Interreg
Danube Transnational Programme
EUROPEAN UNION

Applicants Manual

for the period 2014-2020

Version 1

PART 2: PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

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Disclaimer

This document was endorsed by the Danube Programming Committee on 14th August 2015. However, please note that it is still subject to final approval by the Monitoring Committee to be established within three months of the date of notification of the European Commission decision adopting the Cooperation Programme.

A stream of cooperation

PART 2: PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

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I. Key principles of the programme

I.1. Result orientation

The European Union requires programmes of the 2014-2020 period to follow a **result-oriented approach** through an intervention logic. Programmes have to demonstrate their **clear contribution to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion**. Therefore, since it is mandatory for the proposed projects to fit into the broader framework of the Programme, partners should ask themselves whether the aims of their projects are building upon those of the DTP.

Please note: In order to achieve its goals, the Programme shall support projects with real **transnational character** and strong **result-oriented approach**, reflected in the:

- Transnational relevance of the topic/theme
- Delivery of concrete and measurable outputs and results, in response to well identified transnational challenges affecting the programme area
- Delivery of durable outputs and results, such as implementing/mainstreaming investments prepared in transnational context
- Quality of the partnership of the project
- Efficiency in terms of mobilised resources
- Integrated territorial approach
- Contribution to sustainable development

Projects require a clear **result-oriented approach** contributing to the achievement of a specific objective of Danube Transnational Programme:

- **Project objectives have to clearly target one single programme specific objective** within the chosen priority axis
- The **contribution of the project to the respective programme result** (and the related indicator) has to be clearly demonstrated
- Project **activities and outputs have to be logically linked to the targeted specific objective**

ATTENTION: Coherence of the project intervention logic with the programme intervention logic is a pre-requirement for selection of a project. Furthermore, the project has to demonstrate that it contributes to at least two programme output indicators (this being considered an eligibility criterion).

I.2. Transnational focus

Transnational programmes are defined by the added value of cooperation between regions in different countries. **Projects that could be implemented just as effectively without transnational cooperation will not be supported by the DTP**. Cooperation will be promoted ***vertically***, among different levels of government, ***horizontally***, among different policy sectors and policy actors and ***geographically***, across administrative boundaries.

Transnational focus should result in concrete joint **institutional capacity building** and **improved policy instruments** for enabling multilevel and transnational governance application through joint design, testing, up-scaling, comparison and evaluation of tools, processes, actors, organisations and interfaces in the field of public institutions. Additionally, transnational action shall deliver conclusions on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the above through monitoring and evaluation initiatives.

Transnational and territorial relevance is one of the key quality requirements for a project to be funded. Each project has to clearly contribute to the chosen programme specific objective, addressing development needs and territorial challenges specific to the programme area that are shared across the regions participating in the project.

I.3. Horizontal principles

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is the main pillar of the horizontal principles governing the Danube Transnational Programme.

Sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of present generations without endangering the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. When applying for funding under the DTP, applicants should account for the impact of their project on economic, ecological and social aspects within the region targeted.

Applicants have to specify any possible environmental impact of their project on the following aspects: water, soil, air and climate, population and human health, fauna, flora and biodiversity, natural heritage and landscape.

Projects submitted under any priority axis are strongly encouraged to incorporate activities for tackling environmental concerns and **reducing their environmental and carbon footprint**, for example by:

- Contributing to energy efficiency, renewable energy use and reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
- Contributing to efficient water supply, waste-water treatment and water reuse
- Contributing of green public procurement in a systematic manner

- Contributing to efficient waste management, re-use and recycling
- Contributing to the development of green infrastructures including Natura 2000 sites
- Contributing to reduced transport and mobility-related air pollution
- Contributing to sustainable integrated urban development
- Contributing to enhanced awareness of adaptation to climate change and risk prevention
- Contributing to more employment opportunities, education, training and support services in the context of environment protection and sustainable development

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Projects must promote equal opportunities for everyone and prevent any discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the transnational cooperation projects. Additionally, projects must account for the particular needs of the various target groups prone to such discrimination and the requirements of ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, when selecting service providers, suppliers or contractors, projects have to ensure equal opportunities for all interested parties and avoid limiting and discriminating with requirements or selection criteria. During project selection, each project will be subject to the verification of compliance with equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles defined in EU and national legislation.

Equality between men and women

The Danube Transnational Programme aims at promoting gender equality in line with the EU policies in this field. In the framework of their activities, projects have to ensure equal participation of men and women and gender mainstreaming and avoid generating discrimination of any kind.

I.4. Durability and transferability of the project results

Durability of project outputs and results is crucial for ensuring territorial impact and long-term benefits which continue after the project end, in order to reach the project`s overall objectives. Therefore, projects have to ensure that outputs obtained and results achieved are durable and suitable to be continued after project closure. This may include follow-up activities, handover to the policy level, ownership, financing through other initiatives or funds, leverage of investments, etc. In order to achieve durability, projects need to adopt from the beginning a long-term, strategic perspective that leads to desired results for the target groups over an extended time frame. In order to achieve such long-term benefits, it is essential to consider needs of key stakeholders as well as the institutional context already when designing the project. In particular, key stakeholders should be actively involved from the early stages of the project development. Therefore, projects should be devoted to the achievements of the

objectives set up by the EU 2020 Strategy and the Danube strategy and make sure that the outputs obtained and the results achieved are durable and suitable to be continued after the project closure. The ownership of the investment in the project is to be retained within the project partner. The durability of the investment is to be ensured for 5 years following the final payment to the beneficiary.

Please note: A pre-condition for durability of project outputs and results is sustainability. The following 3 dimensions of sustainability should be considered by every project already from the preparation phase:

- Financial sustainability: financing of follow-up activities and investments, leverage of funds, resources for covering future operating and maintenance costs, etc.
- Institutional sustainability: identification of structures that will take over the follow up of the action after the end of the project and enhancing the capacity for spill over effect
- Political sustainability: impact of the project on the political choices that will lead to improved legislation, code of conduct, methods

I.5. Integrated territorial approach

European Territorial Cooperation programmes are intended to complement other European programme strands such as "rural development" or "investment for growth and jobs", programmes which aim to invest in infrastructures, enterprises and people. Transnational cooperation programmes are primarily designed for further territorial integration through enhanced cooperation in specific policy fields. Given its overall budget size, the transnational cooperation programmes cannot target large-scale investment interventions and consequently major economic impact.

The DTP will not use specific instruments for integrated territorial development offered by the EU regulations such as Community Led Local Development (CLLD) and Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI). However, the DTP supports an integrated territorial approach which is mainly understood as a comprehensive and coordinated approach to planning and governance and territorial coordination of policies in specific territories.

The DTP recognises that the territorial dimension and the coordination of EU and national sectorial policies are important principles in fostering territorial cohesion. Most policies at each territorial level can be made significantly more efficient and can achieve synergies with other policies if they take the territorial dimension and territorial impacts into account.

- Therefore, the DTP supports territorial approaches such as territorial integration in transnational functional regions
- Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises

II. Partnership

II.1. Lead Partner principle

According to the EU Regulation 1299/2013, art. 13, the "Lead Partner principle" applies to Danube Transnational Programme.

This means that the Lead Partner (LP) should be nominated by the partners from amongst themselves.

ATTENTION: The LP can only be chosen from among the ERDF partners and cannot be changed between the two steps.

The Lead Partner organisation should follow the legal requirements set out in section II.3. Lead partner organisations can be public bodies, bodies governed by public law, private non-profit institutions or international organisations.

The Lead Partner, together with the project partners, is responsible for drafting the Expression of Interest and Application Form and submitting it to the MA/JS. After approval of the project, a Subsidy Contract will be concluded between the MA/JS and the Lead Partner, being formally the final beneficiary of the ERDF and IPA funding and the only direct link between the project partnership and the programme.

According to Art.13 of the EU Reg. 1299/2013 the Lead Partner shall:

- Lay down the arrangements with other beneficiaries in a Partnership Agreement comprising provisions that, inter alia, guarantee the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the operation, including the arrangements for recovering amounts unduly paid
- Assume responsibility for ensuring implementation of the entire operation
- Ensure that expenditure presented by all beneficiaries has been incurred in implementing the operation and corresponds to the activities agreed between all the beneficiaries, and is in accordance with the document provided by the managing authority pursuant to Article 12(5)
- Ensure that the expenditure presented by other beneficiaries has been verified by the responsible Controller where this verification is not carried out by the managing authority pursuant to Article 23(3)

II.2. Composition of the partnership

Each project has to involve at least **three financing partners from three different countries** of the programme area: the Lead Partner and at least two project partners. Out of these financing partners, at least one, the Lead Partner, has to be located on the territory of an EU Member state of the Programme area.

The responsibilities of the project partners are listed below:

- Carrying out activities planned in the approved Application Form (AF) and agreed in the Partnership Agreement
- Submitting reports of project activities to payment claims
- Assuming responsibility of any irregularity in the expenditure which it has declared, repaying the Lead Partner any amounts unduly paid in accordance of the Partnership Agreement signed between the lead partner and the respective project partner
- Carrying out information and communication measures for the public about the project activities

The number of partners may considerably vary between the projects depending on the character of the project. The project partnership should be comprised in a strategic manner and well adapted to its purpose. A partnership that is too small might reduce the potential of the project while a partnership which is very large might face significant organisational, communication and coordination problems and thus be cost ineffective.

Keeping this in mind, the partnership should always reflect on the optimal number and role of partners to be involved. No maximum limit of partners is fixed at programme level.

Please note: It is not the number of institutions listed in the proposal that makes the project partnership ideal, but rather their expertise necessary to carry out the planned activities, their commitment and willingness to cooperate. The number and type of partners, as well as project duration and budget depend on the specific focus of the project and proposed activities[1].

The topics addressed by the project determine the profile of the organisations that could be involved in the project activities.

The ideal partnership should include:

[1] Based on experience of the previous programming period, the number of partners in majority of the approved projects ranged from 8 to 15 (including ASPs) covering 6-8 countries. The projects' budget varied from 1.2 M Euro to 5 M Euro. The figures above might serve as orientation for future projects, however smaller or larger projects can be accepted if justified by the project objectives and set up.

- Optimal transnational representation (linked to the problems and challenges identified the partnership should include institutions from the concerned countries)
- Complementary sectorial expertise (horizontal composition of the partnership)
- Necessary expertise at relevant administrative levels (vertical composition of the partnership)
- Sufficient financial, technical and human resources to implement project activities

In order to apply integrated territorial approach within the project, partnerships should not consist only of organisations from one sector (e.g. ports, environmental associations, etc.) but include relevant organisations from other sectors affected by the project as well (e.g. universities/ research facilities, chambers, societal partners, relevant associations).

The actions that require a transnational or integrated territorial approach (e.g. related to transport) should not be concentrated in only one country, at one administrative level nor focused on only one economic sector but should demonstrate a larger geographic or sectorial perspective.

Political commitment is often crucial for transferring the strategies worked out in the project into real actions or investments. In addition, involvement of public authorities might facilitate the implementation of project results. Otherwise, there is a risk that e.g. the strategies developed by the projects are not recognised by the respective decision-makers.

Project partners should be involved already in the project drafting phase in order to incorporate ideas and needs from all partners and to ensure a high level of commitment to the project. In addition, during the preparatory phase partners can test how the cooperation works before the implementation of the project activities is started.

Involvement of permanent staff of the participating organisations helps the network to keep operating after closing the actual project activities and ensures that the knowledge gained during the project implementation stays in the organisation.

II.3 General eligibility rules

The following types of partners, according to their legal status, are eligible for funding within the Danube Transnational Programme: local regional, national public bodies/ bodies governed by public law (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), International organisations, private bodies(including private enterprises) having legal personality.

A. Local, regional, national public bodies[2]/ bodies governed by public law (including EGTCs in the meaning of Article 2(16) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Bodies governed by public law

Bodies governed by public law' as defined in Article 2(9) of DIRECTIVE 2014/24/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing DIRECTIVE 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014).

The definition of a body governed by public law is the following according to Article 2(1) of DIRECTIVE 2014/24*:*

'bodies governed by public law' means bodies that have all of the following characteristics:

- *They are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character (being not relevant the industrial and commercial character)*
- *They have legal personality; and*
- *They are financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law; or are subject to management supervision by those authorities or bodies; or have an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law*

[2] e.g. ministries, municipalities, regions etc.

How to assess whether a legal entity is a "body governed by public law"? *In individual cases it might be difficult to ascertain whether a legal entity fulfils the criteria defining a "body governed by public law". In this respect it can be helpful to first consult Annex I of the Directive 2014/24/EU. For all EU Member states participating in the DTP, it sets out non-exhaustive lists of bodies and categories of bodies governed by public law which fulfil the criteria in question. Moreover, lawyers specialised in public procurement law, certified public accountants and national procurement authorities and national programme's representatives could give advice. They will also be familiar with the national jurisdiction on the term "body governed by public law"…….* *Considering the case-law of the European Court of Justice the following can be noted to interpret the three criteria of the term "body governed by public law" correctly on European level. In general, the European Court of Justice held that the term must be interpreted in functional terms and broadly.*		
a 1)	***established under public or private law for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest***	*The term **"needs in the general interest"** is an autonomous concept of Community law. In case of doubt, its legal and factual situation must be determined in each individual case in order to assess whether or not it meets a need in the general interest.* *Needs in the general interest are generally needs which are satisfied otherwise than by the availability of goods and services in the marketplace and which, for reasons associated with the general interest, the State chooses to provide itself or over which it wishes to retain a decisive influence. Account must be taken of relevant legal and factual circumstances, such as those prevailing when the body concerned was formed and the conditions in which it carries on its activity. However, the existence or absence of needs in the general interest not having an industrial or commercial character must be appraised objectively, the legal form of the provisions in which those needs are mentioned being immaterial in that respect.* *A body which was not established to satisfy specific needs in the general interest not having an industrial or commercial character, but which has subsequently taken responsibility for such needs, which it has since satisfied, fulfils that condition provided that the assumption of responsibility for the satisfaction of those needs can be established objectively. Activities of the body in question linked to public policy can indicate that it meets needs in the general interest.* *The condition that the body must have been established for the "specific" purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character, does not mean that it should be entrusted only with meeting such needs. It is immaterial that such an entity is free to carry out other activities provided that it continues to attend to the needs which it is specifically required to meet.*
a 2)	***(and) not having an industrial or commercial character***	*This criterion is intended to clarify the meaning of the term "needs in the general interest". That means that within the category of needs in the general interest there is a sub-category of needs which are not of an industrial or commercial character.* *If a body operates in normal market conditions, aims to make a profit, and bears the losses associated with the exercise of its activity, it is unlikely that the needs it aims to meet are not of an industrial or commercial nature.* *The status of a body governed by public law is not dependent on the relative importance, within that body's activity, of the meeting of needs in the general interest not having an industrial or commercial character.*
b)	***having legal personality***	*The question whether or not a body has legal personality is to be answered by national law. An entity's private law status does not constitute a criterion for precluding it from being classified as "body governed by public law" within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU.*
c) 1	***financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or other bodies***	*Each of the alternative conditions set out in the "c" criterion (c1, c2, c3) reflects the close dependency of a body on the State, regional or local authorities or other bodies governed by public law. Whilst the way in which a particular body is financed may reveal whether it is closely dependent on another public authority, that criterion is not an absolute one. Not all payments made by a public authority have*

	governed by public law	*the effect of creating or reinforcing a specific relationship of subordination or dependency.* *Only payments which go to finance or support the activities of the body concerned without any specific consideration therefore may be described as public financing.* *The term "for the most part" means more than half. That necessarily implies that a body may also be financed in part in some other way without thereby losing its character as a body governed by public law. In order to determine correctly the percentage of public financing of a particular body account must be taken of all of its income, including that which results from a commercial activity.* *To decide whether a body is a "body governed by public law" the way in which it is financed must be calculated on the basis of the figures available at the beginning of the budgetary year, even if they are only provisional.*
c) 2	***Or subject to management supervision of those bodies***	*The criterion "management supervision" must give rise to the dependence on the public authorities' equivalent to the dependence which exists where one of the other alternative criteria (c1 or c3) is fulfilled. A mere review does not satisfy the criterion of management supervision. That criterion is, however, satisfied where the public authorities supervise not only the annual accounts of the body concerned but also its conduct from the point of view of proper accounting, regularity, economy, efficiency and expediency and where those public authorities are authorised to inspect the business premises and facilities of that body and to report the results of those inspections to other public authorities.*
c) 3	***or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.***	

B. International organisations

International organisations acting under the national law of any DTP Partner State or under international law, provided that, for the purpose of the project, they fulfil the EU, programme and national requirements in terms of control, validation of costs and audits, can be considered as eligible for funding. In particular, these organisations should express in written form (through a form of Declaration only requested in the second step of the call) that:

- They agree to comply with applicable community policies, including the respect of principles on public procurement
- They accept the national control requirements set in the framework of the Danube Transnational Programme
- They agree to accept the controls and audits by all bodies entitled to carry out such controls in the framework of the Programme, including the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat, the Audit Authority and the European Court of Auditors as well as the

relevant national authorities of the Member State in which the international organisation acting as project partner is located. Storage of all documents required for these controls must allow performing them in the geographical area covered by the Danube Transnational Programme

- They assume the final financial liability for all sums wrongly paid out

C. Private bodies

In the context of this programme, the concept of "private bodies" means all organisations which are founded by private law such as (but depending on the country) chambers of commerce, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, private enterprises[3]. They may receive funding if they fulfil the following criteria:

- They have legal personality
- They make available the results of the project to the general public
- They apply the principles of public procurement

ATTENTION: Private enterprises coming from non-EU countries of the programme area are not eligible for funding.
Due to the overall objectives and the nature of the programme private enterprises cannot be Lead Partner.

Nevertheless, private non-profit bodies acting as Lead Partner have to demonstrate that:

- They have no debts to the state budget
- No liquidation or bankruptcy procedure has been initiated against them
- They are financially autonomous
- They are solvent (meaning that they can cover their medium and long term commitments)

Private non-profit LPs will demonstrate the fulfilment of the criteria above through a self-declaration.

Please note: In the first step of the call the financial liability will not be checked, and it would be the responsibility of the LA to ensure that it fulfils the programme requirements. For this purpose the programme will make available a tool for calculating the financial liability ratios. In case the private LA will be found ineligible in the second step, then the entire project will be rejected.

[3] In the context of the Danube Transnational Programme private enterprises refers to any type of profit making body, including SMEs

ATTENTION: Private bodies whose main scope of activities within their business profile, as well as their project role, consists of project management, communication, financial monitoring or other activities that are of supporting character cannot be involved as project partners, but need to be sub-contracted following the public procurement rules. The Joint Secretariat will carefully check this requirement during the quality assessment and specifically during the assessment of the involvement of the Project Partners in project implementation (assessment of the Work Packages and activities and contribution of each partner to their implementation). Nonetheless, the non-compliance with this criterion will not lead to an automatic rejection of the proposal, but could lead to the exclusion of the concerned partner(s) from the project.

Only legal entities listed in the approved Application Form eligible for funding may report their costs. In order to ensure a proper audit trail, the JS/MA needs to know which organisations receive programme funding and whether they are eligible according to the programme rules. Therefore, an "umbrella" type of partnership structure, where one partner collects funding and represents other partners without naming them is not possible.

II.4. Geographic eligibility rules

The Programme covers 14 countries, 9 of them EU Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany-Baden Württemberg and Bayern, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and 5 non-member states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine with four provinces: Chernivetska Oblast, Ivano-Frankiviska Oblast, Zakarpatska Oblast, Odessa Oblast). As a general rule, EU financing is only provided to project partners located in the Programme Area.

Please note:

Exceptions

Legal entities located in Germany and Ukraine (in the sense of legal registration) but outside the Programme area can receive EU financing, if:

a. Are competent in their scope of action for certain parts of the eligible area, e.g. federal ministries, federal agencies, national research bodies which are registered outside the Programme area etc.,

b. Fulfil the basic requirements specified in point II.3 and

c. Carry out activities which are for the benefit of the regions in the Programme area.

Based on the geographical location the following two **types of partners** are identified:

- **Directly financed partners**: receiving directly financial contribution from the Programme (by ERDF and IPA) and bearing full responsibility for their budget
- **Indirectly financed partners (ASPs)**: being **not** directly financed by the Programme but – eventually – "sponsored" by an ERDF Partner that is bearing the responsibility for their participation to the project. Associated Strategic Partner (ASP) in the DTP is an organisation whose participation is considered crucial for the added value given to the partnership. As an example, ASP can potentially be a Ministry, which does not want to apply and contribute financially because of administrative burdens and financial reasons but it is interested to participate to a project for ensuring the *political sustainability* of delivered outputs and results.

ASPs (Associated Strategic Partner) are actors not contributing financially to the project and are located either in an:

- **EU country (inside or outside the Programme area) or in a**
- **Non-EU country of the programme area (in case the given partner is not financed by IPA/ funds within the same project)**

Expenditure is limited to reimbursement from the programme of *travel and accommodation* costs related mainly to their participation in project meetings, which shall be finally borne by any of the institution acting as ERDF "sponsoring" partner in order to be considered as eligible.

Furthermore, **EU countries outside the programme area/ non EU-countries of the programme area** can benefit also from **20% activities**[4] which are specific activities of the project implemented by the ERDF LP/ PPs in:

- EU countries outside Programme area
- Non-EU countries of the programme area

[4] Further information on eligibility of these costs is provided in PART 3

Summary of the proposed type of partners

	Type of Partner	Location	Does it have a separated budget?	ERDF/IPA budget lines[5]
Directly Financed Partners	**LEAD PARTNER**	Only EU part of the Programme area	Yes	All
	ERDF PARTNER	Only EU part of the Programme area	Yes	All
	IPA PARTNER	Only Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia	Yes	All
Indirectly financed partners	**Associated Strategic Partners (ASPs)**	- EU countries - Non-EU countries of the Programme Area	No (it's part of a "sponsoring" ERDF PARTNER budget)	ERDF - Only TRAVEL and ACCOMODATION

[5] The eligible expenditure of the DTP include the following budget lines: staff costs, office and administrative expenditure, travel an accommodation costs, external expertise and service costs, equipment expenditure, infrastructure and works

II.5. Financial capacity of project partners and national co-financing

The Programme works based on reimbursement principle, which means that project partners have to pre-finance their activities and the amounts paid are reimbursed after the submission and evaluation of the progress reports. As a general rule, progress reports are submitted twice a year and cover six month period each. Since the timeframe between the payment and the reimbursement is approximately up to 10 months, project partners have to be ready to financially support the project implementation.

Under the Danube Transnational Programme, projects are co-financed by ERDF and IPA. The co-financing rate per partner is up to 85% for ERDF and for IPA partners. The remaining budget (15%) can be covered by state contribution (where applicable) and/or own sources (can be public or private) of the project participant and/or other contribution (e.g. regional/local/other sources).

Please note: State contribution has to be indicated in the AF only in case the Partner State provides national public contribution at state level for the projects selected by the Monitoring Committee, and therefore the amount is covered in total or partially by the state

Each Partner State applies a different system in providing state public contribution. An overview on the national co-financing system of the Danube Partner States is available on the Programme website. However, as more detailed information might be available at national level, Partner States, through the DTP NCP, should be contacted in order to clarify the position.

III. Type of project activities

Activities and related expenditures are eligible according to the eligibility rules set out in the Cooperation Programme. However, in conjunction with these, there are wider considerations for project providers as the Danube Transnational Programme is fully integrated within the European Territorial Cooperation Objective of the EU's Cohesion Policy, which in turn is strongly linked to the achievement of the EU 2020 and EUSDR objectives. This being the case, projects should carefully consider the following aims:

- Contribution to sustainable territorial development
- Leverage effect on investment, development perspectives and policy development
- Facilitation of innovation (including social innovation), entrepreneurship, knowledge economy and information society by concrete cooperation action and visible results (creation of new products, services, development of new markets, improvement of human resources based on the principles of sustainability)
- Contribution to integration by supporting balanced capacities for transnational territorial cooperation at all levels (systems building and governance)

ATTENTION: The orientation on research, technology and innovation encompasses a significant entrepreneurial development aspect. **As a consequence, projects focusing on purely academic cooperation or basic research activities or aiming at mere networking and exchanging of experience and/or not demonstrating the translation of outputs arising from "soft" actions (surveys, studies, networks, etc.) into concrete and sustainable results will not be supported by the DTP.**

Projects could include activities such as strategies, studies and operational plans, capacity building activities, promotion actions, development of tools, set-up of services, preparation and development of investments proposed by transnational strategic concepts, including small scale infrastructure investment if appropriate and justifiable. Additional activities could include networking and exchange of information, though not as stand-alone activity, as purely networking activities will NOT be supported.

It is the task of each project applicant and each proposed intervention to present an adequate activity mix, which will produce concrete results, ensure the fulfilment of the proposed project specific objectives and contribute to the programme specific objectives.

IV. Capitalisation

Based on previous experience, capitalisation proved to be a very fruitful exercise that developed from the beginning of the programme can bring added value.

In this respect, capitalisation can be used both internally within the programme, but also externally for the purpose of cooperation and finding synergies with the other programmes.

The programme emphasises the importance of building upon past efforts and existing knowledge (relevant information can be found on the SEE programme website – SEE Output library, INTERACT database Keep 2.0). This being the case, relevant and up-to-date knowledge, tools and partnerships which are appropriate for the development, implementation and dissemination of planned outputs and results are needed to build a solid ground for innovation and to avoid the duplication of efforts. Furthermore, this will allow for existing disparities between regions and uneven development of regions in the cooperation area to be effectively addressed. In this respect, the programme also invites partnerships to reach out to relevant stakeholders and professionals in order to ensure effective networking beyond the partnerships. In order to encourage the capitalisation activities, the programme will develop a guiding strategy for the partners.

Cross-programme cooperation[6] **-** Art. 20, point 3 of the ETC regulation states that "For operations concerning technical assistance or promotional activities and capacity-building, expenditure may be incurred outside the Union part of the programme area provided that the conditions in points (a) and

[6] Cross-programme cooperation refers to cooperation between different EU funded programmes

(c) of paragraph 2 are satisfied." laying the ground to start **promoting cooperation between projects supported by different programmes and not individual partners.**

The main objectives of the Danube Transnational Programme capitalisation strategy are:

- To valorise and further build upon the knowledge resulting from projects working in a thematic field
- To fill knowledge-gaps by linking actors with complementary thematic specialisation, experiences, methodological approaches or geographical scope
- To increase the visibility of the projects and the Programme and to ensure their impact on the policy making process at local, regional, national and European levels
- To strengthen strategic thematic networks in the Programme area
- To encourage the wider take-up of project outcomes from outside the DTP Programme area
- To contribute to the design and/or implementation of future transnational cooperation in the area

Possible capitalisation activities could include:

- Newsletters
- Joint thematic meetings to exchange on projects' content and outputs
- Joint thematic studies and policy recommendations
- Peer review or benchmarking of project outputs
- Exchange visits between projects, if this enables cross-fertilisation and/or take-up of results
- Joint dissemination activities such as joint (final) conferences addressing common stakeholders

Please note: Capitalisation activities and the related budget have to be planned already in the application form. The capitalisation activities have to be included in the project work plan in a coherent manner, according to the project structure and the expenditures included in the concerned Work Package.

V. Duration of projects

The maximum project duration (implementation of project activities) is **30 months**.

Costs incurred in the last reporting period and control costs related to the Final Progress Report have to be paid within 60 days from the project end date at the latest.