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The Danube:Future idea was built in 2011 by a research group in Vienna, coordinated by Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt (IFF Faculty) and University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU).

In 2012 the project idea was approved by the AARC annual meeting in Zagreb, as one of the four project proposals of joint initiatives of AARC and DRC to the EU Strategy for Danube Region, Priority Area no. 7, *Knowledge Society*.

With the contribution of the project “DIAnet - *Danube Initiative and Alps Adriatic Network*” managed by the University of Trieste (funded by the European Social Fund 2007/13, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region OP), the first step of Danube:Future was possible in April 2013. “DIAnet International School”, a training interdisciplinary school for junior researchers, is the first project started in the framework of Danube:Future. The official website was online on March 2013.

Following the good results of the first DIAnet school edition, the four Core partners (Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt, University of Trieste, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna and University of Novi Sad) defined the flagship project proposal during the summer 2013. On September 24th Danube:Future was adopted as a Flagship project of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, PA no. 7.

The project focuses on the Sustainable Development of the Danube River Basin (DRB): sustainability problems transcend disciplinary boundaries and can only be tackled by inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches. Sustainable development of riverine landscapes is particularly challenging as rivers are fragile ecosystems. Danube:Future seeks to contribute to the sustainable development of the DRB by bringing the humanities into an interdisciplinary dialogue. Environmental humanities are a new area of research whose potential for fostering sustainability transitions has not yet been tapped. Both societal and natural legacies limit the possibilities for future developments. A host of interdisciplinary methods is necessary to deal with our legacies, both cultural and natural.

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The project is divided into three modules:

- **Core:** aimed at establishing an open-access knowledge base to which capacity building and research projects can contribute, thus increasing their visibility and accessibility. The outcomes of the Danube:Future project are available to organizations, institutions and decision makers.
- **Research:** the DRB has a troubled political and environmental history. Environmental problems abound and impede economic growth and sustainable development. Danube:Future takes into account the long-term legacies of this troubled history with a strong focus on humanities and social sciences through new interdisciplinary approaches.
- **Capacity Building:** it takes into account existing initiatives and frameworks dealing with sustainable development research. Danube:Future is aimed at developing trainings in cultural and natural heritage, institutional capacity building for green jobs, and strengthening regional networks.

MANAGEMENT

Danube:Future is managed by the **Core Partners**: Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt (A), University of Trieste (I), University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (A) and University of Novi Sad (SRB).

The **Endorsing partners** of the project, as a joint initiative, are the Danube Rectors' Conference and the Alps Adriatic Rectors' Conference

The **Supporting partner** is the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Vienna (IDM).

Institutions contributing to any of the modules Core, Research and Capacity Building are **Contributing Partners**.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee is composed of at least 5 and not more than 10 members:

- 2 delegates from each Core Partner;
- 1 delegate from DRC;
- 1 delegate from AARC.

The EU Commission or its representative, as well as the Coordinators of the EUSDR - PA 7 (Knowledge society) can participate in the meeting of the Management Committee without voting right.

The Project Coordinator chairs and represents the Management Committee.

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In 2013, the Management Committee was composed of:

- Prof. Verena Winiwarter (AAU), Project Coordinator - Dean of IFF
- Prof. Sergio Paoletti (UniTS) - Pro-Rector
- Prof. Pavle Sekerus (UNS) - Vice-Rector for Science and International Relations
- Prof. Alberto Pallavicini (UniTS)
- Dr. Gertrud Haidvogl (BOKU)
- Dr. Susan Milford (IDM) - Permanent Secretariat of DRC

Meetings were held on October 18th and November 22nd, 2013.

Project Regulations were approved in November.

INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

The International Advisory Board is composed of experts with varied experiences and of different nationalities. Its role is to offer advice on matters of development of Danube:Future, increase the international visibility of Danube:Future and allow it to benefit from the experience of a high-ranking interdisciplinary group. Having outstanding scholars from different specialisations and involved in different networks assisting in the development of Danube:Future as a major initiative in interdisciplinary environmental humanities is of great value for the project.

The International Advisory Board is composed of at least 3 and no more than 15 members, appointed by the Management Committee. The following experts were appointed by the Management Committee:

- Prof Andreas Breinbauer, University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna (Austria)
- Prof Helmut Habersack, BOKU Vienna (Austria)
- Prof Poul Holm, Trinity College Dublin (Ireland)
- Dr Didier Pont, Irstea (France)
- Prof Wolfgang Stalzer, ICPDR (Austria)

CONTRIBUTION TO EUSDR

The Action Plan of EUSDR identifies in PA no. 7 the Action “To strengthen cooperation among universities and research facilities and to upgrade research and education outcomes by focusing on unique selling points” where Universities and Research Centers should engage in stronger cooperation in various fields. The cooperation between DRC and AARC Universities is appreciated, so Danube:Future is a good example of how to reach this goal.

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Furthermore, Danube:Future is connected with all the EUSDR Priority Areas because it potentially contributes to all 4 pillars:

- Pillar 1, Connecting the region: transportation network evolution (PA 1), transition pre- to post-fossil society (PA 2) and nationalism, war, tourism (PA 3);
- Pillar 2, Protecting the environment: results of the research module will be useful for the restoration and maintenance of the quality of waters by the hydromorphological change (PA 4), for the management of environmental risks as toxic sediments (PA 5) and for the preservation of biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils (PA 6);
- Pillar 3, Building prosperity: results of the capacity building module enhance the development of green/blue economy (PA 8) and strengthen the education for people (PA 9);
- Pillar 4, Strengthening the Region: through contributing to the political and institutional structures (PA 10) and to social prosperity (PA 11).

CONTRIBUTION TO MAIN PROBLEMS according to ICPDR

Both Danube:Future capacity building and research projects take also into account the main environmental problems of the Danube and the DRB as they were defined by the ICPDR. It addresses, in particular:

- water quality deterioration from organic pollution because the Danube River Basin is greatly affected by the activities of over 81 million people;
- excessive nutrients which are disturbing the ecological balance in the Danube and the Black Sea;
- heavy metal input, whereas Cadmium, Lead, Mercury, DDT, Lindane and Atrazine are among the most serious pollutants contaminating the Danube River Basin;
- hydromorphological alterations because more than 80% of the length of the Danube is regulated, and over 700 dams and weirs have been built along its main tributaries;
- floods as e.g. that of 2002, which caused €14.4 billion of damage in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, were made worse by canalization;
- loss of natural floodplains.

CONTRIBUTION FROM/TO DRC and AARC

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During the first phase of the project, the DRC/AARC universities were invited to participate in the DIAnet International Schools (*please read the DIAnet School Final reports for more info*). Participants to the 2013 and 2014 editions came from the following universities:

COUNTRY	MEMBER	DRC	AARC
ALBANIA	Universiteti i Shkodrës "Luigj Gurakuqi"		X
AUSTRIA	Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt		X
	University of Wien	X	
BULGARIA	University of Ruse	X	
CROATIA	University of Rijeka		X
	University of Split	X	X
	University of Zagreb	X	X
CZECH REPUBLIC	Charles University Prague	X	
	Czech University of Life Sciences	X	
	Palacký University	X	
HUNGARY	Eötvös Loránd University	X	
	University of Pécs	X	X
ITALY	Free University of Bozen/Bolzano	X	
	University of Trieste	X	X
KOSOVO	University of Prishtina	X	
ROMANIA	"Babes-Bolyai" University	X	
	Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad	X	
SERBIA	University of Novi Sad	X	
SLOVAKIA	Constantine the Philosopher University Nitra	X	
SLOVENIA	University of Ljubljana		X
	University of Maribor	X	X
	University of Nova Gorica	X	X
	University of Primorska	X	X

ANNUAL REPORT 2013**CORE MODULE**

During the first year, the following activities were performed:

Networking: the Danube:Future project was presented in different events:

- 5th Steering Group meeting of EUSDR PA7 in Bratislava (SK) on 14th February
- 6th Steering Group meeting of EUSDR PA7 in Ulm (D) on 24th September;
- 2nd EUSDR Forum in Bucharest (Ro) on 27th - 28th October by the Project Administrator;
- DRC Annual Assembly in Cluj-Napoca (Ro) on 8th November by the Project Coordinator;
- AARC SG meeting in Tuzla (Bosnia) on 19th November by AAU and UniTS

Website: the first action of the Core Members was the creation of the website (www.danubefuture.eu), available online since the end of March 2013.

The Core Partners have been working on an **integrated networked program** aimed to establish a knowledge base to which the capacity building and research projects will contribute. An integrated, networked program will build the core of supporting existing and future bi-, tri- and multilateral capacity building and research projects. The knowledge base will be available open access, ensuring that the output of the Danube:Future program can be utilized by all interested organizations, institutions and initiatives.

RESEARCH MODULE

The main goal of this module is to create new bi-/tri- and multilateral research projects funded by Horizon 2020, Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund), joint programs of national research funds, etc. These projects investigate specific questions related to the overall aim and contributing specifically to the societal and environmental challenges of the DRB. They also contribute to the knowledge base of the integrated core project.

The expert knowledge on sustainability issues available through Danube:Future will allow even small and peripheral communities and actors to gain access to the international state of the art in matters of sustainable development. The distribution of project results will be greatly enhanced through the offered networking tools.

The Core partners are working on mapping the existing projects linked to the themes of Danube:Future.

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CAPACITY BUILDING MODULE

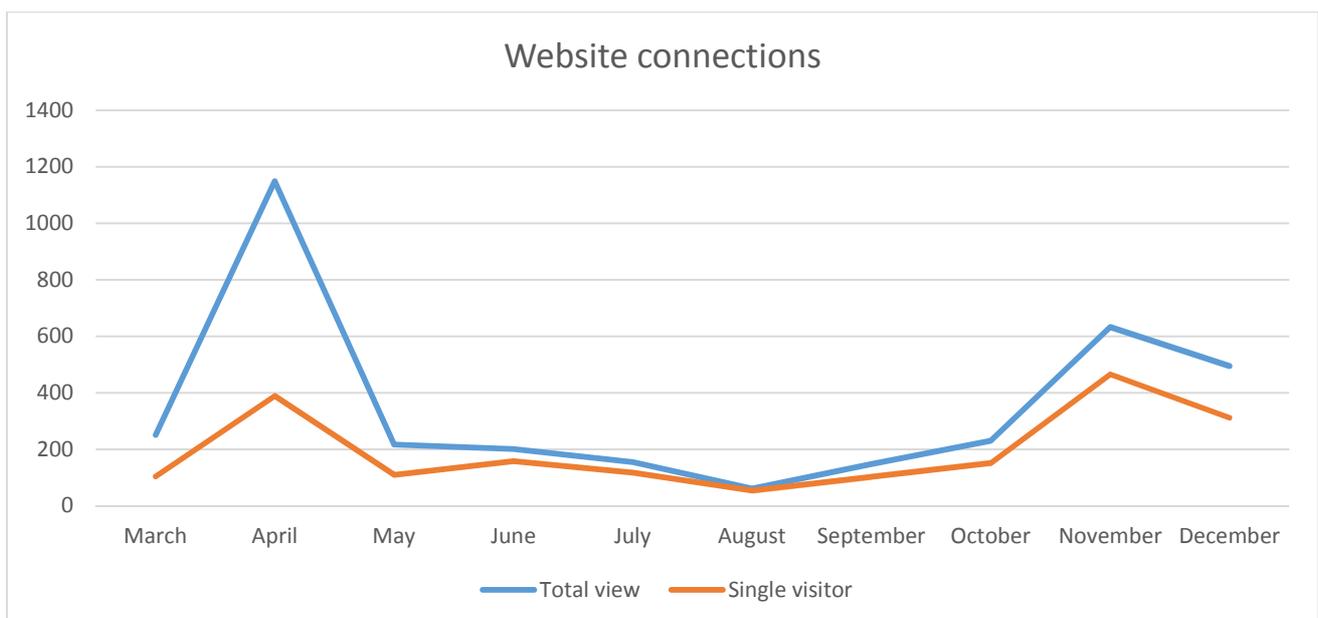
DIAnet International School is the first project linked to Danube:Future. It started in January 2013, with the financial contribution of the European Social Fund OP FVG 2007/13, and CARIGO Bank Foundation of Gorizia. The School is held in Gorizia (Italy), on the border between Italy and Slovenia; the Isonzo river, and its problems, is a good case study for the participants.

The first edition, “Interdisciplinary methods for the sustainable development of the Danube Region” was held in April 2013 (13 - 22): 37 participants from 18 Universities and from 12 Danube Region countries attended. Two excursions, 12 lectures, and Working Group activities were organised. Six project proposals, developed by the participants, are the outcomes of this edition. They were published in the “2013DIS Proceedings”, which were available online in October 2013. More information can be found in the final report of the edition.

The second edition, focused on the “The role of natural heritage for the sustainable development of the Danube Region” is scheduled for March 2014.

VISIBILITY OF Danube:Future

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

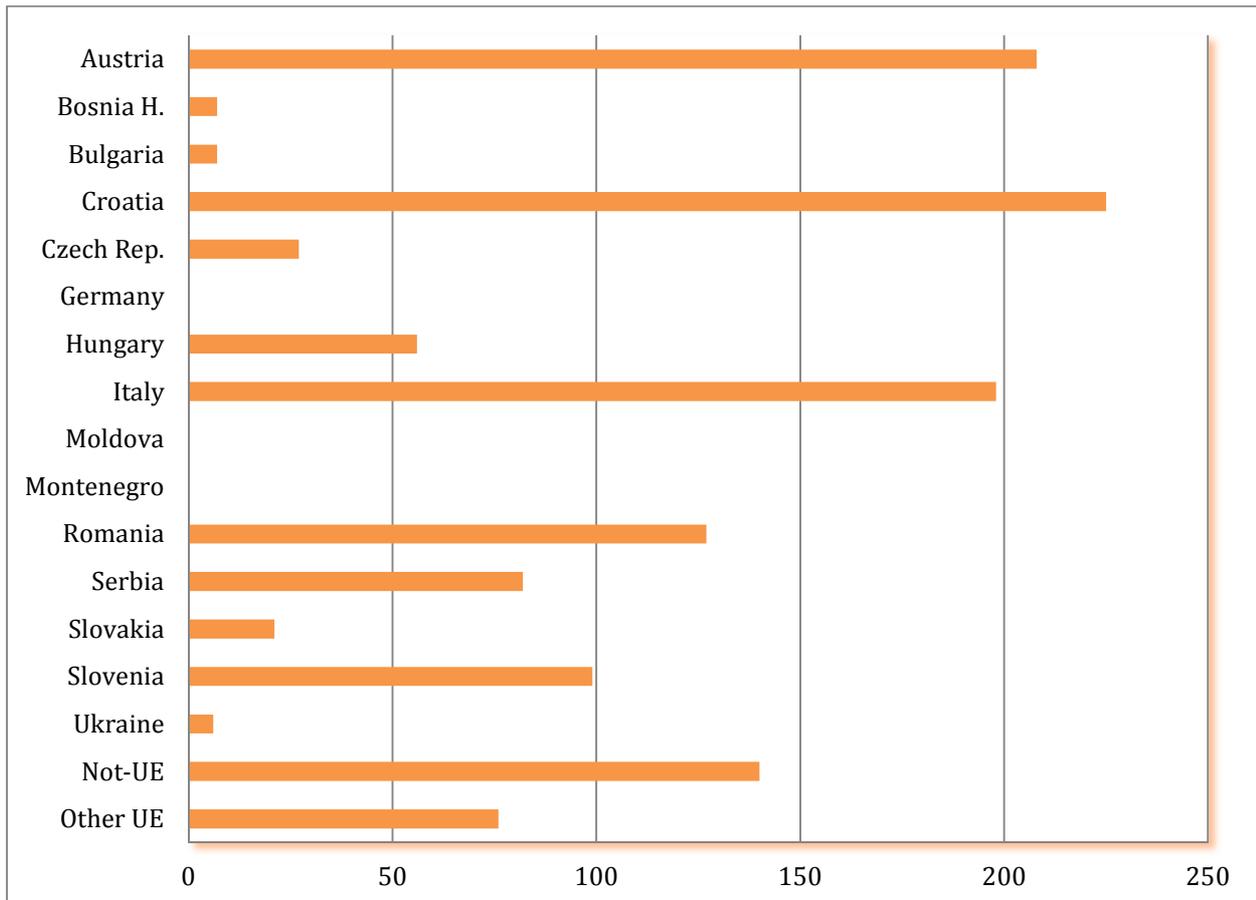


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Total view: 3.539; Total visitors: 1.960

Registered members: 88

Different country access:



Use of ICT to connect to the website:

- Desktop/notebook: 92,51%
- Mobile: 4,61%
- Tablet: 2,88%

SOCIAL MEDIA

- **Linkedin:** account open on November 8th 2013, “Danube:Future project”
 - Members: 10
 - Countries: Italy, Austria, Romania

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WEBSITES where Danube:Future is mentioned

- EUSDR: the project is mentioned on the “initiatives” page (<http://www.danube-region.eu/organisations-and-initiatives/projects-and-initiatives>)
- EUSDR PA7: the project is mentioned in the Flagship projects area and a short description is available (<http://groupspaces.com/KnowledgeSociety/pages/projects>)
- DRC: a specific page is dedicated to the Danube:Future; DIS activities in the “news folder” (<http://www.drc-danube.org/activities/partner-of-danube-future/>)
- DRC/AARC Universities: Koper, Klagenfurt, Trieste, Corvinus, Pecs
- Other: WBC-INCO.NET, Welcome Office FVG, IDM (DanubeCat).

PUBLICATIONS linked to Danube:Future

- “2013 DIAnet International School Proceedings”
www.openstarts.units.it/dspace/handle/10077/9292
 - visits: 415
 - countries: Italy, USA, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Romania, Albania, Serbia
 - full downloads: 271

NEXT STEPS FOR 2014

Main activities on which the Core Partners are working for 2014:

- ✓ Cooperation Agreement to strengthen the Core of the project (→ *done on March 22nd 2014*)
- ✓ starting the development of a DF integrated networked program (→ *EUSDR PA10 project for Technical Assistance was presented on April 1st 2014*)
- ✓ developing the 2014 DIAnet International School (→ *done on March 22nd - 31st 2014*)
- ✓ increasing the number of members and widening the scope of the International Advisory Board
- ✓ developing the DF WIKI and the DF knowledge-base of experts and projects connected with DFp
- ✓ preparing the 2015 DIAnet International School
- ✓ preparing the 2015 workshop for building a new Horizon 2020 consortium
- ✓ promoting the activities of Danube:Future in the Region, going from the members of DRC and AARC to research centers, institutions (national and international), SMEs interested in the sustainable market (green and blue economy)