documents in relation with Natura 2000 and other sectors are continuously prepared by EC and could be followed on the link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/guidance_en.htm
<i>Opportunities and challenges in implementing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The EC and MS will improve cooperation with key sectors and continue to develop guidance documents to improve their understanding of the requirements of EU nature legislation and its value in promoting economic⁵⁵.
<i>Outline for the future</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Follow the development of guidance documents on EU nature legislation and its value in improving the cooperation with key sectors ■ The PA6 Stakeholder Network (see report) will also tackle this Action.
<i>Projects associated with the action</i>	

⁵⁴ Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin (2007)

⁵⁵ Following on the Action 3b in COM (2011) 244 final

ANNEX 2

PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP

Implementation of the EUSDR Priority Area 6

“To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils”

Rationale: The following list provides the progress on the project labelling in the period June 2013 - June 2014. The Annex 2 produced as the part of the 1st report by PA6 in June 2012 and the Annex 2 from the 2nd report from June 2013 give a detailed overview on each project previously approved by the Steering group including deadlines, project descriptions, countries involved and funding details. In the chapters provided part A) are the projects approved by the Steering group in the last 2 reporting periods and part B) are the projects approved in actual reporting period (June 2013- June 2014)

A) PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP in the last 2 reporting periods

- **Danubeparks II**
- **Sturgeon 2020**
- **SONDAR - Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region**
- **Bioregio Carpathians**
- **Wetland restoration in the Mura-Drava-Danube area**
- **Protecting “Europe’s Lifeline” - The creation of a Trans-Boundary UNESCO Biosphere**
- **DUNNOCK** (Danube Network for Enhancing Communication, Knowledge and Innovation on the Environment)
- **Haus am Strom**
- **DUNAVISION** (Donauwandel 2013 (Danube Learning Journey))

B) PROJECTS APPROVED IN THIS REPORTING PERIOD (JUNE 2013- JUNE 2014)

Name of the project	Assessment of migratory waterbird population in the Danube Area (analysis of human caused threats, elaboration of action plan to protect the most endangered species)
Action related	Action 03 of PA6: <i>“To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered species”</i>
Countries involved	All EUSDR countries are beneficiaries.
Funding	tbd
Stage of implementation	Project in preparation (e.g. project proposal, feasibility study)
Description	The project aims at an improvement of waterbirds conservation in the region. Specific objectives are to develop sound information basis for waterbirds conservation in the region, to prepare an Action Plan for waterbirds conservation; to involve key stakeholders in AP implementation.
Involvement of the PACs	Letter of Recommendation issued in April, 2014
Next steps	Steering group proposed to project coordinators to widen project area by including more stakeholders from the Danube area (for example ornithological societies from other Danube countries).

Name of the project	ECONETICS - Maintaining Ecological Networks in Mountainous Regions - A Critical Contribution to Green Infrastructure in the Danube Basin
Action related	Action 09 of PA6: <i>“To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)”</i>
Countries involved	All Carpathian Region countries, with a possibility of extension of the project to the Dinaric Region and Bulgaria.
Funding	Short-term funding for project development: TAF DRP - Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects Medium-term (from 2015): Follow up programme to the SEE ETC Programme for the Danube Region; LIFE+, Horizon 2020 for research and innovation Longer-term: LIFE Integrated Projects over 6-7 years; Connecting Europe Facility
Stage of implementation	Project idea.
Description	The project aims at identifying and securing ecologic corridors in mountainous areas such as the Carpathians, through an integrated

	participatory planning and management approach. ECONETICS specifically addresses green infrastructure assets, which tend to become under pressure by further development of grey infrastructure. It is foreseen to integrate both green and grey infrastructure by participatory planning measures and methods of conflict management. The project will elaborate respective guidelines and strives for implementation in selected pilot areas.
Involvement of the PACs	Letter of Recommendation issued in April, 2014.
Next steps	Project idea received TAF-DRP funding for project preparation.

Name of the project	R-PAS- Ragweed Pollen Alarm System for the Danube region
Action related	Action 06 of PA6: <i>“To reduce the spread of invasive alien species (IAS)”</i>
Countries involved	Collaboration between pollen monitoring stations to collect "near real time" ragweed pollen data. Pollen data from the main source area will be collected from Austria (East), Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine. Countries affected by the airborne transport of the pollen should also be included: Germany, Austria (West).
Funding	tbd
Stage of implementation	Project idea.
Description	The Project R-PAS is aiming at the combination of several pollen-monitoring networks in the Danube Region with the objective to create a high resolution Ragweed Pollen Map using isarithmic mapping techniques. The Ragweed Pollen Alarm System (PPRR) could be expanded for the entire area of the Danube Region
Involvement of the PACs	Letter of Recommendation issued in April, 2014.
Next steps	Partners to be involved from Germany. Continue strong linkage with JRC activities.