

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Danube:Future started in January 2013 and was approved as EUSDR Flagship Project by the EUSDR PA7 Steering Group on September 23rd, 2013. This is the second annual report of the project.

The most relevant information concerning the 2014 activities is as follows. More detailed information is described in each sector of this annual report:

- ✓ The Cooperation Agreement to strengthen the Core of the project was signed on March 22nd 2014 by the four Core partners;
- ✓ Increasing the number of the Management Committee members: from 6 to 9;
- ✓ Promoting the activities of Danube:Future in the Macro-Region, in several networking events of EUSDR (annual forum), DRC and AARC;
- ✓ Danube:Future as part of the 2015 DRC Action Plan;
- ✓ Participating in the DANUBE OP 2014/20 Survey;
- ✓ Developing the “*Danube:Future_Core*” project funded by EUSDR PA10 - Technical Assistance Facility, by the consultants of Metis GmbH Vienna and Inforelais, for new project proposals in the framework of the “DF integrated networked program” (*Decision Support Facility* and *Green Job Idea Pool*);
- ✓ Developing the “*Danube:Future Knowledge-base*”;
- ✓ Organizing the 1st Danube:Future Workshop “*CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALS FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DANUBE REGION: CONTRIBUTING TO HORIZON 2020*” in Klagenfurt, April 2015;
- ✓ Developing the 2014 DIAnet International School (March) and organizing the 2015 DIAnet International School (March 2015);
- ✓ Publications concerning the Danube:Future project.

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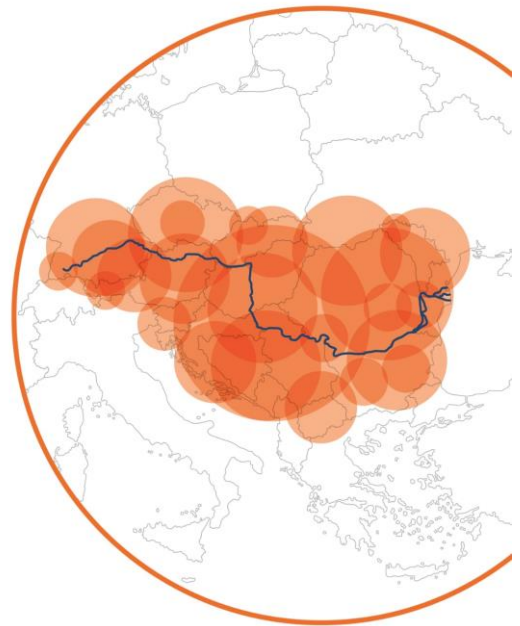
MANAGEMENT

Danube:Future is managed by the **Core Partners**: Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt (A), University of Trieste (I), University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (A) and University of Novi Sad (SRB).

The **Beneficiaries and endorsing partners** of the project, as a joint initiative, are the Danube Rectors' Conference and the Alps Adriatic Rectors' Conference.

The **Supporting partners** are the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Vienna (IDM), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and International association for Danube research (IAD).

Institutions contributing to any of the modules Core, Research and Capacity Building are **Contributing Partners**. An open list is available on the website: www.danubefuture.eu/contributing-partners?order=field_location_country&sort=asc



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee is composed now of 9 members: 2 delegates from each Core Partner (AAU, UniTS, BOKU, UNS) and 1 delegate from DRC (1 delegate from AARC is appointing in January 2015). There is one Coordinator and one Vice-Coordinator.

The EU Commission or its representative, as well as the Coordinators of the EUSDR - PA 7 (Knowledge society) can participate in the meetings of the Management Committee without voting right.

Six Meetings were held during 2014.

Project Regulations were approved in November 2013 and amended during 2014.

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

The International Advisory Board is composed of experts with varied experiences and of different nationalities. Its role is to offer advice on matters of development of Danube:Future, increase the

international visibility of Danube:Future and allow it to benefit from the experience of a high-ranking interdisciplinary group. Having outstanding scholars from different specializations and involved in different networks assisting in the development of Danube:Future as a major initiative in interdisciplinary environmental humanities is of great value for the project.

The International Advisory Board is composed of at least 3 and no more than 15 members, appointed by the Management Committee. The Management Committee appointed the following experts:

- Prof Andreas Breinbauer, University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna (Austria)
- Prof Helmut Habersack, BOKU Vienna (Austria)
- Dr Didier Pont, Irstea (France)
- Dr Wolfgang Stalzer, ICPDR (Austria)

ADMINISTRATION

The Project Administrator offers essential administrative support in all aspects facilitating the Danube:Future project: scheduling meeting times and locations, taking meeting minutes and developing presentations. In addition, the project administrator participates in budget administration, providing analysis, keeping records, and forecasting financial performance.

The University of Trieste is in charge of the Project Administration by its staff.

CONTRIBUTION FROM/TO DRC and AARC

During the first phase of the project, Danube:Future invited the DRC/AARC universities to participate in the DIAnet International Schools (please read the DIAnet School Final reports for more info).

The following Universities are now Contributing Partner, according to the *Danube:Future Project Regulations* (art. 3.4):

COUNTRY	PARTNER	DRC	AARC
ALBANIA	Universiteti i Shkodrës "Luigj Gurakuqi"		X
AUSTRIA	Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt		X
	University of Wien	X	
BULGARIA	University of Ruse	X	
CROATIA	University of Rijeka		X
	University of Split	X	X
	University of Zagreb	X	X

CZECH REPUBLIC	Charles University Prague	X	
	Czech University of Life Sciences	X	
	Palacký University	X	
HUNGARY	Corvinus University of Budapest	X	
	Eötvös Loránd University	X	
	University of Pécs	X	X
ITALY	Free University of Bozen/Bolzano	X	
	University of Ferrara		X
	University of Trieste	X	X
	Ca' Foscari University of Venice		X
KOSOVO	University of Prishtina	X	
ROMANIA	"Babes-Bolyai" University	X	
	Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad	X	
SERBIA	University of Novi Sad	X	
SLOVAKIA	Constantine the Philosopher University Nitra	X	
SLOVENIA	University of Ljubljana		X
	University of Maribor	X	X
	University of Nova Gorica	X	X
	University of Primorska	X	X

Since November 2014, Danube:Future is part of the 2015 DRC Action Plan.

CONTRIBUTION TO EUSDR

Danube:Future is connected with all the EUSDR Priority Areas because it potentially contributes to all 4 pillars:

Pillar 1, Connecting the region: transportation network evolution (PA 1), transition pre- to post-fossil society (PA 2) and nationalism, war, tourism (PA 3);

- **Pillar 2**, Protecting the environment: results of the research module will be useful for the restoration and maintenance of the quality of waters by the hydromorphological change (PA 4), for the management of environmental risks as toxic sediments (PA 5) and for the preservation of biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils (PA 6);
- **Pillar 3**, Building prosperity: results of the capacity building module enhance the development of green/blue economy (PA 8) and strengthen the education for people (PA 9);
- **Pillar 4**, Strengthening the Region: through contributing to the political and institutional structures (PA 10) and to social prosperity (PA 11).

CONTRIBUTION TO ICPDR

Danube:Future takes also into account the main environmental problems of the Danube and the DRB as they were defined by the ICPDR.

It addresses, in particular:

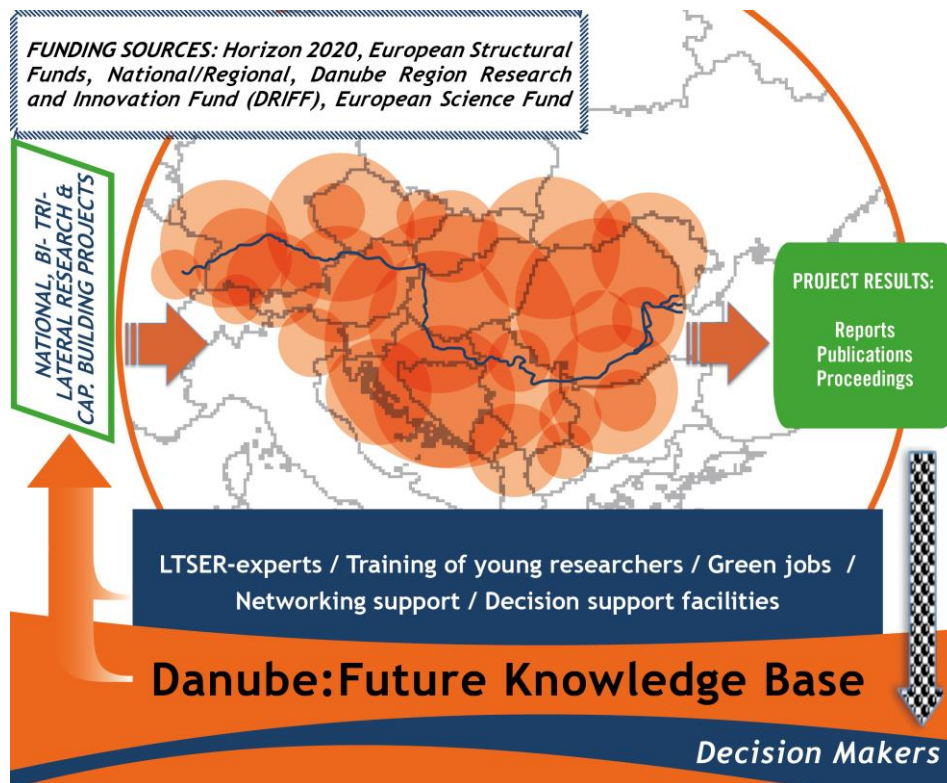
- ✓ **water quality** deterioration from organic pollution because the Danube River Basin is greatly affected by the activities of over 81 million people;
- ✓ **excessive nutrients** which are disturbing the ecological balance in the Danube and the Black Sea;
- ✓ **heavy metal** input, whereas Cadmium, Lead, Mercury, DDT, Lindane and Atrazine are among the most **serious pollutants contaminating the Danube River Basin**;
- ✓ **hydromorphological alterations** because more than 80% of the length of the Danube is regulated, and over 700 dams and weirs have been built along its main tributaries;
- ✓ **floods**: in 2002 the floods in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, were made worse by canalization causing €14.4 billion of damage;
- ✓ **loss of natural floodplains**.

THE PROJECT STRUCTURE

The project is divided into three modules:

- **Core**: aimed at establishing an open-access knowledge base to which capacity building and research projects can contribute, thus increasing their visibility and accessibility. The outcomes of the Danube:Future project are available to organizations, institutions and decision makers.
- **Capacity Building**: it takes into account existing initiatives and frameworks dealing with sustainable development research. Danube:Future is aimed at developing trainings in cultural and natural heritage, institutional capacity building for green jobs, and strengthening regional networks.
- **Research**: the DRB has a troubled political and environmental history. Environmental problems abound and impede economic growth and sustainable development.

Danube:Future takes into account the long-term legacies of this troubled history with a strong focus on humanities and social sciences through new interdisciplinary approaches.



CORE MODULE

1) NETWORKING

Danube:Future is aimed to create and develop new networks of researchers and SME/NGO representatives of the DRB engaging in smart specialization strategies in their region and sharing best practice models in research, education and training.

The Rectors' Conferences' communication structures and their annual meetings increasingly become a major platform for exchange and networking on the level of the partner institutions. This task will be facilitated by the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), which acts as permanent secretariat of the Danube Rectors' Conference.

The Danube:Future project was presented at different events:

- EUSDR PA7 SG meeting, Budapest (20 May)
- UniTS Seminar, Trieste (28 May)
- IAD Austria Annual meeting, Vienna (2 June)
- AAU, Klagenfurt (3 June)
- IAD Conference, Sofia (17/20 June)
- 3rd EUSDR Forum, Vienna (26-27 June)
- AARC Plenary Assembly, Tuzla (18 September)
- European Danube Forum, Krems (10 October)
- Austrian Scientist of the Year Lecture organized by Office of Science and Technology Austria, Washington DC (28 October) and General Consulate Austria, New York City, (October 29)
- Advisory Committee of the Danube Local Actors Platform (PA 10), Vienna (4 November)
- DRC Annual Assembly, Belgrade (6 November)
- Conference “From Idea to Implementation - Chances and Limits” of the EUSDR of ARGE Donauländer (12 November)
- EUSDR PA7 SG meeting, Vienna (10 December)

2) INTEGRATED NETWORKED PROGRAM

The integrated program is composed of the following tools:

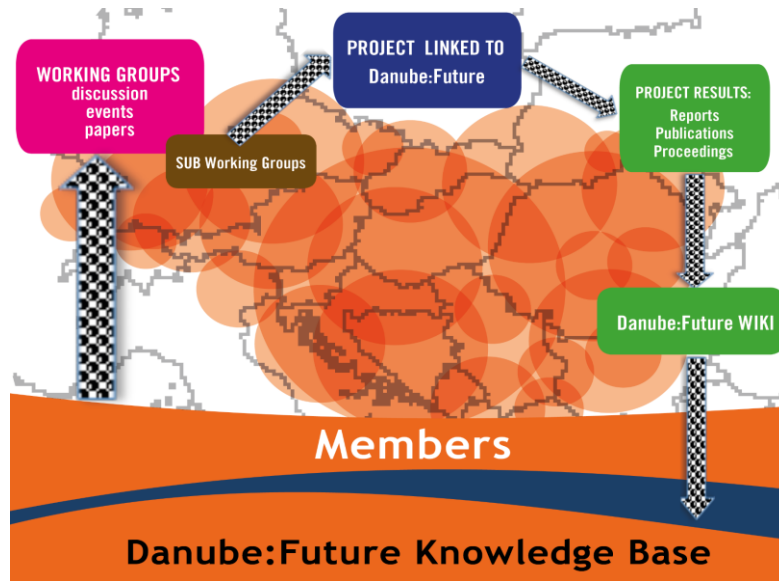
a) Danube:Future Knowledge-base

The Knowledge Base 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 the Danube:Future project are utilized by universities, organizations, civil society institutions or other involved parties.



“Danube:Future Knowledge Base Regulations” will help Members participating in collection of high-quality information.

→ During 2014, the first stage of the Knowledge Base was developed. The on-line version is expected by April 2015.

b) Decision Support Facility

(Policy) decision makers - local, communal, regional governments, sectoral institutions on national levels - need information about development perspectives for their own community. Information from many different scientific perspectives is needed in the decision process.

The *Joint Programming Initiatives* are a new process combining a strategic framework, a bottom-up approach and a high-level commitment from Member States for a limited number of areas. Not all the countries of the Danube Region are members of the JPIs and, at the same time, Sustainable Development is an important topic which is at present missing from the JPI agenda.

Danube:Future should contribute 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 and to find new ways of governance, science-policy cooperation and to fill the existing knowledge gaps.

The proposed project aims at testing in two important policy fields - Sturgeons in the Danube and Toxic Sediments and Environmental Legacies - how these new models could work in practice and how a mainstreaming to further regional actors and topics could be managed in the Danube area.

→ During 2014, the project idea was analyzed with the support of the EUSDR-PA10 TAF: information on suggested projects is available upon request to the Project Administrator. The follow up activities are expected in 2015.

c) Green job idea pool

The Danube Green jobs have been a promise for several years. Europewide, 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). The basin has been selected in 2010 for a macro-regional strategy of the European Union (EUSDR). Of its 11 pillars, Pillar 7, Knowledge Society, deals with linking all parts of the innovation cycle, but in particular making research available for the wider economy, which is unequally developed in the DRB.

The Danube region faces large and varied sustainability challenges, which differ at least partly from other areas of Europe. As the environment knows no national boundaries and its rivers are a powerful connector also of pollution and invasive species, international cooperation is required to tackle them. More than anywhere else in Europe have the basin's history of warfare and conflict, but also the exploitative economies of communist regimes and their successors left scars on the landscape, legacies of toxins and hydromorphological changes in river courses and landscapes that need to be taken into full account as baselines for planning, if sustainable development is to be achieved. On the other hand, the basin's potential to develop its natural and cultural heritage into an asset for sustainable development is great, if yet largely untapped.

Danube:Future has very successfully held two "International Schools" in Gorizia (IT) aimed at training PhDs and Junior PostDocs in interdisciplinary, international cooperation in the field of sustainable development. The intensive schools have led to a series of project proto-proposals of which some will become research proposals, but others have the potential to become business ideas. For the latter, a 'Green Job Idea Pool' is currently under development.

→ During 2014, the incubators' framework was analyzed with the support of the EUSDR-PA10 TAF, resulting in recommendations to Danube:Future. The follow up activities are expected in 2015.

3) WORKSHOPS

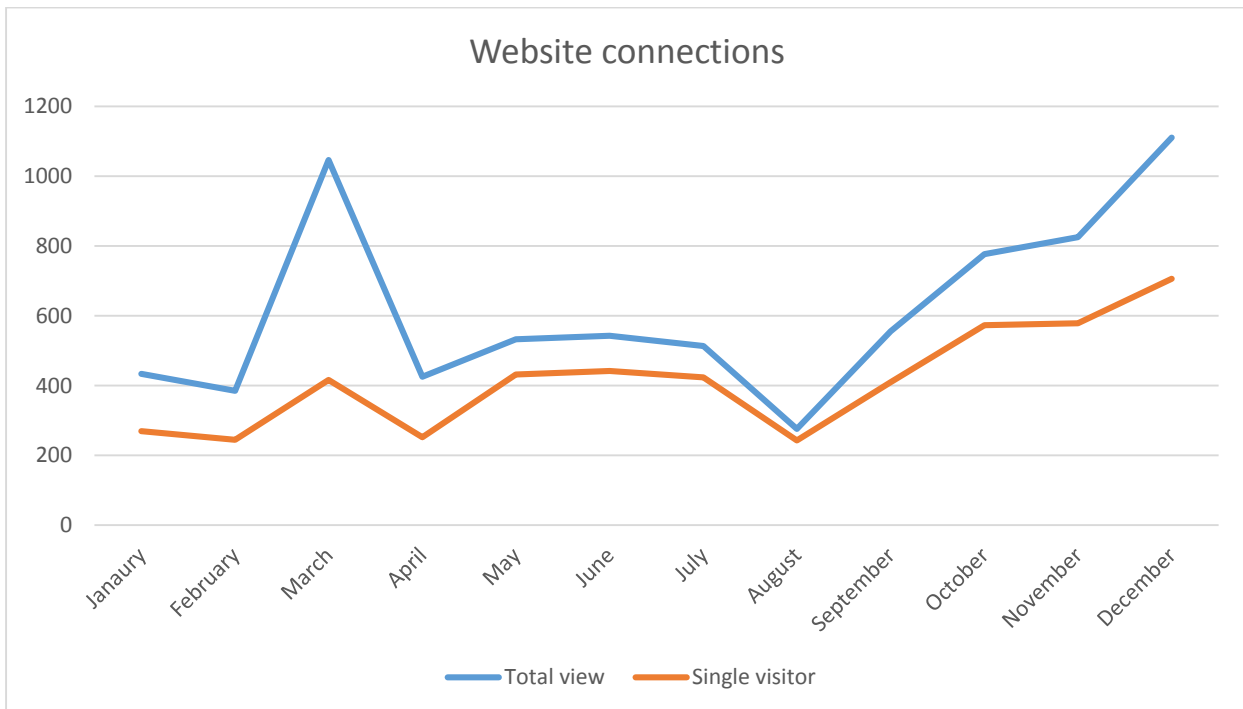
Annual planned series of international workshops are dedicated to identifying challenges and potentials in the Danube River Basin in interdisciplinary groups. Emphasis will be on the humanities and their contribution to the preparation of one or more HORIZON 2020 project proposal(-s).

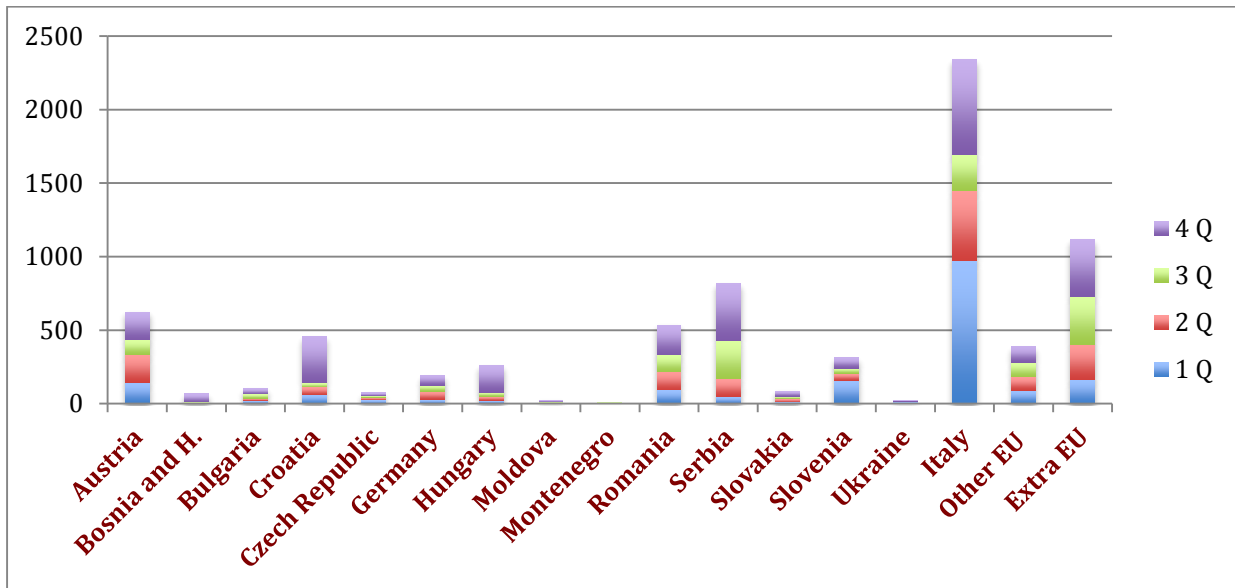
The first workshop will be held in Klagenfurt (A) from April 8th to 10th, 2015. The organizers expect up to 50 participants, including invited representatives of the international institutions which endorsed Danube:Future (EUSDR-PA7; DRC; AARC), and participants invited on the basis of their research excellence and on the potential to create a project consortium which will be able to handle sustainability problems of the DRB in an inter- and transdisciplinary way.

4) WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

To disseminate the Danube:Future activities, the official website is online since March 2013 (www.danubefuture.eu). Registered members: 134

VISIBILITY OF Danube:Future





(please note: the DIAnet School is held in Italy during the first quarter)

Social network:

The following profiles are open:

- LINKEDIN “DanubeFuture group”
- TWITTER @DanubeFuture
- FACEBOOK facebook.com/2014DIS (the account is related to the DIAnet School)

Other webpages:

Danube:Future is permanently promoted in the following websites: EUSDR (project and initiatives), EUSDR-PA7 (flagship projects), DRC, AARC, ICPDR, IAD, IDM, Danube-Inco.net

The activities of Danube:Future, in particular the DIAnet Schools and the Workshops, were promoted on 37 webpages, of which 16 of DRC/AARC Universities.

5) ARTICLES/PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO Danube:Future

- “2013 DIAnet International School Proceedings” available at: www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/9292
- “2014 DIAnet International School Proceedings” available at: <http://www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/10485>
- ACTA ZOOLOGICA BULGARICA, suppl n. 7, 2014 available at: <http://www.acta-zoologica-bulgarica.eu/downloads/acta-zoologica-bulgarica/2014/supplement-7-209-214.pdf>

CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE

DIAnet International School is the first project linked to Danube:Future. It started in January 2013, with the financial contribution of the European Social Fund FVG 2007/13, and CARIGO Bank Foundation of Gorizia. The School is held in Gorizia (Italy), on the border between Italy and Slovenia; the Isonzo River and its problems serve as a smaller scale case study for the participants.

2014DIS “The role of natural heritage for the sustainable development of the Danube Region”

- March 22nd - 31st 2014
- 35 Participants from 11 Countries and 17 Universities
- 6 project proposals
- Proceedings are available since November

2015DIS “The role of cultural heritage for the sustainable development of the Danube Region” (preparation)

- March 14th - 23rd 2015
- 40 Participants from 10 Countries and 16 Universities will participate.

RESEARCH MODULE

The main goal of this 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. These projects investigate specific questions related to the overall aim and contributing specifically to the societal and environmental challenges of the DRB. They also contribute to the knowledge base of the integrated core project.

The expert knowledge on sustainability issues available through Danube:Future will allow even small and peripheral communities and actors to gain access to the international state of the art in matters of sustainable development. The distribution of project results will be greatly enhanced through the offered networking tools.

The Core partners are working on mapping the existing projects linked to the themes of Danube:Future by using the “Danube:Future Knowledge-base”.

TIMELINE

With reference to the general timeline of the Flagship project, as presented at EUSDR PA/ Steering Group on September 2013, the progress of the project during 2014 is in general inline with the planned activities. The development of new project ideas under the Capacity Building or Research Modules, depends of the available Call for funding: unfortunately the call of the Structural Funds will be available only during 2015.

	1Q-2013	2Q-2013	3Q-2013	4Q-2013	1Q-2014	2Q-2014	3Q-2014	4Q-2014	1Q-2015	2Q-2015	3Q-2015	4Q-2015	1Q-2016	2Q-2016	3Q-2016	4Q-2016	1Q-2017	2Q-2017	3Q-2017	4Q-2017	1Q-2018	2Q-2018	3Q-2018	4Q-2018	1Q-2019	2Q-2019	3Q-2019	4Q-2019	1Q-2020	2Q-2020	3Q-2020	4Q-2020	
MANAGEMENT																																	
Coordination																																	
Management Committee																																	
Int. Advisory Board																																	
Administration																																	
CORE MODULE																																	
1 Networking																																	
2a DF Knowledge Base																																	
2b Decision Support Facility																																	
2c Green Job Idea Pool																																	
3 Workshops																																	
4 Website & Social Media																																	
5 Articles/Publications																																	
CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE																																	
Training Schools																																	
Cap. building projects																																	
RESEARCH MODULE																																	
Existing LTSER projects																																	
New LTSER projects																																	

2015 planned activities:

- developing the *Danube:Future Knowledge Base* of experts and projects connected with DFp and the DF WIKI;
- Developing the *2015 DIAnet International School* in Gorizia March 14th - 23rd, 2015
- Developing the *1st Danube:Future Workshop* for preparing a White Paper on research needs in Klagenfurt April 8th -10th, 2015;
- Set-up the project proposal for building new services for DRC/AARC Universities (ie Decision Support Facility, Green Job Idea pool, ..)
- Improving visibility of Danube:Future through the websites of EUSDR, EUSDR PA7, AARC, DRC, IPCPR, IAD, Universities and other organizations
- Building new network of researchers for building new interdisciplinary project ideas.