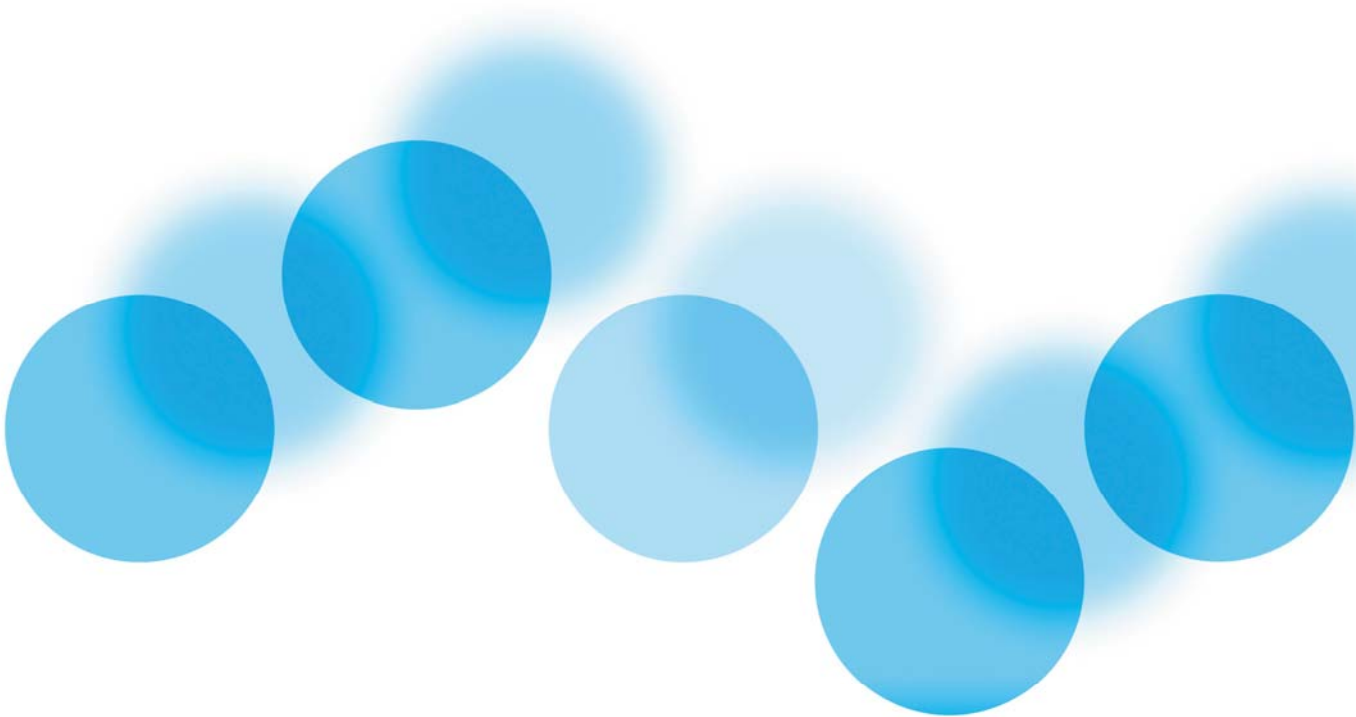


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# PHASE – OUT OF THE DANUBE REGIONAL PROJECT



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides strategy recommendations for the Danube Regional Project (DRP), and the International Commission for Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The DRP will come to a close in early 2007. It is important that prior to that time, the ICPDR is in a position to sustain the programmes and activities that it views to be central to its mission. It is also important for the ICPDR and DRP to coordinate closely their activities during 2006 to fully utilise the remaining GEF funding in ways that both accomplish DRP objectives and enhance ICPDR sustainability.

This report discusses exit strategy / sustainability options framed around the following considerations:

- The need to sustain funding for core ICPDR activities, some of which the DRP is currently supporting:
- The need to agree on how the transfer of activities and responsibilities from the DRP to the ICPDR Permanent Secretariat and Expert Groups will proceed during 2006 – 2007;
- The need to devise strategies for the ICPDR and member governments to bridge the financial and technical gaps after the DRP concludes

The strategy focuses on core activities, selected based on discussions with Permanent Secretariat staff in late October 2005 and on discussions and outcomes of the ICPDR Ordinary Meeting in December 2005. Core activities are those that are viewed as mission essential for ICPDR and which have been receiving DRP support. Core activities are reviewed and recommendations are provided on how they can be carried forward.

Some mention is made with respect to DRP activities that are considered more peripheral to the ICPDR, but which may be vitally important in relation to water quality in the Danube basin. Recommendations are provided in this strategy on how to continue carrying out these activities by governments, institutions and other stakeholders in the Danube River Basin (DRB).

The ICPDR Heads of Delegation (HoD) meeting in April 2005 included discussion on the future roles and activities of the ICPDR. This strategy document has been developed in support of, and in harmony with, these ICPDR planning efforts.

This document has been finalised jointly by the DRP and the ICPDR Secretariat.

### 1.1. Exit Strategy Objectives

The objectives are to:

- Identify for the ICPDR the financial and technical gaps that will open once the DRP has ended, and recommend actions to make up for the drop in technical and financial assistance.
- Commence a smooth transfer of responsibilities from the DRP to ICPDR countries, expert groups and Permanent Secretariat

## **2. BACKGROUND**

While developing an “exit strategy” is not specifically required under the project activities set out in the DRP Project Documents (1&2), it was recommended in the DRP mid term evaluation process, and is consistent with the high priority placed by GEF & UNDP on the sustainability of project outputs. After 10 years of financial and technical support, it is necessary for the ICPDR to prepare for a future without the approximately \$2 million per year that GEF has provided for efforts to improve Danube water quality. GEF plans no further support at the current scale, so the ICPDR has begun to look to its own budgets and other financial support mechanisms.

The regular annual budget of the ICPDR mainly covers the expenditures for staff and infrastructure of the secretariat. Only a small portion of the regular budget is allocated to specific ICPDR activities. Due to constraints in the national budgetary regulations of several Contracting Parties concerning their contributions to the budgets of international organisations like ICPDR it is not possible to significantly increase the share of operational expenditures in the regular budget. Furthermore the capacity of the Contracting Parties to assign higher regular contribution will most probably be very limited. Despite these limitations, there is an obvious demand for additional financial resources for external technical assistance, non EU-Country support, special research projects such as the proposed 2nd International Danube Survey, and outreach efforts such as publishing Danube Watch.

Until 2007 the UNDP/GEF Danube Regional Project addresses a significant part of these demands by allocating a substantial share of the project budget to programme elements closely linked to the activities of the expert groups.

The ICPDR has begun to develop their plans to meet future needs by tapping suitable new funding sources. This requires early definition of projects and activities that may need external financial support, a continuous screening of funding programmes, the exploration of innovative funding options, and timely preparation of applications.

## **3. UNDP/GEF DRP INVOLVEMENT IN THE DANUBE BASIN**

UNDP/GEF has been involved in the Danube Basin since the early 1990s. The Danube Regional Project is seen as the final GEF intervention at a basin level giving a wide range of support to the countries of the basin and to the ICPDR.

### **3.1. Summary of DRP Activities and Budgets**

The DRP was split into two phases for administrative reasons, however the same priorities and themes ran through both phases between 2002 and 2007. Under the four objectives of the DRP there were 20 project components. The main budget against each of these components is summarised below.

**DRP Activities and Budgets**

<b>DRP Cost code</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Total spent / committed K USD</b>
<b>Objective 1: Support for Policy Development</b>		
1.1	RBM Tools (including Sava RBMP, Roof Report, GIS etc.)	1,140
1.2 / 1.3	Agriculture – Policies and Pilots	1,215
1.4	Wetlands	348
1.5	Industry	420
1.4 / 1.7	Water Tariffs and pollution Charges, Fines & Incentives	559
1.8	Phosphorus reduction in Detergents	70
<b>Component 2: Capacity Building and Transboundary Co-operation</b>		
2.1	Inter-ministerial Mechanisms	131
2.2	Monitoring, Laboratory and Information Management	264
2.3	Accident Emergency Response	245
2.4	DANUBIS	333
2.5	Danube - Black Sea Co-operation (MoU)	140
2.6	Training and Workshops	834
<b>Component 3: Public Participation and Awareness Raising</b>		
3.1	NGO Institutional Development	730
3.2	NGO Small Grants Programme	1,966
3.3	Communication and Public Awareness Campaigns	1,201
3.4	Public Participation and Access to Information	1,991
<b>Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects</b>		
4.1	Indicators	100
4.2	Analysis of Sediments in the Iron Gate Reservoir	116
4.3	Nutrient Removal Capacity of Wetlands	228
4.4	Pollution Trading and Economic Instruments	193

## 4. ICPDR AND DRP KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The ICPDR has received support from a number of external sources (e.g. European Commission, Country support for specific activities such as SK assistance with the monitoring annual report, etc.) however the final basin-wide GEF intervention through the DRP has provided the most comprehensive and responsive support for the ICPDR. The ICPDR has been involved in aspects of all the above listed DRP activities, however, the most important joint activities have included:

1. **River Basin Management** – Roof Report, Sava RBMP, TNMN upgrade for WFD, training, , and basin wide or national workshops on issues of importance (WFD implementation and nutrients etc).
2. **Policy** – agriculture and industry pollution reduction, Tariffs and Charges for municipal authorities, wetlands, etc.
3. **Communications** – including the transformation of Danube Watch, Danube Day, stakeholder engagement, etc.
4. **Institutional** – Restructuring of ICPDR, national experts participation at ICPDR EGs, strengthening of NGOs (DEF and small grant initiatives), JTWG (Danube – Black Sea), ICPDR information systems (DANUBIS and GIS), training on a wide range of topics for ICPDR experts, etc.

## 5. ACTIVITIES TO BE TRANSFERRED

### 5.1. Tools and Institutional support

#### 5.1.1. Introduction

Since 2002 the DRP has provided the ICPDR with a range of activities to support the operation of the ICPDR Secretariat and the work of the Expert Groups. Examples of work supported by the DRP include:

- > Experts to assist the RMB EG with the preparation of the Roof Report. This included a number of individual experts and companies addressing issues such as nutrients, heavily modified water bodies, pollution risks, production of maps, translation of roof report summary etc.;
- > Provision of travel and expenses for experts attending the ICPDR Expert Group meetings;
- > Consultancy support for EGs – e.g. TNMN upgrade, M2 risk methodology, etc.
- > ICPDR Information systems (DANUBIS, GIS)
- > Provision of additional administrative support to the ICPDR Secretariat

#### 5.1.2. Provision of Expert Support to the Expert Groups and Thematic stakeholder meetings

The DRP has been able to assist the ICPDR's EGs by providing external consultants to prepare technical papers, collect and assemble data for the WFD reporting requirements etc. The level of financial support from the DRP has been in the range of 200k USD for the preparation of the WFD Roof Report together with associated training courses. The DRP has been able to provide a

very flexible approach to this assistance, as many of the final needs of the ICPDR were not identified at the inception of the DRP. It is realistic to assume that the ICPDR will continue to need such a flexible approach to address new issues as and when they are identified.

The likely needs for expert assistance include:

- > Preparation of technical position papers for the various EGs;
- > Assistance for assessing information in the preparation of WFD activities (e.g. typology and intercalibration issues)
- > Providing technical experts to assist with thematic stakeholder meetings (e.g. industry, agriculture, navigation, etc.)
- > Assistance with fund-raising and other activities associated with, for example, JDS II.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- > External consulting fees could be provided through direct country contributions;
- > Contracting Parties could provide national experts to support specific technical issues;
- > One or more Contracting Parties take a responsibility for completing the work required under the direction of the ICPDR's EG.
- > Expert Group participants could assume greater responsibility for undertaking technical consultancy work, as a form of national or institute support;
- > EC research funds could be utilised.
- > External funding (see Business Friends of the Danube) from corporate supporters.

### 5.1.3. Work with non-EU accession countries to ensure their participation in ICPDR expert groups and special workshops

The DRP has provided some assistance to non-EU accession states for the participation of their experts in expert group meetings. The DRP started out providing assistance to all non-EU countries for travel to EG meetings. This assistance has been progressively reduced over the years with the expansion of the EU and the improved economic circumstances in many of the countries but is set to fully phase out during 2006. In 2005, the DRP provided travel assistance to Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia, and Bosnia Herzegovina to participate in ICPDR meetings. This funding has been at the level of €45,000 in 2005. The planned DRP budget for expert group travels is set to decline to €26,000 in 2006. While most of the contracting parties have demonstrated themselves as fully capable of supporting expert participation concern exists that without travel assistance, the participation of experts from the non-EU accession states may be limited for ICPDR sponsored meetings and workshops.

The Secretariat has expressed concern that without travel assistance, the participation of experts from the four non-EU accession states (Moldova, Ukraine, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina) now receiving travel assistance may be restricted.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- > It should be the responsibility of all Contracting Parties to fund their participation in regular ICPDR activities, including representation at ICPDR general and expert group meetings. ICPDR members should agree that from 2006 onwards, all travel and subsistence costs for participation at regularly scheduled ICPDR meetings, including EG meetings, should be the responsibility of each member country. However, it is necessary to ask what actions could or should be taken by the ICPDR if a Contracting Party is unable to fulfil these obligations.

- > Support for this participation may also come from the Friends of the Danube Fund proposed and under development by the Secretariat.
- > With host countries taking care of meeting costs, such as venue logistics, the ICPDR direct obligation would be to cover remaining back office costs, such as to produce and disseminate meeting materials.

#### **5.1.4. Information Systems (DANUBIS) and GIS**

The DRP has supported the Danube countries in developing, upgrading and reinforcing capacities for information management. The web-based ICPDR Information System (DANUBIS) has been developed with financial support from the Austrian Government (computer equipment and software) and from the Austrian Environmental Trust Fund, administered by UNOPS (concept and development of the Information System). The system is presently installed at the Permanent Secretariat of the ICPDR and is operational. Further activities are planned to restructure and upgrade the Information System, in terms of architecture, functions, related document management and administration.

DRP has budgeted \$40,000 for DANUBIS for years 2005/2006 to support the DANUBIS restructuring. It is anticipated that with the current up-date of the DANUBIS system little or no significant input should be needed from the ICPDR other than maintenance; this is considered to be part of the current core activities of the ICPDR and within the budget.

Particular attention, however, will be given to the development of a Danube GIS. A recent decision was made to utilize the Austrian Umweltbundesamt (UBA) to develop the Danube GIS on behalf of the ICPDR. The UBA is the expert authority of the federal government in Austria for environmental protection and environmental control.

The Secretariat has estimated that approximately €90,000 is needed to make the GIS development and another €30,000 – 40,000 or more annually for UBA or the ICPDR itself to maintain the GIS.

The DRP has budgeted \$38,000 is planned in 2006 for the GIS software upgrade, hardware and licensing, with a total contribution of 84 k USD to the Danube GIS over the life of the DRP. The ICPDR has allocated a portion of back-payments for contracting party dues from Ukraine received in 2005 to the development of the system. In addition the ICPDR has allocated a portion of future budgets to the annual maintenance.

#### **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

- > A separate GIS account is needed to cover operational costs. Some portion of this may be covered from core funding but the ICPDR should consider seeking specific support from Contracting Parties for future GIS implementation. This support could include a one time grant to development the system as well as more long-term support for maintenance of the system.
- > The proposed Friends of the Danube Fund may also provide some possible support for the development and maintenance of the Danube GIS.
- > The DRP faces a tight budget during its final phase, and is unlikely to have the flexibility to contribute more than has already been provided or is budgeted for the GIS upgrade.
- > At the Ordinary Meeting in December 2005 it was agreed that a portion of the backpayment of contributions from Ukraine (approx. 90,000 Euro) payed in 2005 would be used to support the GIS development. The formal allocation of these funds are necessary.



## 5.2. Policy Issues and Development

The ICPDR is primarily involved at assisting and co-ordinating the activities of the Contracting Parties to fulfil their obligations under various EU directives. A clear example of this role has been in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and specifically the initiative taken by the ICPDR at the request of the CPs to prepare the Roof Report. In addition there is an anticipated proactive role that may be needed on issues such as the introduction of voluntary agreements banning the use of phosphates in detergents.

The main activities that are likely are:

- **WFD:** Continuing support to WFD implementation (consultancy support – described above, publication of RBMP etc.)
- **Sub-basins:** The ICPDR has agreed to expand the sub-basin initiatives that have begun with the Tisza and Sava river basins, by including the Prut River and the Danube Delta. The DRP has provided technical support to the Sava River that will lead to an outline of an agreed river basin management plan, and has facilitated activities in the Tisza with a focus on Ukraine. It is likely that additional support, outside the core budget of the ICPDR, would also be needed for the two new sub-basins.
- **Agriculture and Industry:** A significant part of the DRP's budget has been directed at assisting with reduction of pollution from industry and agriculture. Whilst this level of investment will not be possible by the ICPDR in the future, there will be a need to support awareness raising exercises and engaging these key stakeholders in dialogue with the ICPDR. Some of these additional costs have been identified above (expert support etc.), but it is likely that additional support will be required by the ICPDR to facilitate a better understanding of nutrient pollution from agriculture and to co-ordinate guidance on CAP issues.
- **Detergents:** The DRP has undertaken a small project to understand the potential of eliminating phosphates in washing detergents through voluntary agreements. The next steps at a basin level will involve a range of stakeholders with discussions leading to the introduction of a ban on the use of phosphates. It is expected that the ICPDR will take a leading role in the initiation of these discussions and will assist the CPs with negotiations with detergent manufacturers.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The support for these activities will likely be provided by specific funding targeted to that activity. It will be necessary for the ICPDR to have the capacity to develop and prepare funding proposals to meet such needs as they are identified.

## 5.3. Public Awareness Raising

The ICPDR, with support from the DRP, has significantly improved the impact of their awareness raising campaigns in the basin.

### 5.3.1. Danube Watch

Providing information to stakeholders and the public has been an important aspect of the work of the DRP and Secretariat. The DRP has provided considerable direct support to the ICPDR for communications activities (e.g. Danube Watch, Danube Day, visual identity, information

material, web enhancement, etc.) and indirectly through the range of projects undertaken by the DRP on public participation and awareness raising.

Communications pathways the ICPDR has been using include posting information on the Web, as well as using traditional printed communications, such as publishing the Danube Watch, ICPDR Annual Reports and the Monitoring Yearbooks, as well as posters, reports, etc. The Secretariat views the continuing of these activities and the publication of Danube Watch in particular to be a core activity. The cost of publishing and posting 8,000 copies of the magazines is around € 20,000. The Secretariat would like to publish quarterly, representing an € 80,000 yearly expenditure. The ICPDR operating budget does not cover the full amount for publication costs for the Danube Watch.

The DRP spent \$ 87,000 for three issues of the Danube Watch in 2005. In 2006 the DRP will support up to two issues of Danube Watch with a budget of 40 k USD. For the last two years the ICPDR has been increasing the percentage of the self funding of this activity and in 2006 has budgeted approximately half of the needed funds.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The ICPDR needs to agree on how to fund the Danube Watch in the future. Options include:

- > Accept magazine advertising
- > Join the publication together with another publication (AQUA Press)
- > Shift to a paid rather than free subscription basis
- > Obtain sponsorship from member states, or external organisations
- > Decentralise publishing, with each ICPDR country responsible for printing and postage and associated costs. The Secretariat would develop the artwork and content, and would retain full editorial control and keep the master subscription file. This could also enable Danube Watch to be published in multiple languages.
- > Switch to internet – based publishing
- > Publish quarterly, three times a year or semi-annually.

All of the above options entail different funding implications, and options can be combined. Each brings opportunities and limitations.

### 5.3.2. Danube Day

Danube Day is a core public relations activity for the ICPDR, and its most prominent public promotion and participation event. It has achieved 'brand' recognition and has elicited growing interest from industries to provide sponsorship. During 2005, the ICPDR negotiated a sponsorship and participation agreement with Coca Cola. The partnership with Coca Cola includes a memorandum of understanding forming the "Green Danube" partnership. In addition to Danube Day, the partnership leaves open additional joint promotion opportunities that highlight Danube water quality issues.

The DRP budget included \$115 000 (€91000) in support of Danube Day for 2004. Limited funding was provided also for Danube Day in 2005. The budget makes no direct provision for 2006. Danube Day continuation and expansion now rests with the ICPDR member states and external sponsors.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- > Recognising the potential of Danube Day as a brand, the ICPDR has begun and should further develop a sponsorship programme to underwrite the promotion of Danube Day and to support the many activities to be held in member states during that day.

- > Coca Cola has indicated its interest to continue and broaden its sponsorship support. This should be supported, and Coca Cola should be asked to assist in the effort to secure additional sponsors. ICPDR should negotiate with Coca Cola a pro bono arrangement for the use of PR personnel to expand the co-sponsorship base, and enhance Danube Day promotional activities. One output should be a sponsorship and planning meeting for Danube Day convened early in 2006, designed to secure co-sponsorship arrangements with other co-sponsors and coordinate promotional activities.

## **6. ICPDR PRIORITIES AND FUNDING**

### **6.1. Background**

The Permanent Secretariat receives its basic funding from the member states. The ICPDR budget for 2006 is approximately €858,000. The ICPDR has over its short history managed to achieve a high degree of stability in its funding and support. All countries of the Danube are contributing to the budget and the core activities of the Secretariat are able to be supported by the national contributions. As the previous section has identified, however, some critical elements of work have been supported by UNDP GEF and these need to be in future funded through other means.

At present the funds to meet the regular budget have been provided by the member states at three differing levels (EU member states highest level, accession countries medium and non accessions countries lowest level) with the intention that by 2010 the contributions should be allocated on an equal basis (see contribution key). Under this arrangement the actual contribution from EU countries has been steadily decreasing. A review of the contributions will be made in 2007 to determine whether the contributions of the three countries in the lowest category would be able to increase their share to that of the other countries by 2011 and whether the achievement of equal share can be reached.

Additionally the ICPDR has examined the option of strategies for freezing (the actual contribution) at the current level from the countries paying the highest percentage of the budget could be feasible. A decision on a proposal for the future development of the contribution keys with a contribution freeze for EU member states, will be made at the Standing Working Group Meeting in June 2006 and would if adopted mean a progressively higher overall budget for the ICPDR up to 2010 when the equal share of the budget is intended to be reached. These additional funds (approximately 50,000 in 2010) would allow a number of the key needs identified in the sections above to be financed.

It is clear, however, that in addition to these options other external funding sources are going to be needed for specific actions that have been over the past ten years supported by UNDP GEF. A number of options are under consideration and it is essential that the final months of the UNDP GEF project support the exploration of these sources.

## 6.2. Recommendations

1. The ICPDR should adopt the proposed revision of the contribution scheme in a way that still leads to the required equal share scheme (with some possible exemptions) by 2010 but which at the same time prevents current contributions from decreasing in absolute terms. Those Contracting Parties paying more than their equal share contribution up until the year 2010 should stabilise their contributions at current levels in absolute terms while the other Contracting Parties stepwise increase their contributions to the same level.
2. The ICPDR should call upon all Contracting Parties to provide for voluntary financial and/or in kind contributions to support additional activities and projects as outlined in the External Funding Plan.
3. The ICPDR should develop an external funding plan for permanent funding of activities outside of the regular budget. The current development of the Business Friends of the Danube appears to be the most realistic means of achieving this.
4. The ICPDR should develop and maintain internal capacity for the preparation of funding proposals to meet specific funding needs (i.e. JDS 2).

### Next Steps

1. ICPDR to agree on phased approach to reach base contribution parity in 2010 for all members.
2. External Funding Plan agreed to in 2006 for 2007 – 2008 period, with support agreements reached with members and external sponsors for specific projects.

## 6.3. Options to expand the 'capacity and function' of the ICPDR.

In addition to the strategies outlined above there are a number of options for developing further the funding for ICPDR related activities. These options are presented here in two major categories:

### Main:

- > CPs pay more – not considered further
- > CPs donate resources
- > Fund-raising
- > Corporate funding

### Secondary:

- > Accessing EC (and other) research funds – specific issues and not sustainable\ - (see presentation made by EC at RBM EG in Ulm 4/5 May 2006)
- > Links to other international programmes – again not sustainable
- > International Donors (e.g. GEF initiatives in Tisza and potentially elsewhere)

## 6.4. Priorities

The ICPDR's priorities for additional activities, beyond what is considered to be part of the core budget, can be split in to three categories;

- > Essential (i.e. must be funded);
- > Important (i.e. necessary for the ICPDR and EGs to implement their work programmes);
- > Desirable (i.e. highly beneficial to operation of ICPDR)

### Essential

Activity	Anticipated costs €	Potential Sources
EG travel and subsistence	20,000	Core budget and Special Fund
ICPDR Info Management Danubis Library GIS	40,000	Country contributions and Core budget

### Important

Activity	Anticipated costs €	Potential Sources
Danube Watch	40,000	Corporate and Special Fund
Experts to assist EG	20,000	Country in-kind and Corporate
JDS-2 (special)		Corporate / Country contributions
WFD + ICPDR (workshops and consultants ) 3/per year	40,000	Country in-kind and Corporate
Sub-basin activities (Interns)	30,000	Country in-kind and Corporate
Danube Day	20,000	Corporate and External Funding
<b>Total</b>	<b>210,000</b>	

### Desirable

Activity	Anticipated costs €	Potential Sources
Technical support for stakeholders		Corporate, 'Stakeholders'
Specific policy issues detergents agriculture	? ?	Corporate, Stakeholders, Country in-kind
Special publications	20,000/yr	Corporate and External Funding
Special actions	?	Corporate and External Funding

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

In order to meet the funding needs the ICPDR is undertaking the following actions:

- 1) The CPs agree to the issues and potential solutions presented in this paper, and recognise the need for greater country support for ICPDR activities in both cash and 'in-kind'.
- 2) Development of a Friends of the Danube Business Fund.
- 3) Carrying out of Fundraising strategy for JDS 2
- 4) Application for MSP with GEF for development and investigation of other cooperation with business.
- 5) Identify the need and internal capacity for any 'special project funding' and potential sources of funds;
- 6) Recognise the significant catalytic benefits for external support to initiate sub-basin programmes, e.g. on the Tisza and potentially the Prut rivers, and to encourage the CPs in sub-basins to active seek this international support.

These activities need to be fully supported and in the final months of the UNDP GEF project support needs to be provided to ensure that these options can be fully explored and developed. The contracting parties need to take seriously the challenge existing and support the ICPDR in meeting the short term and long-term funding needs through national commitments where possible.