EUSAIR Action Plan revision process:
Item 4 – EUSAIR Action Plan structure

First meeting of the Revision Working Group

Zagreb and online, December 9th 2022

Contents

1. Action Plan as rolling document
2. Moving focus from Pillars to Topics
3. Chapters to define Topics
4. Criteria for identification of Actions
5. Chapters to define Actions
6. Horisontal/cross-cutting topics/issues
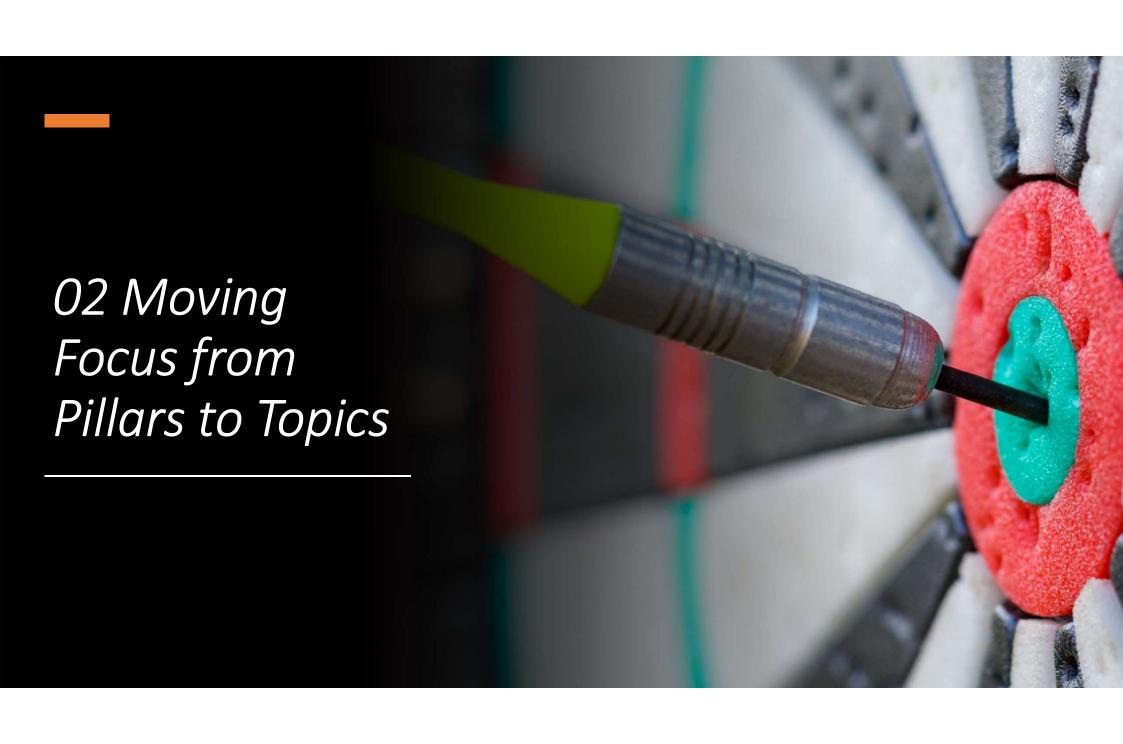7. Governance – to what extent should it be revised in the Action Plan
8. Conclusions

01 Action plan as a rolling document

Action Plan as a rolling document-proposal

➔ What does it mean?

➔ New challenges arise, major changes and shifts occur => it is hard to plan for the future

➔ **Resilient actions are needed but also flexibility** – possibility to reshape existing actions and propose new ones not in the Action Plan document, but through its implementation (TSG dedicated pages at the website, where the status of the actions would be described and updated – what are the activities, strategic projects…, there should be these kinds of modifications communicated)

➔ Procedure on how and under what conditions these minor adjustments of the Action Plan could be made

02 Moving Focus from Pillars to Topics

Moving focus from Pillars to Topics - observations

➔ lacking harmonised approach – lacking consistency between descriptions, different type and level of information is provided in the same chapters of different Pillars

➔ challenges, objectives, needs, approach described several times in different chapters – focus is lost

➔ more condensed way of presenting information is needed to quickly convey the main messages

➔ Need for a more focused/implementation-oriented approach

LOOKING AT OTHER MRSs

➔ Pillars only as umbrella thematic policy areas/objectives/pillars, content is defined per Action Group/Policy Area/Priority Areas.

Moving focus from Pillars to Topics - proposal

- **general objective for each pillar in terms of what is the main target**, the main change the EUSAIR implementers would like to achieve in the future (2030 or beyond?) through the Action Plan in certain thematic area

- only short description provided explaining the objective: **main characteristic, main challenge and main approach** (2-3 sentences for each)

- these objectives and descriptions would need to be prepared in cooperation with Pillar Coordinators, their thematic experts and shared with National coordinators and relevant TSG members to gather feedback

- **more detailed descriptions are then only provided per Topic**

03 Chapters to define Topics

Chapters to define Topics -

Chapters to define Topics - observations

➔ Policy and funding framework is missing

➔ Often there is no clear difference between the two chapters (presentation of the issue and Adriatic-Ionian specifics)

LOOKING AT OTHER MRSs

➔ All MRSs define **specific objectives** per each topic and EUSALP also the mission.

➔ How the key **stakeholders shall be involved** (EUSBSR)

➔ EUSBSR also defines **key areas of achievement** which is a good way to promote achievements of the Strategy, highlight good practices and direct towards capitalization of existing knowledge

Chapters to define Topics - proposal

➔ **Specific objectives** to be defined – what change key implementers aspire to achieve through EUSAIR in the region regarding the challenges of the topic

➔ Description of **main challenges/opportunities in the AIR to be addressed** by EUSAIR and what main approach should be taken (indication of actions)

➔ **Policy and funding framework** (only policies, initiatives or also EU cohesion policy and enlargement provisions)

➔ **Key stakeholders** to be engaged in implementation

04 Criteria for identification of Actions

Criteria for identification of Actions- 1/6

They should address identified priorities, meeting well-substantiated needs and be widely supported. The need for the action or project concerned should have been clearly expressed by countries, regions and stakeholders or Commission's services. The proposals should have been thoroughly discussed with these partners since their support is crucial during the implementation phase.

+ the most relevant policies

+ transnational initiatives

➔ we propose this criterion is still relevant, but it should be updated

Criteria for identification of Actions- 2/6

Their scope or impact should be transnational, if not macro-regional. Most actions and projects having an impact at the macro-regional scale will involve several countries who wish to cooperate and coordinate their efforts. If, however, a national/regional project has a direct impact on (i.e. is for the benefit of) the macroregion (e.g. the construction of a waste water treatment plant that improves the water quality of rivers or extension of a port to buttress a macro-regional transport networks), it could also be included. The impact should ideally be articulated in terms of an impact indicator which could be evaluated over time. Consideration should be given to the data which will need to be gathered in order to evaluate the impact (including definition of the baseline situation). To contribute to this end, an inventory of data already available, including their quality, should be established. Actions and projects spanning national boundaries with a view to implementing the Strategy should furthermore complement each other.

➔ we propose this criterion is still valid

Criteria for identification of Actions- 3/6

They should be realistic and credible. Projects should be feasible (technically and financially) and there should be overall agreement between countries, stakeholders and the Commission of their worth. In particular, the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of a project should be established and a realistic source of funding should be identified. Confirming the consistency of a project with the Action Plan does not per se guarantee funding,

➔We propose this criterion is still valid, can we agree on that?

Criteria for identification of Actions- 4/6

They should build on existing initiatives and have reached a fair degree of maturity.

➔ The actions should reflect the whole path done in the past years (including the work on defining the Flagship projects) but also go further in defining activities for the future, in line with recent and future policy development.

➔ Is the fair degree of maturity necessary for the action? If for example a new challenge or issue arises and there is a clear need and agreement among countries the challenge should be addressed, probably such an action should still be included, even though the maturity criterion is not met.

Criteria for identification of Actions-5/6

They should pay attention to the cross-cutting aspects identified in the Communication, further developed in this Action Plan.

➔ We propose this criterion is still valid, can we agree on that?

Criteria for identification of Actions- 6/6

They should be coherent and mutually supportive. While mainly relating to one particular pillar, each action or project must take fully into account possible impacts on actions and projects carried out under other pillars. Actions and projects undertaken under the different pillars must thus be compatible with each other and create win-win solutions. For example, transport projects or energy efficiency initiatives should not jeopardise achievement of environmental targets, such as air quality, and should preferably contribute to achieving such targets.

➔ **We propose this criterion is still valid.** This issue was also raised by TSG3 and the need to have an environmental impact assessment done for the Action Plan or at least to check all actions against the TSG3 matrix.

05 Chapters to define Actions

Chapters to define Actions – observations

➔ More **harmonisation is needed** between pillars how the actions should be defined, which elements to define for each action.

➔ Even though **actions were defined as indicative**, TSGs took them over and worked on their implementation. In some cases, they decided to leave one or the other action aside or they prioritised (they focused on a smaller number of actions - e.g. Pillar 4).

➔ **Targets were only defined as examples**, they lack target values, baseline and measuring method.

Chapters to define Actions – proposals 1/3

➔ There should be a clear definition of actions and a clear commitment by the EUSAIR implementing bodies to support their implementation - **no indicative only agreed actions**.

➔ There should be agreement reached on **definition of actions and the main criteria they have to follow** to have a more harmonised approach towards actions and assure implementation orientation (avoiding actions out of scope of the EUSAIR framework or actions that are mere projects)

➔ As follows from the EUSAIR Evaluation a **clear indicator system shall be developed to set realistic targets and monitoring basis**. *The definition of limited SMART result indicators for each topic would benefit the guidance of the TSGs and stakeholders towards the desired change... A clear connection between indicators and targets and a clear connection between actions /output /results should be developed.* **ESIF indicators shall be used.**

Chapters to define Actions – proposals 2/3

➔ Define a **limitation for the number of Actions per Topic** (to encourage TSGs to focus on those actions with the highest potential for impact, to streamline the work of TSGs, to avoid a large number of project-like actions and to focus rather on systemic, management approach). For example EUSBSR has 2-4 actions defined for each Policy area.

➔ Reconsider the term **flagship** - they are not mere projects to be funded. Rather, successful projects can evolve into flagships, regardless if they are initiated top-down or bottom-up, they successfully combine both approaches. As flagships have both policy and practical impact, they are driven by a vision of policy impact. Flagships gather all possible stakeholders in a long-term process of co-creation of both policy and action. This way, flagships become 'home' for projects and any other forms of action, such as policy dialogues, policy-making workshops, public consultations and become areas for alignment of funding, too.

Chapters to define Actions – proposals 3/3

➔ For definition of Action, we propose to follow the example of EUSBSR: each action has **objective** and **description** indicating how the objective will be achieved, through which **activities, outputs** and **results.**

A very clear **indicator system** is provided:

Indicator title	Value	Baseline/year	Target/deadline	Data source

06 Cross-cutting topics

Horisontal/cross-cutting topics/issues - considerations

➔ How effectively are horisontal topics being implemented through Pillars?

➔ What is the objective - what do we want to achieve with a certain horisontal topic and then we see whether this can be achieved through Actions of planned Pillars?

➔ What activities are needed, how well are they integrated into Actions and who will do them? (everyone's and no-one's task, lack of commitment, introduction of topic coordinator)

➔ How to measure achievements?

07 Governance

Governance revision-proposals

➔ Systematic approach in addressing complex governance issues should be kept separate to the revision of the Action Plan. It is necessary and it has to be tackled, but do the implementers have sufficient resources to deal with these two complex topics in parallel? We propose to deal with governance issues in the revision of the Action Plan process in as far as the governance issues are directly related to the Action Plan elements.

➔ Proposals for the improvement of governance shall continue to be gathered within the Action Plan revision process.

➔ Activities for revision of the governance shall be planned in the new governance support projects.

08
Conclusions

Conclusions 1/2

➔ **Action Plan as rolling document - resilient actions are needed but also flexibility** – possibility to reshape existing actions and propose new ones not in the Action Plan document, but through its implementation. Procedure on how and under what conditions these minor adjustments of the Action Plan could be made is to be defined.

➔ **Pillars** as umbrella priority areas – definition of general objective, main characteristic, main challenge and main approach

➔ For each **Topic** the following chapters should be drafted: specific objectives, main challenges/opportunities, policy and funding framework, key stakeholders

➔ Revised existing **criteria for identification of actions** shall be used with additionally agreed criteria.

Conclusions 2/2

➔ **No indicative only agreed actions**.

➔ Aclear indicator system shall be developed to set realistic targets and monitoring basis. ESIF indicators shall be used as far as possible.

➔ **Limitation for the number of Actions per Topic**.

➔ Proposals for the improvement of governance shall continue to be gathered within the Action Plan revision process.

➔ Activities for revision of the governance shall be planned in the new governance support projects.