

**Action Plan revision**

**2nd Revision Working group meeting**

**Thematic proposals on existing Pillars from Pillar Coordinators**

Athens, 24 February 2023

Version 1

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EUSAIR FACILITY POINT Project Partners: Ministry of Cohesion and Regional Development (Slovenia) | State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (Albania) |

Directorate for European Integration of Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina | Ministry of Tourism and Sport of the Republic of Croatia | Special Service for Strategy, Planning and

Evaluation (EYSSA), National Coordination Authority of the NSRF, Ministry of Development and Investments (Greece) | Marche Region - Innovation and International Cooperation Unit (Italy) |

Ministry of European Affairs (Montenegro) | Ministry of European Integration Government of the Republic of Serbia | Municipality of Izola (Slovenia)

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Strategic project »EUSAIR FACILITY POINT – Supporting the governance of the EUSAIR« is funded under the INTERREG V-B Adriatic-Ionian Cooperation Programme2014-2020 by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance(IPA II) and national funds. Project “Additional support to the Governance of the EUSAIR - Facility Point Plus” has received funding from the European Union.

* 1. Introduction

Purpose of this document

In line with the approved Background document with Roadmap v5. in the first round of thematic consultation the TSGs reflect on the contents of the Initial Policy Papers which build on the 2014 Action Plan, flagships and new policy developments. In this first round the Topics of the 2014 Action Plan are kept (except for Pillar 2- Energy subgroup an additional Topic was added as this was already agreed at their TSG meeting) and suggestions are gathered for revision/refocus of the existing Topics or for additional Topics. Since the strategic level (National Coordinators and EC) provides strategic guidance to the thematic level (TSGs), these suggestions were gathered and are presented to the strategic level through this document. We only considered those suggestions which were already agreed on the TSG level. **This document serves as a working material for the members of the Revision Working Group at the 2nd Revision Working Group meeting and represents means of exchange between thematic and strategic level. At this meeting the Working Group members should provide strategic guidance to TSGs as regards their suggestions, since this is important for the continuation of the process in the next round.**

In the next round of TSG meetings the country inputs gathered through questionnaires will be consolidated. The Pillar Coordinators, Pillar thematic experts supported by EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner with external experts will organise the gathered information and prepare proposals to be discussed at the next TSG meeting planned for March/April. At the TSG meeting agreements on contents of most Action Plan chapters (e.g. objectives, challenges, policies, key stakeholders, actions, indicators, targets) will be sought, using the received inputs as the basis. This will be a moderated discussion. After the meeting results will be written down, sent first to Pillar Coordinators and then to TSG members. After fine-tuning they will be included in the first draft of the Action Plan for further commenting from the strategic level (National Coordinators, EC...) and for another round of public consultation. The consolidation process will therefore happen entirely in the TSG. At that point the first Action Plan draft will be already prepared and sent to the strategic level for further commenting/approval.

### Level of included thematic proposals

Proposals gathered in this document only refer to thematic elements of the Action Plan on the most general level and include:

* suggestions of new Topics in the existing Pillars
* suggestions for revised focus/title of Topics
* suggestion for revised name of the Subgroup
* suggestion for refocusing of Pillar
* suggestion of division into Subgroups.

### Sources

These suggestions were gathered by Facility Point Lead Partner and their external exerts at different occasions:

* at TSG meetings (Spring and Autumn 2022)
* at meetings with Pillar Coordinators (Autumn 2022, Winter 2022/2023)
* in written through comments to Initial Policy Papers and completed questionnaires (Autumn 2022, Winter 2022/2023).

Before sending this document to the Revision Working Group members, it was circulated to Pillar Coordinators for final fine-tuning.

## Pillar 1 – Blue Growth

*Disclaimer: The proposals listed below were prepared by the Pillar 1 Coordinator from Montenegro and are for sure supported by TSG members from some countries, however an agreement on these points will still need to be reached also on the level of the TSG.*

### Limitation of the revision in TSG 1

Initial Policy Paper is based on the content of the Action Plan 2014, Input from the Flagships Document for Pillar 1, and finally Suggested Updates for Revision are based on the content of Flagships. With this approach there is possibility that we are closed in the circle, that means suggested updates are based on Flagships Document, and Flagships Document are based on the priorities from the existing Action Plan 2014. This approach is not providing with possibility to include something new to solve some chronic problems of this Pillar, but is somewhat limited by an existing AP.

### Pillar 1 is not equally relevant for the whole territory of EUSAIR

*Beside Pillar 1 Coordinator from Montenegro this proposal is shared also by Serbia and North Macedonia as evident from the received questionnaires.*

Pillar 1, its priorities, as well as the name itself does not fully reflect all countries of the AI region involved in EUSAIR implementation. Since the beginning of the implementation of the Strategy, the Pillar 1 has faced the challenge of involving countries with limited or no access to the sea. For now, we have 4 such countries out of 10. This pillar as well as its future activities in its Revision need to be addressed in mentioned direction, try to involve all countries equally or to the largest possible extent.

### Jumbo Pillar – need for division into Subgroups

*This proposal was made by Pillar 1 Coordinator from Montenegro based on the conclusions of the Public consultation what are the expectations of the stakeholders as regards the Pillar 1 and based on past experiences and the fact that TSG 1 members mostly come from fisheries and aquaculture departments.*

We can characterize Pillar 1 as a Jumbo pillar given the topics covered: Blue technologies, Fisheries and Aquaculture and Maritime and Marine Governance and Services. Also, majority of membership of this Pillar is coming from the field of fisheries and aquaculture and a lot of activity goes in that direction. Potentially other topics were not equally treated, especially Maritime and Marine governance and Services, so it might be good to think about the introduction of Sub- groups in this Pillar.

## Pillar 2 – Connecting the Region

**Subgroup Transport**

### Only small revision of existing Topics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2014** | **2023** |
| Topic 1: Maritime Transport | No change |
| Topic 2: Intermodal connections to the hinterland | **Multimodal connectivity** |

The objectives of the existing topics remain more or less the same, they were only updated.

### New Topic - Topic 3: Urban nodes

The objective of the topic is to foster the improvement of urban mobility solutions and transport systems talking/anticipating the challenges and the already existing criticalities deriving from growing urbanisation (urban sprawl) and from some socio-economic (e.g. aging population) and environmental trends, calling for the a reduction of the impacts of passengers and goods mobility in the cities. The improvement of Integrated Local Public Transit systems (including active mobility, and also new and innovative services such as shared mobility solutions) is essential to increase transport efficiency and to achieve the decarbonisation targets by the promotion of urban low -emission mobility.

**Subgroup Energy Networks**

The Strategy and the EUSAIR Action Plan were approved and launched during the year 2014 and formulated during that year and before. With regard to energy matters quite a few changes occurred since those times in EU policies, programmes, directives and regulations, as well as throughout the countries of the world. Just to quote a few elements and events which appear to shape the new energy scene are: the Paris Agreement on climate change of December 2015; the Clean Energy for All Europeans Package adopted by the EU in 2019; the European Green Deal, the Investment Plan for Recovery for Western Balkans of October 2020; the Fit for 55 Package of 14 July 2021, REPowerEU in 2022. The general aim is to decarbonise the EU energy system towards a carbon-neutral economy by the year 2050. All these new elements appear hard to accommodate within the present (2014) structure of the EUSAIR Action Plan.

### New Topic – Topic 2: Green Energy

As a consequence, with a view at the period 2021-2026 it can be suggested and recommended to update the Action Plan with regard to energy issues and matters by including a **new Topic entitled Green Energy** (another option might be Energy Transition) under Pillar 2 – Connecting the Region. The formulation and title Energy Networks as stated by the present energy-related Topic appear limiting because they are focusing mainly on physical grids and connections.

As for the new Topic Green Energy the following would be included such as: confronting climate change, energy efficiency, **energy storage**, distributed and digitalised energy systems, **advanced energy technologies**.

Priotities such as direct use of LNG as a fuel, **low-carbon fuels** would remain in the Action Plan as well as smart energy networks under the Topic Energy Networks. **Concerns regarding security of energy supply, energy system resilience and access to energy shall be highlighted and considered.**

**With the suggested change the existing EUSAIR TSG2 Sub-Group on Energy Networks might become EUSAIR TSG2 Sub-Group on Energy encompassing the two Topics of Energy Networks and Green Energy.**

## Pillar 3 – Environmental Quality

### Only small revision of existing Topics

So far in the revision process the need to revise the existing titles of the Topics in Pillar 3, was not expressed. Only minor changes to existing topics are suggested:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2014** | **2023** |
| Topic 1: Marine Environment  | **The marine and coastal environment** This Topic is to be reformulated to better reflect both subtopics. |
| Subtopic: Threat to coastal and marine biodiversity | No change |
| Subtopic: Pollution of the sea | No change |
| Topic 2: Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity | No change |

### New Topic – Topic 3: Ballast water and other releases in the sea and water

This new topic would include the following:

* Reducing the introduction of non-native species and pollutants into the sea;
* Ensuring a good environmental status;
* Technical equipment on ships for cleaning ballast water;
* Introduce ship tracking - by discharge CISE system at the Maritime Administration.

## Pillar 4 – Sustainable Tourism

According to TSG 4 the two Topics of the 2014 Action Plan should remain:

1. Diversified tourism offer
2. Smart (innovation and quality) and sustainable tourism management.

The content of these Topics however will be updated according to the country inputs received through the Action Plan revision questionnaire.

**Prepared by EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner:**



