

## 1<sup>st</sup> Danube:Future Milestone Report

Reporting period  
01/01/2013 - 30/04/2015



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[www.danubefuture.eu](http://www.danubefuture.eu)  
[management@danubefuture.eu](mailto:management@danubefuture.eu)

## Overview

Danube:Future is a networking activity which aims at supporting the sustainable future of the Danube River Basin by integrating the social sciences and humanities into a long-term perspective. The initiative started in January 2013 and was approved as EUSDR Flagship Project by the EUSDR PA7 Steering Group on September 23, 2013.

This report is divided into three parts (achievements, future activities, beneficiaries) and includes recommendations for the future. The second project phase is planned from 2016 until 2020 as demonstrated in the scheme below (Fig. 1).

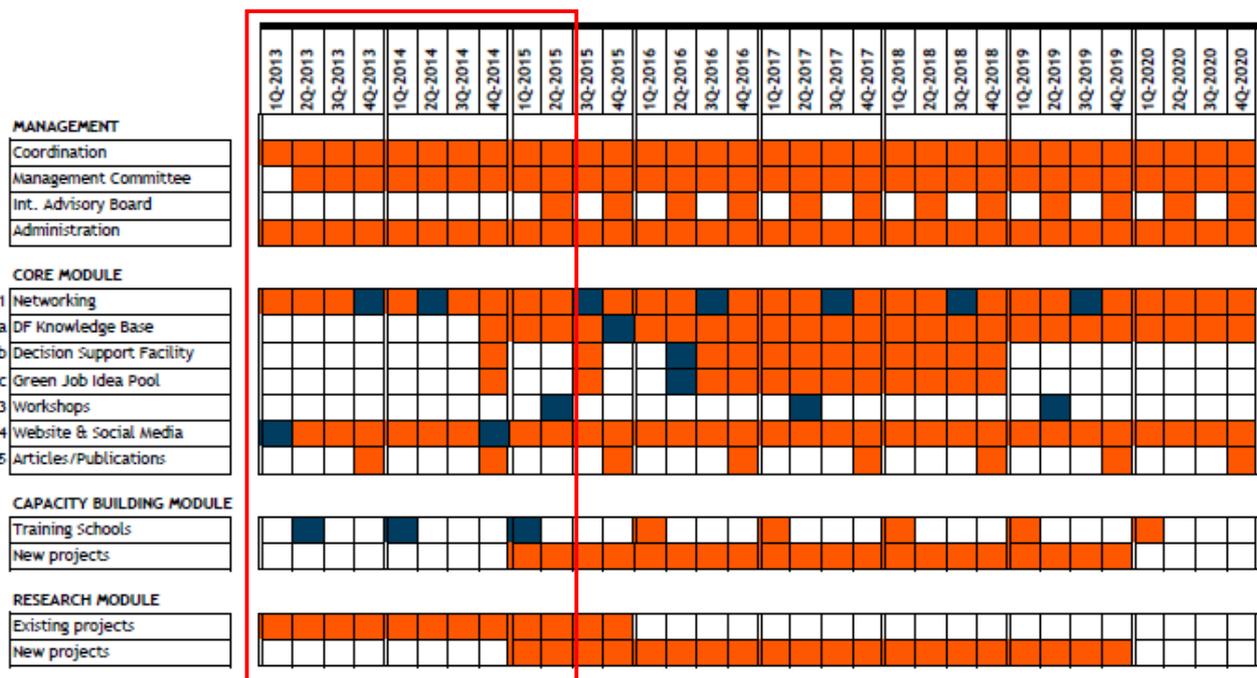


Fig. 1: Project tasks and timetable of Danube:Future indicating important steps, i.e. milestones, for specific activities in blue.

The completion of the pilot phase at the end of 2015 provides the appropriate timing for a reflection about the achievements, plans and the optimal use of the existing resources and funding opportunities. This requires the consideration and feedback of the main beneficiaries and stakeholders, especially DRC, AARC and EUSDR-PA 7. The beneficiaries are encouraged to produce an evaluation, whether Danube:Future should remain a strategic project for research and cooperation to contribute to a sustainable development of the Danube River Basin and - if so - which activities would be most necessary and promising. As funding is often task-specific, this input is needed for further planning.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Danube:Future was endorsed by the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC) and the Alps Adriatic Rectors' Conference (AARC). Their network comprises now 88 Universities. During the project's pilot phase, 26 Universities from 12 Countries participated in the DIANET-training schools. Several Institutions and organizations (25) from the Danube Region were involved in other activities. Supporting partners are currently IAD (International Association for Danube Research), IDM (Institute of the Danube Region and Central Europe) and the ICPDR (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River), which invited Danube:Future to follow its activities as guest.

In March 2014, the four core partners Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt (AAU), University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU), University of Trieste and University of Novi Sad signed a Cooperation agreement for the general support of the project. The main task of Danube:Future is to implement and manage activities in three modules, i.e. Core Module, Research Module and Capacity Building Module.

The project is led by the project coordinator (Verena Winiwarter, AAU Klagenfurt) and her deputy (Gertrud Haidvogel, BOKU) together with the Management Committee (MC). Members of the MC are Heike Egner for AAU, Thomas Hein for BOKU, Renato Gennaro & Alberto Pallavicini for Univ. Trieste, Pavle Sekerus & Marco Skoric for Univ. Novi Sad, Sebastian Schäffer for DRC and Gregor Torkar for AARC. Stefano Brumat, Univ. Trieste, acts as project administrator.

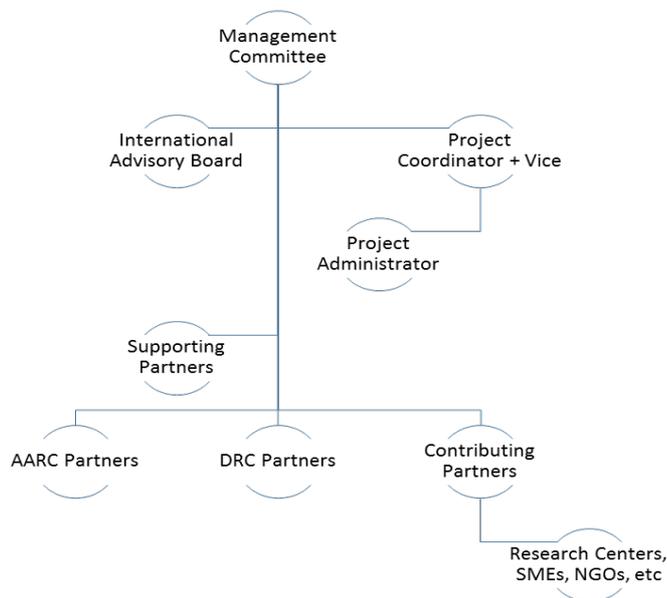


Fig. 2: Organization chart of Danube:Future (as in application for flagship status).

## CORE MODULE

The Core module is dedicated to an Integrated Networked Program. **Networking** was done during relevant events, in particular during:

- 1) **EUSDR events:**
  - a) Annual Forum: 2013 (Bucharest) and 2014 (Vienna)
  - b) Priority Area 7 SG meetings: 5 attended
- 2) **DRC events:**
  - a) Annual assembly: 2013 (Cluj-Napoca) and 2014 (Belgrade). Since November 2014, Danube:Future is part of the 2015 DRC Action Plan. The DRC is represented in the Management Committee via a person from the Institute of the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM where the secretariate of DRC is located).
- 3) **AARC events:**
  - a) Annual assembly: 2012 (Zagreb) and 2014 (Tuzla).

Danube:Future was presented at several conferences, workshops and meetings especially in the core partner countries. Several articles and publications in national and international journals as well as in newsletters further contribute to the dissemination of the project. Two proceedings of the “DIAnet International Schools” are already available on the website of Danube:Future; the third volume will be published in summer 2015.

The **official website** is online since March 2013 ([www.danubefuture.eu](http://www.danubefuture.eu)): **190 members** from **16 Countries** are registered. In the reporting period, **15.403** views from 8.460 different contacts (IP addresses) were registered. Visitors of the website came from 138 countries, including all European countries, but also from USA and Japan, among others. In the last months, **Social Media** profiles were created and are available on TWITTER (48 followers), FACEBOOK (42 likes) and LINKEDIN.

Danube:Future is permanently promoted on the websites of EUSDR (“Project and initiatives”-site), EUSDR-PA7 (“Flagship projects”), DRC, AARC, ICPDR, IAD, IDM and Danube-Inco.net.

In the framework of the **Integrated Networked Program** the Core Partners designed 3 tools. The first one is the **Danube:Future Knowledge-base** which aims at:

- ⇒ compiling and disseminating existing projects linked thematically to Danube:Future;
- ⇒ fostering collaboration between members;
- ⇒ supporting the creation of new networks (e.g. for building interdisciplinary projects);
- ⇒ sharing the outcomes of sustainability-oriented research related to the DRB.

The Knowledge Base is a **dynamic database**. It is updated regularly and is made available to supporting and supported researchers, universities, institutions, enterprises, regional or local administrators, or politicians.

The Knowledge Base is available **open access**, ensuring that the outputs of Danube:Future are utilized by universities, organizations, civil society institutions or other interested parties. The official launch of the Knowledge Base is planned for autumn 2015. All the registered members of the website can contribute and improve data and information (projects, WIKI, Working Groups, etc.) following standardized rules which include review mechanisms and quality assurance.

With the financial support of the **EUSDR-PA10 Technical Assistance Facility**, it was possible to start the analysis of two further Core Module tools:

- i. **Decision Support Facility:** Decision makers such as local, communal and regional governments or administrative institutions on national levels need information about development perspectives for their communities. Information from many different scientific perspectives is needed in decision making processes.

Danube:Future aims at contributing to decision making by providing a long-term-perspective on issues of sustainable development. Danube:Future, through the DRC and AARC members, should be able to offer a service for supporting local decision makers and public authorities.

New models are required to establish this cooperation, to find new ways of governance, science-policy cooperation, and to fill the existing knowledge gaps.

A possible pilot project was identified to develop such a new model of science-policy cooperation in two important policy fields, i.e. Sturgeons in the Danube and toxic sediments and environmental legacies. The project is intended to be developed for the forthcoming Danube Transnational Program and will not only test how such a new model could work in practice but also how a transfer to other regional actors and topics could be managed in the Danube area.

- ii. **Green job idea pool:** Green jobs have been a promise for several years. Europe-wide, job prospects in many traditional sectors are more and more limited. Business ideas related to sustainable development, be they in the wider realm of the bio-economy, in green transport or green building, to name but a few, fare better than most. This is also true for the Danube River Basin (DRB).

Danube:Future aims at investigating and developing models how (green) business ideas evolving from research at or in conjunction with universities can be brought into being. Young scholars are in the focus. Danube:Future has very successfully held three "International Schools" in Gorizia (IT), which offered training in interdisciplinary, international cooperation in the field of sustainable development for PhDs and Junior Post-Docs. The schools have led to a series of project proto-proposals some of which have the potential to become research proposals, while others have the potential to be further developed into business ideas. The latter could be a starting point for a 'Green Job Idea Pool'. A first project plan for a Green Job Idea Pool will be defined in 2015 to be presented to DRC and AARC.

The Core Module also hosts Danube:Future **Workshops**. The first one was held in Klagenfurt (A) from April 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015. It identified challenges and potentials for sustainability research in and for the Danube Region. The event led to a policy document (White paper) tackling main research and capacity building issues and ways to address them. The workshop was attended by 45 participants, including invited representatives of the international institutions which endorsed Danube:Future (EUSDR-PA7; DRC; AARC), and participants selected on the basis of their research excellence and on the potential to create future project consortia which will be able to address sustainability problems of the DRB in an inter- and transdisciplinary way. The final document "**Danube River Basin White Paper on Integrated Sustainable Development**" will be made available to the DRC, AARC and EUSDR-PA 7 for promoting research in the DRB at

the European Commission, especially DG Research.

## **RESEARCH MODULE**

The main goal of the Research Module is to create new bi-, tri- and multilateral research projects funded by Horizon 2020, Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund), joint programs of national research funds, etc. Such projects investigate specific questions related to the overall aim of Danube:Future and contribute specifically to the societal and environmental challenges of the DRB. They also contribute to the knowledge base of the integrated core project.

During the pilot phase of Danube:Future, the focus was on preparatory work for future research projects. This included two important actions done within the Core Module:

1. Mapping of existing projects linked to the topics of Danube:Future in combination with preparing the “Danube:Future Knowledge-base”.
2. Supporting the development of new projects. 2 consortia applying to the ERDF Central Europe 2014-20 Programme were provided with Letters of Support.

The Core Universities contributed several existing research projects dealing with long-term sustainability research in the Danube. At present, the list comprises six projects dealing with the Austrian section of the river.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE**

DIAnet International School was the first project linked to Danube:Future. It started in 2013, with financial contributions of the European Social Fund FVG 2007/13, and CARIGO Bank Foundation of Gorizia. The Schools were held in Gorizia (Italy), on the border between Italy and Slovenia.

In the three editions, 94 young researchers from 26 DRC and AARC member universities (PhD Students and early Post-docs) were involved. Three students participated in all three editions, 12 in two. 75 teachers from DRC and AARC universities were involved in the three schools.

Each International School focused on a specific topic (interdisciplinary methods, natural heritage, cultural heritage). Based on excursions and input lectures which comprised also lectures on project management and basics of inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation, the participants elaborated thematically relevant project ideas. 18 proposals were developed and published in the school proceedings.

Several participants of the DIAnet schools attended the 1st Danube:Future workshop and contributed to the White Paper. With some students, first co-operations were started (one project application, joint publications).

Like the Research Module, the Capacity Building Module aims to prepare new projects linked to Danube:Future. During the pilot phase, one project was submitted to the ERDF Central Europe 2014/20 Program.

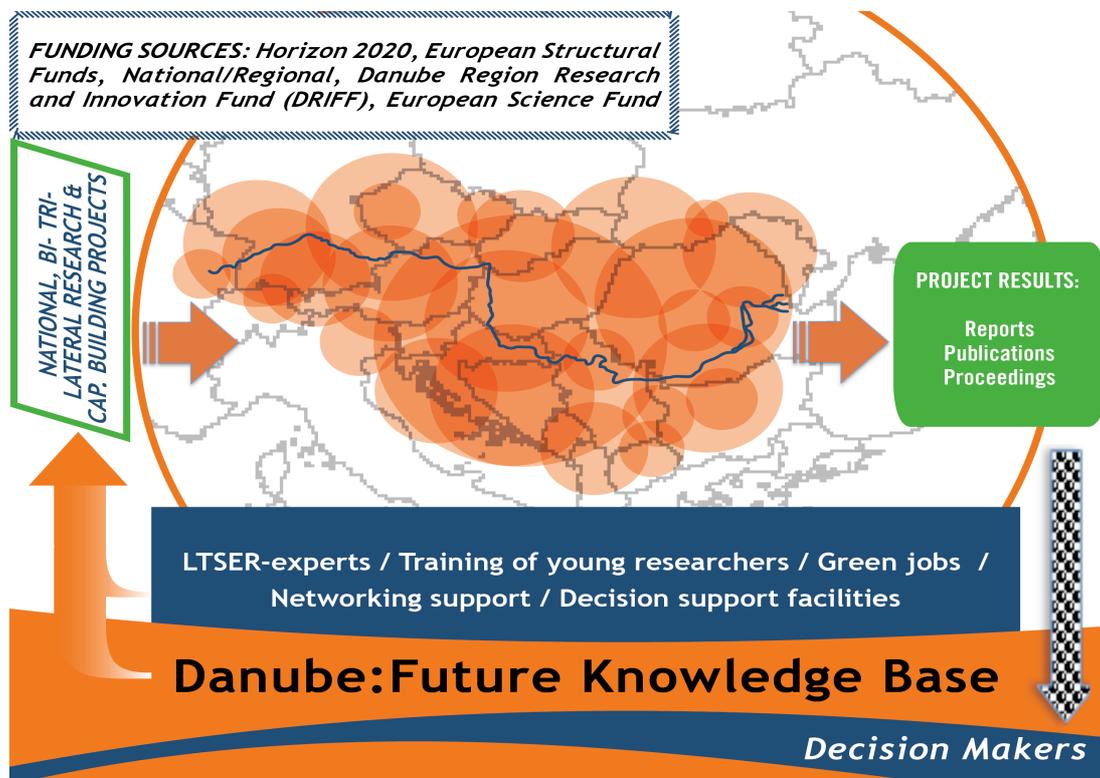


Fig. 3: Project cycle of Danube:Future: Existing funding sources will be used for national, bi-, tri- and multi-lateral projects. Already existing projects and new ones will contribute to an interdisciplinary knowledge base, which in turn will aid the development of internationally competitive new projects. Training of PhD students in the DIAnet schools and expert knowledge will be offered in the support structure, which will also be responsible for the growing knowledge base.

Comprehensive overview of the “**tangible achievements**” of the pilot phase of Danube:Future:

- The project **webpage**
- A network of **190 researchers** registered on the Danube:Future webpage
- The framework of the **Danube:Future Knowledge Base** (including the Danube **WIKI**) to be launched in autumn 2015
- **94 young scholars** who participated in the DIAnet Schools
- 45 participants who attended the first **Danube:Future Workshop** organized in Klagenfurt in April 2015, some of them from DIAnet Schools
- First **co-operations for publications and joint projects** with participants from DIAnet schools
- **Two DIANET school proceedings** completed; the third to be published in summer 2015
- “Danube River Basin **White Paper** on Integrated Sustainable Development”

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Danube:Future started its activities based on the financial resources of the four Core Universities and the contribution from the Friuli Venezia Giulia - European Social Fund 2007/2013. New funds were acquired during the pilot phase especially for implementing the core module tools and the capacity building actions. The costs were covered from the following sources, many of them are In-Kind contributions of the Core Universities:

	Management	Core Module	Research Module	Capacity Building Module
<b>IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION</b>				
AAU Klagenfurt	24.094,00	21.751,00		34.959,00
University Trieste	6.442,00	2.041,00		65.390,00
BOKU Vienna	13.900,00	19.870,00		20.444,00
University Novi Sad	986,00			4.505,00
IDM (DRC repr.)	665,00	95,00		
Other Partners				4.036,00
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>46.087,00</b>	<b>43.757,00</b>	-	<b>125.298,00</b>
<b>EXTERNAL RESOURCES</b>				
EU funds			2.200.000,00	
European Social Fund FVG	14.028,00	13.587,00		90.000,00
CARIGO Gorizia				29.000,00
Voivodina province				2.500,00
Central European Initiative		8.500,00		
Austrian Ministry of Science		35.008,00 *		
Austrian funding agencies (Austrian Science Fund, Austrian Academy of Sciences, etc)			1.665.000,00	
EUSDR PA10		25.000,00		
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>14.028,00</b>	<b>82.095,00</b>	<b>3.865.000,00</b>	<b>121.500,00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60.115,00</b>	<b>125.852,00</b>	<b>3.865.000,00</b>	<b>246.798,00</b>
		<b>4.297.765,00</b>		

\* Funds until Dec. 2015

## FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the general timeline, as approved by the EUSDR - PA7 Steering Group, Danube:Future will last until 2020. The **second project phase** from 2016 to 2020 will be specifically dedicated to joint research projects, but the Core Module and Capacity Building Module activities initiated during the pilot phase will continue. The Management Committee will continue to coordinate the activities of Danube:Future.

For the **CORE MODULE** the following activities are envisaged:

- managing and maintaining the website & social media for promoting the project and its activities;
- managing and maintaining the *Danube:Future Knowledge Base* of thematically relevant experts and projects and the *Danube:Future WIKI*;
- organizing further *Danube:Future Workshops* to involve and connect researchers from the Danube Countries;
- developing project proposals for building new services for DRC/AARC Universities (i.e. Decision Support Facility, Green Job Idea pool);
- *networking*, including in particular the official involvement of and cooperation with EUSDR PA3 (Culture and Tourism), PA6 (Biodiversity) and PA9 (People and Skills).

At the 1<sup>st</sup> Danube:Future workshop in Klagenfurt, participating researchers of the Danube region pointed out the need for the following services:

- Scientific Newsletter prepared for the community and/or a specific scientific journal dedicated to inter- and transdisciplinary research for sustainable development;
- Technical support for designing interdisciplinary projects, screening ideas, pre-submission review and evaluation;
- Calls for small projects open only for young researchers (similar to EUSDR P10 START)

Danube:Future Management Committee welcomes this input of the community and will strive for putting these services into practice. Possibilities depend on adequate funding.

## RESEARCH MODULE

The White Paper, as a main outcome of the pilot phase, shall be promoted and used by the beneficiaries of Danube:Future especially at relevant funding institutions on European level.

National, bi- or multi-national research projects addressing calls of HORIZON 2020, Structural Funds but e.g. also calls of ERA Nets will be developed. The first Danube:Future workshop was a good opportunity to identify and connect interested researchers of the DRC and AARC universities to form powerful interdisciplinary consortia for such project applications. Through the Danube:Future Knowledge Base the community will be also able to identify partners and build new project ideas.

## CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE

The previous editions of the training schools (DIAnet International Schools in Gorizia, Italy) were very successful. Planning at least one school each year in the future is thus strongly recommended.

The school curriculum could consider as an added value the “euro planning” procedure, i.e. the project cycle from the identification of an idea to the implementation of the activities, their

reporting and evaluation. Also a “business model canvass” following suggestions of involved business incubators could be integrated for designing new business in sustainability.

As for research projects, new capacity building projects will be supported by the Management Committee.

### Recommendations for the Danube:Future MANAGEMENT

The **Scientific (Project) Coordinator** is responsible for planning and managing ongoing and new project activities, representing the project at relevant events and for preparing reports, press releases and publications. At present, the coordinator and her deputy accomplish these tasks with very limited time and financial resources. In the future, financial resources for the scientific project coordination will be necessary to continue the implementation and coordination at least of the envisaged core module activities.

A **project administrator** is indispensable for supporting the coordination and management and for the general implementation and controlling of the project activities. Also for these tasks, financial resources for a full time employed person will be needed.

The coordinators of Danube:Future are convinced that a permanent coordination and administration will increase the achievements and the Danube Region’s research community of research will benefit from this Flagship project.

The management structure should be further developed. While an international advisory board is not deemed useful for the overall network, but will be put together on a project-specific basis for research projects in the future, a new group of individuals should be developed: “**Danube:Future CONTACT POINTS**”. Currently the project is relying on staff from the four core partners in Austria (AAU, BOKU), Italy (UniTS) and Serbia (UNS), while the project is open to all the Danube Region, in particular to the AARC & DRC network (88 members). A network of national contact points is needed to strengthen the collaboration between countries, to disseminate the activities and - most important - **to collect the needs of the beneficiaries and stakeholders** and to act as an information point to them. The national contact points will be connected via the project coordinator and administrator. This solution will allow a better coordination of information, promotion and support to the stakeholders. The University of Ljubljana started already to take some initiatives as a contact point in Slovenia. Further national contact points are strongly required. This network of contact points can be used also for other EUSDR Flagship Projects, which are connected within the framework of the AARC and DRC. At least, Danube:Future will need contact points in the Danube River countries.

### BUDGET NEEDED

Some activities could be covered by adequately funded EU projects (e.g. the Decision Support Facility or research/capacity building projects). But the activities listed in the table below require budget from different resources. The following table presents an overview, wherein costs are considered per year:

MANAGEMENT		MIN BUDGET	MAX BUDGET
Scientific project coordination	Project Coordinator and a Deputy (part-time/full-time)	40.000,00	100.000,00
Management Committee	10 members, including DRC&AARC representatives	31.200,00	31.200,00
International Advisory Board	15 members, travels for meetings	-	9.000,00
Administration	A project administrator (part-time/full-time)	22.500,00	45.000,00
	Supporting staff (part-time/full-time)	15.000,00	30.000,00
DF contact point network	Supporting staff for 9 (or 14) Countries	27.000,00	42.000,00
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>135.700,00</b>	<b>257.200,00</b>

CORE MODULE		MIN BUDGET	MAX BUDGET
Networking	Participation in relevant (15) events, travel costs	7.500,00	7.500,00
Website	Hosting, maintenance, implementation	9.800,00	9.800,00
DF Knowledge Base / WIKI	Editor role (scientific person)	22.800,00	42.750,00
	Implementation	4.200,00	4.200,00
Workshops	Offering accommodation, food / and travel cost	20.000,00	28.000,00
Services for building projects	Pre-screen of project ideas: 15 (30) ideas	23.250,00	46.500,00
	Consultant services for writing applications: 5 (10) projects	25.000,00	50.000,00
Seed money for starting small research projects by young researchers	For each application € 25.000	125.000,00	250.000,00
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>230.050,00</b>	<b>431.250,00</b>

CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE		MIN BUDGET	MAX BUDGET
Training school	9 days, 28 participants (no fee)	55.000,00	-
	10 days, 40 participants (no fee)	-	70.000,00
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>55.000,00</b>	<b>70.000,00</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>420.750,00</b>	<b>758.450,00</b>

## ENVISAGED SUPPORT of BENEFICIARIES & STAKEHOLDERS

Danube:Future supports its beneficiaries and stakeholders in inter- and transdisciplinary sustainability research, integrating the social sciences and humanities in a long-term perspective. Simultaneously, the core members need feedback on the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders and their commitment to contribute to the objectives and activities of Danube:Future. Below the main benefits for and envisaged feedback and support of the beneficiaries and stakeholders are summarized.

### Beneficiaries:

#### AARC & DRC Universities:

##### Offers of Danube:Future

- Training of their young scholars in international and interdisciplinary research in topics in line with Danube:Future, i.e. sustainable development with a long-term as well as social sciences and humanities perspective
- International network and exchange of its researchers within the Danube basin leading among others to new projects
- Visibility of research projects and results via the Danube:Future Knowledge base and WIKI
- Possibilities for new co-operations and project applications
- Specifically designed tools for science-policy co-operation
- Specifically designed tools for turning research into businesses

##### Requested feedback and support

- Support in distributing and completing a questionnaire about the needs of the DRC and AACR universities in terms of a Green Job Ideas Pool
- Support in establishing Danube:Future national contact points
- Promotion of the White Paper at relevant funding institutions
- Identifying ways to implement the White Paper recommendations
- Support for getting funds for the Core Module activities

Indirectly also other communities and groups can benefit from the activities of Danube:Future, in particular the:

- **Sustainability research community:** the Danube Region is rich in research organisations involved in sustainability research. The involvement of such organizations and contacts to SMEs and NGOs will allow a better coordination and implementation of projects. The sustainability research community will benefit from the Danube:Future Knowledge Base and WIKI, and can also contribute to these tools;

- **Local authorities:** through the Core Module tools, in particular the planned Decision Support Facility, Danube:Future can offer a science-policy link and a transfer of knowledge to solve local sustainability problems;
- the Danube Macro-Region and its **citizens** will indirectly benefit from the Danube:Future activities when the macro-region adopts sustainability policies.

## Stakeholders:

- **EUSDR, in particular PA3, PA6, PA7 and PA9:**  
Offers of Danube:Future:
  - contribution to the specific targets of PA 7;
  - strengthening the research communities in the Danube region that are dealing with sustainable development;
  - links and cooperation across different priority areas, in particular PA3, PA6 and PA9, for complementary actions.Requested feedback and support:
  - feedback on the planned activities and prioritization;
  - feedback and exchange on possible needs not yet identified by Danube:Future
  - support, by specific funding options, of the Danube:Future activities.
- **Ministries of Research:**  
Offers of Danube:Future:
  - Information about the main needs of national universities;
  - Practical solutions to achieve EUSDR milestones, in line with the final communiqué of the Ministries of Danube Region, Ulm, 8-9 July 2012Requested feedback and support:
  - National funds should be available to support the management of the project (coordination, administration, contact points) - please see page 11, MANAGEMENT.
- **ICPDR:**  
Offers of Danube:Future:
  - Interdisciplinary research on significant water management issues as identified by ICPDR
  - contributing to the ICPDR River Basin Management PlanRequested feedback and support:
  - access to data
  - Invitation of Danube:Future members to important events.

- **IAD & other research networks:**

Offers of Danube:Future:

- Cooperation and networking with new research fields, especially the social sciences and humanities

Requested feedback and support:

- Promotion of the project's actions
- Contribute to the Danube:Future Knowledge base and WIKI

## LINKS to Danube:Future

The following information could be founded on:

- Project presentation, goals, activities: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/project>
- Project partners: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/partners>
- Community: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/members>
- Workshops: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/workshops>
- Articles, Publications, White papers: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/danubefuture-articles-publications-white-papers-documents>
- DIAnet Schools: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/dianet-international-school>
- DIAnet Schools proceedings: <http://www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/9291>

The ongoing project “Danube:Future Knowledge Base” will be available under the menu by the end of 2015: <http://www.danubefuture.eu/core-module>