**INVITATION & AGENDA**

**Workshop for IPA/NDICI programming authorities on
embedding the EUSDR into EU funding programmes**

**Towards a Network of IPA / NDICI programming authorities in the Danube Region**

**23rd April 2021**

**09:00 – 12:00 CET**

**Online (Webex)**

[**Meeting registration**](https://danube-region.eu/danube-events/ipa-ndici-embedding/)

[**>>> Join meeting here <<<**](https://whservice.webex.com/whservice-en/j.php?MTID=m35064cea2ebdd841b46b2cdd2bff17e1)

Meeting number: 183 805 7818

Password: closer\_coop\_2021

**Introduction**

[EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)](https://danube-region.eu/about/)

It provides an integrated framework to address common challenges faced by countries sharing a common recourse – the Danube River. Countries and regions benefit from strengthened cooperation contributing to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion. The main idea behind the EUSDR is to establish a framework for policy integration, coordination, cooperation, multi-level governance and partnership. The EUSDR is not a funding instrument – it seeks to create synergies and coordination between existing policies, funding instruments and initiatives taking place across the given macro-regional Strategy (MRS).

Similar to other macro-regions, the EUSDR works to improve socio-economic development and governance in the region, but it also strengthens ties between the strategy’s Member States and brings the participating candidates, potential candidates and neighbouring non-EU countries closer to the EU, hence reinforcing the process of European integration.

Meeting objective?

This workshop is explicitly addressed to these EUSDR member states and the respective IPA and NDICI programming authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine.

**Why does it need embedding?**

Macro-regional strategies such as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region mobilise different existing programmes, projects and cooperation mechanisms in the region to address challenges that know no borders. To achieve this goal, Member States, NDICI and IPA countries shall reflect MRS priorities in their funding programmes.

The European Commission in its *3rd report on the implementation of MRS[[1]](#footnote-1)* from September 2020 advocates to further strengthen the links between EU funding programmes and MRS:

Since 2018, the MRS have initiated or strengthened the embedding process that led to mutually beneficial interactions between strategies' and programmes' authorities in preparing post-2020 programming documents. This is to be continued during implementation throughout 2021-2027. Eventually, embedding is expected to increase programmes’ impacts through better cooperation and coordination, in addition to providing the MRS with the means to achieve their objectives (…)

Also, the *Council conclusions on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies*[[2]](#footnote-2) emphasise the urgency to further embed the priorities of the MRS in relevant EU funding programmes 2021-2027 and, to that end:

c) CALLS on all participating countries/regions, with the support of the Commission and as soon as possible, to establish networks of (managing) authorities of relevant 2021-2027 EU funding programmes (Cohesion Policy Funds, EAFRD, EMFF, IPA, NDICI); CALLS on these (managing) authorities to actively participate in such networks in order to ensure a coordinated implementation of the MRS Action Plan priorities and projects shortlisted by MRS, across the macro-region, in their respective programmes;

The preparation phase of the 2021-2027 programming period offers a unique opportunity for all EU programmes to address territorial challenges more strategically, through more coordinated and synergized actions stressing the European added value of funding, and encourage a dialogue between those involved in the programming process and the MRS**.** This embedding exercise is equally relevant for Cohesion Policy Funds in EU Member States as for EU programmes in non-EU countries (essentially IPA and NDICI – former ENI).

**What is to be achieved through embedding?**

The overall objective of macro-regional strategies is to pool resources and bring national approaches into a more coherent macro-level implementation in order to tackle common challenges. This should lead to visible results and in the long-term contribute to more economic, social and territorial cohesion.

MRS help enlarge the audience, enhance visibility and extend the outreach of programmes or projects to a wider range of public in the macro-region. In line with the EUSDR strategic topics, a more effective joint implementation of measures, projects and governance mechanisms should be achieved.

**How can this be achieved?**

The relevant references of the proposal by the EU Commission for the new regulatory framework for the funding period 2021-2027, including regulations relevant for IPA and NDICI and their implementing regulations recognise the necessity to include macro-regional priorities in the planning and programming documents from the very beginning, and to identify challenges with macro-regional relevance.

This requires **upgrading the level of coordination among countries, notably among national/regional authorities responsible for ESIF, IPA and NDICI** planning and programming.

**What has been done so far?**

As agreed by National Coordinators (NCs) of EUSDR participating states in November 2019 in Zagreb, a **Task Force for embedding the EUSDR into EU Programmes (EMB-DR)** was formed. The aim was to draft a functional tool to support the EUSDR embedding process and the strategic planning and programming of the ESI/IPA III/ NDICI funds.

As the EUSDR Action Plan (with 85 actions) would be hard to utilize in the embedding process, a **shortlist** **of** maximum of three **strategic topics** per Priority Area (PA) to be included in the relevant national/regional Operational Programmes was generated.

The **EUSDR “embedding tool”** was elaborated based on a screening of available funding instruments. In this matrix, for each action and strategic topic possible funding instruments are suggested. The possible financing instruments refer to the Policy Objectives (PO) and Specific Objectives/intervention fields (EU-MS), IPA III Thematic priorities for assistance and NDICI Areas of cooperation for the geographic programmes & Areas of intervention for thematic programmes (non-EU). The tool supports the implementation of strategic topics with the highest EU added value in line with the priorities set for the next financing period.

In the course of the 2nd EU MRS WEEK, **Cross embedding workshops on IPA and NDICI with programming authorities from the Danube Region** took place. The workshops aimed to gather the main stakeholders of the IPA and NDICI embedding process, present the draft programming framework and open a discussion on how to achieve the objective in cooperation focused on possibilities to link IPA and NDICI assistance with macro-regional priorities.

**Why another meeting?**

Such **meetings among programming authorities from the Danube Region** could become a permanent tool for coordinating/monitoring the implementation of macro-regional actions (and then projects) included in the national programmes. To streamline the discussion process and to offer as much common focus as possible 2-3 meetings with / of MA are scheduled. 1. ERDF & CF managing authorities, 2. Meeting of ESF managing authorities Network, 3. IPA and NDICI programming authorities

In the first meeting, we kindly invite programming authorities responsible for IPA and NDICI funds to a Workshop on embedding the EUSDR into EU Funding Programmes. The Workshop includes sufficient time for discussion and exchange between the programming authorities, who are the target group of the Workshop. The agenda is complemented by short presentations and information from the EC and the EUSDR (incumbent Presidency and Danube Strategy Point), who plays the role of process facilitator. In order to show already good ways of embedding processes, examples from the Strategy on the one hand and from a IPA programme on the other hand are presented.

 **Draft Agenda**

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| **23 April 2021, 09:00 – 12:00 CET, online** |
| **08:45** | *Registration (connection to Webex)* |
| **09:00** | **Welcome and Introduction – Agenda setting The Role of MAs and Programming Authorities Networks in the EUSDR***Moderators*: Ilze CIGANSKA, Interact and Albert SORROSAL, TESIM |
| **09:15** | **Keynotes** **The Strategy’s approach and objectives. How to translate macro-regional Strategies into the language of programmes?*** Recommendations for Embedding

Michal BLAŠKO, Slovak EUSDR Presidency**The EC's Positions and Expectations. How to translate macro-regional Strategies into the language of programmes?*** How to embed MRS into EU funding programmes?
* The role of programming authorities

Johan MAGNUSSON, EC/DG REGIOMassimo MINA, EC/DG NEAR (tbc) |
| **10:00** | **Embedding EUSDR into EU funding programmes – concrete tools and processes*** the WHY: EUSDR embedding process
* the HOW: Presentation/demonstration of the “embedding tool”
* the WHAT: Selection of EUSDR strategic topics

Robert LICHTNER, Danube Strategy Point |
| **10:15** | **Experiences & good practices****From the Strategy’s point of view*** Approach on embedding on EUSDR national level in Serbia

National IPA Coordinator for Serbia (tbc)**From a programme’s point of view*** Experience from the Interreg IPA-CBC Programme Romania – Serbia

Oana CRISTEA, managing authority for Interreg IPA CBC Romania-Serbia Programme |
| **10:45** | **Round Table Discussions and proposals on embedding the EUSDR by authorities responsible for programming in** **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine and the European Commission****Parallel Session 1 - IPA: BA, ME, RS** (moderated by Ilze CIGANSKA, Interact,)**Parallel Session 2 - NDICI: MD, UA** (moderated by Albert SORROSAL, TESIM)* Feedback on the proposed four potential tools for embedding as outlined in the discussion paper provided beforehand via email
* What else would be helpful to support the embedding process (general overview or concrete implementation proposals)?
* What are the current discussions and processes in respective programming authorities?

**Discussion by Representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine and the European Commission** |
| **11:45** | **Summary and Outlook**Michal BLAŠKO, Slovak EUSDR Presidency |
| **12:00** | *End* |

*In case of questions, you may contact:* *office@eusdr-dsp.eu*

1. COM(2020) 578 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1600880135115&uri=CELEX:52020DC0578> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/cooperate/macro_region_strategy/pdf/concl_implementation_macro_region_strategy_1220_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)