



## EUSALP FINANCIAL DIALOGUE NETWORKS WORKSHOP: taking the embedding process one step further

March 10 • 9:00-10:30 • Online

### Minutes

 [Supportive documents available here](#)

### Workshop concept and goal

EUSALP Financial Dialogue Networks (FDN) aim at **facilitating the connection between EUSALP activities and available funding** by enhancing dialogue and exchange of information between Action Groups (AG) members and bodies in charge of managing funding opportunities: managing authorities (MA) and intermediary bodies.

The first networks were set up at the EUSALP Embedding Workshop, during the second EU MRS Week (March 2021), on a voluntary basis<sup>1</sup>:

-  Network on **energy transition** and specifically hydrogen, led by the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region;
-  Network on **sustainable mobility** led by the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region;
-  Network on **digital technology** led by the Lombardy Region and the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region.

This workshop aimed at gathering the leaders of these networks so they could give a **state-of-the-art of the work done so far** and their **plans for the future**. It was also the opportunity to **reflect and share experiences** from the practical work with the MA.

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<sup>1</sup> A network on natural hazard led by Austria within AG8 was set up on a trial basis, but it was found that there is no need for a financial network in this field as in most countries this area is well covered by government funding.

## STATE OF THE ART BY NETWORK LEADERS AND PLANS FOR 2022

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN 2021	
 Energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitation of the <b>focus group on hydrogen issue</b> gathering 9 regions (which signed a letter of intent) to set up consortiums and apply for European funds. Liguria Region joined in 2022 and there are currently 10 regions committed in this cooperation.</li> </ul>
 Sustainable mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First meeting during the 2<sup>nd</sup> MRS week gathering EUSALP AG4 (Mobility) stakeholders and key MA, which was timely, as the meeting allowed exchange before the <b>labelling process of alpine mobility projects</b><sup>2</sup>.</li> <li><b>Close cooperation with MA representatives</b> (in particular Alain Baron of the DG Move), who intervened in several events, providing key information on funding opportunities to our stakeholders and is following closely our labelled projects.</li> <li><b>Labelling</b> of 6 new projects in 2021 by AG4 (after 14 in 2020)</li> </ul>
 Digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation of the <b>Workshop on Digital innovation and smart lands</b> – including digital innovation hub and smart villages during the EUSALP Embedding Workshop Tuesday 2nd March 2021</li> <li><b>Documentation</b> on the main activities on digitalisation carried out within the EUSALP framework</li> <li><b>Identification of some priorities</b> in the field of digitalisation taking into account the consultation of the MA in the context of the embedding activities</li> </ul>
OBSTACLES MET	
 Energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alpine Space Programme fits perfectly to the EUSALP issues and projects: <b>it can be difficult to convince authorities to look beyond this funding source</b></li> <li>Difficulties for regional and new actors to benefit from new funds: <b>lack of experience, resources, knowledge, coordination</b></li> </ul>
 Sustainable mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties to <b>mobilise other DGs</b> beyond DG Regio</li> </ul>
 Digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Low awareness</b> about relevance of DATA interoperability between Alpine regions at transnational/cross-bordering level and relevance of real-time data for policy development</li> <li>Lack of a <b>common framework and methodology</b>; lack of a shared roadmap with objectives and expected results</li> <li>Difficulties in <b>identifying the most appropriate stakeholders</b> to support PPP for data sharing, low awareness of large open data availability</li> <li>Difficulties in <b>connecting the relevant activities</b> in the field of digitalisation with financial support</li> <li>Low accessibility of PAs data for user (Universities, Privates, Citizens)</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The labelling of projects has been designed since 2017 to **identify projects of macro-regional interest**, either by their cross-border dimension or by their exemplarity in terms of sustainable mobility. These projects **illustrate EUSALP objectives and priorities in terms of mobility** so that they are taken into account by the MAs and **get specific support when applying for European funding or registration in the TEN-T**.

GOOD PRACTICES TO SHARE	
 Sustainable mobility	<p>The <b>labelling process</b> launched in 2020 by our EUSALP AG4 is a very good basis for a financial dialogue with MA as it clearly identifies Alpine regions priorities, needs and key projects. For example, the forthcoming inclusion of the Nice-Ventimiglia-Breil-Cuneo rail hub in the overall TEN-t network has demonstrated the positive influence of the EUSALP label.</p>
 Digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation of the <b>Workshop on Digital innovation and smart lands</b>, gathering experts from different fields to share the common vision</li> <li>• <b>First identification of the strategic projects</b></li> <li>• <b>Mapping of the most relevant EU Programmes and Initiatives</b></li> </ul>
ACTIVITIES AND GOALS FOR 2022	
 Energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Supporting the application by a member of the network</b> (Auvergne Rhone Alpes Agency on Energy and Environment) as lead partner for an Interreg Alpine Space project, which has been incubated in EUSALP AGs thanks to the Hydrogen Focus group</li> <li>• Developing European initiatives with other regions to <b>apply for major calls involving the private sector</b></li> <li>• Strengthening the <b>links with the private sector</b>: the focus group could be part of a private consortium as an observatory member in a future CleanHydrogenPartnership call</li> <li>• <b>Creating a well-functioning FDN</b> with regular meetings and active working groups</li> <li>• <i>Point to clarify: clarification on how to apply for CEF calls.</i></li> </ul>
 Sustainable mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promoting dialogue</b> between MA and EUSALP partners within the FDN during the EUSALP AG4 Mobility Conference (Innsbruck - May 2022), where the labelled projects and mobility priorities will be promoted (following the declaration of EUSALP region and states calling for a development of rail and modal shift from road to rail)</li> <li>• <b>Organising a FDN meeting</b> during the AG4 meeting in Marseille in September</li> </ul>
 Digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Identifying AG needs and requirements</b> and matching them with the typologies of actions supported by relevant programmes</li> <li>• <b>Consulting national / regional coordinators</b> to understand priorities and commitment</li> <li>• <b>Exchanging information and best practices</b> with other FDN</li> <li>• Defining a <b>common vision for FDN</b></li> <li>• Identifying <b>synergies with EUSALP Innovation Facility</b></li> <li>• Agreeing on a <b>common Roadmap on Digitalisation</b> in line with EUSALP strategy and priorities</li> <li>• <b>Submitting first projects</b> for financial support under the most relevant funding sources</li> <li>• Facilitate and build <b>cross-policy cooperation</b> in the EUSALP</li> </ul>
SUPPORT EXPECTED FROM MRS STAKEHOLDERS	
 Energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support expected from the TSS to <b>develop the network</b></li> <li>• Support <b>building links with the thematic DGs</b></li> </ul>

 Sustainable mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support expected from the TSS policy officer in charge of mobility topics to <b>coordinate the funding needs and priorities</b> to get clear answers from MA and concrete results.</li> </ul>
 Digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Methodological approach</b> from the European Commission</li> <li>• <b>Strategic orientation</b> from the Executive Board</li> <li>• <b>Operational support</b> by the TSS</li> <li>• <b>Commitment and participation</b> by other regions (also by involving the most relevant stakeholders)</li> </ul>

## REFLEXION AND EXPERIENCE FROM THE PRACTICAL WORK WITH MANAGING AUTHORITIES

Anders BERGSTRÖM, Policy Area Coordinator (PA Education, Science and Social affairs) EUSBSR



**Implementation formats besides projects are needed:** so called “missions” where stakeholders can be gathered to jointly co-create solutions to societal challenges presented in the Action Plans also offering “homes” for various projects.



**Mainstream programmes need macro-regional strategies** as strategic frameworks for their transnational cooperation. The new CPR make transnational cooperation compulsory and therefore macro-regional strategies can offer support.



**Interface between programmes and strategy are needed:** projects funded by mainstream programmes are national or regional, hence coordination is needed between programmes and between programmes and macro-regional strategy - MA networks are the needed infrastructure for this coordination.



**Engage in stakeholder dialogues:** by engaging stakeholders in “missions” they themselves bring funding own or with help of projects funded by programmes they are familiar with. For example regions are used to work with mainstream programmes.



**Focus on being relevant to stakeholders:** introduce transnational collaboration in stakeholders own strategic development – introduce thematic networks as part of “missions” where stakeholders can choose different levels of engagement.

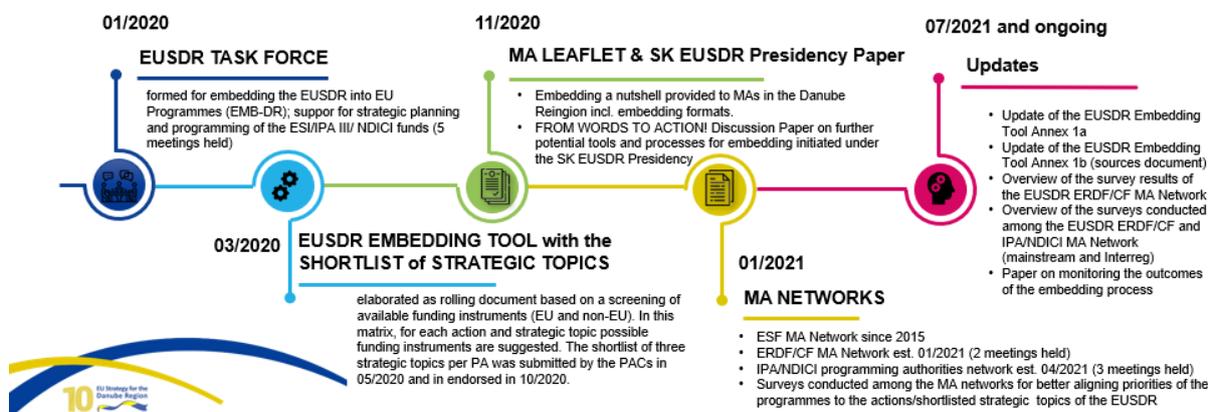


**Capacity building is the key to success:** macro-regional strategies are new to us all and we all need to learn how to implement them. This learning needs to be offered for National Coordinators, Thematic Coordinators, members of Steering Groups, “mission-leaders” and for MA to mention the most important target groups.

Robert LICHTNER, Coordinator, Danube Strategy Point, EUSDR

## EUSDR embedding is an inclusive and comprehensive process

[More detail on EUSDR embedding process here.](#)



### Support / Facilitation of the embedding process:

- Coordination on national levels via National Coordinators
- Streamline & support project development on thematic levels and thematic coordination and support - Priority Area Coordinators
- Operational support and facilitation via Danube Strategy Point
- Strategic advisory role of the European Commission

### Embedding tools (examples)

- Coordinated calls for parallel cooperation between single projects / chain of projects
- Synchronised calls
- Awarding extra points in the evaluation process for EUSDR relevant projects
- Labelling of projects having EUSDR impact

## Input on the commission expectations on the networks

David MATZEK-LICHTENSTEIN, DG REGIO

**The strategies are the vessels – the networks are the tools** – as the Macro-Regional Strategies have no own funding, common priorities need to be met with increased cooperation. EUSALP being the youngest MRS, it was decided to set up thematic networks to see success stories and examples.

**Cooperation can increase efficiency and effectiveness** – The Council has significantly sharpened the proposed regulation to require cooperation in all ERDF programmes and under all specific objectives – but it requires coordination.

### Networks should:

- a) Gather the relevant actors
- b) Exchange on investment needs and plans
- c) Work result-oriented

The clear intention is to materialise gains from cooperation: networks are very flexible in order to cater the needs and ease the work, not add a new workload.

### **How can the Commission help?**

- Identify relevant actors and programmes
- Make contact with the European Institutions and stakeholders
- Simplify communication between programmes and strategies

### **And what next?**

- The Commission is currently **screening the draft programmes**: there is a great willingness from MA to involve MRS, but sometimes they just don't know what is being done and how they can relate to this.
- We are quickly **moving from the programming to the implementation period** – regional programmes have paved the way to more joint projects, but there is a need to identify actors on the ground, build working relations, and make sure that the legal and theoretical basis is translated into action!
- **Monitoring and evaluation** is important when moving focus to implementation: important with indicators and targets able to deliver upon by the MRS. For example absorbed funding, engaged stakeholders and policy impact. With the next report on MRS coming up, the Commission will be asking the amount of funding channelled through the MRS to see progress and maturation of the strategy.

## **Key takeaways for the EUSALP Technical Support Structure**

**Benoit GARRIGUES**, TSS Consortium

**TSS missions** – The TSS will support the governance of EUSALP; support communication, monitoring and evaluation activities; offer operational implementation support for the AG projects and youth activities ; strenghten the policy cycle through capitalisation, transfer and mainstreaming of projects results and policy positions of EUSALP as well as capacity building of EUSALP stakeholders.

**TSS support to FDN** – The TSS will support FDN through several activities in cooperation with the relevant AG Leaders: foresee and organise meetings (invitations/registrations, logistics, minutes), design agenda and expected outputs, identify relevant participants.

**TSS objectives** are to help finance the projects AG want to develop and influence policies and financial programmes at European, national and regional levels.

## NEXT STEPS

The discussions highlighted the will to develop **cross-MRS exchanges and initiatives on these topics** (digitization, mobility, youth employment, hydrogen) to scale them up, notably with the support of Interact and the EUSALP TSS.

As the programming of the new funding programmes for the period 2021-2027 are nearly finalized it is now time to move to the 2<sup>nd</sup> embedding phase and ensure that MRS priorities/objectives/projects embedded in the national/regional programmes are duly implemented, in a coordinated way, across the macro-region. In this way taking the embedding process one step further. **DG Regio will continue supporting** the embedding process by assuring links with other DGs and providing methodological support.

It was proposed to set up a **Task Force** which would provide a framework for regular exchange between the leaders of the Financial Networks and joint work on the embedding strategy. The Task Force would be supported by the TSS, once fully functional, in coordination with the Presidency.

**Interact Programme** will continue providing space for cross-MRS exchange on embedding and facilitate the joint cross macro-regional work on practical implementation tools and methods.

## CONTACTS

**Anders Bergström**, Policy Area Coordinator (PA Education, Science and Social affairs) EUSBSR  
[anders.bergstrom@norden.se](mailto:anders.bergstrom@norden.se)

**Robert Lichtner**, Coordinator, Danube Strategy Point, EUSDR • [robert.lichtner@eusdr-dsp.eu](mailto:robert.lichtner@eusdr-dsp.eu)

### FDN Energy transition

Sylvain Guetaz • [Sylvain.GUETAZ@auvergnerhonealpes.fr](mailto:Sylvain.GUETAZ@auvergnerhonealpes.fr)  
Etienne Vienot • [etienne.vienot@auvergnerhonealpes-ee.fr](mailto:etienne.vienot@auvergnerhonealpes-ee.fr)  
Simon Soltner • [simon.soltner@auvergnerhonealpes.fr](mailto:simon.soltner@auvergnerhonealpes.fr)

**David Matzek-Lichtenstein**, DG REGIO  
[David.MATZEK-LICHTENSTEIN@ec.europa.eu](mailto:David.MATZEK-LICHTENSTEIN@ec.europa.eu)

### FDN Digital Technology

Monica Peggion • [Monica\\_Peggion@regione.lombardia.it](mailto:Monica_Peggion@regione.lombardia.it)  
Guido Piccoli • [luigi@alot.it](mailto:luigi@alot.it)

### FDN Sustainable mobility

Olivier Margouet • [omargouet@maregionsud.fr](mailto:omargouet@maregionsud.fr)  
Xavier Garcia • [xgarcia@maregionsud.fr](mailto:xgarcia@maregionsud.fr)

### TSS Consortium

Benoit Garrigues • [bgarrigues@maregionsud.fr](mailto:bgarrigues@maregionsud.fr)

### Interact

Ilze Ciganska • [ilze.ciganska@interact-eu.net](mailto:ilze.ciganska@interact-eu.net)  
Baiba Liepa • [baiba.liepa@interact-eu.net](mailto:baiba.liepa@interact-eu.net)

**EUSALP Presidency**  
[2022@eusalp-presidency.it](mailto:2022@eusalp-presidency.it)

