

**Rules of Procedure**

of the

**Steering Group**

for the implementation of

**Priority Area 5 - Management of Environmental Risks**

of the

**European Union Danube Region Strategy**

Approved by the Steering Group on June 9, 2011

## Preamble

The **eight EU-Member States**: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany (Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria), Hungary, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia, in consultation with the **Non-Member States** from the Danube Region: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine and Serbia,

on the basis of the following documents:

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions (8.12.2010., COM(2010) 715 final);
- Accompanying Action Plan of the European Commission (8.12.2010., SEC(2010) 1489);
- European Parliament Resolution of 21 January 2010 on a European Strategy for the Danube Region (P7\_TA-PROV (2010)0008);
- Council Conclusions on the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (3083<sup>rd</sup> General Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 13 April 2011), and;
- Guidance to the Priority Area Coordinators of the European Commission – DG REGIO

have agreed on establishing a Steering Group (hereinafter referred to as SG) for the implementation of Priority Area 5 “Management of environmental risks” (hereinafter referred to as “PA5”) of the European Union Danube Region Strategy (hereinafter referred to as “EUSDR”) coordinated by the Priority Area Coordinators (hereinafter referred to as PACs) designated by Hungary and Romania.

### ***Rule 1: Setting up the Steering Group***

- 1) The SG shall be set up at the first SG meeting, held after the delegation of members/observers by the Member and Non-Member States from the Danube Region, interested in the implementation of PA5.
- 2) The SG has the competence to create subcommittees and working groups, to deal with specific tasks having a clear and time-limited mandate.

### ***Rule 2: Members and other parties***

- 1) **Members** of the SG are appointed by the 14 Member and Non-Member States through the National Contact Points. Each State is entitled to delegate maximum two members (one member and one substitute member) in the SG. A state can opt for not delegating any member to the SG. PACs are also considered members.
- 2) The Secretariat of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube Region (ICPDR Secretariat) has a special status within the Steering Group as a **permanent observer**, being invited to all Steering Group meetings.

- 3) The representatives of the European Commission - DG REGIO, DG ENVIRONMENT and DG CLIMA – are **permanent invitees** to the Steering Group meetings.
- 4) Actors interested in the implementation of PA5 can attend Steering Group meetings **upon invitation**, and if necessary, based on the issues on the agenda, as **ad-hoc observers**, *i.e.*: stakeholders from the civil society, institutions representing potential financial instruments, Project Leaders of Flagship and/or Potential Flagship Projects, PACs of the EU Strategy for Baltic Region and PACs of other Priority Areas from the EUSDR (especially under its 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar).
- 5) Any member of the Steering Group may invite an **advisor** to the meetings, if considered necessary based on the issues of the agenda. The participation of advisors is pending on prior notification by the member to the PACs.
- 6) The term of office of a member/substitute/observer shall be terminated by resignation, assignment of a new member by the respective National Contact Point or at the end of the operation period of the SG. The designation of a new member/substitute/observer shall be done through the delegation letter of the sending institution.

#### **Rule 4: Chairmanship**

- 1) The PACs shall chair the meetings according to the rotation principle.

#### **Rule 5: Secretariat of the SG**

- 1) The appointed PACs of PA5 shall also provide secretarial support for the SG, meaning:
  - (a) organization of the SG meetings;
  - (b) communication with and towards SG members and observers;
  - (c) circulation of agenda and other working documents prepared for decision-making;
  - (d) preparation of the minutes of results of the meetings;
  - (e) any other relevant administrative tasks.

#### **Rule 6: Tasks of the SG**

- 1) The Steering Group is created in order to advice and assist Hungary and Romania in their capacity as PACs, for the smooth implementation of PA5 and to ensure that suitable actions are anchored all over the region and in all participating states. It also acts as a network of national counterparts.
- 2) The SG while taking overall guidance from the EUSDR, the connected Action Plan, as well as, from the Annual Stakeholder Forums and the decisions of the High Level Group, and other important and relevant policy documents on the regional or national level, shall particularly provide for the following main tasks:
  - (a) it shall consider and review, if necessary, its Rules of Procedure;

- (b) it shall consider and agree on the actions broken down by operational steps, as well as, on concrete deadlines and responsible;
- (c) it shall consider and agree on the general procedures and approve criteria for selecting flagship projects under PA5 and any revision of those criteria in accordance with implementation needs;
- (d) it shall approve targets based on the Communication from the Commission and further on any proposed modification of these targets;
- (e) it shall periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets set, on the basis of documents compiled by the PACs. If not required more often this shall be done at least once per year together with the adoption of the Annual Report of PA5;
- (f) it shall examine the results of implementation, particularly the achievement of the targets set for PA5 and propose corrective measures, if necessary;
- (g) it shall consider and approve the Annual and Final Reports on implementation before being submitted to the European Commission;
- (h) it shall be informed about any relevant comments the Commission or the High Level Group may make after examining the Annual Report;
- (i) it shall agree on any simple amendments made to the Action Plan, as well as, any revisions or amendments to it or the list of Flagship Projects prior to their submission to the European Commission or the High Level Group;
- (j) it shall approve projects selected to be as Flagship under PA5, based on the general procedures and criteria referred to in point c) and make any amendments necessary connected to these;
- (k) it shall be involved in policy discussions and policy development in the subjects covered by PA5;
- (l) it shall advice and formulate suggestions on how to solve errors which are systemic in nature or any other issues being related to the implementation of PA5;
- (m) it shall be informed about any communication or information and publicity actions undertaken by the PACs, or any other issues relevant concerning implementation;
- (n) it shall assist PACs through the individual activity of each member designated in the implementation of PA5 specifically, but not exclusively, in the following tasks: gathering data about existing projects, financing possibilities, new project ideas, monitoring projects, sending necessary data, information and input for the elaboration of the Annual Report, information and involvement of other relevant actors and stakeholders on the national level, including project partners, communication, multiplication and dissemination activities, etc.

### **Rule 7: Organisation of the meetings**

- 1) The SG shall meet as frequently as it deems necessary for the proper implementation of PA5, but at least twice in a year.
- 2) The SG shall agree on preset dates for the two yearly regular meetings. If no such agreement has been reached the members and observers shall receive the invitation in a written form, one month prior to the meeting, through e-mail from the relevant PAC<sup>1</sup>
- 3) The written invitation shall contain the invitation indicating place, date and time of the meeting enclosing a draft agenda. Documents prepared for the steering process shall be sent out at least 15 working days<sup>2</sup> before the due date or, in exceptional cases, regarding urgent matters with minimum 5 working days before.
- 4) Requests concerning the amendment of the draft agenda can come on behalf of any member and be communicated in a written form to the PACs, if possible, 5 working days before the meeting. The up-dated agenda shall be communicated towards the members by the relevant PAC 3 working days before the fixed date. If there is evidence of urgency or in exceptional cases, the members may propose to modify the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.
- 5) The PACs must keep accurate and regular records of the meetings and the relevant documentations. After the meeting minutes of results will be prepared listing the agreements taken.

### **Rule 8: Steering Process**

- 1) The Members of the Steering Group, regarding their competence, shall strive for consensus.
- 2) Minutes:  
The relevant PAC shall prepare the draft minutes of the meeting and send them to the members/observers/invitees of the SG not later than 10 working days after the meeting has taken place. The participants of the meeting may formulate their observations, proposals or amendments concerning the minutes not later than 10 working days following the receipt of the document, sending them to all members/observers/invitees. If appropriate observations have been made, the PAC amends the minutes accordingly and forwards it to the members/observers/invitees, as the final version. If no objections have been made, the minutes are deemed to be agreed on.

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<sup>1</sup> In all cases the term „relevant PAC” means the PAC from the country hosting, chairing and organizing the meeting based on the rotation principle.

<sup>2</sup> When working days are calculated, bank holidays shall be taken into account.

3) Steering by written procedure:

- (a) The written procedure can also be used as a steering process of the SG, in exceptional cases (e.g.: urgent agreement/approval has to be reached on a single issue, or the convening of the SG would take too much time or would not be effective) or in case PACs consider there is a need for consultation.
- (b) At the initiative of the PACs or any member of the SG, the relevant PAC sends out the documents to the SG members/observers/invitees for consultation and/or agreement/approval through written procedure. The written procedure is managed via e-mail. Members will be asked to give their written opinion on the proposal within 15 working days, although exceptionally a shorter consultation period might be requested, but not less than 5 working days. In all cases the exact date and time of reaction shall be put in the e-mail. The written procedure shall refer to the nature of the procedure (i.e. single issue to be agreed on/approved, request for consultation, or documents to be elaborated or amended).
- (c) The proposal on which consultation and/or agreement and/or approval is sought shall be deemed agreed on/approved if no objections from the members have been expressed within the deadline, *i.e.* if the proposal meets the consensus of the SG members with voting rights. Silence is considered agreement/approval.
- (d) If one or more member/observer/invitee of the SG has comments/amendments to the proposal, these shall be sent to all members, observers and invitees of the SG with a justification. The PAC initiating the procedure shall summarise the comments/amendments indicating the organisation by which they have been presented together with the justification. In a next round members will be asked to give their written opinion on the comments/amendments. The duration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round shall be the same as that of the first round. The proposal shall be deemed agreed on/approved if no objections from the members have been expressed within the deadline specified. The amendment shall be elaborated accordingly. It shall be deemed rejected if consensus cannot be reached.
- (e) Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of the written consultation, the relevant PAC shall inform the SG about its result.
  - the proposal has, in the absence of any written objection, been deemed agreed/approved, or
  - it has been rejected indicating the justification, or
  - it has been agreed on/approved partially<sup>3</sup> and the remaining parts should be referred back to the SG for further consideration during its next meeting.
- (f) In case the proposal cannot be partly agreed on/approved, and it is on an urgent matter, the members/observers/invitees of the SG shall meet urgently. The

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<sup>3</sup> The document can be partly agreed on/approved if the document can be applied without the part on which the SG cannot reach a consensus. The other part of the documents on which consensus cannot be reached, shall be referred back to the next SG meeting. The document cannot be partly agreed on/approved if it cannot be applied without the missing part.

meeting shall be organized within 10 working days. In case the proposal can be partly agreed on/approved the discussion on the remaining parts shall be postponed until the next meeting.

(g) Once agreement/approval is reached PACs and SG Members shall act upon it.

#### **Rule 9: *Communication, information flow***

- 1) Communication, including the circulation of working documents, among the members and the PACs shall generally be done by e-mail.
- 2) In certain cases documents for decision-making can be uploaded to the web-page created: <http://groupspaces.com/EnvironmentalRisks/>.

#### **Rule 10: *Working language***

- 1) The official language of the SG is English.
- 2) Documentation referring to the agenda of the SG meetings and the minutes will be circulated in English language by the relevant PAC.

#### **Rule 12: *Expenses***

Any expenses related to the organization of the meetings of the SG, excluding the accommodation and travel costs of its members, observers and advisors, shall be covered by the Co-coordinating countries. Travel, accommodation and any other extra costs are due to each participant.