**EUSAIR Thematic Action Lab**

**EUSAIR Flagship: PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF THE AI REGION BY IMPLEMENTING ICZM AND MSP ALSO TO CONTRIBUTE CRF ON ICZM OF BARCELONA CONVENTION AND THE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

**20th December 2022**

**14h30 – 16h30 (CET)**

**Venue**

Online via EUSAIR Stakeholders Platform

**Participants**

MAs/JS representatives of the following programmes: IPA ADRION; Greece-Italy; Greece-North Macedonia; Croatia-Serbia; Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro; IPA South Adriatic; Italy Croatia; Italy Slovenia.

Observers from INTERACT; T-ELIKA; EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner; Marche Region; Department for Cohesion Policy – Presidency of the Council of Ministers; FUTOUR; Municipality of Izola.

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| **PROGRAMME and MINUTES** | |
| **14:30–14:45** | 1. **Introductory remarks and objectives of the meeting**   Institutional greetings are given by Mr. Marco Doglia (Department of Cohesion Policy) and Ms. Donatella Romozzi (Marche Region – Italian Project Partner of EUSAIR Facility Point), setting the objectives of the meeting and remarking that, since Programmes have been approved, the focus must be moved to embedding in planning to embedding in Programmes’ implementation.  This is the first Action Lab, since the launch of the EUSAIR Network of ETC programmes in April 2022.  Since the programmes have been approved, our focus must shift from embedding in planning to embedding in programme implementation. Programmes are more closely aligned with the Strategy than it was in 2014-2020. EUSAIR has reached a level of maturity that makes embedding a great chance. Many programmes have already launched or are about to launch a call for proposals. The majority of them, have also defined the type and timing of next calls for proposals. For this reason, this Action lab will aim to stimulate a discussion on how to embed EUSAIR’s flagships in the call for proposals. We will keep a thematic approach by focusing on specific flagships, as each has unique characteristics that must be considered. We decided to start with the Pillar 3, because it is one of the most advanced in terms of studies conducted and progress made in the development of the flagship. Another Action Lab on Green Ports will also take place soon. |
| 14:45-15:00 | 1. **Embedding of the flagship: From alignment to implementation**   Ms. Battistina Cugusi (Department of Cohesion Policy) presents the topic providing a brief overview on the alignment with the flagship in ETC programmes and a focus on the calls for proposals. An analysis of the programmes showed that there is a strong level of alignement with the flagship in almost all of the Programmes of the areas. In four cases, programmes mention ICZM/MSP. In general, aligment is also evident in other programmes.  The main topics related to the flagship and considered by the Programmes can be summarized as such: climate change, biodiversity, preservation of marine protected areas, monitoring. Joint plans, data collection, strategies and investments are instead the main outputs linked to the flagships.  There is a great room of manoeuvre for embedding this flagship also during Programmes’ implementation.  The preparation of the call for proposals represents the first step for embedding. In order to make it possible we have to do three things:   1. Define assessement criteria, which require projects proposal to demonstrate (not only to declare) its contribution to the flagship; 2. To provide programmes but also potential beneficiaries guidance on how to assess or to prepare a project proposal that is in line with EUSAIR. 3. To support programmes which are interested in preparing a Strategic project in the field related to the flagship.   This Action Lab intends to contribute to the two first two point, while starting the discussion on the point 3. |
| **15:00-15:30** | 1. **Presentation of the main features of the flagship**   Mr. Iztok Škerlič (EUSAIR Pillar 3 expert) and Ms. Martina Bocci (T-ELIKA expert in charge of the strategic development of the flagship TSG3 and Interpillar TSG1-TSG3) present the argument. For boosting the embedding process at programme level, actions needed are: specific selection criteria; dedicated allocations; specific calls for flagship projects; labelling ex-ante and ex-post (for communication activities). Purposes of the flagship projects are: to translate macro-regional priorities into national/cross-border level; to elaborate priorities based on feedback from the countries and to start financial dialogue in order to build synergies and embed EUSAIR priorities into ESIF/IPA programmes.  Concerning the ICZM&MSP idea, a first concept was discussed in September 2022 during the Mediterranean Coast and Macroregional Strategies Week and presented revised at the TSG3 in Sarajevo in November 2022. The approach will be macro-regional: a back-bone ICZM&MSP project idea – building on previous projects and aimed at strengthening harmonized implementation of marine and coastal plans in the AIR-a constellation of projects ideas is being prepared – topic focused (e.g. enhnace biodiversity protection, improve aquaculture spatial planning, improve transboundary spatial fisheries management, identify spatial measures to improve sustainability of maritime transport), concurring to the same strategic objectives. Implementation shall happen through different funding programmes based on topic and geographic scope. The strategic objectives identified are: to strengthen institutional capacity to apply ecosystems approach; to achieve harmonized implementation of marine/maritime and coastal plans; to promote the extention of the network of marine protected areas; to promote sustainable bio-economy and adaptation to climate change. |
| **15:30-16:15** | 1. **Debate (moderated by Paolo Martinez, FUTOUR)**    1. **Gathering informative needs: Is the information provided sufficient? What other information is needed?**  * **IPA ADRION:** the information received is sufficient in case of an open call. If the call instead is targeted, much information is needed. * **Italy-Slovenia:** the information has been well received and well explained. Three projects funded by the Programme are in line with the objectives of ICZM&MSP, which are: POSEIDON, ADRIONCYCLETOUR and KRAS-CARSO II. The assessment criteria chosen were those that matched the most with the flagship. * **Italy-Croatia:** the Programmes’ priorities are inspired by the EUSAIR Pillars, so assessment criteria have been inserted in the call for proposals, but at present time there are no ideas on how to apply flagships in the Programme. * **IPA South Adriatic:** the information received is good and well explained. The Monitoring Committee of the Programme has already identified 5 strategic projects which foresee a link with the flagship, mainly on the topics of blue economy, aquaculture, fisheries and marine planning. * **Greece-Italy:** the information provided at the meeting is enough, there will be in the future a request to provide more info about the specific objective 2.4 and the projects developed on it. Startup activities in this sense have been approved by the Monitoring Committee but not set up already. * **Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro; Croatia-Serbia:** the information provided for now is sufficient, maybe there will be a need in the future to provide it more in depth. Both Programmes have been approved by the European Commission and open calls for standard projects will open in February. Macroregional strategies will be better incorporated in the assessment criteria, expecially concerning the objective 2.4 of both Programmes.   1. **The discussion will also test the ground for more in-depth support from EUSAIR in the preparation of call documents, particularly in case of targeted or strategic calls: What are the programmes interested in having a targeted or strategic call in SOs relevant for this flagship? What type of support would you need to ensure an effective embedding of EUSAIR priorities?** * **IPA ADRION:** the Programme was supported in its definition in order to be fully allied with the EUSAIR flagship. This should be seen in the first call for proposals, which will be an open one. In the future, the Programme will have more targeted call for proposals for better aligning with the flagship. * **Italy-Slovenia:** the Programme will be supported by the thematic experts in the same way that has been done for the IPA ADRION Programme, expecially for the definition of the concept in detail. Concerning project POSEIDON, it involves the concept of marine protection but can also involve the other thematisms of the flagship. * **Italy-Croatia:** the Programme asks the availability of the experts for joining the working group that is established within the Monitoring Committee, since it will be necessary invite in it experts from each Pillar in order to discuss the approach and criteria for the implementation of the flagship in the Programme. The answer of the experts is affirmative, expecially for the help in the definition of criteria. Flagships are foressen in objectives 1.1; 2.4; 2.7; 3.2 and 4.6 of the Programme. * **IPA South Adriatic:** the Programme asks for receiving technical support in the identification of specific assessment criteria linked to the EUSAIR Strategy. The experts are willing to provide their support in the selection of projects and in the setting up of targeted call for proposals. * **Greece-Italy:** the Programme foresees to have three strategic projects of which one devoted to the 2.4 SO, it is not still clear if a strategic call will be established in this sense. A support will be asked in projects related to blue economy, maritime risk and the involvement of the civil protection. * **Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro; Croatia-Serbia:** both Programmes have predicted strategic projects under SO 2.4. However, the flagship is not very much linked, expecially in the Croatia-Serbia Programme which has a more continental approach due to Serbia’s landlock, and will not be tackled under the SO 2.4. |
| **16:15-16:30** | 1. **Conclusions**   Ms. Battistina Cugusi wraps up.  Programmes are encouraged to use as much of the information provided in the power point presentations as possible, as this can be used to assess the consistency of a project proposal to Pillar 3's flagship on ICZM/MSP. It can also be used as a supporting document to help potential applicants understand what it means to define a project proposal in accordance with this flagship. These presentations could be published on programmes' websites or included in application packages.  There are many possibilities for strategic projects that can be expanded, but the decision of Monitoring Committees is still required. It is therefore suggested that the Managing Authorities come back to the Monitoring Committees and present the meeting's results. It will be especially important to show them the power point prepared by TSG3 experts in order to familiarise them with the flagships' thematic priorities and objectives. TSG3 experts will be available to attend MC meetings if the MC so requests, in order to present the flagship in greater detail and discuss possible targeted support in the process of strategic project development.  As a result, programmes are encouraged to express their interest in such a possibility in order to move forward.  All the attachments of the meeting (list of participants and Power Point presentations) will be uploaded in the dedicated webpage (<https://espcommunity.eu/eusair-embedding-process>). |