**9th meeting of the Thematic Steering Group for**

**Pillar 3 – Environmental Quality**

**under the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)**

**13th November 2019**

**MINUTES**

**Venue:** Hotel Budva, Slovenska obala b.b. 85310, Budva, Montenegro.

**Chairs:** Pillar 3 Coordinators: Mitja Bricelj (Slovenia).

**Participants:** The members of the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group 3 (TSG 3), representatives of EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner (GODC) and Project partners Municipality of Izola (Sl), representative of the European Commission (EC).

The meeting began with the greetings from the Montenegro TSG 3 member as hosting country. Five countries (SI, IT, ME; GR, SR) out of the eight were represented at the meeting. The Co-Chair verified that the quorum was reached and that decisions could therefore be taken provided there was consensus among all the countries represented.

**Item 1:** The Agenda was presented by the Co-Chair Mitja Bricelj. After agreement on including under AOB the presentation of project PORTODIMARE and of report from round table Small-scale coastal traditional fisheries - challenges and opportunities for local community development through the link of fisheries and tourism proposed by Olga Sedioli and Mr. Mitja Bricelj, the revised Agenda was adopted.

Conclusions under Item 1:

***C.1. TSG 3 agreed by consensus to adopt the Agenda with the amendments proposed.***

**Item 2:** The minutes of the 8th TSG3 meeting (Tirana, June 2018) were subject to revision. Since there were no additional comments or amendments the minutes were adopted with the inclusion of the revisions.

Conclusions under Item 2:

***C.2. TSG-3 agreed by consensus to adopt the minutes of 8th meeting of TSG 3 in Tirana.***

**Item 3:** PC Mitja Bricelj presented the outcomes of the Technical pillar coordinator meeting at the 8th Governing Board (GB) in Podgorica (3-4 October). At the meeting was presented the problem of non-participating countries at TSG 3 meetings. Regarding the issue all activities to stimulate their participation from TSG3 were done. The GB take note of the situation and the report at the GB shown the similar situation also at the other TSGs. The members of GB as first solution requested that for the future invitation for the TSG meetings national coordinators must be included in the invitation and if some members are not registered for fore coming meetings, the national coordinators must be informed.

Iztok Škerlič (EUSAIR FP PP) presented briefly the state of the art of other TSGs: - TSG 1 has six proposals for strategic projects which are not labelled yet but they gave supporting letters for project submitted under last ADRION call for projects proposals, in Jan-Feb 2019 there will be also a dedicated workshop for Blue Growth; TSG 2 has 15 project labelled for the transport segment and 28 in energy sector; TSG 4 has projects Roman Empire Routs (continuation of Danube initiative) and Olive Routs labelled, 6 priority project labelled under development phase. For the further development of the project the TSG4 coordinator (Ministry of Tourism of Croatia) appointed an expert for TSG 4 support, financed by Facility Point EUSAIR strategic project.

Mitja Bricelj also informed TSG 3 members that was presented the submission of TSG 3 and 4 inter-pillar project as the first inter-pillar project to be developed under Facility Point Plus.

**Item 4:** Representative of EUSAIR FP LP Staša Mesec presented the outcomes of the 8th GB in Podgorica, MNG (Annex 2). Moreover, she reported the state of the art of the 5th EUSAIR Facility Point Steering Group meeting informing TSG 3 members about the implementation state. The non-EU countries will receive a special grant from EC for hiring experts to help project implementation, like the member states have in FP EUSAIR strategic project. At the FP EUSAIR meeting was agreed that the stakeholders’ platform must be lunch by February 2019 at the latest. For the TSG 1 and TSG 2 the expert support is not hired yet and this is due to the fact of the late signed contracts for co-financing the FP EUSAIR strategic project, change in partnership (Albania, Montenegro) and this caused a re-evaluation of the project with new implementation and acceleration plan. She presented the OECD seminar, which took place the day before the GB. The participant at the seminar was the EUSAIR Key Implementers – National Coordinators, Pillar Coordinators and Thematic Steering Group members – as well as Facility Point Project Partners. The objective of this seminar was two-fold: 1. To identify mechanisms that Key Implementers can use to boost cooperation with other EUSAIR. The overarching aim is to help build greater awareness, understanding and ownership of the strategy. 2. To help EUSAIR key implementers strengthen existing coordination mechanisms in their respective countries and identify new ones that can contribute to more effective Cross-Pillar exchange. The overarching aim is to strengthen national EUSAIR governance structures. The 4-hour seminar was divided into two sessions. It was emphasised the work in working groups, sharing experiences, and learning from one another. The Moderator was Ms. Maria-Varinia Michalun from Unit for Decentralisation, Public Investment and Subnational Finance, OECD. She pointed out that at the seminar the Matrix was presented and recognized as important methodological tool for inter-pillar projects that should be used in the process of identification of inter-pillar projects. This funding was presented by Co-ordinator of TGS3 Mitja Bricelj also at the GB, he thanked Italy - Olga Sedioli in particular and all TSG 3 members for the collaboration within the process of approval of the Matrix. At the GB the Matrix was approved as useful tool for the inter-pillar project identification.

**Item 4.1:** Co-ordinatorMitja Bricelj presented the Catania declaration and the request to identify one-two TSG 3 priorities which would be included in the programming of next financial period. Representative from EC Nadine Lakhal explained that TSGs should asap came up with priorities that would like to be included in the partnership agreement matching with EUSAIR Action Plan and need to be forwarded to NCs, who will meet in December at ADRION Monitoring Comity. After that a discussion took place. Olga Sedioli, Italy, propose to choose one priority among the existing ones on the sea and one on the land to obtain balance – 1) MSP&ICZM on the sea, which represents also a cross-cutting approach to all others: marine species and contingency could be managed through MSP, and 2) Terrestrial habitats and ecosystems. Dušan Ognjanović, Serbia, proposed two priorities for the sea and one for hinterland because EUSAIR main focus is on the sea: 1) MSP; 2) Contingency plan; 3) Terrestrial habitats and ecosystems. During the discussion, Iztok Škerlič, EUSAIR FP PP Izola, clarified that these priorities will be used only for programming the next programming period and does not affect the four projects concepts development process. The TSG3 members proposed that TSG 3 priorities should be shared with other TSGs in order to stimulate the agreement also about common inter-pillar priorities, like ICZM and MSP that should be common to the 4 Pillars.

Conclusions under Item 2:

***C.3. After the discussion TSG 3 agreed by consensus among three priorities: 1.* Promotion of sustainable growth of the AI region by implementing ICZM and MSP also to contribute Common Regional Framework (CRF) on ICZM of Barcelona convention and the monitoring and management of *marine protected area 2.* Development and implementation of Adriatic-Ionian Sub/regional Oil spill contingency plan*, s, 3.* Protection and enhancement of natural terrestrial habitats and ecosystems**.

**Item 5**: The video for the Mediterranean and EU Macro-regional Coastal Week was shown. Nadine Lakhal (EC) stressed that such participative approach used in this year events is a good example how to involve people to show what are MRS. This could encourage other countries to follow and prepare similar events in years to come.

**Item 6:** Iztok Škerlič, EUSAIR FP PP, Izola presented the Monitoring and evaluation process foreseen within WP 3 EUSAIR Facility point project TSG 3. He presented the document prepared by EUSAIR Facility Point Izola (Annex 3). After the presentation a discussion took place where present agreed that is important to have an agreement on indicators to be used and followed for the monitoring. As first step was identified the need for all TSG 3 members to forward the document to and meet with their statistical offices within the ministry or outside it (or other institutes that deal with data collection and analysis) and asking if there are data available in order to reduce or substitute the indicator for the non-available data. Iztok Škerlič, EUSAIR FP PP Izola, stressed the importance of help and support of TSG 3 members in gathering information to allow the process of monitoring with external expert to go further, because EUSAIR Facility Point Izola will not be able to collect all needed data alone. The gathered data should be forward to EUSAIR Facility Point Izola who will manage afterwards to prepare the monitoring. Also a direct contact with the statistical office or other agencies is possible. Co-ordinator Mitja Bricelj welcomed the proposal of EUSAIR Facility Point Izola to assist the country to get the same standards to monitor the process – taking into account the confusion in this area of data (different structure, collections, institutions) whit the aim to focus on relevant indicators taken into account national specifics.

**Item 7:**  Iztok Škerlič, EUSAIR FP PP, reported about the state of the art of mono-pillar project concepts development. He presented the Logical Framework as a tool for further project development and explained the intervention logic from the higher level down. At the top are overall objective from EUASIR Action Plan (AP), followed by the level of specific objectives (3 specific objectives from AP). Next two levels are defined by the results and activities. Expected results are deriving from the existing project concepts. This part of the logical framework includes questions about the means, expert needed, costs, partners, etc. The logical frameworks will be forward to all TSG 3 members and potential partners (sent from TSG 3 member) to help fill the questions within logical framework for needed information. It is very important to get the contribution from each country on national level. This way EUSAIR FP Izola will be able to further develop the project concepts and individuate partners, needs, means and other. Followed the presentation of the logical frameworks was the presentation on the state of the art regarding the potential project partners and from Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina information are still missing. Iztok Škerlič explained the work already done for 3MPS project concept by the National Institute for Biology of Slovenia, who volunteered to take over the role of leading partner of the project. For the other project concepts, he suggested to consult PAP/RAC (for MSP&ICZM project concept) and REMPEC (for ASOSCoP project concept) and Serbia to find a lead partner for the PET HAB ECO project preparation. After that a discussion took place and issues like difficulties in contacting the potential project partners and their low response were presented. In order to help with the issue and other questions Iztok Škerlič proposed that workshops with potential project partners can be organised in each country for support the countries in this process.

Conclusions under Item 7:

**C*.4. TSG 3 by consensus agreed on the proposals of next steps for developing mono-pillar project concepts and proceed with identification of institutions for collaboration within developing process as follow with external expert that could be hired from EUSAIR Facility Point funds for the project development into bankable projects:***

* ***MSP & ICZM project concept – PAP/RAC will be consulted for further steps of development process,***
* ***for PET HAB ECO project concept – Serbia will be given the mandate to find a Lead Partner for development of the project concept,***
* ***for ASOSCoP project concept – REMPEC will be contacted to help develop the project concept ahead.***

***C.5. Workshops with potential partners/stakeholders interested for support project concepts development will be organized.***

**Item 8:** EUSAIR Facility Point Izola informed TSG 3 members that inter-pillar project TSG 3 and 4 was submitted under Facility Point plus call and is now in evaluation process. Inter-pillar project TSG 3 and 1 was sent to TSG 1 coordinator and is in process of TSG 1 revision and decision about confirmation of the joint collaboration for the project development.

**Item 9:** Emilija Kastelic presented TSG 3 Annual report 2018. A discussion took place and amendments to the report are needed (including 9th TSG 3 meeting and workshop in Greece). The Annual report must be submitted to GB not later than the end of February 2019.

Conclusions under Item 9:

**C.6. The amended TSG 3 Annual report 2018 will be sent to TSG 3 members for additional revision and amendments if needed and then approved by written procedure by the end of February 2019.**

**Item 10:** Fabio Gratti presented project Small-scale coastal traditional fisheries: challenges and opportunities for local community development presented on the back.to back round table Small-scale coastal traditional fisheries - challenges and opportunities for local community development through the link of fisheries and tourism (Annex 4). After that Olga Sedioli presented PORTODIMARE project - Geoportal of tools & data for sustainable management of coastal and marine Environment (Annex 5) stressing the problem of difficulty to gather the data and information now known. This kind of activities should be known to all TSGs in order to develop new tools and to achieve concrete solutions. This shows the importance of data, their analysis and interpretation. After the presentation a discussion took place with questions like “How do you see opportunity and challenge to use project as PORTODIMARE to capitalize your findings to became closer to find appropriate modus for the next or new fishery policy to be implementing in A-I region?” and where the lack of collaboration between projects is missing e.g. PORTODIMARE and ARIEL was a presented issue. Also was recognized the gaps among the sectors on national levels, how the gap still exists and to wish how the parties should be aware of this and to work and use existing results for future next steps.

After the discussion Ivana Stojanović informed all TSG 3 members about the possibility of a side event at the 4th EUSAIR Forum and needs to choose theme for the panel session.

Mitja Bricelj informed also about the EU Fishery conference where he will present TSG 3 achievements, 17-19.12. the world bank will visit Slovenia and show a lot of interest in development of the region.

Next meeting will be in march 2019. Montenegro volunteered to host also the 10th TSG 3 meeting, but also possible venues in non-participating countries will be taken into account. The venue will be defined in a later stage.

Conclusions under Item 10:

**C.7. Montenegro informed TSG 3 members about the possibility to have side events at the 4th EUSAIR Forum and the need for TSG 3 to choose the theme for panel session until mid of December 2018.**