

# Danube Transnational Programme's support to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

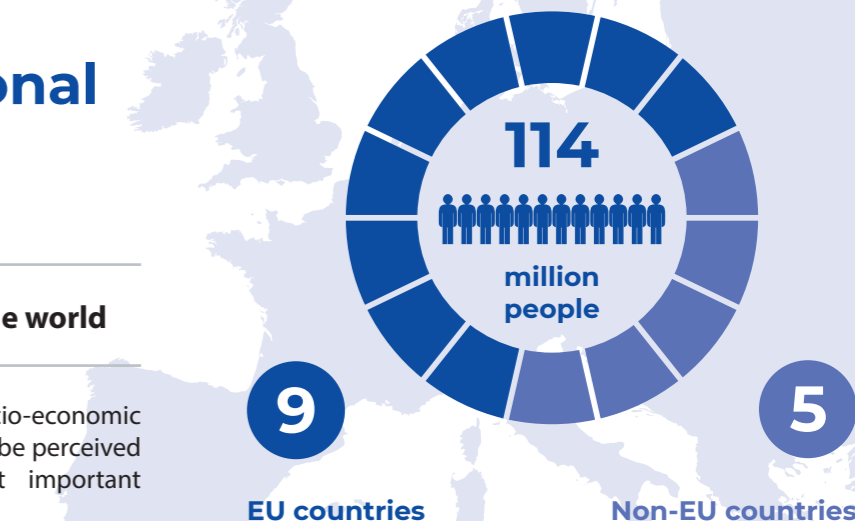
**Programme co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, IPA, ENI)**

A stream of cooperation

# Danube Transnational Programme

## The most international river basin in the world

The variety of natural environment, the socio-economic differences and cultural diversity of the area may be perceived as major challenges, but actually represent important opportunities and unexploited potential.



## Thematic Priorities



**Innovative and socially responsible Danube Region**



**Environment and culture responsible Danube Region**



**Better connected and energy responsible Danube Region**



**Well-governed Danube Region**

## Supported activities

- ▶ Contribute to a higher degree of social, economic and territorial cohesion
- ▶ Act as policy driver towards positive change
- ▶ Develop policy frameworks, tools, services and concrete pilot investments

## Budget

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	202 095 405.00 €
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA)	19 829 192.00 €
European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)	10 000 000.00 €
National cofinance	42 653 480.00 €
<b>Total programme budget</b>	<b>274 578.077 €</b>



DTP is the only Interreg programme covering 3 EU funds: ERDF, IPA, ENI

More information about the DTP projects and their results:  
[www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects)



100+ projects approved



150+ enterprises receiving non-financial support



1200+ institutions cooperating together

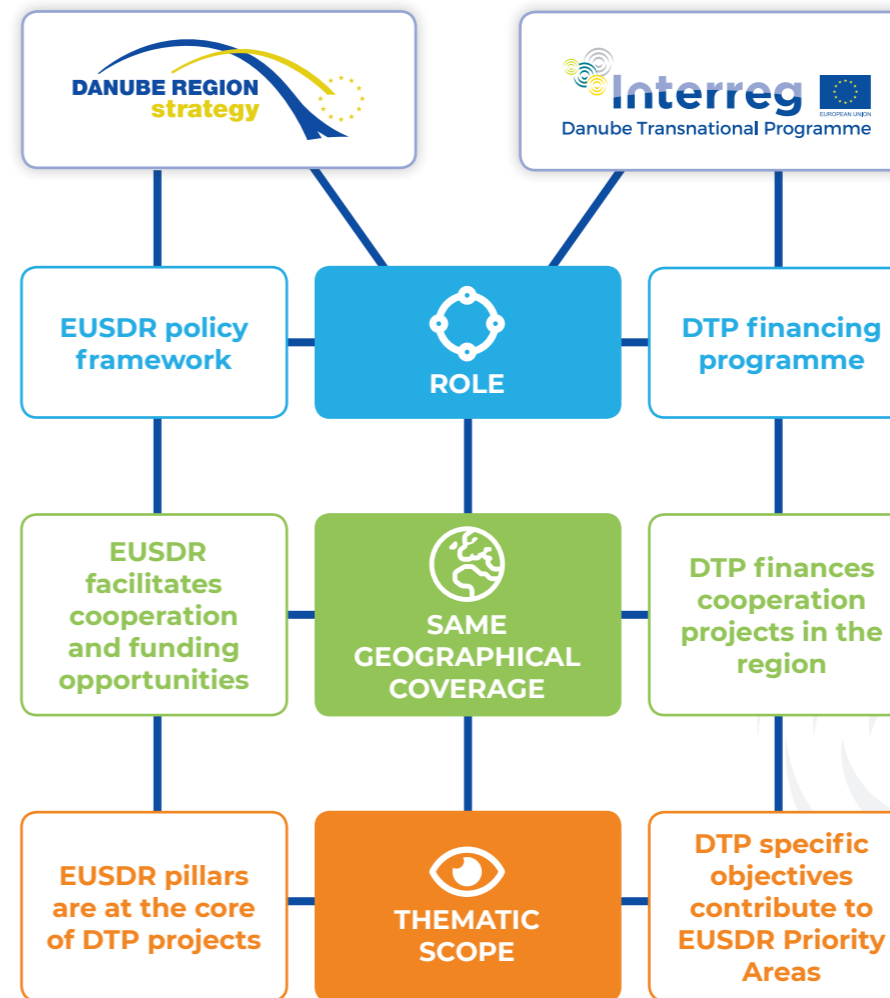


12 partner institutions per project (average)

### Number of projects each country participates in



### EUSDR-DTP Links and Differences



### How does DTP support EUSDR?

- Backing the coordination of the EUSDR
- Tackling regional challenges through DTP projects
- Strengthening the cooperation beyond borders
- Involving EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators in the DTP Capitalisation Strategy
- Contributing to EUSDR goals through DTP projects



### Balázs Rákossy

*State Secretary, Ministry of Finance of Hungary*

Since 2014, Hungary has been hosting the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat of the Danube Transnational Programme, which is implementing the related programme management tasks successfully and effectively. Throughout all these years, more than 100 projects involving thousands of partner institutions have produced considerable results for the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Danube area. We are committed to continuing these successful activities and achieving more valuable common results in the future.

For its part, the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, having been implemented since 2011, intends to develop coordinated policies and actions in the area of the river basin, reinforcing the commitments of the Europe 2020 strategy towards smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Strategy sets the framework for cooperation, and supports the alignment of funding in the macro-region.

The Danube Transnational Programme has been, since the beginning, a key player in the implementation of the Strategy. On one hand, it supports its coordination through a number of measures ranging from the financing of the Priority Area Coordinators to the organization of events and the promotion of the Strategy. On the other hand, the Danube Transnational Programme provides funding for the implementation of projects, which contribute to the goals and actions of the Strategy so that projects aligned to the Strategy benefit from political backing and higher visibility.

The Danube Transnational Programme has successfully launched three calls for proposals, and by the end of the programming period, more than 100 projects are expected to be supported. Strengthening the competitiveness of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, tackling demographic change, renewable energy, cultural tourism, waterway infrastructure are only some examples from the wide range of topics tackled by the transnational projects, which are very relevant for the needs and challenges of the Danube Region, and are, to a very large extent, in line with the goals of the Strategy.

Moreover, the networks and the cooperation established by the institutions involved in the transnational projects have set the ground for further investment through other funding sources. These synergies contribute to one of the main aims of the Strategy: to encourage the increase in the level and quality of network activities, strengthening the existing regional and transnational cooperation, and at the same time, also fostering new cooperation, which will give rise to further mutual success stories.



### Melania-Gabriela Ciot

*State Secretary for European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania*

Starting from 1 January 2019, the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council has been promoting Cohesion as a priority theme under the motto “Cohesion, a common European value”. Ensuring cohesion is, hence, a prerequisite for the development of prosperous and sustainable regions, as well as for supporting a united and powerful Europe.

Romania’s Presidency of the EUSDR is guided by the motto “Building cohesion for shared prosperity in the Danube Region”. Therefore, Romania’s EUSDR Presidency is deeply committed to facilitating the activities that ensure the social-economic cohesion and sustainable development of the participating countries, as well as to further promoting competitiveness, connectivity and mobility within the EUSDR.

In its capacity as Presidency of the EU Council and Presidency-in-office of EUSDR, Romania acted as a facilitator at EU level, with the objective of implementing Macro-Regional Strategies. We have spared no effort in achieving consensus among all partner countries towards a better synchronization of the objectives of Macro-Regional Strategies, including EUSDR priorities, with those of INTERREG and EU mainstream programmes, in order to enhance cooperation.

Romania’s main political objective as EUSDR presidency is to re-launch the Strategy following the revision of the 2010 Action Plan. We look forward to an inclusive, transparent, open-ended and, ultimately, successful revision process. Accordingly, our efforts aim to increase political involvement in promoting and implementing the Strategy in all participating countries.

I highly commend the growing impact for the region of more than 100 projects implemented over the last years with the support of DTP. I look forward to continuing the programme in the post 2020 framework and for a better correlation of its objectives with EUSDR priorities.

The Romanian Presidency continues to work together with the DTP and with other stakeholders in order to avoid overlaps of newly emerged EUSDR objectives following the revision process of the EUSDR. We shall work together, through joint activities, ensuring a prosperous, well-connected and green environment in the Danube Region.

I am looking forward to closer and stronger cooperation within the framework of the EUSDR, for the benefit of the millions of citizens living in the area and the European Union as a whole.



## Innovation and Research

The relative economic backwardness of the Danube Region and the societal challenges it faces can be most efficiently mitigated through research and innovation. Measures enabling adequate framework conditions and capacities for research and innovation, SME competitiveness, skilled labour force, technologically advanced businesses, industrial transformation or reduction of brain drain are therefore necessary. In this respect, DTP and EUSDR are working together within well-established cooperation frameworks, which match complementary projects financed by the programme with specific EUSDR Priority Areas.

Thus, the group of projects focusing on innovative ecosystems for SMEs, for example, MadeinDanube, SmartFactoryHub or DanuBioValNet, contribute to the targets set by EUSDR Priority Area (PA) 8 with regard to research & innovation, technological development, and SME competitiveness. In full consonance with the specific EUSDR targets, the projects are working on generating new products and services and proposing new business processes through the exploitation of the research results of the academic sector so as to reduce intra-regional disparities.



Projects like ResInfraDR, D-Stir or RI2Integrate are focused on research, development and innovation framework support work in the direction of EUSDR PA7 objectives by creating policy links between the national, macro-regional and European levels in order to improve the framework conditions for research and innovation in the Danube Region. Particular consideration is given to policy dialogue and the development of new tools and instruments, as well as to knowledge transfer, capacity building and awareness raising.

Social innovation is tackled by projects such as Senses, Da-Space or Digitrans, aimed

at developing new innovative entrepreneurial learning systems to increase the employability and adaptability of the labour force to the modern day technological set-up. To this end, and in line with the objectives set by EUSDR PA9, innovative forms of partnerships were created. On one hand, these partnerships consist of key actors from the labour market, while on the other hand, they consist of business, education and research sectors specially designed to equip people and businesses with the right sets of skills that would enable them to cope with the most pressing requirements of the knowledge society.



## Environment

The rich and diverse environment of the Danube Region provides vital resources and services for the quality of life. Unfortunately, the intense human interventions and other risks threaten its fragile system by over-usage and degradation. It goes without saying that the sufficient quality and quantity of water are crucial for the environment, the ecosystem, human wellbeing, and economy.

The EUSDR set strategic goals concerning water-related challenges in the Danube Region, regarding its quality or the risks it is exposed to. Complementarily, the Danube Transnational Programme offers the framework in which key actors in the river basin can work together to identify solutions for the sake of EUSDR goals. Thus, the integrated river basin and flood risk management plan for the Tisa River Basin developed within JOINTISZA or the Danube River Basin Floodplain restoration Roadmap prepared by the Danube Floodplain are directly contributing to the targets set by EUSDR PA4 and PA5 with regard to the development of sub-basin management plans and flood prevention. Together with DAREFORT addressing the improvement of data exchange among national flood and ice forecasting systems along the Danube, these projects are contributing to the Danube-wide flood risk management plans. DriDanube, on the other hand, improves the drought monitoring and drought emergency response management whose necessity has also been acknowledged by EUSDR.

Preservation of the biodiversity and ecosystems of the Danube Region is also central to EUSDR. Once again, DTP facilitates the implementation of cooperation projects such as ConnectGREEN, coop MDD, DANUBEparksCONNECTED or REFOCuS, aimed at identifying and mapping key riparian and terrestrial ecological corridors in the Danube Region, developing strategies and implementing solutions for the restoration and protection of its valuable habitats, and improvement of connectivity between these areas. Thus, the Danube Region takes one more step towards halting the deterioration of habitats, establishing green infrastructure, and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems. Fragmentation between protected areas along the Sava River and tributaries has been tackled by SAVA TIES, which took on the challenge of managing key invasive alien plant species, thus contributing to the identification and prioritization of invasive alien species and their pathways in order to control or eradicate priority species as pursued by the EUSDR. MEAUSRES also joined the challenge of preserving the region's biodiversity by setting out to detect and propose solutions for the management of habitats and repopulation of migratory fish species, thus supporting the general efforts of securing viable populations of Danube sturgeon species.

## Culture

During most of the 20th century, culture and tourism were viewed as separate aspects of destinations. This, however, changed gradually as the role of cultural assets in attracting tourists and making destinations unique became more obvious, thus making "cultural tourism" a major source of economic development for many destinations. In this regard, the EUSDR, under Priority Area 3 "To promote culture, tourism and people to people contacts", set such ambitious targets as the development of a Danube Brand for the entire region, or the development of new and support for existing Cultural Routes relevant in the Danube Region. DTP projects such as DANUrB, developing the "Danube

Cultural Promenade" brand, CultPlatForm21, developing innovative services and products for cultural routes including an implementation plan for a small project fund for cultural-touristic activities or Iron Age Danube, setting up a network of archaeological sites and surrounding landscapes and linking them into a thematic route, bring a direct and substantial contribution to the achievement of these targets. Developing green tourist products along the Danube Region, as another goal pursued by the EUSDR, has been addressed within INSIGHTS, which developed a set of novel tools and methods for the expansion and improvement of green, slow and healthy tourism in the Danube Region.





## Transport

The fact that the Danube Region has a huge potential for development in terms of transport is a well-known and commonly-accepted fact. Potential always translates into a multitude of challenges and opportunities lying ahead. With doors so widely open, EUSDR, as the macro-strategy, through its PA1a, defined comprehensive yet very distinct goals, such as the removal of obstacles to Danube navigation and the establishment of an effective waterway management, or the promotion of safer and more sustainable transport in the region fully resonating with the targets set by PA1b. Some DTP projects embraced these goals, and by working hand in hand, they brought the region one step closer to achieving them.



While DANUBE STREAM has proceeded with the long-time endeavour of constantly improving Danube navigation through a more efficient management of waterway



transport infrastructure, DANTE has brought forth practical solutions for the simplification and harmonisation of procedures, thus overcoming the administrative barriers along the river. In this respect, DANTE successfully cooperated with the EUSDR priority areas responsible for inland waterway transport and security.

RADAR and Transdanube.Pearls, on the other hand, joined forces to ensure safer and more sustainable transport in the region. RADAR works on concrete solutions for the improvement of road safety taking into consideration vulnerable road users, sensitive areas, speed management, or the installation of protection elements, while Transdanube.Pearls has provided sustainable mobility plans and services alongside the Danube river with emphasis on identified touristic “pearls”.

## Energy

Reaching ever-higher renewable energy targets has become both a necessity and a tremendous challenge for European countries and implicitly for the Danube Region. Constantly-increasing goals may look like simple figures, but they actually show the conspicuous will and commitment of the countries towards an energy-responsible Europe. Achieving global leadership in renewable energies has become a priority, which is fully supported by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. In this respect, the EUSDR PA2 is striving for the removal of existing bottlenecks in energy with a view to fulfilling the goals of the Energy Union within the Danube Region by better interconnecting regions via joint activities involving relevant institutions.

In this context, two DTP projects stepped in and brought major contributions to the increase of renewable use in the Danube Region. While DARLINGe looked into the sustainable use of the existing but largely untapped deep geothermal resources, ENERGY BARGE tackled the biomass value chains and the sustainable use of biomass for energy production.

Thus, DARLINGe has provided a harmonised and standardised database under the form of the Danube Region Geothermal Information Platform that offers, among others, information about thermal water uses, potential reservoirs, or the heat market.

ENERGY BARGE, on the other hand, has brought together the biomass supply, the Danube ports logistics, and the bioenergy plants to create sustainable value chains in the region. The Modal Shift Platform for Green Bioenergy Logistics developed within the project is aimed at supporting all relevant actors by providing reliable information on the region's bioenergy landscape, as well as the role and benefits of the Danube logistics in the bioenergy supply and value chains.



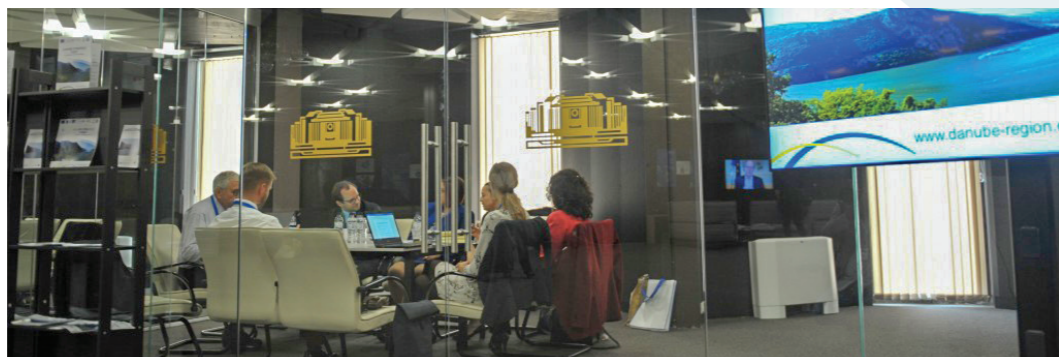


## Governance

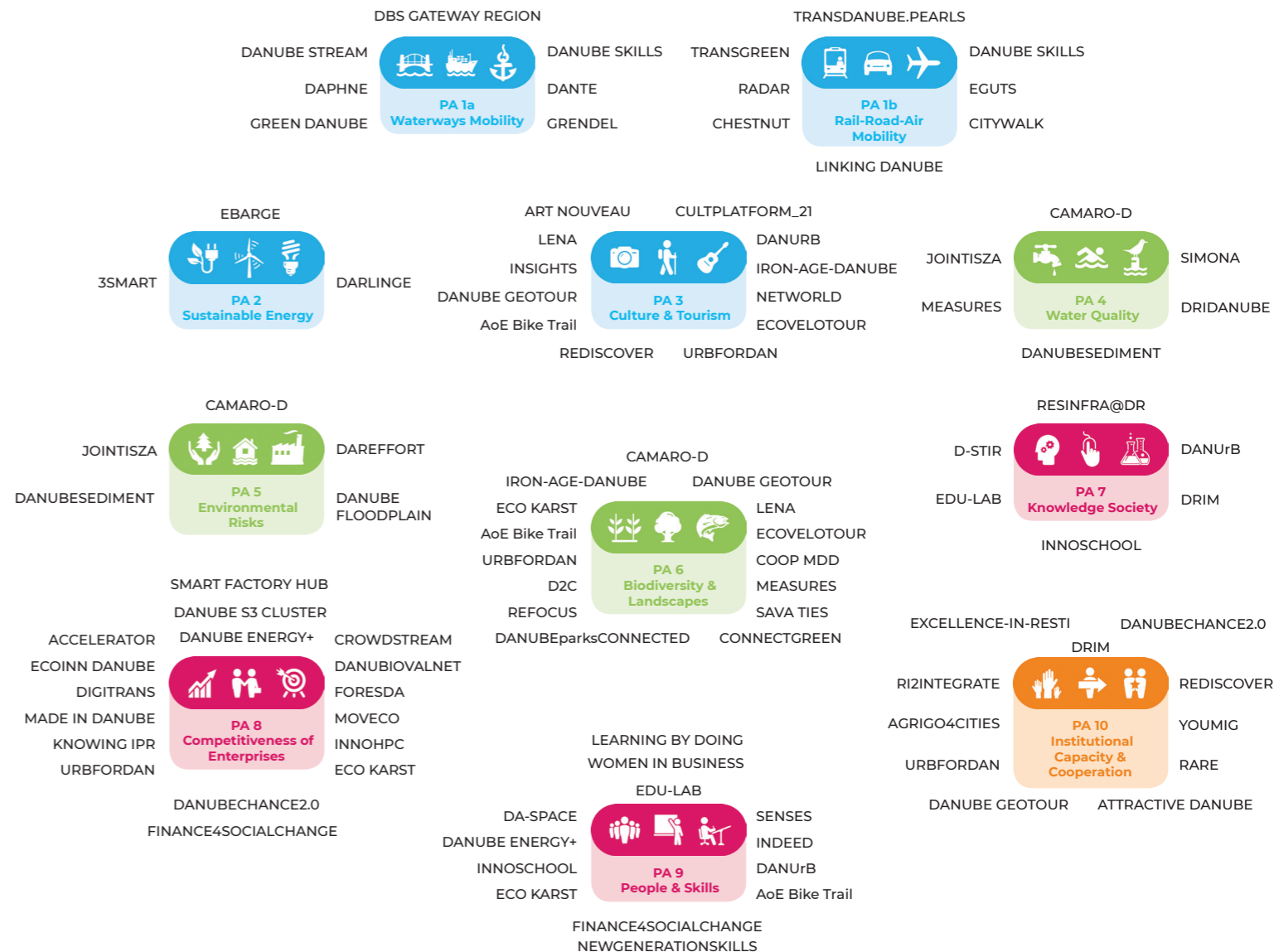
New cooperation models among public institutions, private sector and civil society are needed to effectively tackle common governance bottlenecks in the Danube Region, so as to cope with major societal challenges in such fields as demographic change and migration, inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups (especially Roma communities), labour market policies, education systems, participatory planning processes and involvement of civil society, urban-rural cooperation, and cooperation on safety, justice and security. All these elements were taken into consideration by the EUSDR when establishing goals for the future.

Several DTP projects tackle topics related to educational, migratory, or participatory and local governance, and they provide contributions to and cooperate closely with several EUSDR priority areas. DTP projects Edu-Lab, InnoSchool, Learning by Doing and

New Generation Skills contribute to actions and targets of the EUSDR Priority Areas 7 and 9 through creating a shift towards more demand-driven and labour-relevant education schemes, and developing blended learning tools for designing and implementing new educational governance models for institutional learning. DTP projects DRIM, RARE and YOUMIG also contribute to Priority Area 9, especially by information exchange on labour market integration issues. The AgriGo4Cities project, from its side, has built up strong ties with PA10 by developing common actions focussing on improving the evidence base and exploring new, innovative ways for civil society involvement and local governance. A further side-product of that cooperation between the programme and the Strategy is the direct contribution of one of the projects (Attractive Danube) to the establishment of a macro-regional monitoring system under involvement of the EUSDR Strategy Point.



## DTP projects supporting the EUSDR Priority Areas







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