

# Report

on the

## Pole 1 “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs” Capitalisation Workshop together with Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness”

- 17.10.2018 -  
Sofia, Bulgaria

---

*The Main Objective: Capitalisation within TP 1 of the Interreg DTP in the thematic field of innovative ecosystem for SMEs and the establishment of topic related Task Forces contributing to the achievements of the objectives of PA8*

### **Introduction**

The objective of the **Report** is to introduce a practical and concrete implementation of capitalisation in the thematic field of innovative ecosystem for SMEs and to give a summary on the establishment of topic related Task Forces contributing to the achievements of the objectives of Priority Area 8. The Interreg DTP Thematic Pole 1 has already shown good examples of fruitful capitalisation to the **achievement of EUSDR Priority Area 8 objectives**, among different EUSDR Priority Areas, with a special focus on **cross-area** contribution of PA 7, as well as **cross-pole** support of the Interreg DTP Capitalisation Strategy through adopted projects of TP 1 but also TP 2 and TP 3. The Workshop underlying this report focused on the thematic capitalisation within Pole 1 “innovative ecosystem for SMEs”, to identify concrete opportunities and precise options for actions which could serve as a basis for the work of the Priority Area Coordinator 8 (PAC 8) to enhance the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). At the same time the highlighting of potential synergies by addressing the cooperation opportunities serves the improvement and sharpening of the Interreg DTP programme goals and thus represents an important impetus for future programme calls.

The Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop took place in the framework of the **EUSDR 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum** in Sofia on 17 October 2018 and had an interactive format by engaging the participants to give their contributions on the focussed topic. Ms **Judit Schrick-Szenczi** (*Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing Baden-Württemberg, Germany*) and Ms **Nirvana Kapitan Butković** (*Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Croatia*), coordinators of EUSDR Priority Area (PA) 8 “Competitiveness of enterprises”, welcomed all present participants and wished fruitful discussions on new ways of capitalisation. Mr **Marius**



**V. Niculae** (*DTP Joint Secretariat, Hungary*) informed the participants about the Interreg DTP 3<sup>rd</sup> Call which will be launched soon. It was of great pleasure and particular important that all 11 projects of the Thematic Pole 1 “Innovative Ecosystem for SMEs” were represented at the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop. This not only reflects the long range and strong interest of Pole 1 but also the great demand for capitalisation and ultimately also willingness to cooperate in this thematic field. All representatives of the Thematic Pole 1 gave a 3-minute-pitch-presentation of their project outcomes and results they are proud. The presentations showed excellence progress and outcomes of the projects of the Interreg DTP, nevertheless the potential for effective capitalisation and applicable results remains to be not fully exploited. Therefore, a new operational concept of the Interreg DTP Pole 1 in the form of a new horizontal structure was developed.

On the basis of a qualitative structured workshop, the participants filled in an interactive matrix in order to prepare a list of concrete results in thematic groups considering objectives of EUSDR Priority Area 8 groups to establish Pole 1 Task Forces.

<b>Priority Area 8 Objectives</b>	
To foster cooperation and exchange of knowledge between SMEs, academia and the public sector in areas of competence in the Danube Region	O <sub>1</sub>
To improve business support to strengthen the capacities of SMEs for cooperation and trade	O <sub>2</sub>
To improve framework conditions for SMEs in areas where competitive infrastructure is missing	O <sub>3</sub>
To support enterprises through high performing training and qualification schemes	O <sub>4</sub>
To improve the competitiveness of rural areas and in particular of the agricultural sector	O <sub>5</sub>
To eliminate cross border barriers and bottlenecks to people and business - Seamless Europe for a livable Danube Region	O <sub>6</sub>

Figure 1: Objectives of EUSDR Priority Area 8.



## Implementation

The interactive workshop was moderated and organised by the coordinator of Thematic Pole 1 of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP), Daniela Chiran, who is also coordinator of the PA 8 Working Group Innovation and Technology Transfer as well as of TP 1 co-coordinator for Period 4 (Jul 2018 –Dec 2018), Tamara Valič. In total 42 participants attended the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop with representatives of the EUSDR Priority Area 7 and 8, the DTP Thematic Poles 1, 2 and 3 as well as stakeholders out of the field of enterprises (SMEs), public authorities and higher education and research.

The Pole 1 “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs” Capitalisation Workshop together with PA 8 “Competitiveness” is based on previous results of capitalisation analysed within Thematic Pole 1. In the framework of this analysis common thematic fields were identified by the running projects of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call of the Interreg DTP Pole 1. The results summarized in a table with the project name related to field as well as the fields and topics of activities can be found in the recent version of the TP 1 Roadmap (<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/default/0001/19/47b57704be5ee8c2a0e9cbfd024df8251d499ff5.pdf>). Figure 2 shows the thematic concentration of four identified fields of interest related to the analysed capitalisation within Pole 1 in order to foster the use of synergies and complementarities between the projects. These fields of interest served as a basis for the work in four thematic groups at the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop.

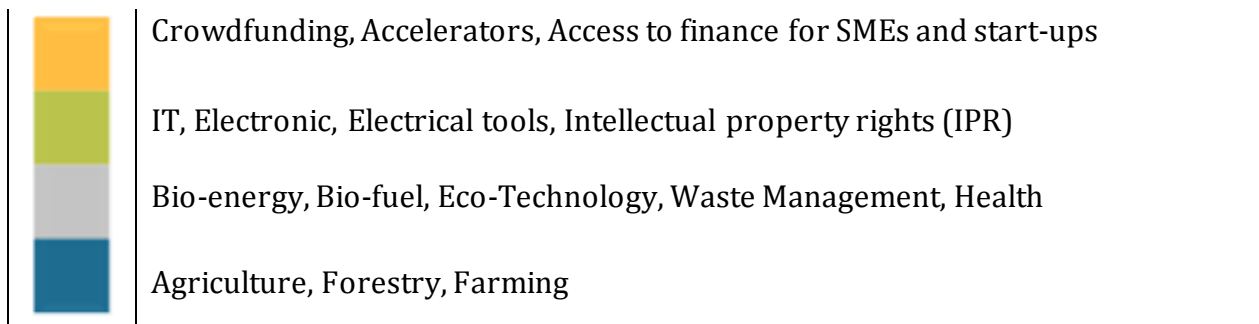


Figure 2: Thematic concentration of four identified fields of interest.

In a first step the participants were split in four thematic working groups<sup>1</sup> at different tables, including the nomination of four ‘Pole 1 Task Force leaders’ (Dominik Patzelt, Miljana Ćosić, Borut Rončević and Zoltán Bendó), to summarize and present the results of the new established Task Force. The participants named their new Pole 1 Task Forces, which were selected and composed by their thematic priorities of the participants’ project involved or by their personal profession. Figure 3 shows the distribution of Participants due to relevant thematic fields identified.

<sup>1</sup> The thematic groups were established as “Working Groups” and later renamed “Task Forces” to differentiate these more from the Working Groups of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

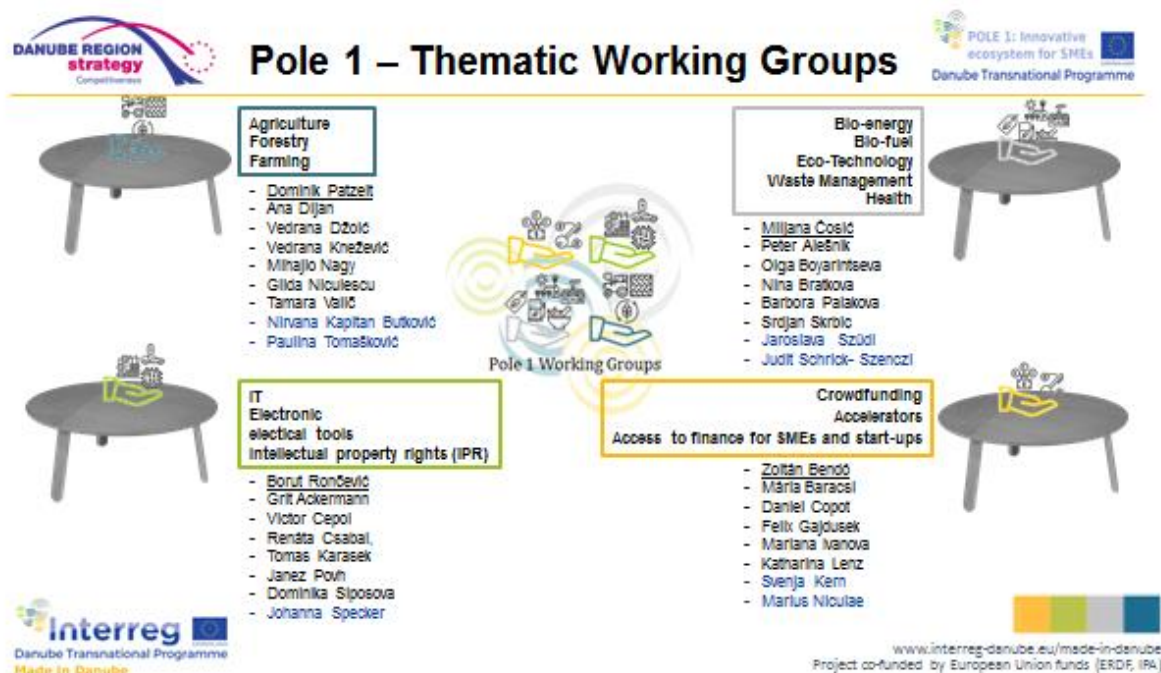


Figure 3: Distribution of Participants due to relevant thematic fields identified.

Each thematic group was provided paper based templates to prepare a list of concrete results that they had in their thematic working group considering the following pre-defined questions and the objectives of EUSDR PA 8 considering the thematic focus of the projects of the Interreg DTP:

- What are the obstacles for an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies?
- What are your main lessons learned and how would you improve the Interreg DTP?
- How can the results of transnational cooperation be made more accessible and longer usable to SMEs?
- What are the new services developed and for which target group?
- How can the civil society benefit?
- Which PA8 Working Group do you want to work with?
- How does your Pole 1 Task Force contribute to achieve the objectives of Priority Area 8?

Figure 4: Pre-defined questions to work on.

In a second step the participants summed up and prioritized the concrete results with the dot stickers method and elaborated on clear ideas of thematic collaboration (e.g. projects) answering the questions mentioned before. After the finalisation of the two-part workshop, a

short presentation of results of each thematic group followed. In the follow up each Task Force Leader wrote a short report on the establishment of the respective new Pole 1 Task Force which can be found in Annex II. Based on the four reports, the present final report on the workshop was written. The final results of the Task Force's reports shall be the subject of the final report. During the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop the following four Pole 1 Task Forces were established:




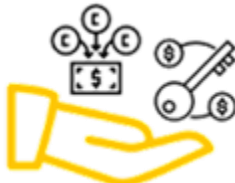
Thematic field of Pole 1 Task Force	New name of Pole 1 Task Force	Task Force Leader	Logo
Agriculture, Forestry, Farming	Innovative Rural Ecosystems - InnoRurEco	Dominik Patzelt	
Bio-energy, Bio-fuel, Eco-Technology, Waste Management, Health	Energy 4 the Future	Miljana Cosic	
IT, Electronic, Electrical tools, Intellectual property rights (IPR)	itGreen	Borut Rončević	
Crowdfunding, Accelerators, Access to finance for SMEs and start-ups	Access to Finance	Zoltán Bendó	

Figure 5: Overview of new established Pole 1 Task Forces.

Starting from the above presented workshop design the report will focus on the outputs of the establishment of the new Pole 1 Task Forces and their conclusions and recommendations for cooperation among the Danube area. Furthermore concrete next steps in the thematic field of Innovative Ecosystems for SMEs will be taken into account. The analysis of the findings of the new established Task Forces helps to define tangible recommendations and possible activities on how to enhance and foster the integrated building process of capitalisation while supporting the work of the Priority Area Coordinators 8 of the EUSDR.



## Results

Previous activities of the Thematic Pole 1 of the Interreg DTP revealed the potential for effective capitalisation and applicable results remains to be not fully exploited. The topics and issues (thematic fields) addressed by Pole 1 are manifold regarding the domains relevant for an innovative SME sector. Therefore, a new operational concept of the Interreg DTP Pole 1 in the form of a new horizontal structure “**Pole 1 Task Forces**” was developed to facilitate an even stronger capitalisation of the programme and the project results.



During the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop the participants discussed at roundtables relevant issues regarding the pre-defined questions (see figure 4) to prepare a list of concrete results which will be further elaborated upon in this section. The participants listed the following three questions as most relevant in terms of how to better capitalise project results of their running projects within the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, but also regarding other transnational cooperation and funding programmes such as Horizon2020 or Interreg Europe, Central Europe, Alpine etc.

Figure 6: Logo of Pole 1 Task Forces.

### ➤ **What are the obstacles for an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies?**

Obstacles to efficiently and effectively capitalize and exploit synergies include:

- *Perceived lack of systematic approach* with relatively weak coordination and improvable information and communication flows within all policy levels.
  - Interreg DTP Capitalisation strategy
  - Interreg DTP Thematic Pole 1
  - Interreg DTP Project coordinators
  - and particularly project consortia (project partners)
- *The communication and aggregation is rather a one-way and respectively top-down approach.* Therefore, communication channels should be defined and ensured that necessary information reaches all relevant stakeholders e.g. SMEs or civil society.
- *Low involvement of the consortium partners in the capitalization activities.* All the project partners have to be involved in the capitalisation activities, not only the lead partners and members of the DTP Pole 1 and Task Force members.
- *The significant intra-regional variation, fragmentation and specifics* were also discussed as the Danube region combines both highly developed and significantly underdeveloped regions constituted in the social-economic development gap.

- *Lack of budget for the capitalization activities.* For all activities and also for the new established Task Forces the framework of resources and budget for capitalisation of project results firstly with other projects and secondly various other programmes was not taken seriously into consideration by the DTP and the partners when writing the project proposals. The limited resources require strong commitment and support from the pertinent organisations.

➤ **What are your main lessons learned and how would you improve the Interreg DTP?**

The participants of the new established Task Forces drew attention to:

- *The simplification of administrative procedures* by moving toward a complete digitalised project implementation. Further suggestions involved more financial flexibility (change the 5%/10% flexibility rule to 10%/20% flexibility), the pre-starting of projects (introduction of a timeframe of two months to settle all administrative issues before the thematic work starts) and the
- *Creation of a joint pool of information on DTP projects*, initiatives and events on Interreg DTP Capitalisation strategy level following the roadmaps created in the Thematic Poles.
- The Task Forces further discussed the possibility of *letters of recommendation or seals of excellence* provided by the Interreg DTP Joint Secretariat (JS) for project partners that have been proven to successfully implement projects.
- Strong emphasis was additionally put on *extended and targeted inclusion of respective target groups such as SMEs*. These target groups should be stronger involved in participating at trainings, events or workshops, whereby (funding) vouchers could be a solution to work with them in the projects more closely.
- *Barrier of language on project level.* On project level, language barrier is an issue as well as deficiencies in communication skills. The improvement of skills of communication managers and the pre-planning of capitalisation activities could help to improve the visibility of certain projects of the Interreg DTP.



➤ What are the new services developed and for which target group?

target service	SMEs and Entrepreneurs	Business associations	Clusters	Researchers	Public authorities	Civil Society
E-tools						
(online) Platforms						
Trainings						
Workshops						
Info days						
Capacity building						
Match-making						
Strategic documents						
Networks						
Labs/Associations						
Innovation Audits						

Figure 7: Overview of new services developed for various target groups by Task Forces.

The new 4 established Task Forces

- Energy 4 the Future
- itGreen
- Access to Finance
- InnoRurEco

mentioned various new established services of the projects running in the Interreg DTP Thematic Pole 1 for target groups following the quadruple helix approach (see figure 7). The analysis has shown that most services are provided to SMEs and Entrepreneurs as the Thematic Pole 1 deals with the “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs”. Ranked by appearance, (online) platforms and trainings are the most provided services to the target groups. This also reflects the previous mentioned need for more targeted identification and inclusion of respective target groups for events, workshops or networks.



## Conclusions

To achieve defined objectives within the new established **Task Forces**, such as *participating projects, goals to be realised, responsibilities, time-schedules and general meeting planning*, it might be useful to **create a common strategy, action plan or protocol** for cooperation in the framework of the **Task Forces**. The establishment of a common framework improves further the visibility of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme and could help to avoid duplications between projects. The underlying documents can be listed in the Thematic Pole 1 Roadmap, which is updated on a regularly basis.

Within the new established **Task Forces** several connecting factors were stated, which demonstrated a great potential for further capitalization activities – not only on Lead Partner, but also on Project Partner level. However, the members of the **Task Forces** stated a big need for **improvement of conditions for the synergies and capitalisation exploitation** between project results.

The participants suggested capitalising predominantly regarding the **exploitation of project results** especially with regard to the phasing out of the projects of the first call of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme in mid-2019. In this context, the common problem appeared that capitalisation activities mostly remain on lead partner level as project partners sometimes are not even aware of a capitalisation strategy and the access to a pool of relevant information such as the *Pole 1 Roadmap*. The required capitalisation activities to better exploit project results and to enhance the visibility of the capitalisation strategy could include the organization of greater events by the financing programme, clustered to specific challenges of the project and equivalent to the DTP thematic seminars on project implementation level, which were organised in the run-up to the third call of the Danube Transnational Programme.

To increase the impact of Interreg DTP project results, it is necessary to enable **better access to policy multi-levels** (EU, national, regional and local), which could also help to improve the governance within the Danube Region as a whole. Capitalisation potential of the new established **Task Forces** is thus seen in the **collaboration with Priority Area 8** of the EUSDR to enhance the policy impact of project results and to improve their visibility on EU, national, regional and local level. As not all members of Thematic Pole 1 and the four **Task Forces** are involved in the Danube Strategy guidance and mentoring could help to understand the connection of the work of TP 1 and PA8. The coordinator of Pole 1 can provide such guidance in the Thematic Pole 1 *Roadmap*. Further cooperation windows arise with the inclusion of target groups and **thematic and targeted cross-pole exchange within the Interreg DTP**, e.g. between the new established *Pole 1 Task Force “Energy 4 the Future”* and *Pole 8 “Sustainable energy”*. Cross-cutting topics such as social innovation or digitalisation should be more emphasised given to. Need is also seen for a specific focus on efforts towards greener products and services and the improvement in working and living conditions not only, but also for specific vulnerable groups.



Likewise the **issue of lack of funding for capitalisation activities** as these are not covered officially by on-going projects was raised by the new established Thematic Pole 1 **Task Forces**. The help in securing the financial support such as the cost eligibility for the **Task Forces** meetings in the frame of the Pole 1 projects is much welcomed, precisely because meetings on a regular basis are pursued by all **Task Forces**.

### *Next steps*

- Definition of members and projects of each Pole 1 Task Force and nomination of responsible persons
- Definition of objectives within each Pole 1 Task Force and adoption of these
- Creation of a common proceedings for all Pole 1 Task Forces including a guidance for the connection with EUSDR Priority Area 8
- Support to secure the financial support of capitalisation activities
- Meetings and events on a regular basis

Daniela Chiran

Coordinator of the TP 1 “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs” of the Interreg DTP

Katharina Lenz

TP 1 “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs” of the Interreg DTP

Annex I: Photos of the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop in Sofia

Annex II: Reports of the Task Force Leaders



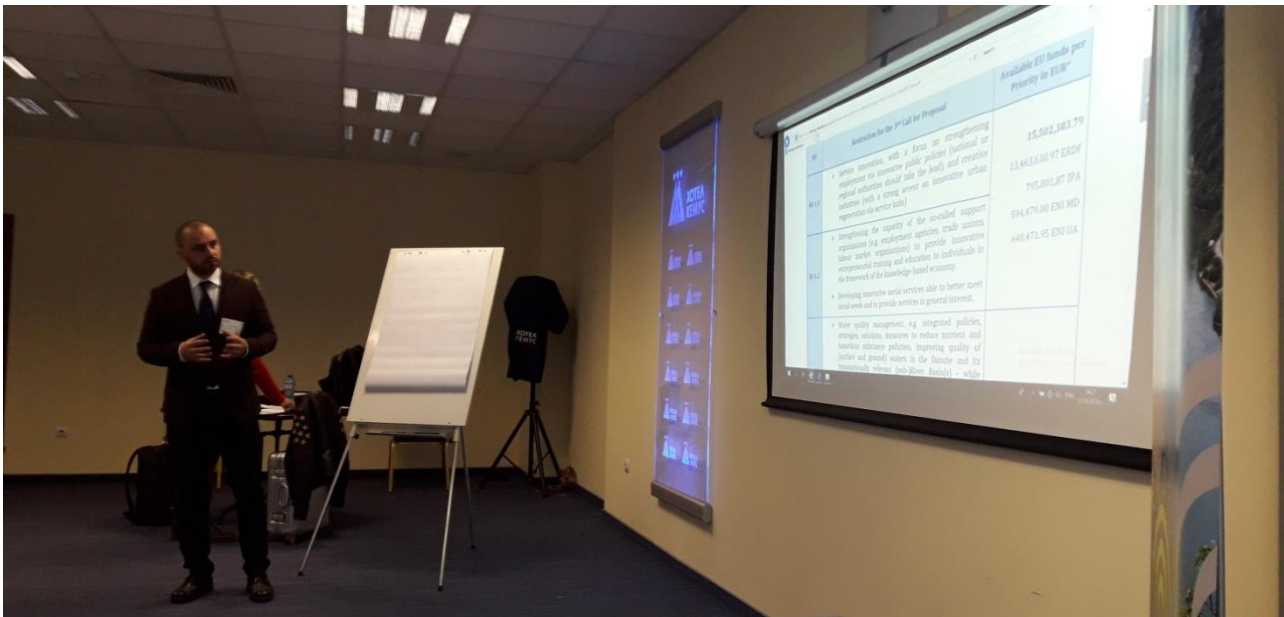
## *Annex I: Photos of the Pole 1 Capitalisation Workshop in Sofia*















## Annex II: Reports of the Task Force Leaders

### Report of Task Force “Innovative Rural Ecosystems – InnoRurEco”



## REPORT

### on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups

Event	Pole 1 “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs” Capitalisation Workshop together with EUSDR Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness of enterprises”
Pole 1 Working Group - Fields of interest	Agriculture, Forestry, Farming
Pole 1 Working Group - Title	Innovate Rural Ecosystems – <a href="#">InnoRurEco</a>
Pole 1 Working Group Leader / Rapporteur	Dr. Dominik Patzelt, BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH, LP <a href="#">DanuBioValNet</a>
Project of Pole 1 Working Group Leader	Dr. Dominik Patzelt, BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH, LP <a href="#">DanuBioValNet</a>
Recipient	Daniela Chiran, Coordinator of Pole 1



## Content

<b>REPORT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERREG DTP POLE 1 WORKING GROUPS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS .....</b>	<b>3</b>

### 1. Report on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups

LPs and PPs of DTP projects of Thematic Pole 1 that contribute to one or more fields of interest in Agriculture and Forestry discussed how to better capitalise project results via a guided question and answer process:

**Q: How can the results of transnational cooperation be more accessible and longer usable to SMEs?**

**A:** Recipients agreed that usability of transnational cooperation for SME after project termination is of crucial importance, but it is not a simple task to do. Some recommendations of the group (ranked through first appearance): Awareness campaigning after project ends, developing virtual platforms and physical info points as one stop shop for all projects grouped in the working group (1 representative for the projects). However, funding or implementation needs to be elaborated. Further mentioned but not prioritised topics were stronger cooperation with universities so that results are inherently placed within universities and the internationalisation of SME

**Q: What are the obstacles for an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies?**

**A:** Budget for capitalisation of project results with other projects and programmes was not taken seriously into account by partners when formulating the project proposals. Therefore, no adequate resources are available to exploit the synergies to the fullest. Suggested actions should be to make 1 deliverable or output "capitalisation" mandatory for proposal development under WP Management or WP Communication in the next Calls / programming periods. Furthermore, participants state that the understanding of the term "capitalisation" for their project was not fully understood as well as the project goals of related projects. Therefore, participants suggested central capitalisation events offered by the programme or by the Thematic Pole right from the beginning. This was the most important point, that participants suggest more capitalisation events but also with other programmes, inside and outside the Interreg community.

**Q: What are your main lessons learned and how would you improve the Interreg DTP**

**A:** One of the most important target groups as identified for this working group are SMEs. However, SME participation at project events is not always easy to achieve. Therefore, participants suggest to develop further concepts/options that would allow including SMEs to a greater extent on various levels: participation at trainings /events /workshops. Another possibility would be to hand out (funding) Vouchers

to SMEs, so that SME can already work more closely with the project by receiving a certain amount of funding. This suggestion leads to the next recommendations when it comes to funding/budget that the participants hope for more financial flexibility (e.g., change the 5 % / 10 % flexibility rule to 10 % / 20 % flexibility). Participants acknowledge that control mechanisms should be established but wish for more competencies and autonomy on side of the Lead Partner to minimize heavy traffic with the JS. A further thought was given to "letters of recommendation/seals of excellence" that could be provided by the JS for project partners that have been proven to successfully implement projects. This "letter of recommendation" could enable organisation to apply, with obtained project results from Interreg, also to other funding bodies with more dedicated focus on Research and Innovation to enhance the probabilities of project funding and thus capitalisation after project ended. Meaning, other programmes have direct feedback of partners capabilities from the DTP. However, it should be avoided that the "letter for recommendation" create a closed loop (funding only for already funded partners).

**Q: What are the new services developed and for which target group?**

A: The question was understood regarding new services that will come out of the currently running projects: New services that will be developed (ranked by appearance) are: collaboration and innovation networks, as well as training modules for SMEs and researchers, e-tools for entrepreneurs and SMEs, innovation audits and cluster services.

**Q: How can the civil society benefit?**

A: The civil society is (and should further be) involved in all projects to a certain extent for developing new products/services and should also further be engaged by developing new tools for transfer of knowledge (fairs, videos, ...).

**Q: Which Working Group do you want to work with?**

A: Participants see their main project content connection to PAB working groups as following (ranked by appearance): Education as well as Innovation, Clusters, Digitalisation, Women

**Q: How does your Pole 1 Working Group contribute to achieve the objectives of Priority Area 8?**

A: The main objective of all participants and their mutual understanding is to address the competitiveness of rural areas, especially where the competitive infrastructure is missing, to eventually empower rural development.

## 2. Conclusions and Recommendations

To conclude, participants of the working group for Agriculture and Forestry have a lot of connecting factors, that is also reflected in participation of attendees in several DTP projects within the same Thematic Pole. Participants suggest that further capitalization should be envisaged to exploit project results to the fullest by possibly organizing bigger events by the DTP clustered to specific challenges of the project, equivalent to the DTP thematic seminars (but on project implementation level).

## 3. Next steps

Not discussed.



## Report of Task Force "Energy4Future"



### REPORT

#### on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups

Event	Pole 1 "Innovative ecosystem for SMEs" Capitalisation Workshop together with EUSDR Priority Area 8 "Competitiveness of enterprises"
Pole 1 Working Group - Fields of interest	Bio-energy, Eco-Technology, Circular economy
Pole 1 Working Group - Title	Energy4Future
Pole 1 Working Group Leader / Rapporteur	Miljana Cosic
Project of Pole 1 Working Group Leader	Made in Danube
Recipient	Daniela Chiran, Coordinator of Pole 1



## Content

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Report on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups.....	4
3. Conclusions and recommendations/Next steps.....	5

## 1. Introduction

Based on the obtained results of the prior DTP Pole 1 activities, organised in the period between June 2017 and September 2018, the need for the establishment of horizontal structure of the Pole has been acknowledged as Pole coordinator/co-coordinator (Made in Danube/InnoHPC). This is due to the fact that Pole 1 members (on-going DTP Projects Call 1/Call 2) are addressing different domains relevant for the SME sector. These include Forestry, agriculture & farming, sustainable energy, IT & electronics and diverse financial aspects, such as crowdfunding, accelerators & access to finance.

In order to facilitate even stronger capitalisation activities among the projects mainly addressing energy related challenges, simultaneously targeting the achievements of the PA8-Competitiveness objectives, the proposal for the establishment of **Pole 1 Working Group (WG) Energy4Future** has been deliberated at the DTP Pole 1 Capitalisation Works Shop (WS), held in Sofia on 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2018.

All countries in the Danube Region are dependent on the import of primary energy sources, even though the region is very rich in the natural resources and gives a various opportunities for the better exploitation of the latter. This refers to both, renewable energies (especially Bio-energy resource, Geo-thermal, Hydro, Wind and Sun) and application of the energy efficiency measures. In the transition to moving towards to the more sustainable economy – Circular/ Bio-economy, the engagement of all economic sectors is prerequisite. Here, especially SMEs can have a significant role, as they are seen a main drivers and innovators of the modern economies.

The WG consists 4 Pole 1 Projects and also welcomes representatives of PA7 and P8 in the assembly. The following representatives (Projects) have been present at the establishment session and have contributed to the input of this paper<sup>1</sup>:

1. Miljana Cosic, peter Alesnik - Made in Danube
2. Olga Boyarintseva - DanuBioValNet
3. Nina Bratkova - Ecolinn Danube
4. Barbora Palakova
5. Srdjan Skrbic
6. Jaroslava Szüdi - PA 7 coordinator
7. Judit Schrick- Szenczi - PA 8 coordinator
8. Ivan Turk
9. Ivan Ursu

<sup>1</sup> The list is not executive. Final list of the participating project and names of the representatives should be defined after the adoption of a proposal for the establishment of a working group

## 2. Report on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups

### **Q1: How can the results of transnational cooperation be more accessible and longer usable to SMEs?**

In terms of securing the sustainability of the Project results, in the frame of the WG Energy4Future few proposals have been discussed by the participants. Establishing the local contact points for SMEs is considered as an necessary point as in this way SMEs active in the certain sector (e.g. renewable energies) could obtain relevant information on what has been done in the previous or on-going projects. This could be for instance information of developed infrastructure, technologies installed, best practices cases, existing and established networks or information of the relevant contacts can be provided e.g. project coordinators. These contact points could be established in the Chamber of commerce or other relevant organisations, such as Regional Development Agencies. Furthermore, closer work on the cluster levels, especially in the transnational environment should be initiated more intensely, as in this way SMEs can also benefit from these collaborations.

Furthermore, development and setting in operation of a so called Meta platform which will up to date collect and provide the information related to the energy sector has been discussed, but here financial and human resources are the main barrier for putting into the practice this idea. The possible option would be to use the platform of some on-going project which would commit on this kind of activities in the upcoming period.

### **Q2: What are the obstacles for an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies?**

The main challenges that appear and could be address in the new future are referring to: limited resources (there must be strong commencement from the relevant organisations); lack of information flows and aggregation tools (communication channels should be defined and it should also be secured that necessary information reach the stakeholders/ final users, e.g. SMEs or Civil society); improving the communication flows within the Project consortiums (involvement of all Project partners in the capitalisation activities, not only the members of the DTP Pole and WG members) exploring the possibilities for establishment of risk investment funds.

### **Q3: What are your main lessons learned and how would you improve the Interreg DTP**

Interreg DTP gives a vast opportunities to collaborate transitionally. By the capitalisation activities these opportunities are much more widened. What could be improved on the project level are e.g. a bit less complicated administrative procedures (e.g. moving toward complete digitalisation in the process of the Project implementation), support the visibility of the certain Project by improving the communication skills of communication managers and planning the capitalisation activities should happen in advance in order to avoid any administrative or financial issues.

### **Q4: What are the new services developed and for which target group?**

Many Project developed different services or tools. The most used are e-tools or platforms for the connection of the different stakeholders in the region. In the scope of this WG it would be beneficial to

have a platform only for the actors active in energy sector (here the possible collaboration with the Pole 8 - Sustainable energy could be established. Other services mainly include trainings, WS, Info days for the different stakeholder groups - SMEs, civil society, PAs

**Q5: How can the civil society benefit?**

The benefits of moving towards the subsumable energy resources are multiple for the society. This refers at the first toward the reduction of CO2 emissions, better living and healthier environment where the water generation is decreased to the minimum, inclusion of the society in the different aspects - such as incentives for recycling, using the environmentally friendly products in every day life. Many DTP projects have a very strong social compost included in their projects. This should be even more stimulated by organisation the Info-days and WS for the local communities on the different topics.

**Q6: Which Working Group do you want to work with?**

The WG would be interested to establish the connections with following WGs of PAB

- Innovation and TT,
- Environmental technologies,
- Cluster excellence,
- Excellent Education
- plus DTP Pole 8 Energy

**Q7: How does your Pole 1 Working Group contribute to achieve the objectives of Priority Area 8?**

In general, transnational cooperation within the DTP Projects contribute frosting the collaboration and exchange of the knowledge between the SME, improve business support, support enterprises through high performing training and qualification schemes, improve framework conditions for SMEs. Capitalisation activates, elevate this collaborations on even higher level by giving the access to the different networks, by exchange of the information, share of the best practices and joint planning of the future projects/developments in the region.

**3. Conclusions and recommendations/Next steps**

In order to facilitate future activities of the WG the following steps on the Group level are suggested:

- Definition of the WG members and nominations of the responsible persons
- Adoption of the objectives or the WG by the members
- Crating a strategy and action plan for the achievement of the defined objectives
- Proposing and adopting the responsibilities, time-schedules and general meeting planning (e.g two times per year)
- Checking the financial support options for activates

On the level of the DTP Pole 1 level, the following suggestions should be consider:

- The official adoption of the proposal for the establishment of DPT Pole 1 Working Groups confirmed by the DTP Pole 1 coordinator
- Providing a guidance and mentoring for the direct connection of the WG with PAB



- Establishing the collaboration of the WG with Pole 8 – Sustainable energy and possibility to add the Project representatives from this Pole in the WG
- Defining the participation of the Projects in the WG after their finalisation (June 2019)
- Helping in securing the financial support – costs eligibility for the meeting in the frame of the on-going Project



## Report of Task Force “Access to Finance”

I



### REPORT

#### on the establishment of Interreg DTP **Pole 1 Working Groups**

Event	Pole 1 “Innovative ecosystem for SMEs” Capitalisation Workshop together with EUSDR Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness of enterprises”
Pole 1 Working Group - Fields of interest	
Pole 1 Working Group - Title	Access to Finance
Pole 1 Working Group Leader / Rapporteur	Zoltan Bendo
Project of Pole 1 Working Group Leader	
Recipient	Daniela Chiran, Coordinator of Pole 1



#### Methodology:

- Participants from Pole 1 projects were selected by the organisers to discuss pre-defined questions at a roundtable. Selection was done with regards to the thematic focus of the projects.
- Participants had roughly an hour to discuss seven questions.
- Time was adequate to list and shortly discuss relevant issues for these questions in a brainstorming-like manner.

#### Participants of the working group listed the following issues with regards to the pre-defined questions:

- 1) How can the results of transnational cooperation be more accessible and longer usable to SMEs?
  - intense dissemination of best practices
  - active awareness raising
  - through bringing macro-level strategic processes
  - through uptake by public authorities
  - through ownership of results
  - direct involvement of SMEs
  - by building transnational sectorial alliances
- 2) What are the obstacles for an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies?
  - a perceived lack of systematic approach
  - burden on facilitators
  - motivation of partners
  - lack of dedicated resources at programme level
- 3) What are your main lessons learned and how would you improve the Interreg DTP?
  - closer cooperation with other programmes with macroregional strategy would be beneficial
  - a better correlation of the strategy and the programme would be desirable
  - language barrier is an issue
  - "Pre-starting of projects": introducing a - for example - 2 months timeframe for settling all administrative issues before the thematic work starts
- 4) What are the new services developed and for which target group?
  - at project level: online training platforms, new labs, new associations, new accelerator services
  - overall:
    - o these projects provide fact based proposals to decisions makers
    - o a quality pool of experts is at hand
    - o experimenting is relevant and very important part of these projects (provide the base for the fact-based proposals) but experiments sometimes fail which should be acknowledged

- 5) How can the civil society benefit?
  - through direct involvement in the projects
  - the projects provide possible solutions to social problems
  - through **informaiton**.
- 6) Which PAB Working Group do you want to work with?  
All working groups seemed relevant to **participatis**
- 7) How does your Pole Working Group contribute to achieve the objectives of Priority Area 8?
  - the working group created a space for dialogue



## Report of Task Force "itGreen"



### REPORT on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups

Event	Pole 1 "Innovative ecosystem for SMEs" Capitalisation Workshop together with EUSDR Priority Area 8 "Competitiveness of enterprises"
Pole 1 Working Group - Fields of interest	IT, Electronic and Automotive Industries, Intellectual Property Rights
Pole 1 Working Group - Title	<i>itGreen</i>
Pole 1 Working Group Leader / Rapporteur	<i>Rokut Rončević</i> , Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto, Slovenia, LP of InnoHPC and KnowING IPR
Project of Pole 1 Working Group Leader	<i>Rokut Rončević</i> , Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto, Slovenia, LP of InnoHPC and KnowING IPR
Recipient	Daniela Chiran, Coordinator of Pole 1



## Content

1. Report on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Groups.....	1
2. Conclusions and Recommendations .....	2
3. Next steps.....	3

### 1. Report on the establishment of Interreg DTP Pole 1 Working Group

*How can the results of transnational cooperation be more accessible and longer usable to SMEs?*

Accessibility and durability of the results of transnational cooperation after the end of the projects to an important extent depend on ability to extend project activities beyond initial funding. We have identified several possible mechanisms.

Firstly, regular updating of project results, to keep them in line with the ever changing social, economic, political, regulatory and technological situation. This can be achieved, for example, via development of semi-autonomous online (web and mobile) platforms with superb user experience design (UXD). Their semi-autonomy enables us to update them with relatively little effort and UXD makes them attractive to SMEs even after we no longer have the resources to specifically encourage them to use project results.

Secondly, we should focus on development of mechanisms, methodologies and techniques that encourage both SMEs, as well as policy-makers who are in charge of innovation and entrepreneurship policies, to "assume the ownership" of project results. In case of SMEs, this can be enhanced by development of realistic business models, and in case of policy-makers by transferring ownership of policy documents to policy makers.

Finally, there is a need to amend the focus on the quantity of dissemination activities on its quality.

*What are the obstacles for an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies?*

We have noted a number of obstacles to an efficient and effective capitalisation and exploitation of synergies. The first one is time-related concerns on the side of most project partners. Secondly, there appears to be significant variation in multi-level policy coordination in the Danube region and in a number of cases the coordination appears to be relatively weak and communication between policy levels is one-way (top-down). Third, there appears to be insufficient access to rich pool of relevant information, which may be to some extent attributed to less than optimal user experience of





information platform. Fourth factor is the significant intra-regional variation, fragmentation and specifics: the Danube region combines both highly developed and significantly underdeveloped regions.

Finally, some partners expressed the issue of lack of funding for capitalisation. However, others have emphasized that the issue can be dealt with during project planning.

*What are your main lessons learned and how would you improve the Interreg DTP?*

There is significant room for improvement of Interreg DTP. We would like to specifically emphasize the following:

- DTP should invest systematic effort to support access to variety of policy levels; low policy take-up significantly impacts effectiveness of DTP.
- There is a need to create joint pool of information on DTP projects, initiatives and events. This will not only improve visibility of DTP, but also make it easier to avoid duplication between projects.
- More emphasis is to be given on quality of inclusion of target groups.

*What are the new services developed and for which target group?*

Projects under scrutiny are relatively standardised. They are developing services for SMEs, business associations, civil society. The services being developed are typically various online platforms, training and capacity building, match-making between relevant partners and variety of strategic documents.

*How can the civil society benefit?*

Civil society can benefit in a variety of ways, especially through development of:

- social innovation, based on digitalization;
- greener products and services;
- improvement in working and living conditions, contributing to quality of life (e.g. ambient assisted living);
- new employment and business opportunities.

*Which PA8 Working Group do you want to work with?*

Following were recognized as the key working groups:

- Innovation and technology transfer (primary one)
- Cooperation of business organizations
- Digital Danube

*How does your Pole 1 Working Group contribute to achieve the objectives of Priority Area 8?*

Our Pole1 working group will in the future:

- serve as exchange platform allowing us to enable and simplify our cooperation;
- by doing that it will help us to lead our projects;
- as such, it will indirectly contribute to SME competitiveness in the region, which is one of the key objectives of PA 8.

## 2. Conclusions and recommendations

There were two main conclusions of the workshop.

The first was that there is a big need for improvement of conditions for capitalisation exploitation of synergies between project results. These improvements should include a. improving governance in the Danube region, by enabling better access to variety of policy levels, with the purpose to increase the impact of DTP projects; b. establishment of joint pool of information on DTP projects, initiatives and events (digital solutions), to improve visibility of DTP and make it easier to avoid duplication between projects; and c. more emphasis is to be given on quality of inclusion of target groups.

The second major conclusion is the need for specific focus a. on social innovation, which is based on digitalisation; b. continued efforts towards greener products and services; c. improvement in working and living conditions, as well as the quality of life for specific vulnerable groups (e.g. projects on ambient assisted living and health-related projects, including issues of mental health, stress and burnout).

While pursuing these topics, special attention should be given to new employment and business opportunities.

## 3. Next steps

We did not discuss these issues in detail. However, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to develop a protocol for cooperation in the framework of this working group and to meet on a relatively regular basis.

