

EUSDR PA7 Coordinators
 Danube Rectors' Conference
 Alps Adriatic Rectors' Conference
 Danube:Future International
 Advisory Board
 Danube:Future Management
 Committee
 Danube:Future Core Partners

Trieste, 30th April 2014

2014 DIAnet International School Final Report

1. OVERVIEW of the PARTICIPANTS

By the Call Deadline of December 6th, 2014, 40 candidates had sent their application form via their AARC/DRC University. On December 18th 2014, 39 were admitted based on the quality of their application. In the end, the 2014 DIAnet International School was attended by 35 students or recent post-docs:

ALBANIA	Universiteti i Shkodrës "Luigj Gurakuqi"	3
AUSTRIA	University of Wien	1
	Alpen Adria Universität Klagenfurt	1
BULGARIA	University of Ruse	1
CROATIA	University of Zagreb	3
	University of Rijeka	1
CZECH REPUBLIC	Charles University Prague	1
	Czech University of Life Sciences	1
	Palacký University	1
HUNGARY	Eötvös Loránd University	1
ITALY	University of Trieste	5

ROMANIA	"Babes-Bolyai" University	5
SERBIA	University of Novi Sad	4
SLOVAKIA	Constantine the Philosopher University Nitra	1
SLOVENIA	University of Nova Gorica	2
	University of Primorska	3
	University of Ljubljana	1

2. OVERVIEW of the TEACHERS

In total, 25 teachers (professors, researchers and other contributor) participated:

Alpen-Adria Universitat Klagenfurt	Professors	2
	Researchers	1
Universität für Bodenkultur Wien	Professors	3
	Researchers	2
University of Nova Gorica	Researchers	1
University of Primorska	Researchers	1
University of Trieste	Professors	3
	Researchers	6
University of Udine	Professors	2
Other Organisations	ARPA FVG	1
	Idrija Mine	1
	Modrej Hutchery	1
	SBIC	1

The School Facilitator who followed all the working groups activities, was provided by AAU.

3. OVERVIEW of the STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

The 2014DIS was composed of 61 hours of activities divided into:

- WELCOME: "Introduction ceremony" (2 hours) - Organizing Committee;
- LECTURES: 15 hours in 2 days on the topics "Ecology and environmental sciences" and "Sustainability and nature conservation" - 15 teachers involved;
- EXCURSIONS: 2 daylong excursions, the first one to Slovenia (Idrija Mercury Mine and Tolmin - 2 teachers and 2 guests involved), the second one to the Lower Isonzo River in Isola della Cona - Cona Island (2 teachers involved);

- GROUP WORK INTRODUCTION: 3 hours dedicated to “Project management of interdisciplinary projects” and “Trans-disciplinary projects for sustainable development” - 3 teachers involved;
- GROUP WORK: 23 hours in 4 days, 3 of which were plenary discussions on the daily results of the group work;
- CONCLUSIONS: “presentation by the Working Groups” and “Final marks” (3 hours) - Organizing Committee.

4. **OVERVIEW of the FUNCTIONS of the website as tool for interdisciplinary teaching and dissemination, “Interactive Teaching Tool”**

The official website of Danube:Future includes a specific area dedicated to the DIAnet Schools. The website is the main tool to create and foster the network of Universities, research centres and stakeholders interested in the Danube:Future Project.

For each edition of the DIAnet Schools, there is a specific area which includes the description (call, draft programme, facilities, etc.) and the list of lectures and other activities - which links to the details (teachers involved, description of the activity, research field). School participants have an area dedicated to their project works - where they can upload the documents of their works, developed during the school.

Teachers are requested to disseminate new elements of interdisciplinary studies. Each teacher involved is responsible for the uploading and updating of documents and any material relevant to the project topics, which can be done also outside the school. All important uploaded information reinforces the system of interdisciplinary methods.

Participants can make use of the available information as well as disseminate their own contributions to their colleagues when carrying out teaching activities. The contents of the DIAnet School will then be accessed by a much larger and ever-growing number of stakeholders interested in the themes of the Danube:Future project.

5. **OVERVIEW of the RESULTS**

During 2014DIS, students should have gained basic knowledge about the role of natural heritage for the sustainable development of the Danube river basin. The lectures which were offered dealt with biodiversity and nature protection on the one hand, and on the other hand with

sustainable agriculture, climate change and in particular with environmental legacies from past societal activities.

Draft project proposals developed in working groups were the main result to be produced during the school. Participants were divided in six working groups, each of them representing a variety of disciplines and countries as well as PhD-students and young post-doc researchers. The groups had to agree first on a common idea for a future project which addresses one of the societal challenges of Horizon 2020 and takes into account the environmental challenges of the DRB according to the ICPDR1. Further, the project idea had to be related to natural heritage. On the last day of the school, groups presented their research proposals - which should ideally represent a part of an application to a funding authority. Students received feedback on their co-developed papers and were invited to pursue them further after the school. While groups differed in the quality of their work and their ability to agree on an interdisciplinary topic, all groups developed an original idea and carried out the task to formulate the core of a research proposal.

5.1. Themes of Project proposals

GREEN	<i>“ECORR”</i> - Creating ecological corridors to support sustainable development based on long term approach
YELLOW	<i>“FoCUS - Food Chemicals Used Safely”</i> - Environmental pollution monitoring and adverse effects of chemicals used in food production
RED	<i>“SHARED (Society, Heritage, Awareness, River, Environment, Danube)”</i> - Sharing Responsibility for Protection of the Danube Delta
BLUE	<i>“LINDA”</i> - Promotion of Low Input Danube Agriculture in the Mura River Basin
VIOLET	<i>“REFREsh DANUBE”</i> - Refused-Derived Fuel from Municipal Solid Waste to reduce landfills
ORANGE	<i>“Danube Youth”</i> - Danube Future

¹ International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin

5.2. Evaluation of the work

This subchapter of the final report summarizes the evaluation and final conclusions of the group work. Detailed evaluations of the single group projects can be found in the evaluation report.

The project proposals and their presentation were the main outcomes produced by the participants. All working groups succeeded in developing project ideas based on current societal problems as addressed in Horizon 2020 or the goals of the ICPDR. Three of the project ideas aim at decreasing the input of nutrients or organic and hazardous substances into the Danube and its tributaries either via changes in agricultural management (LINDA), the use of chemicals in food production (FoCUS) or waste collection and recycling for industrial purposes (REFREsh). They deal with pollution which is among the most pressing environmental problems in the Danube and DRB. The project SHARED refers to a reduction of pollution but its core interest is the preservation of natural heritage in the Danube delta. ECORR is the only proposal which considers a long term perspective which is not surprising given the fact that a historian and an archaeologist were in this group. Danube Youth - Danube Future focuses on the social sciences.

Most groups also succeeded in an interdisciplinary integration of the different scientific backgrounds of the members. Changes in group constitution not under the control of the participants have to be taken into consideration when assessing the outcomes. One group (Danube Youth - Danube Future) was heavily affected by the withdrawal of two group members.

Overall, the developed project ideas are innovative and have the potential to be submitted for national, bi- or multilateral funding. The groups managed well to work constructively with new people from different disciplines and to produce a defined output in a limited time. Despite the heavy workload they were highly motivated and had a positive spirit. Scheduling the group work in one block in the second half of the school enabled participants to concentrate on their task without being interrupted by new input provided in lectures and seminars. While this system intensifies the interaction between individual lecturers and students, it intensifies group interaction. As can be seen, this system leads to good learning outcomes and shall be used also in 2015.

5.3. Feedback from participants

The 2014DIS proved to be successful both in its organization (staff, assistance, premises, facilities) and the teaching activities. As far as the website of the event is concerned, it sometimes proved to be not very easy to browse in terms of contents/structure and download/upload of the material.

Generally speaking, indoor lectures were well-focused and interdisciplinary and met the participants' expectations despite their different academic backgrounds. The participants largely praised the outdoor lectures/excursions, regarded as interesting and engaging activities that allowed the participants not only to learn more about the topic of the School, but also to start interdisciplinary cross-cultural and international networks. More occasions to strengthen the international networking have been strongly recommended for the future editions of DIAnet School.

Group working proved to be effective and useful, despite more assistance at the beginning of group working activities was requested by the participants, together with more information on managing group work and interpersonal relationships in international work groups.

The participants also suggested to better balance theory and practice, a more flexible schedule, more time dedicated to the work groups and more lectures/drill on how to write a project proposal.

Teachers were appreciated when their English proficiency and presentation was adequate for the international context of the School.

Overall the School met the expectations of participants who considered it useful for their future careers.

5.4. SWOT- Analysis, Lessons Learned and Planned Improvements

5.4.1. Strengths:

- The school benefited from the international composition of the students and from their broad disciplinary background and experiences in interdisciplinary work.
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- Offering a wide field of topics and opening the school to participants from all scientific fields and countries from the Danube and Alps-Adriatic region provides the chance to foster international and interdisciplinary cooperation. The feedback of students clearly demonstrated that this is an asset of the DIAnet schools.
- The lectures addressed topics which are important for sustainability and natural heritage and many lectures focused on the Danube river Basin.
- The types and mixing of courses (lectures, interactive parts, excursions, group work) were appropriate to stimulate discussions among the students and within the groups. The organization of the schedule, with lectures and excursions in the first part of the school and group work in the second part, proved to be a good format for the success of the working groups.
- The working group sessions motivated students to discuss sustainability problems and to develop joint projects.
- The use of strategic documents such as Horizon 2020, Danube River Basin Strategy, ICPDR-documents as the basis for the projects was helpful for the working groups and led to proposals which have a chance of being developed into full proposals.

5.4.2. Weaknesses:

- As already noted last year, the workload for students was very high; the program covered full days from Sunday 23rd to Saturday 29th March and lasted until Sunday 30th March, midday. According to the students, the most challenging was the number of indoor activities, in particular the number of lectures.
 - Students would like to be more involved in the group formation and in particular have more time in the beginning to get acquainted with each other.
 - The specific tasks of the groups, in particular which parts of the project proposal should have been prepared, were not fully clear. In order to reach the objective, i.e. to enable participants to prepare drafts of project proposals they can later on submit to a funding agency, the introduction into group work should be further improved.
 - The teachers followed only partly the recommendation to limit the lecture up to 50 minutes excluding student interactions.
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5.4.3. Chances:

- DIAnet schools are organized as a joint cooperation of the Danube Rectors Conference and the Alps-Adriatic Rectors Conference, providing access to the largest institutionalized pool of young researchers and PhD-students in these regions. This should, however, be explored, to increase attention and awareness in the universities of the DRC and AARC.
- Another edition of the DIAnet school has been planned for 2015. The structure of lectures and the introduction into group work can be further improved for this event.

5.4.4. Threats:

- Teachers came also in the 2014 edition mainly from the organizing universities. The number of student applications could be increased. Thus, the call for teachers as well as the call for students must be better spread. From discussions with students who finally did not apply or had to withdraw, it seems that a ten-days school is too long.
- Many students evaluated the duration of the school and the number of lectures as excessive. This is something, however, which is established by the ESF rules and therefore cannot be changed.

5.5. Lessons learned from 2013DIS and planned improvements:

5.5.1. Lessons learned from 2013DIS

- all lectures and excursions were concentrated in the first days of the school, followed by group work in the second part;
 - the lectures were split into 50% of presentation time and 50% discussion time with the participants;
 - teachers were requested to link their topic to the DRB during a webinar before the start of the School;
 - more detailed instructions for group work: “Handout for group work”, “EU funds overview” and two lessons on Project Management Cycle and Transdisciplinary project, were delivered to enable less experienced students to get familiar with the targets;
 - a facilitator from AAU supervised the Working Groups during the School.
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5.5.2. planned improvements for 2015DIS

- Possibilities to access the universities of DRC and AARC for publishing and promoting the call for teachers and the call for participants should be better explored.
- Introduction to group work should be extended and made on the first day.
- Teachers should all participate in the webinar. Therefore, they should confirm their participation when applying for the school. This should ensure that lectures have an extensive interactive part with students.
- The number of lectures should be reduced or their duration shortened. On the other hand the time for group work should be extended and group work should officially start already on the first day.
- Students should have the opportunity to present briefly their own work or projects on the first day.

6. OVERALL BUDGET OF THE SCHOOL

	E.S.F. FVG	CARIGO	Uni TS	AAU	BOKU	Other AARC / DRC	TOTAL COSTS
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE							
Preparation			€ 2.273,20	€ 1.432,80	€ 2.967,32		€ 6.673,32
During school			€ 1.176,36	€ 5.254,20	€ 3.613,78		€ 10.044,34
Outcomes			€ 959,48	€ 716,40	€ 1.148,64		€ 2.824,52
TEACHING BODY							
Lectures	€ 308,90		€ 2.456,40	€ 1.422,00	€ 3.090,96	1.900,00	€ 9.178,26
WGs Facilitator				€ 4.620,00			€ 4.620,00
Accomodation	€ 980,00						€ 980,00
Living costs	€ 1.585,00						€ 1.585,00
PARTICIPANTS							
Accomodation	€ 7.175,00						€ 7.175,00
Living costs	€ 8.578,00						€ 8.578,00
DIAnet STAFF							
Secretary			€ 6.392,50				€ 6.392,50
Tutor		€ 2.260,11					€ 2.260,11
Technician		€ 1.281,00					€ 1.281,00
Other costs	€ 2.225,00						€ 2.225,00

EXCURSIONS							
Idrija - Tolmin	€ 610,00						€ 610,00
Cona Island	€ 1.093,14						€ 1.093,14
WEBSITE							
Update	€ 206,47	€ 3.123,20					€ 3.329,67
GENERAL ORGANIZATION							
Facilities	€ 3.120,00		€ 1.950,00				€ 5.070,00
Stationery		€ 1.352,08	€ 147,62				€ 1.499,70
DIS PROMOTION AND OUTCOMES							
Promotion		€ 1.983,40					€ 1.983,40
Proceedings	€ 790,00						€ 790,00
Other costs							€ -
	€ 26.671,51	€ 9.999,79	€ 15.355,56	€ 13.445,40	€ 10.820,70	1.900,00	€ 78.192,96

7. CONTRIBUTION OF THE DIANET School to HORIZON 2020

- The nature of the sustainability challenges addressed by Horizon 2020 (health, demographic change and wellbeing; food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy; secure, clean and efficient energy; smart, green and integrated transport; inclusive, innovative and secure societies; climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials) requires international and interdisciplinary approaches. Each of these challenges will play out differently in different areas of Europe and will require both localized knowledge (as reflected, e.g. in knowledge of local languages and historical legacies influencing the available paths for development) and an overarching approach.
- By linking a specific area, i.e. the Danube River Basin, a target area of a macro-regional strategy of the EU, with the Grand Challenges of Horizon 2020 and building an interdisciplinary network of young scholars, DIAnet schools contribute to the preparation and workability of Horizon 2020. By offering experience in interdisciplinary group work, DIAnet schools engage in capacity building in a crucial area and at a crucial moment. By mapping the EUSDR challenges onto Horizon 2020, DIAnet schools pave the way for successful participation in Horizon 2020.

8. Danube:Future in EUDSR PA7

DIAnet Schools are designed to foster networking among young researchers (and their teachers). They contribute to all priority areas of Pillar 1, “Connecting the region”, because teachers and students come from universities of the area and engage into research in all thematic areas (intermodality, sustainable energy, culture and tourism). The particular contribution of DIAnet, does, however lie in priority area 2, protecting the environment, The DIAnet Initiative develops people and skills and contributes to strengthening knowledge society, two of the priority areas of pillar 3. Finally, DIAnet is about capacity building on a regional level, hence, it contributes to strengthening the region. As first phase of Danube:Future, a research program dedicated to long-term research on the sustainable development of the Danube River Basin, DIAnet offers networking and capacity building, two necessary prerequisites for the development of intra- and inter-regional projects in the DRB.

9. 2015 DIAnet International School

The next edition of the School will be held in Gorizia from March 14th to 23rd 2015. The theme of the 2015DIS is “The Role of Cultural Heritage for the Sustainable Development of the Danube Region”. A Call for teacher will be issued by May. The Call for Participants is planned by the end of September 2014 (deadline for applications in December).

The Organizing Committee

Prof. Alberto Pallavicini (Director)

Dr. Gertrud Haidvogl (Leader)

Prof. Verena Winiwarter

Prof. Mauro Tretiach
