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Action Plan for Pons Danubii EGTC



pons danubii

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Sharing solutions for better regional policies

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General information

Project: **SWARE (Sustainable heritage management of Waterway REgions)**

Partner organisation: **Pons Danubii European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation**

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): **All partners (in knowledge sharing)**

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Foreword, incl. Policy Context

Pons Danubii EGTC is a partner in the EU INTERREG EUROPE part-funded “SWARE” (Sustainable heritage management of Waterway REgions) project (www.interregeurope.eu/sware/).

Pons Danubii is a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation targeting the development of economic and social cohesion in the municipal territory of its member settlements situated along the Danube river (Komárom, Tata, Kiskőrös, Oroszlány, Komárno, Kolárovo, Hurbanovo). It is a legal entity, it has its own budget, it employs people and it can sign agreements.

The organisation gathers local municipalities in the cross-border area from both sides of the border and creates and implements joint territorial development strategies. The aim of the Grouping is to follow a non-distinction policy: local actors must have equal opportunities on national and cross-border level as well. The EGTC has considerable experience in heritage related cross-border cooperation initiatives and projects. Being an EGTC, Pons Danubii is fully entitled and capable to submit applications to the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme, thus improving the instrument through the actual implementation of its defined aims. Furthermore, the EGTC was involved as a consultancy in the preparation phase of the cross-border cooperation programme and will also participate in its midterm evaluations.

The overall objective of SWARE project is to foster integrated management of natural and cultural heritage within inland waterway regions by improving the partner regions’ related policy instruments in order to create a better balance between the protection and sustainable exploitation of the natural resources and the built heritage sites.

There are five other organisations involved in the project from the Netherlands, Italy, Ireland and Latvia. Project activities include analysis of situation in each partner region, good practice and knowledge transfer and development of Action Plans to improve respective partner policy instruments.

Phase 1 SWARE project activities in (ending September 2018) will be accomplished through exchange of experiences and practices; stakeholder and institutional learning; benchmarking and analysis of challenges and needs; which will culminate with the development of an Action Plans in each participating region. Phase 2 (until March 2021), the remainder of the project, will revolve around implementation of the Action Plan.

This document constitutes the SWARE Project's Action Plan for Pons Danubii EGTC.

The Action Plan aims to impact: ☐ Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
☒ **European Territorial Cooperation Programme**
☐ Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020**

Summary of SWARE Interregional Learning and Findings

In the first phase of the project, good practices from the regions were explored and discussed by the partners and their stakeholders. Learnings and findings which have been gained from SWARE project and which serve as a base of the Action Plan of Pons Danubii EGTC, are the followings (in general):

- The establishment of balanced (private-public) partnerships and the participation of all relevant actors of the area – including project owners, tourism service providers, authorities, transport companies, other stakeholders and local communities (of all ages) – are necessary in order to produce effective solutions for complex situations. The establishment of a formal structure/arrangement for bottom-up/community stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes should be completed by informal (non-institutionalized) partnership models and platforms in order to reach the general public and broaden cooperation networks. Different methods / tools tailored to the types of involved stakeholders should be applied.
- New, innovative utilisation of natural and cultural values is required combining multiple usages of the heritage along inland waterways (culture, nature, sports, arts, navigation, education; combined water and cycling tours, etc.), as far as possible in the form of a cross-border or transnational cooperation. Natural values can be used for the development of cultural tourism (combining history, natural heritage and culture in complex tourism packages). Intangible heritage can be a symbol of an area and can strongly contribute to its identity.
- The importance of the complex development - including the improvement of water tourism related infrastructures, development of tourism products and services, boosting local tourism

entrepreneurship and planning and implementing effective marketing actions (with an effect to the wider audience) - is emphasized.

- Diverse functionalities of waterways should be considered, e.g. tourism / recreation, commute traffic, economic utilisation, environmental protection, flood protection. In the management of the waterway areas and the adjacent natural and cultural heritage sites, the combination of the different functions (e.g. tourism and energy, education, economy and sustainability) is vital. With the involvement of the adjacent areas to inland waterways, a more spatially-balanced tourism flow can be ensured, thus reducing the overload of focal areas.
- The shared good practices of successful international examples of biodiversity management, sustainable tourism development projects and awareness raising actions can provide transferable and adaptable models for sustainable interventions (with the development of good practice databases, with knowledge sharing and dissemination activities). New initiatives with strong environmental protection aspects can be generated if we consider:
 - o The greater integration of sustainability aspects in the evaluation of the funded projects' and the programme's performance,
 - o The mapping and making more usage of data generated by the realization of green projects.
- The wide visibility of funded projects and the dissemination of the projects' and the programmes' results is necessary. Based on the outcome statements of transnational knowledge sharing activities, several interventions can support this intention, e.g.: branding (based on a clear vision); implementing good marketing activities (including new technologies, e.g. mobile apps, big data analysis); besides the tangible natural and cultural attractions, using the potential of intangible heritage elements (e.g. stories) in branding and promoting the regions; disseminating the results to the wider audience, etc. Digital platforms and new developments (e.g. new ICT tools, big data analysis on decision making) are of great importance.
- Joint service developments and management tools (e.g. tourism card system, bike sharing system, audioguide), the possibilities for creating green jobs, stimulating tourism related business activities and entrepreneurship contribute to the institutional and financial sustainability after project closure as well.

List of Priority Actions for Pons Danubii EGTC based on SWARE findings

Pons Danubii EGTC plans to implement the following actions:

- Action 1: ***Elaboration of a sustainability manual for cross-border natural and cultural heritage development initiatives based on new projects implemented in the frame of Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020***
- Action 2: ***Policy recommendations for the improved operation of Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, including the channelling of good practices of other policy instruments***
- Action 3: ***Inclusive management – providing professional / methodological support for improved participatory approach of Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020***
- Action 4: ***Improved dissemination of successful projects funded by Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020***

Details of the actions envisaged

ACTION 1 – Elaboration of a sustainability manual for cross-border natural and cultural heritage development initiatives based on new projects implemented in the frame of Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

1. Background

According to the lessons learnt from SWARE project during knowledge exchange sessions, it is extremely important to develop a sustainable approach and to improve the sense of awareness of natural and cultural heritage developments along inland waterways and their surrounding areas both in project development and implementation phases. Based on the outcome statements of SWARE transnational knowledge sharing activities, several interventions can support this intention, e.g.:

- The establishment of balanced (private-public) partnerships and the participation of all relevant actors of the area – including project owners, tourism service providers, authorities, transport companies, other stakeholders and local communities (of all ages) – are necessary in order to produce effective solutions for complex situations;
- New, innovative utilisation of natural and cultural values is required combining multiple usages of the heritage along inland waterways (culture, nature, sports, arts, navigation, education; combined water and cycling tours, etc.), as far as possible in the form of cross-border or transnational cooperation;

- With the involvement of the adjacent areas to inland waterways, a more spatially-balanced tourism flow can be ensured, thus reducing the overload of focal areas;
- Diverse functionalities of waterways should be considered, e.g. tourism / recreation, commute traffic, economic utilisation, environmental protection, flood protection. In the management of the waterway areas and the adjacent natural and cultural heritage sites, the combination of the different functions (e.g. tourism and energy, education, economy and sustainability) is vital;
- The shared good practices of successful international examples of biodiversity management, sustainable tourism development projects and awareness raising actions can provide transferable models for sustainable interventions.

Transferable good practices of partners provide adaptable solutions for planning tourism development strategies:

- **River Suir Heritage Audits:** the project provides a good solution for properly underpinning tourism development strategies of an area. It stresses the importance of the baseline data: the so-called heritage audit developed in the frame of the project (including ecological information and habitat mapping, monument inventories) provides a simple but effective way to gain a comprehensive picture of the area with the engagement of local communities and involvement of local knowledge in order to apply a holistic approach to heritage management and to activate local communities.
- **The use of natural heritage for cultural tourism in the Pons Danubii area:** the project provides transferable solutions for the innovative usage of natural values for the development of cultural tourism (combining history, natural heritage and culture in complex tourism packages). Its cooperative approaches applied during the planning and implementation processes – i.e. cooperation of private and public actors of the cross-border region, preparation of cross-border tourism packages, thematic routes – provide good practices for multilevel governance methods resulting in an improved level of organisational sustainability. The joint tourism services developed (tourism card system, audioguide) contribute to the financial sustainability after project closure as well.
- **Riverways - Development of water tourism as nature and active tourism component in Latvia and Estonia:** the project provides a good practice for planning and implementing a joint cross-border water tourism strategy in order to improve conditions for sustainable water tourism development, to better utilize water tourism potentials, to decrease seasonality and to increase competitiveness of water tourism taking sustainability aspects into account as well. The joint development was based on the active participation of the stakeholders both from private and public sectors affected by water tourism (municipalities, tourism entrepreneurs, tourism experts). The importance of complex development is stressed including the improvement of water tourism related infrastructures, development of tourism products and services, boosting local tourism entrepreneurship, planning and implementing effective marketing actions (with an effect to the wider audience). A

Handbook for water tourism service providers was created with suggestions for quality service provision and for the establishment of a competitive company.

- **Sloepennetwerk Zuid-Holland (uniformly marked waterways):** the project aimed to create a uniformly marked network of waterways in order to give an impulse to the experiencing of the Green & Blue living environment and to stimulate business activity. As a good practice, solutions are provided for creating a broad, uniform network specifically for navigating the waterways and for a participatory approach in the planning and implementation processes (with the active involvement of municipalities, institutions, SMEs, NGOs in the frame of the so-called Group Decision Room meetings).

The main findings and conclusions of SWARE knowledge sharing events can empower the quality of new projects to be submitted and implemented in the frame of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (*furthermore SK-HU CBC Programme*) and can provide good practices for improving cross sectoral sustainability approaches.

2. Action

The main findings and conclusions of SWARE knowledge sharing activities will be built into the approaches of **new projects** to be implemented by / with the participation of Pons Danubii EGTC:

- Financed by the SK-HU CBC Programme 2014-2020 (priority axis 2: Enhancing cross-border mobility), the KOMBI project partnership, led by Pons Danubii EGTC, implements an integrated cross-border bike sharing system providing an eco-friendly green transport option for tourists and inhabitants;
- Financed by the SK-HU CBC Programme 2014-2020 (priority axis 1: Nature and Culture), the CULTPLAY project, managed by Pons Danubii EGTC (as the project manager organisation), targets the innovative utilisation of the border area's cultural heritage through providing interactive attractions and services in thematic parks;
- Financed by the SK-HU CBC Programme 2014-2020 (priority axis 2: Enhancing cross-border mobility), the Kn-Kn ImproTrans project, managed by Pons Danubii EGTC (as the project manager organisation), concerns e-bus transfer development with smart environmentally friendly traffic solutions in the cross-border area;
- Pons Danubii EGTC plans to submit applications for the new calls for proposals of the SK-HU CBC Programme 2014-2020 (priority areas: 1. Nature and Culture; 4. Institutional cooperation) with a strong sustainability focus.

Through the implementation of these ongoing and planned projects, the managing authority of the SK-HU CBC Programme can find inspiration and import new projects with a strong sustainability focus to be financed within the programme.

Based on the findings of the SWARE project transnational knowledge sharing activities, as well as the experience and conclusion of the SK-HU funded projects implemented by / with the participation of Pons Danubii EGTC, the action addresses **the elaboration of a sustainability manual for cross-border natural and cultural heritage development initiatives.**

Planned tasks:

- Summarising the topic-specific findings and conclusions of the SWARE project (transnational good practices, shared knowledge and solutions);
- Organising cross-border knowledge sharing events, stakeholder group meetings to involve other aspects and recommendations on sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage;
- Processing the experience and conclusions of SK-HU funded projects in the form of case studies (with presenting the main tasks and results, the possible pitfalls and the good transferable solutions);
- Based on the findings and conclusions of the above tasks, elaborating a sustainability manual for cross-border natural and cultural heritage development initiatives (with case studies), delivered to the Managing Authority.

The sustainability manual provides recommendations for the sustainable utilization of natural and cultural heritage (with special focus on cross-border cooperation), thus it can support the ongoing and ex-post evaluation of the 2014-2020 Programme's performance, as well as the monitoring of the funded projects' sustainability aspects. Moreover, it can encourage the deeper integration of sustainability aspects into the new programming exercise (preparation of the new Operational Programme).

The above tasks will be completed by **providing professional support for the application procedures to the actors in the Euroregion**, in order to stimulate projects focusing on sustainable development:

- Organising professional meetings, workshops;
- Technical assistance for project development / elaboration of applications;
- Implementing several communication activities.

With this professional support, Pons Danubii EGTC can foster in-depth integration of sustainability aspects into the planned and implemented CBC projects ensuring a spill-over effect in the sustainability of natural and cultural heritage along inland waterways of the SK-HU cross-border region.

3. Players involved

The following organisations / actors are planned to be involved in the action:

- Project owners of case study projects: these actors provide information for the elaboration of case studies.
- Local municipalities, tourism service providers, authorities and other relevant actors and stakeholders of the Euroregion: these actors participate in cross-border knowledge sharing events and provide complementary information for the elaboration of the manual.
- Local inhabitants: local inhabitants are the target group of communication activities and awareness-raising actions.
- Managing Authority of the SK-HU CBC Programme: the MA will be invited to knowledge sharing events, it will receive the sustainability manual providing policy recommendations.

4. Timeframe

Planned timing of the activities envisaged:

- Submission of new projects for the new calls for proposals: Winter 2018 – Spring 2019
- Implementation of the funded projects: 2018 - (early) 2020
- Collection of international good practices, findings and conclusions of SWARE and other initiatives (via knowledge sharing events): 2019
- Elaboration of case studies: 2019-2020 (subject to the implementation period of the funded projects)
- Elaboration of the sustainability manual: 2020

5. Costs

Implementation costs of the funded projects is / will be determined in the project application documents and in the subsidy contracts:

- Project budget of KOMBI: 2,873,580.10 €
- Project budget of CULTPLAY: 980,954.70 €
- Project budget of Kn-Kn ImproTrans: 999,766.71€

- New projects: to be determined in the project preparation phases (individually)

The costs of knowledge sharing activities, events amount to approximately 5000€ (costs of events, external fees, etc.). Pons Danubii EGTC will prepare the case studies and the sustainability manual using its internal human and technical capacities.

6. Funding sources

The policy instrument provides funding for project implementation, with co-financing of the participating States and with the own contribution of project partners:

- Total ERDF awarded for KOMBI: 833,811.48 €
- Total ERDF awarded for CULTPLAY: 2,442,543.06 €
- Total ERDF awarded for Kn-Kn ImproTrans: 849 801,70 €
- New projects: to be determined in the subsidy contracts

Knowledge sharing and visibility actions, professional assistance and study drafting tasks fit into the general operation of the EGTC; thus, the costs of these tasks can be covered by the organisation's own resources.

However, the cooperation project planned to be submitted for the new call for proposals of SK-HU CBC Programme can contain several tasks of the action, providing financial possibility to widen the scope of the involved partners, organise more meetings, knowledge sharing events and integrate more external expertise work in the tasks.

ACTION 2 – Policy recommendations for the improved operation of Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 with channelling good practices of other policy instruments

1. Background

According to the lessons learnt from SWARE project during knowledge exchange sessions, the operation of the territorial cooperation programmes can be continuously improved, influenced by the opinion and requirements of involved actors as well as by the good practices gained from other (cross-border, transnational) cooperation programmes. Based on the outcome statements of knowledge sharing activities, several recommendations have been already drafted by SWARE partnership, e.g.

- The importance of digital platforms and new developments in planning and communication (e.g. new ICT tools, big data analysis on decision making);
- The involvement of local expertise, actors, the usage of bottom-up approaches;
- The development of good practice databases;
- The shortening of procedures;
- The greater integration of sustainability aspects in the evaluation of the funded projects' as well as the programme's performance.

Transferable good practices of partners provide adaptable solutions for planning initiatives with real cross-border dimension and impact. These solutions can provide a good starting point for defining the future CBC project requirements in terms of cross-border dimension and impacts and to provide effective support for potential applicants. They can provide inputs, e.g.

- for finetuning the definition of cross-border dimension as a basic requirement towards cross-border projects,
- for tailoring project assessment criteria (with a stronger focus on cross-border dimension and impacts and environmental aspects),
- for defining strategic project directions,
- for defining the financial frameworks of intervention areas by taking into account sustainability aspects,
- for providing good practice examples for future project applicants in knowledge sharing and communication events, activities (e.g. infodays, good practice catalogues).

Thus, investigating these projects' good practices and building the lessons learnt into the policy recommendations to be drafted by the EGTC and shared with the Programme Bodies of the HU-HR Cooperation Programme can enrich these suggestions with tangible examples and experiences.

Good practices of partners:

- **ubiGreen:** the project is considered as a good practice in planning and implementing new initiatives with strong environmental protection aspects. It can provide adaptable tools useful for the different Programme bodies when programming and selecting proposals with environmental sustainability principles. The project provides transferable solutions for mapping (with a webGIS application) and making more usage of data generated by the realization of green projects (e.g. Opendata section with downloadable dataset, dissemination) in active cooperation with non-profit environmental organisations.
- **Network of cross-border bike routes in the Pons Danubii region:** based on the established bike routes & bike sharing system in the cross-border region implemented with the support provided by the Interreg IV Hungary-Slovakia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020, the project aimed the further development of cross-border bike routes along the river Danube and Váh by creating a complex system of bike tourism in the region, harmonizing legislative frameworks, constructing bike routes, providing services and information for bikers and commuters, extending cross-border bike sharing system, implementing joint management structures, laying the possibilities for creating green jobs and combining

cycling and water tourism. The initiative provides a good practice for projects based on each other in order to carry on the results already achieved and to maximize synergies of different interregional programmes.

- **Museum of Italian-Swiss Waters – IDROTOUR:** in the frame of the initiative, a good practice for an integrated tourism cooperation project was formed: the project applies methods (joint development of tourism attractions and services, collaboration of institutions from both sides of the border, hiring a receptive-tourist services operator) for the real sharing of common tourist resources (Lake Maggiore, the river Ticino and the system of Lombard channels), which ensures a greater integration between Italy and Switzerland and a really strong cross-border impact and results in an increased number of visitors strengthening financial sustainability.

Pons Danubii EGTC, as the preparator and implementer of several SK-HU CBC projects has its own experience related to the operation of SK-HU CBC Programme. Moreover, being an EGTC, Pons Danubii gathers seven local municipalities and has a wide spatial and sectoral partner network (for example a network of EGTCs in the programme area), thus it has an insight into the Programme's operation in a broader sense, from the (potential) applicants' point of view. The SWARE project partnership is composed of partners from different countries and partner organisations are involved in other territorial cooperation programmes. Naturally, thanks to the SWARE project, all partners are experienced in the operation of Interreg Europe Programme.

By channelling good solutions of the programmes, new approaches can be adopted providing improved applicant friendliness, better governance practices, social and environmental consciousness, Programme-level sustainability, etc. Therefore, the operation of SK-HU CBC Programme can be influenced with the lessons learnt from other policy instruments in other regions.

2. Action

The main aim of the action is to **elaborate policy recommendations for the improvement of the Programme's administrative, management, financing features** (e.g. information services, procedures, human resources, co-financing solutions). This task is based on two main methods:

- Primary information is planned to be collected with the involvement of stakeholders in the programme area, in order to determine the main development needs of and expectations towards the Programme's operation from the (potential) applicants' aspects;
- Through benchmarking activities, the operation of other cross-border and transnational territorial cooperation programmes (first of all Interreg Europe and Danube Programmes) will be analysed and good transferable practices will be explored.

Special focus of the action:

- Besides suggestions targeting the general improvement of the Programme's operation, policy recommendations stress the importance of more intensive integration of sustainability aspects into the Programme's requirements and assessment criteria;

- Being an EGTC, the action focuses on the possible stronger role of EGTCs in territorial cooperation.

Main tasks:

- Organising stakeholder group meetings (collecting first-hand information from the applicants);
- Regular participation in EGTC's workshops organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (as the new MA of the SK-HU CBC Programme);
- Conducting an online survey (questionnaire) among the EGTCs operating in the programme area (collecting information about these organisations' expectations and possible improved roles in territorial cooperation programmes);
- Conducting an online survey (questionnaire) among the SWARE project partners (collecting information about the operation, good practices of other European territorial cooperation programmes);
- Comparative analysis of operational features of the selected benchmark territorial cooperation programmes – exploring good examples with the assessment of their applicability;
- Preparing a SWOT analysis (determining the internal strength and weaknesses of the Programme's operation, as well as the external opportunities and threats);
- Based on the findings and conclusion of the above tasks, drafting policy recommendations for the improvement of the Programme's performance and delivering it to the Managing Authority.

The output document of the action provides recommendations and adaptable good practices for the improvement of the Programme's operation; thus, it can foster better applicant-friendliness, more effective operation and a stronger sustainability approach.

3. Players involved

The following organisations / actors are planned to be involved in the action:

- SWARE project partners: project partners will support the action by providing information about the operation and good solutions of other territorial cooperation programmes;
- EGTCs of the programme area: the EGTCs participate in a survey and in meetings with the aim collecting first-hand information;

- Other (potential) applicants of SK-HU CBC Programme: during stakeholder group meetings, these actors can articulate their opinion and expectations about the operation of the CBC Programme;
- Managing Authority of SK-HU CBC Programme: MA will get the policy recommendations providing good solutions for the Programme's improvement.

4. Timeframe

As the action is strongly based on experience of partners in terms of territorial cooperation programmes, the action is planned to be implemented towards the end of the programming period, between 2019-2020.

5. Costs

The costs of meetings will be approximately 2000 € (costs of events, external fees, etc.). Pons Danubii EGTC will conduct the surveys and prepare the documents using its internal human and technical capacities.

6. Funding sources

Meetings, surveys and study drafting tasks fit into the general operation of EGTC; thus, the costs of these tasks can be covered by the organisation's own resources.

However, the institutional cooperation project planned to be submitted for the new call for proposals of SK-HU CBC Programme can contain several tasks of the action providing financial possibility to widen the scope of the involved partners, organise more meetings / conduct bigger surveys and integrate more external expertise work in the tasks.

Funding is likely to be available from local and central sources – government and non-governmental – as well.

ACTION 3 – Inclusive management – providing professional / methodological support for improved participatory approach of Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

1. The background

According to the lessons learnt from SWARE project during the transnational knowledge exchange sessions, one of the key success factors of transnational cooperation is the strong participatory approach ensuring bottom-up/community stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes.

Based on the outcome statements of knowledge sharing activities, several interventions can support this intention, e.g.:

- Establishing a formal structure / arrangement for bottom-up / community stakeholder involvement in decision-making;
- Applying different methods / tools, tailored to the types of involved stakeholders;
- Involving stakeholders / actors of all types in public / policy-making structures in order to produce effective solutions for complex situations;
- “Co-creating” solutions / policies between public and private stakeholders;
- Learning from each other, communicating good practices to policy makers;
- Ensuring wide visibility.

Transferable good practices of partners provide adaptable solutions for improving multilevel governance approaches by the active involvement of the local stakeholders (public-private partnership):

- **Waterdriehoek (Water icons):** the project aims to stimulate the attractiveness, visibility and accessibility of the water-rich area of the Province of Zuid-Holland. The project provides transferable solutions for regional territorial, product and market developments through informal cooperation of public and private organizations with investment readiness.
- **Green & Blue Futures Project:** the project provides a good practice for multilevel governance by ensuring and motivating the active involvement of stakeholders engaged with the river Suir, as well as beneficiary inhabitants (including hard to reach people, e.g. youths, disabled) in the planning and implementation processes. This intention was supported by various consultative initiatives, knowledge sharing sessions, communication actions and events directly involving the different target groups (e.g. kayaking, fly fishing, photography, art events). This cooperation model was proved to be successful not only in terms of community engagement, but also in delivering on large green and blue future projects.
- **Lough Derg Marketing Group:** the project created a public-private participatory policy making model for tourism development, management and promotion of Lough (Lake) Derg. The Lough Derg Marketing Group involves a broad range of stakeholders (municipalities, local development companies, tourism sector’s representatives).

The main findings and conclusions of SWARE knowledge sharing events can empower the SK-HU CBC Programme’s good governance policies, integrating effective participatory approaches into its decision-making processes.

2. Action

The action targets the support of inclusive management of SK-HU CBC Programme through **networking and knowledge exchange activities**, facilitating the channelling of professional opinions into the Programme's operation and programming tasks; as well as enhancing cooperation between professional players and methodological support to initialize bottom-up initiatives.

Special focus point of the action is the more intensive integration of sustainability aspects into the Programme's performance.

Planned tasks:

- Organizing cross-border networking events involving the relevant actors and stakeholders, in order to exchange knowledge and experience and to start a wider dialogue within the programme area;
- Establishing and operating a professional advisory body by inviting relevant actors of the programme area (e.g. EGTC committees, local municipalities, institutions, tourism management organisations, local experts) and organizing regular professional meetings on pertinent topics;
- Organizing community planning events (as examples) in order to provide methodological support for bottom-up initiatives;
- Based on the findings and conclusion of the above tasks, elaborating partnership reports of the actual findings and policy recommendations regularly, and delivering them to the Managing Authority.

The output documents of the action provide recommendations for the improvement of the Programme's good governance policies with a more inclusive management approach, ensuring the involvement of local stakeholders and experts and channelling their opinion in the programming exercises.

3. Players involved

The following organisations / actors are planned to be involved in the action:

- Local municipalities, tourism service providers, authorities, experts and other relevant actors and stakeholders of the Euroregion: these actors participate in networking and knowledge exchange events, they provide information and suggestions for the improvement of the Programme and its sustainability approach;

- Local inhabitants: local inhabitants participate in community planning events and activities, they provide information and suggestions for the improvement of the Programme and its bottom-up approaches;
- Managing Authority of SK-HU CBC Programme: the MA will be invited to the networking and knowledge exchange events, it will get the policy recommendation reports.

4. Timeframe

It is important to ensure the involvement of stakeholders / local community continuously, therefore the action is planned to be implemented from 2018 to 2020.

5. Costs

The costs of networking, knowledge exchange and community planning events will be approximately 2000 € (costs of events, external expertise fees, etc.). Pons Danubii EGTC will prepare the documents using its internal human and technical capacities.

6. Funding sources

Events and study drafting tasks fit into the general operation of the EGTC; thus, the costs of these tasks can be covered by the organisation's own resources.

However, the institutional cooperation project planned to be submitted for the new call for proposals of SK-HU CBC Programme can contain several tasks of the action providing financial possibility to widen the scope of involved partners, organise more meetings and integrate more external expertise work in the tasks.

Funding is likely to be available from local and central sources – government and non-governmental – as well.

ACTION 4 – Improved dissemination of successful projects funded by Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme 2014-2020

1. The background

According to the lessons learnt from SWARE project during the transnational knowledge exchange sessions, the wide visibility of funded projects and the dissemination of the projects' and the programmes' results is necessary. Based on the outcome statements of transnational knowledge sharing activities, several interventions can support this intention, e.g.:

- Branding (based on a clear vision);
- Implementing good marketing activities (including new technologies, e.g. mobile apps, big data analysis);
- Besides the tangible natural and cultural attractions, using the potential of intangible heritage elements (e.g. stories) in branding and promoting the regions;
- Disseminating the results to the wider audience, etc.

Transferable good practices of partners provide adaptable solutions for increasing the visibility of the cross-border area and to promote the projects:

- **Lough Derg Marketing Group:** in the frame of the project tourism management and promotion tools – elaborating a signage strategy, tourism product and quality developments, applying destination marketing actions, preparing the Stakeholder Engagement Plan – were developed providing transferable solutions for other tourism destinations as well.
- **Gauja Raftsmen Festival in Strenči:** preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage elements can be ensured by events creating the identity and international recognition of a region regarding its traditions. This is also the purpose of the Gauja Raftsmen Festival organised yearly to promote the craftsmanship of Gauja River loggers and raft making traditions. Intangible heritage can be a symbol of the town and can strongly contribute to its identity.

The main findings and conclusions of SWARE knowledge sharing events can be built in the communication and visibility actions and requirements of the projects funded by the SK-HU CBC Programme and they can improve the Programme's visibility as well.

2. Action

The action focuses on effective and innovative communication and dissemination actions of the sustainability principles of the funded natural and cultural heritage projects to be implemented by the EGTC, thus supporting the improvement of the projects' and Programme's visibility in the cross-border region and beyond.

Planned tasks:

- Carrying out a wide range of cross-border and international dissemination activities in order to promote the EGTC's natural and cultural heritage projects and ensure their wider visibility (e.g. participation in international conferences, EU events, cross-border and local events and study visits organised by the MA/JS/Monitoring Committee, implementing own communication and visibility actions);

- Based on the findings and conclusion of the above tasks, drafting a dissemination report on the dissemination activities performed and delivering it to the Managing Authority.

The output document of the action presents a set of innovative and effective dissemination actions performed by the EGTC, which can be adapted by the Programme itself to promote sustainability principles, and/or they can be integrated into the requirements of the new programming documents in order to improve the funded projects' visibility.

3. Players involved

The following organisations / actors are planned to be involved in the action:

- Stakeholders of funded projects: stakeholders of funded projects cooperate also in communication and dissemination activities;
- Wider audience: the actions will focus on reaching and involving the wider audience as the target group of communication activities;
- Managing Authority of SK-HU CBC Programme: the MA will get the report for further use.

4. Timeframe

As the action is heavily based on the implementation of funded projects, it is planned to be implemented from 2019 to 2020 (in more phases).

5. Costs

Implementation costs of funded projects including also the communication and visibility tasks (see: action 1) are / will be determined in project application documents and in subsidy contracts. Pons Danubii EGTC will prepare the dissemination report using its internal human and technical capacities.

6. Funding sources

Budgets of ongoing and planned projects financed by different cross-border and transnational policy instruments include also communication and dissemination tasks. Study drafting tasks fit into the general operation of the EGTC; thus, the costs of this task can be covered by the organisation's own resources.

Support of the Managing Authority

As it is also written in the Application Form of project SWARE, Pons Danubii EGTC envisaged the improvement of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Program 2014-2020. Fortunately, PD EGTC is in a prosperous position, as it is in regular contact with its policy responsible body, so the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, and with its managing authority, so the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, as the most of its projects, mentioned in this Action Plan, are under the authority of these two Ministries. As soon as this Action Plan was completed, the EGTC contacted these two Ministries in order to acquaint them with this document. Although the policy responsible body of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Program is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, and this Action Plan was presented in person to them, PD EGTC was told to refer to the managing authority of the Program, so to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, in order to receive the Letter of support in which they express their support and approval for the implementation of the actions of this Action Plan, and/or their signature on this document, according to the request of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Europe Programme. That is why PD EGTC presented its Action Plan to the Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and they expressed their support regarding the implementation of the Action Plan of Pons Danubii EGTC.

Date: 08. 04. 2019

Signature: _____



European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
Európai Területi Együttműködési Csoportosulás
Európske zoskupenie územnej spolupráce

Námestie generála Klapku 1
94501 Komárno, Slovenská republika
IČO: 45230021 DIČ: 2023156751
www.ponsdanubii.eu

Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____



Signature on behalf of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary

(Managing Authority): _____



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE
DEPUTY STATE SECRETARY FOR REGIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Zoltán Bara
director

Pons Danubii European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

Námestie gen. Klapku 1.
945 01 Komárno, Slovak Republic

Budapest, 8 April 2019

Letter of Support for the Pons Danubii EGTC

On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary (hereinafter – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade) as the Managing Authority of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Program 2014-2020, I herewith confirm that the project „Sustainable heritage management of Waterway Regions” (hereinafter – the Project) has been successfully implemented by the Pons Danubii EGTC.

I would like to express support to the Pons Danubii EGTC by approving Action Plan for Pons Danubii EGTC developed within the Project.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade recognizes the significance of the Project for the Pons Danubii region and is honoured to be part of the implementation of the Action Plan of the Pons Danubii EGTC.

Sincerely yours,

Péter Kiss-Parciu

