

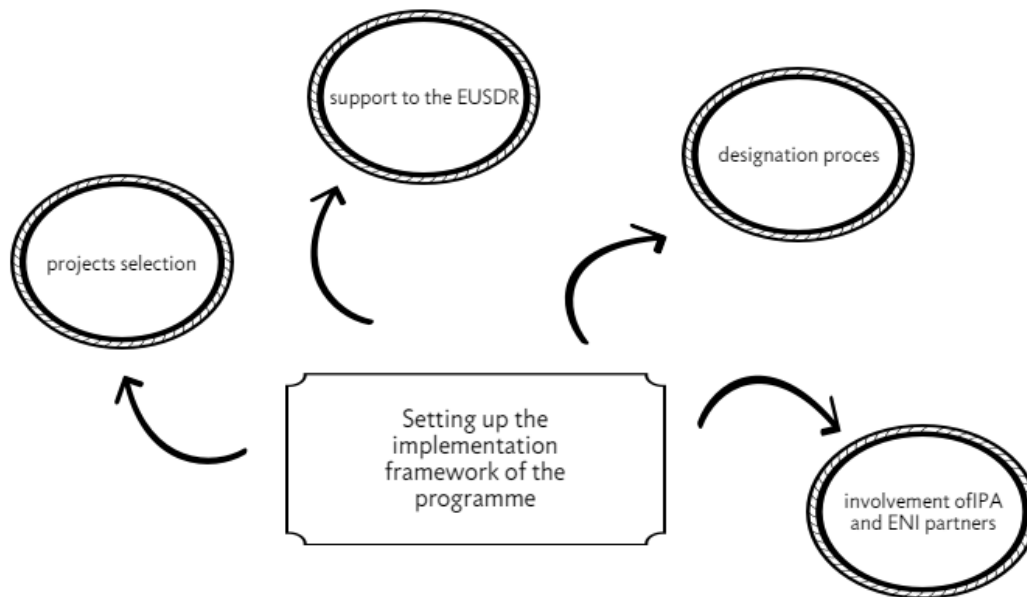
## Citizens summary

The Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) is a financing instrument of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as Interreg. ETC is one of the goals of the European Union cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States. The programme area covers **nine Member States** (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany with two lands Baden-Württemberg and Bayern, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and **five non-EU Member States** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia and Ukraine with four provinces: Chernivetska Oblast, Ivano-Frankiviska Oblast, Zakarpatska Oblast, Odessa Oblast), being composed of 69 NUTS2 regions.

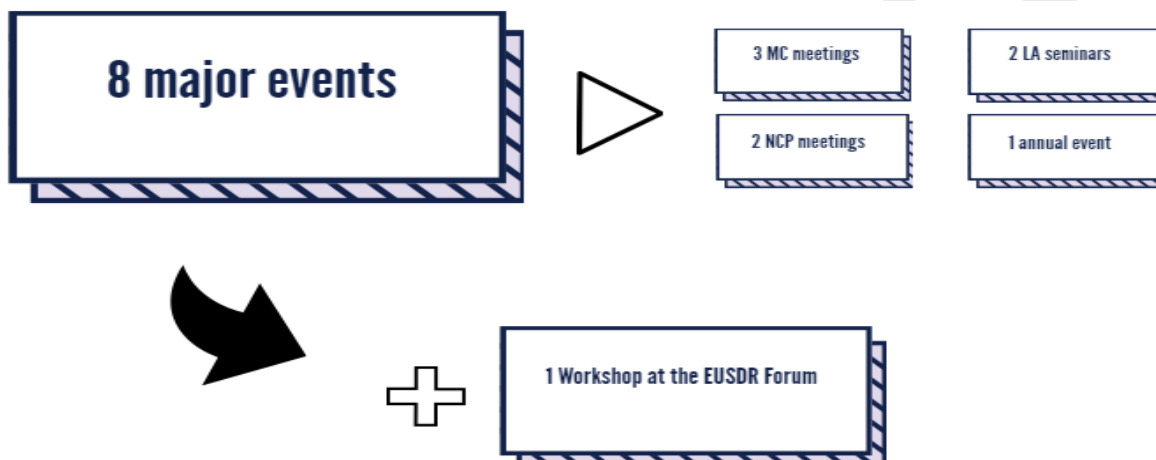


The implementation of Danube Transnational Programme is supported by the European Union with an allocation of **EUR 231,924,597.00**, originating from three main sources: **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF EUR 202,095,405.00)**, the **Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA EUR 19,829,192.00)** and **European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI Moldova EUR 5,000,000.00, ENI Ukraine EUR 5,000,000.00)**. These amounts will be complemented by the **national contributions** of the countries participating in the programme (except technical assistance funds for ENI which follow a different procedure).

In 2016, the programme bodies and the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) had to put **tremendous efforts** in the programme implementation, as many activities and tasks took place in parallel. Important steps were made in terms of setting up the entire **implementation framework** of the programme, including **projects selection, support to the EU Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR), designation process** and, last but not least, the **involvement of the IPA and ENI project partners** in the programme.



During the year, the programme has organised **three Monitoring Committee (MC) meetings**, where important decisions were made (in terms of project selection, 2<sup>nd</sup> call framework, ENI and IPA integration, yearly communication plan, control guidelines etc.), **two National Contact Points meetings**, **two Lead Applicants seminars** (one for the normal call and one for the EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators) and the **Annual Event**. The Annual Event organised on the **29<sup>th</sup> September in Bucharest** entitled *Blue Danube* was developed around the topic "**water as a transnational resource**" and gathered around **260 people** coming from different countries of the Danube Region. Furthermore, inside the **EUSDR Annual Forum in Bratislava**, DTP organised a **workshop** aimed at presenting the programme, as well as facilitating a discussion among stakeholders concerning the funding opportunities offered by DTP and the topics to be covered in the next calls for proposals.



One step towards setting up the framework of cooperation with EUSDR was done in **March 2016** when the **Monitoring Committee endorsed the DTP-EUSDR governance proposal**, document which is creating the **strategic framework for the implementation** of Specific Objective 4.2 (SO 4.2 - Support to the governance and implementation of the EUSDR) and which facilitates the **efficient communication** between the **programme and the EUSDR bodies**.

The **assessment and selection of the projects submitted in the first call for proposals** were carried out throughout the year. The first call for proposals was implemented following an open competitive **two-step procedure**, and out of the **547 Expressions of Interest (EoIs)** submitted, **100 EoIs were invited in the second step** and **54 projects were finally selected** by the Monitoring Committee for funding.



The portfolio of projects covers diverse topics addressing **all the programme priorities**: eco-innovation in bio-based industry, entrepreneurship among youth, circular economy, sediment management, Integrated Tisza river basin and flood risk management plan, connectivity between network of protected areas along Danube, management of Art Nouveau cultural heritage, valorisation of pre-historic landscapes, waterway management, removal of administrative barriers along the Danube, migration, inclusion of vulnerable groups, development of smart grids and integration of RES. The **contracting procedure for the 54 projects started in 2016 and was finalised in the first quarter of 2017**. Following the selection, the **funds allocated to SO 4.1 (Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges) were exhausted**, hence the decision of the MC to close this SO for the second call.

Parallel to the implementation of the 1<sup>st</sup> call, the programme created the framework and launched a restricted **call for EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators (PACs)**. The call was opened on the 12<sup>th</sup> September and closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. All PACs submitted the Application Form and, in December, the Monitoring Committee approved **9 PAC projects** (for which the contracting procedure was finalised in 2017).



In 2016, the Monitoring Committee approved **11 Technical Assistance Project Plans**, the contracting procedure will be finalised in the second half of 2017.

Preparation and approval of the Applicants Pack for the **2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Proposals** was carried out in 2016. The 2<sup>nd</sup> call differs from the first in terms of procedure to be followed (**one-step call**, targeted), eligible financing partners (**partner coming from Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are integrated as financing partners**, provided that the European Commission is approving the modification of the CP and integration of ENI funds) and assessment and selection criteria and procedure.



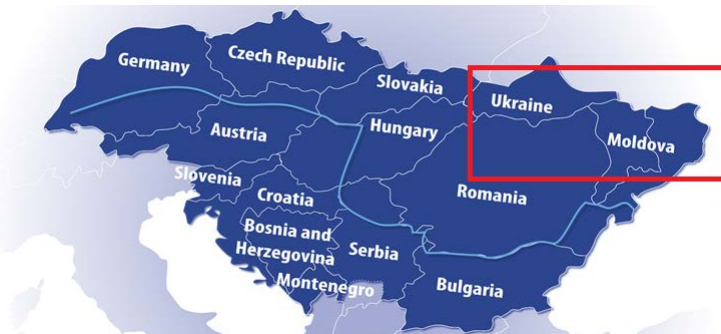
The first preparation on the **Seed Money Facility started in June 2016**, with an official communication to the EUSDR, followed by a meeting in September 2016. Based on the decision of the Monitoring Committee on thematically focusing the Seed Money Facility Call, the MA/JS started its preparation by **informing the PACs in December 2016** about the **deadline** of end-February for providing a **list of focused topics per Priority Area**. The advantage to implement a **targeted approach for the seed money call** is that it would allow **the EUSDR bodies to define their immediate needs and support development of strategic projects** that would directly feed into the targets of the strategy. The finalisation of the Applicants Package and launching the call is planned for second half of 2017.

The MA/JS developed the **Evaluation Plan** which was approved by the Monitoring Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> June. The evaluation plan focuses on **defining the methodology for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the Danube Transnational Programme in the region**, and thus it is essential to **assess the achievements** of the programme objectives and **measure the impact** of the results. The operational evaluation will be carried out during **2017-2018**.



The **designation process** has been going on throughout the year and the **Partner States** have defined their **management and control system**. The process was not finalised at the end of 2016 but will be **completed in 2017**.

One of the **greatest achievements of the programme in 2016** was the **integration of the ENI funds** which allowed the partners coming from **Moldova and Ukraine to be fully included in the second call to be launched in 2017**. In December 2016, the Monitoring Committee endorsed the proposal of the Managing Authority that the financing agreement with the Republic of Moldova is signed with the condition that **no call with ENI integration can be launched without an agreement on the related proper programme implementation conditions**. The signature of the IPA Financing Agreements was still on-going at the end of the year.



In the **first half of 2016**, the MA/JS launched the **tender for selecting the company that would develop the Danube monitoring system**. Nevertheless, the public procurement was **unsuccessful** and, following the **cancellation of the procedure**, the Programme decided to use the **eMS system developed by INTERACT**. The **installation and configuration** of the system is planned in the **first half of 2017**.