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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATU	Administrative Territorial Unit
CC	Climate Change
CP	Cohesion Policy
DD	Danube Delta
DDBR	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EE	Energy Efficiency
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IDA	Inter-community Development Association
IDA ITI DD	Inter-community Development Association for implementation of ITI Danube Delta
ISUD	Integrated Sustainable Urban Development
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MA	Managing Authority
MEF	Ministry of European Funds
MPWDA	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration
NCRIA	National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration
OP	Operational Programme
POCA	OP Administrative Capacity
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SIDDDD	Danube Delta Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (RO: *Strategia Integrată de Dezvoltare Durabilă a Deltei Dunării*)
SISD	Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises

Executive summary

Context of the Interim Evaluation

In 2013, the World Bank received a request for technical assistance from what is now known as the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Public Administration (MPWDA) in Romania to provide support in the preparation of a strategy for the Danube Delta and its surrounding regions. The strategy was subsequently approved through Government Ordinance no 601/2016. To ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development in Danube Delta (SIDDDD), various instruments and institutions were also put into effect in parallel. Key among these were the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) mechanism and the Inter-Community Development Association for ITI Danube Delta (IDA ITI DD).

Taken together, the strategy, the ITI, and the IDA ITI in the Danube Delta region laid the foundation of an integrated regional development program – the first of its kind in Romania. Five years since its inception, the strategy is nearing the end of what can be considered its first stage of implementation. The year 2020 represents a bridge between the end of the current EU programming period 2014-2020 and the beginning of the next period 2021-2027. This transition period is relevant as a large portion of the strategy is financed through the ITI mechanism and EU funds. The Managing Authorities (MA) of the Romanian Operational Programmes are due to close all financing lines for the current period, including those allocated for ITI, and prepare the new national strategies and financial allocations.

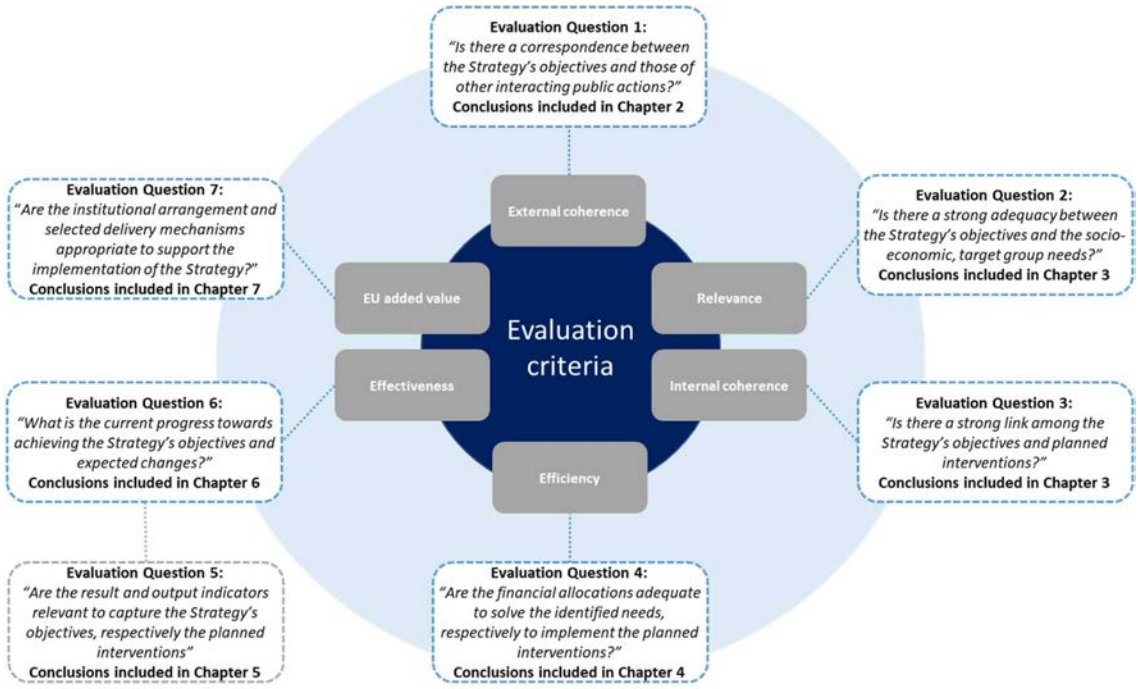
In this context, the MPWDA is keen to understand the overall physical and financial progress of the implementation of the SIDDDD and opportunities for improvement in lead up towards the next programming period. The objective of this evaluation was to support the MPWDA in:

- Estimating the progress and immediate effects of the Strategy in the Danube Delta Region
- Providing practical recommendations for the improvement of ITI mechanism
- Recommending practical processes for ex-ante and ex-post impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation of the development strategy to be used moving forward.

Methodology

This review can best be categorized as an implementation evaluation, focused on the progress towards achievement of objectives as well as the ongoing process of implementation. It should also be noted that the report refers to “evaluation of the strategy”, while within the context as explained the focus is really on the “evaluation of a program”, encompassing many initiatives and “child” projects towards the achievement of the strategy.

As the SIDDDD is implemented mainly through EU ITI delivery mechanism, drawing financial resources from the eight Romanian Operational Programmes, the evaluation team designed a methodological approach in line with European Commission (EC) guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. The report incorporates all five evaluation criteria suggested in the EC Toolbox for Better Regulation, respectively effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value, with different levels of detail, determined by the limited availability of qualitative and quantitative information, and by the incipient status of project implementation. For each criterion, an evaluation question was assigned, to further explain the teams understanding regarding the scope of the analyses, and therefore better guide the analyses. The link between evaluation criteria and evaluation questions is presented in the figure below, it also guides the reader to the relevant chapters discussing each question.



High level findings

During what is considered the first phase of implementation (the period between adoption and closing of the 2014 – 2020 programming period), the SIDDDD registered relatively low progress, especially in relation to the tight deadlines imposed for EU funded strategies. The level of absorption of EU funds is below 20% (payments out of total allocations), and the general physical progress of projects amounts to 35% (current status of output indicators, compared to baselines and interim targets). The overall progress with regards to result indicators is estimated at 42%. Most outcomes and impacts are expected to be more visible towards the end of 2023 with 80% of projects still under implementation. The large infrastructure projects, which are expected to produce significant economic impacts in Danube Delta area, are currently in an incipient status, and therefore are not yet captured in the current analyses. The low pace of implementation can be justified by the novelty of the ITI mechanisms, which required complex preparation activities - developing and approving the local Danube Delta Strategy, setting the institutional framework for the implementation of the strategy and of the ITI instrument, developing inter-institutional agreements and procedures, and promoting the strategy and the financing mechanism.

Nevertheless, the beneficiaries of projects implemented through ITI mechanism are already able to perceive some important environmental and economic developments, generated by the strategy. Two thirds of respondents to the online survey appreciate that both tourists and residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in the area. Moreover, 51% of respondents to the online survey consider that implemented projects have a positive impact on the environment.

While the projects implemented under the SIDDDD were monitored by different stakeholders, **monitoring data were not aggregated at the level of SIDDDD.** Monitoring was conducted by the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes, the MPWDA, and the Community Development Agency ITI DD, mainly focusing on compliance with reporting rules for EU Funded projects. In order to verify the progress towards achieving the objectives of the SIDDDD further procedures and instruments are needed, to establish clear roles and responsibilities for data monitoring and aggregation, to guide the methodological approach, to set deadlines for monitoring and reporting and to communicate the use of results.

The main findings against each of the evaluation criteria (contained in separate Chapters) are summarized below:

External Coherence

The Interim Evaluation started with the assessment of the external coherence of the Strategy (*Evaluation Question 1: "Is there a correspondence between the Strategy's objectives and those of other interacting public actions?"*).

The results indicated a good coordination among the objectives set by the SIDDDD and the objectives set by the six analyzed local strategies, respectively Tulcea County Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy, Tulcea Municipality Local Strategy, Sulina Local Development Strategy, Baia Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy, Isaccea City Development Strategy and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The local strategies are drafted to complement the interventions financed under the Danube Delta Strategy and to contribute to its final objectives and related targets.

Relevance and Internal Coherence

The evaluation team next assessed the relevance of the strategy (*Evaluation Question 2: Is there a strong adequacy between the Strategy's objectives and the socio-economic, target group needs?"*) and its internal coherence (*Evaluation Question 3: Is there a strong link among the Strategy's objectives and planned interventions?*).

A high relevance was noted based on the relationship among identified needs and problems and the objectives of the Strategy. According to the online survey deployed by the evaluation team, the majority of beneficiaries consider that the SIDDDD has covered the needs of the institution they represent, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region. This is attributed to the participatory approach in designing the strategy and implementation documents, which involved all relevant stakeholders, including civil society.

A medium internal coherence resulted from the reconstructed logic of intervention. This was mainly caused by the high level of stratification of the strategy (overarching vision, two strategic objectives, five pillars, 16 sectors, 52 sectorial specific objectives, 137 interventions and 1024 projects), but also by the limited guidelines for the implementation of the strategy, for attaining the integrated approach. In particular, for some sectors, the scope of the contracted projects seems rather limited compared to the ambitious objectives of the strategy. This is a topic to be further explored by a future impact assessment.

Financial Allocation

The Interim Evaluation also addressed the financial allocations of the strategy (*Evaluation Question 4: "Are the financial allocations adequate to solve the identified needs, respectively to implement the planned interventions?"*).

The assessment was limited by the fact that the Strategy itself does not include an overall budget for the entire implementation period, needed or available, to be split by pillars and sectors, and by sources of funds. Nevertheless, the EU and national funds allocated to contracted projects in Danube Delta, reveal a high concentration of resources towards a very limited number of sectors (in particular, transport and rural development), while other sectors have very limited financial allocations. This over-concentration could be addressed during the next programming period, with a quantification of current unfinanced needs and an active identification of possible sources of funding.

System of Indicators

Although the Interim Evaluation was not specifically aimed at analyzing the system of indicators (*Evaluation Question 5: "Are the result and output indicators relevant to capture the Strategy's objectives, respectively the planned interventions?"*) , this became a prerequisite for the evaluation of the physical progress of the strategy.

Danube Delta Strategy included a list of indicators, and while stating some measurement units and sources of data did not include indicator definitions, baselines or targets (not possible to determine during strategy drafting process). These indicators were not actively used for monitoring the implementation of the strategy at the time of this evaluation. Moreover, the majority of indicators were designed to capture only the immediate outputs; while some indicators included in the strategy required data that cannot be aggregated at territorial level.

Taking into consideration the above bottlenecks, the evaluation team suggested an update of the list of indicators, with the support of Inter-Community Development Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta (IDA ITI DD). The updated system of indicators serves to capture the outputs and results of ongoing and completed projects, during the first phase of implementation. For most output indicators, guidelines were provided for data collection and aggregations, including definitions, computation methodology and sources of information. The team further provided support in constructing baselines and intermediate targets, starting from the list of contracted projects.

However, additional result indicators are needed in order to reflect all desired changes included in the strategy, during the entire timeline of implementation. The current list of indicators does not cover all sectorial specific objectives and related interventions (in particular, objectives with no current allocation were omitted). As such, it may over-estimate the progress of the strategy, by monitoring only the specific objectives with registered progress.

Interim Results

The core purpose of the Interim Evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the strategy (Evaluation Questions 6: *"What is the current progress towards achieving the Strategy's objectives and expected changes?"*), based on monitoring data related to financial, output and result indicators, and on the perception of beneficiaries.

The monitoring data suggest a low progress in achieving the desired results. The level of absorption of European Union funds is below 20% (payments out of total allocations), and the general physical progress of projects amounts to 36% (current status of output indicators, compared to baselines and interim targets). The low pace of implementation can be justified by the novelty of the strategy and of the Integrated Territorial Investment mechanism, which required complex preparation activities - developing and approving the local Danube Delta Strategy, setting the institutional framework for the implementation of the strategy and of the funding instrument, developing inter-institutional agreements and procedures, and promoting the strategy and the financing mechanism.

Nevertheless, the beneficiaries of projects implemented in Danube Delta are already able to perceive some important environmental and economic developments, generated by the strategy. Two thirds of respondents to the online survey appreciate that both tourists and residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in the area. Moreover, 51% of respondents to the online survey consider that implemented projects have a positive impact on the environment. Some important impacts are also expected in relation to the large transport infrastructure projects, implemented by the National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration and by Tulcea Administrative Territorial Unit. However, the overall results and impacts of the strategy will be better reflected in a future impact assessment, as the outcomes of a strategy are fully visible only after the completion of projects.

Institutional Arrangements and Delivery Mechanism

The Evaluation Team performed a brief analysis of the institutional arrangements and delivery mechanism (Evaluation Question 7: *"Are the institutional arrangement and selected delivery mechanisms appropriate to support the implementation of the Strategy?"*), as this will be the scope of a separate report, to be published by the Ministry of European Funds.

The preliminary analyses suggest that Romania managed to create functional institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SIDDDD. All relevant stakeholders were involved in planning, implementation and monitoring activities, ensuring compliance with the European Regulations for EU Funded strategies, while taking

into consideration the local needs and objectives. Given the positive feedback received from beneficiaries with regards to the activity of the IDA ITI in Danube Delta, further responsibilities could be delegated in the future to the local institution, in order to leverage the created human capacity.

Beneficiaries further perceive the institutional arrangements, as well as the selected delivery mechanism (ITI DD) as having created the necessary framework for a successful implementation of the SIDDDD. Based on the online survey, the ITI mechanism has significantly contributed to making European funding more accessible, especially for local and central public authorities and for the non-governmental sector. At the level of all beneficiaries, the mechanism generated an increase in the availability share for accessing European funds, contributing significantly to the increase of entrepreneurial capacity.

Monitoring and evaluation

Finally, the Evaluation Team provided guidelines and instruments for developing monitoring and evaluation tools and procedures, for the next phase of implementation of Danube Delta Strategy.

Recommendations for future interventions

Based on the above findings, a series of recommendations were provided in order to further continue and enhance the achieved progress of SIDDDD during the programming period 2021-2027. These are detailed at the end of each chapter and aggregated here, but these can also be summarized and sorted into two broad groups of recommendations, as follows:

Strategic Planning	**Implementation Arrangements**
Recommendations aimed at improving the various supporting documents for the strategy (including needs analysis, implementation plans, etc.)	*Recommendations aimed at improving implementation procedures and tools, including Monitoring and Evaluation*
Recommendation 1 – 3: Ensure coherence with new EU programming period, updated needs analysis and subsequent updated shorter term implementation plans and other implementation documents such as project prioritization methodologies.	**Recommendation 6:** Monitor financial progress and implement corrective action and re-allocation where necessary
Recommendation 4: Clearer representation of logic of intervention	**Recommendation 10 - 11:** Implement remediation actions to address findings from root cause analysis for limited physical and financial progress
Recommendation 5: Develop budget estimates for remainder of strategy implementation period (ideally with annual breakdowns)	**Recommendation 12 - 14:** Develop a stronger monitoring and evaluation function, including M&E procedures, clearer attribution of functions, improved data sharing protocols and improved communication around an agreed evaluation plan
Recommendation 7 – 9: Set additional result and output indicators and fully completed the system of indicators	

The detailed list of recommendations is as follows:

Recommendation 1 (External coherence): Re-evaluate the external coherence with European Union, national and local strategies, at the beginning of the new programming period. This recommendation considers the fact that, for each programming period, new objectives are established at European Union level, which are then translated into the national and regional strategies. It is noted that it is unlikely that the overall SIDDDD will be updated (given cumbersome approval processes – previously 2 years), however various implementation support

documents such as a short or medium term action or implementation plan (annual plan or 3 -5 year plan for example), financial plans to match implementation plan or updated prioritization methodologies (action plan, financial plan, etc.) could be updated to ensure continued relevance.

Recommendation 2 (Relevance): Update the needs assessment, in the context of the future impact evaluation, in order to identify the needs that have already been addressed through the first set of contracted projects and the needs that remain during the second phase of implementation. Moreover, a quantification of remaining needs would better serve for the financial planning of the strategy and for setting the final targets.

Recommendation 3 (Relevance): Update the supporting implementation documents, in anticipation of a future impact assessment. The strategy should be a "living" document, highly responsive to the changing needs of the society. As noted in recommendation 1, while the regular update of the strategy document is not practical, supporting documents towards implementation (such as short- term implementation plans) could be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure relevance.

Recommendations 4 (Internal coherence): Provide a clearer representation of the logic of intervention, to be used by different stakeholders and beneficiaries, in implementation and monitoring. A reconstruction of the logical framework was already performed in the context of this project. However, updates may be necessary once the final list of indicators is approved. Moreover, for the future programming period, it is also recommended to further assess the links between objectives and selected projects.

Recommendation 5 (Efficiency): Strategic and implementation documents should include at least some attempt at capturing a budget for the Danube Delta Strategy. This would ideally be for the period 2016-2030, and include budget needs, budget availability, split by pillars, sectors and, where possible, by interventions. In a further best practice case, this should be further broken down into funding periods (assuming correlation with EU funding periods) and then into annual budget plans. While this seem an extensive and complex undertaking, it would represent a significant step forward in terms of planning and monitoring of financial resources and particularly create a much clearer link between needs and actual financing secured for projects.

Recommendation 6 (Efficiency): Financial progress should be evaluated throughout implementation and, where needed, reallocations should be performed. Danube Delta Strategy has a long horizon and therefore budgetary adjustments may be needed, based on contextual changes (e.g. the ongoing Covid-19 crisis may generate a different prioritizations of investments), on the new needs that m ay arise, or additional financial resources identified throughout implementation.

Recommendation 7 (System of indicators): Set additional result indicators, to capture all sectorial specific objectives. Result indicators should reflect the overall progress of the strategy, not only the objectives with financial allocations. The system of indicators can rely both on quantitative result indicators (to be added and monitored by IDA ITI in Danube Delta), and qualitative result indicators (to be added and assessed by the external evaluation team, in the context of future progress and impact assessments).

Recommendation 8 (System of indicators): Set additional output indicators, as per need, to capture the majority of interventions. The current list of output indicators is set based on the ongoing or completed projects. Additional indicators may be required after the approval of the new financing lines, in order to capture most interventions (at least 75% of the total budget of the strategy). Although it is not recommended to have indicators in relation to each of the 137 interventions, a closer monitoring is required for interventions with high financial allocations.

Recommendation 9 (System of indicators): Finalize the system of indicators (far advanced during this evaluation process) with guidelines for data collection and monitoring. For all indicators, the following information should be provided: title of the indicator; measurement unit; baseline; intermediate and final targets; source of information; definition; computation methodologies; aggregation methodologies; responsible for data collection, aggregation and reporting; deadlines for data collection, aggregation and reporting.

Recommendation 10 (Effectiveness): Select and implement appropriate remediation actions to address the root causes for the limited physical progress of the strategy (as identified in this report). Remediation actions at

strategy level may include: advance planning of implementation mechanisms for the next programming period; technical assistance for beneficiaries, including capacity building projects; communication of funding opportunities by multiple means; increased number and capacity of human resources involved in implementing and monitoring the strategy; clear roles and procedures for monitoring the strategy. Remediation actions at project level may include closer evaluation and guidance for submitted projects and improved guidelines for beneficiaries.

Recommendation 11 (Effectiveness): Identify and implement the appropriate methods for accelerating project expenditure (either at ITI, strategy or project level), while taking into consideration the challenges associated to each method**.** Methods at strategy level may include: overcommitment of strategy funds; additional and/ or targeted calls for project proposals; waiting (reserve) list of projects. Methods at the project level may include closer monitoring of projects' spending and mid-term assessment of projects' spending; decommitment of projects' budgets with low spending level; additional allocations to already running projects.

Recommendation 12 (Monitoring and evaluation function): Develop a monitoring and evaluation procedure, defining clear responsibilities for each institution involved in implementing Danube Delta Strategy. The strategy defines in general terms the responsibilities of each institution; however, a specific procedure for monitoring and evaluation would better guide the collection and aggregation of data at local level, as well as the planning and follow-up for the external evaluations.

Recommendation 13 (Monitoring and evaluation function): Grant access to relevant data to all institution in charge of monitoring and evaluation. Currently, the monitoring data related to implemented projects are collected by Managing Authorities (MA), in relation to each Operational Programme. In order to assess the progress of the Danube Delta Strategy, these data should be aggregated at local level, by the strategy owners. For that purpose, the institution in charge with monitoring Danube Delta Strategy (i.e. MPWDA) should have access to financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports and any other monitoring data submitted by beneficiaries, including the progress of indicators.

Recommendation 14 (Monitoring and evaluation function): Develop and communicate the evaluation plan for Danube Delta Strategy. The evaluation plan should include the following elements: indicative list of evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale; methods to be used for the individual evaluations and their data requirements; provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected; a timetable; a strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations; human resources involved in monitoring and evaluation; the indicative budget for implementation of the evaluation plan; and possibly a training plan.

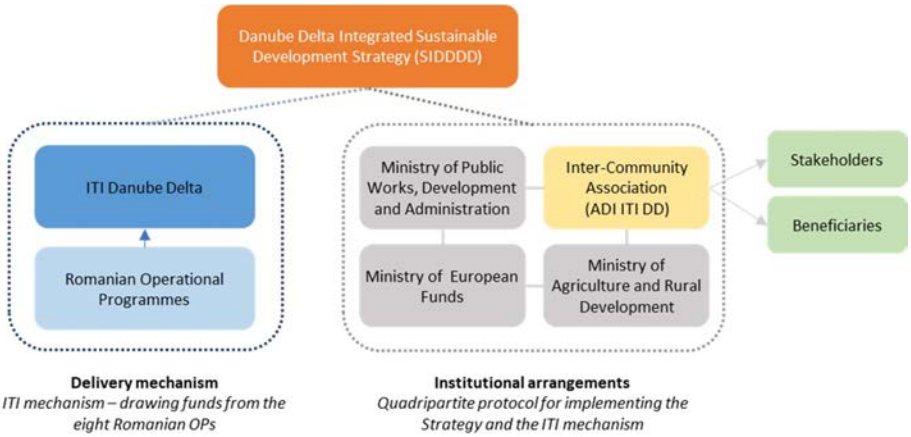
Chapter 1

1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

In 2013, the World Bank received a request for technical assistance from what is now known as the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Public Administration (MPWDA) in Romania to provide support in the preparation of a strategy for the Danube Delta and its surrounding regions. The strategy was subsequently approved through Government Ordinance no 601/2016. To ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development in Danube Delta (SIDDDD), various instruments and institutions were also put into effect in parallel. Key among these were the Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) mechanism and the Inter-Community Development Association for ITI Danube Delta (IDA ITI DD). The ITI delivery mechanism was set up to ensure a streamlined disbursement of European Funds in accordance with the objectives outlined by the Strategy using an integrated approach. The Association, on the other hand was established to bring together key institutions and administrative bodies relevant in the Danube Delta region and to manage the collection of projects, to promote the funding opportunities and to facilitate the access to European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) to achieve maximum development in the region. Taken together, the strategy, the ITI, and the IDA ITI in the Danube Delta region laid the foundation of an integrated regional development program – the first of its kind in Romania.

Figure 1: Synthetic illustration of delivery mechanism and institutional arrangements for SIDDDD



Source: Evaluators' interpretation of SIDDDD strategic and implementation documents

Five years since its inception, the strategy is nearing what can be considered its first stage of completion. The year 2020 represents a bridge between the end of the current financial programming period 2014-2020 and the beginning of the next period 2021-2027. This transition period is relevant as a large portion of the strategy is financed through the ITI mechanism and EU funds. The Managing Authorities (MA) of the Romanian Operational Programmes are due to close all financing lines for the current period, including those allocated for ITI, and prepare the new national strategies and financial allocations. In this context, the MPWDA is keen to understand the progress of the strategy and opportunities for improvement.

1.2. Objectives and scope

The objective of this evaluation is to support the MPWDA in:

- Estimating the progress and immediate effects of the Strategy in the Danube Delta Region
- Providing practical recommendations for the improvement of ITI mechanism
- Recommending practical processes and actions to improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the development strategy (to be used moving forward by various roleplayers).

Methodological approach considered in three stages:

The purpose of the planning phase was to ensure that the project is set-up correctly, to validate the methodological approach with the Contracting Authority and to coordinate the activities performed by different members of the evaluation team.

Considering that the majority of the SIDDDD is implemented through EU ITI delivery mechanism, drawing financial resources from the eight Romanian Operational Programmes, the evaluation team decided to draft the methodological approach in line with European Commission (EC) guidelines for monitoring and evaluation.[1]

It is important to clarify the type of evaluation begin undertaken, which could usually be one of three types: design evaluation (which considers the quality of the design of the program), implementation evaluation (progress/process evaluations) or the final impact evaluation (results / impact evaluations). Although the evaluation was commissioned as part of a larger MPWDA project around impact evaluation, it is clearly too early to pronounce with any certainty on impact since implementation is only at the early stages (as will be outlined in further chapters. Given that the SIDDDD has been through an extensive design and approval process, including extensive environmental impact assessments, there would be little value in a substantive quality of design evaluation (it would not be appropriate for the World Bank to conduct such either, as contributors to the original strategy document). The review therefore can be broadly categorized as an implementation evaluation, focused on the progress towards achievement of objectives as well as the ongoing process of implementation. It should also be noted that the report refers to "evaluation of the strategy", while within the context as explained the focus is really on the "evaluation of a program", encompassin many initiatives and "child" projects towards the achievement of the strategy.

Step 1: Defining the evaluation criteria and related evaluation questions

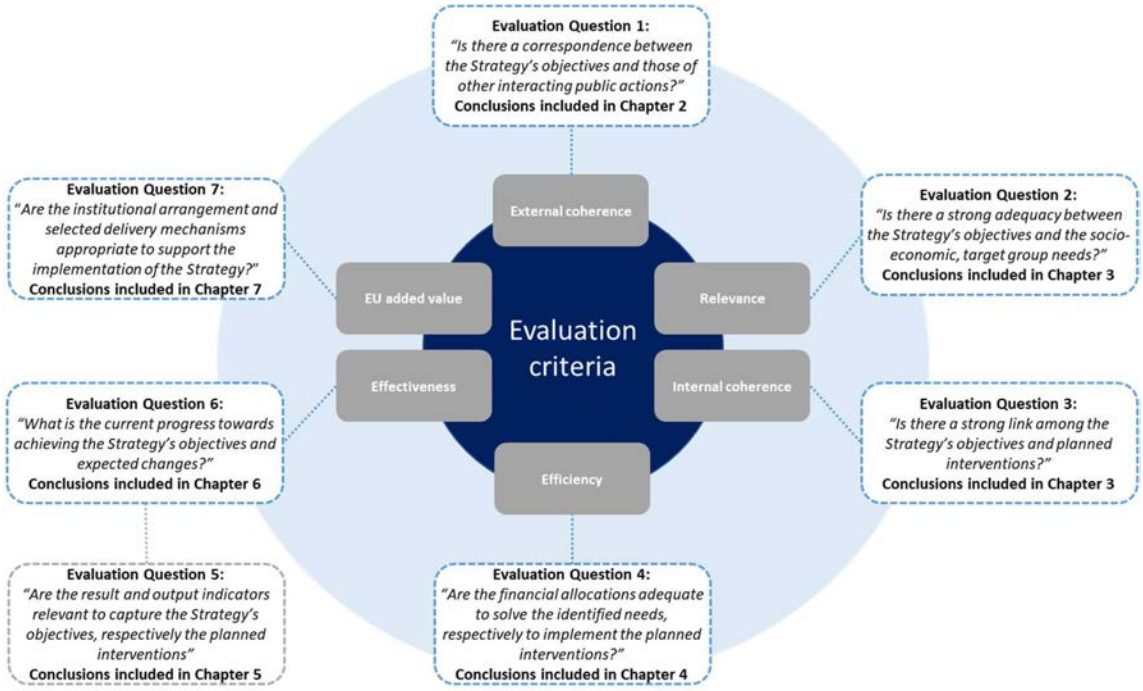
The current report incorporates all five evaluation criteria suggested in the EC Toolbox for Better Regulation[2], Tool 47, respectively effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value, with different levels of detail, determined by the limited availability of qualitative and quantitative information, and by the incipient status of project implementation.

For each criterion, an evaluation question was assigned, to further explain the teams understanding regarding the scope of the analyses, and therefore better guide the analyses. The link between evaluation criteria and evaluation questions is presented in Figure 2 below. Furthermore, the figure indicates the chapters containing conclusions and recommendations in relation to each evaluation criterion, respectively each evaluation question.

[1] See Evalsed resources approach: *https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/evaluations-guidance-documents/2013/evalsed-the-resource-for-the-evaluation-of-socio-economic-development-sourcebook-method-and-techniques*

[2] The better regulation toolbox contains advice on how to: apply general principles of better regulation; carry out impact assessments; identify impacts; prepare proposals, implementation and transposition; monitor the application of an intervention; carry out evaluations and fitness checks; consult stakeholders; apply methods, models, costs and benefits. (Link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-toolbox-47_en)

Figure 2: Evaluation criteria and related evaluation questions



Step 2: Selecting relevant data collection tools

The data collection tools were continuously updated, in order to provide sufficient evidence for each criterion and subsequent evaluation question, but also to respond to the limitations imposed by the ongoing sanitary crisis. The initially planned focus groups and on-site visits were replaced by online surveys, phone-interviews and analyses of project documentation.

Table 1: Data collection tools and consulted documents

Data collection tools	Consulted documents
External coherence	
• Desk research	• Strategic documents for the seven local strategies, including SIDDDD • Financial and monitoring data, including types and value of implemented projects, provided by IDA ITI DD and other local public institutions • Socio-economic statistic data for Danube Delta, available on INSSE webpage
Relevance	
• Desk research • Online survey *(transmitted to all Beneficiaries)*	• SIDDDD: strategic document, needs assessment and action plan • Results of the online survey, regarding the perceived relevance of the strategy, based on beneficiaries' answers
Internal coherence	
• Desk research	• SIDDDD: strategic document • List and description of contracted projects, provided by IDA ITI DD
Efficiency	
• Desk research	• SIDDDD: strategic document

Data collection tools	Consulted documents
	• Financial data retrieved from strategic documents of the eight Operational Programmes, consisting of total amounts allocated to ITI DD • Financial data provided by IDA ITI DD, consisting of total amounts contracted under SIDDDD
Effectiveness	
• Desk research • Online survey *(transmitted to all Beneficiaries)* • In-depth phone interviews *(with selected Beneficiaries*	• Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, for output and result indicators, collected in the context of this project • Monitoring data at project level provided by IDA ITI DD, consisting of • Results of the online survey, regarding the perceived effects of the implemented interventions, based on beneficiaries' answers • Results of the in-depth phone interviews, regarding the expected and achieved results, at project level • Project documentation
EU added value	
• Desk research • Online survey *(transmitted to all Beneficiaries)*	• SIDDDD: strategic document, providing information on institutional arrangements and delivery mechanism • Results of the online survey, regarding the perceived added value of the ITI mechanism, based on beneficiaries' answers

Step 3: Drafting the methodological document

After defining the scope of the project, the evaluation criteria and related questions, as well as the relevant collection tools, the evaluation team drafted the methodological document, including detailed information on the evaluation framework[3], data collection strategy, project activities and timeline, expected results and methodological limitations. The methodological report was regarded as the main working tool throughout the implementation of the contract.

The purpose of the second phase of project implementation was to gather enough information to provide evidence on the level of achievement, at strategy and project level, in qualitative and quantitative terms, and to identify the internal and external factors that influenced the progress of the strategy.

Step 4: Collecting & analyzing strategic and implementation documents

First of all, the evaluation team collected the readily available strategic and implementation documents, for SIDDDD and six other local strategies (Tulcea county, Tulcea city, Sulina city, Isaccea city, Baia commune, and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve). These documents were used to analyze the external and internal coherence of the SIDDDD and reconstruct the theory of change and logical framework.

Step 5: Collecting & analyzing financial data

[3] The development of an evaluation framework enables the evaluation team to understand the main stakes of the evaluation questions and to easily identify the main fields for investigation. It also allows us to identify, from the very beginning, the relevant judgment criteria and related indicators as well as related types of data necessary for carrying out the analysis and the appropriate sources of information, which guarantees the effectiveness of the data collection process.

Financial data was collected with support from IDA ITI DD, to estimate the adequacy of financial allocations, the financial progress at project and strategy level, and the absorption of EU Funds. However, a series of data cleaning activities were required. The strategy did not include a financial plan; the monitoring documents did not indicate the relation among contracted projects and SIDDDD sectors and pillars; data was presented in different currencies; the split between EU Funds and National Budget was not always indicated; and total amounts were not consistent when analyzing various documents. In order to improve the accuracy of financial data, the following activities were performed by the evaluation team:

- **Activity 1:** Assigning each contracted project to the relevant sector and pillar, based on the general description of the project. This activity enabled the aggregation of data at different levels of the Strategy.
- **Activity 2:** Converting all eligible amounts in EUR, using an approximation of the EUR-RON exchange rate during the years 2016-2020. This activity enabled the comparison among allocated, contracted and paid amounts.
- **Activity 3:** Requesting additional clarifications to IDA ITI DD, regarding the split of eligible values between EU Funds and National Budges. This information was needed to compute the rate of absorption of EU Funds.
- **Activity 4:** Identifying outliers and requesting clarification to IDA ITI DD (i.e. for energy related projects, currency was not correctly indicated; for projects implemented at national level, the national allocations were mixed with ITI allocations). The final analyses are based on the updated documents provided by IDA ITI DD, with corrected financial information.

Step 6: Collecting & analyzing monitoring data

The evaluation team requested to MPWDA the monitoring data for SIDDDD indicators, in order to compute the physical progress at project and strategy level**.** However, the strategic documents did not provide baselines, targets, definitions, data collection and aggregation methodologies, or sources of information for selected indicators; and therefore, the SIDDDD indicators were never monitored. In order to address the lack of monitoring data, the evaluation team performed the following activities, with support from IDA ITI DD:

- **Activity 1:** Analyzing the list of output and result indicators included in the SIDDDD and identifying the indicators for which historical data could be retrieved at the level of ITI DD (i.e. baselines and current values).
- **Activity 2:** Analyzing the list of indicators included in the eight Operational Programmes and identifying the indicators relevant for monitoring the physical progress of the SIDDDD projects.
- **Activity 3:** Collecting monitoring data (i.e. baselines and current values) from relevant institutions, and setting interim targets, based on contracted projects. Note: taking into consideration the sanitary crisis generated by Covid-19, for some indicators, data could not be retrieved within this project timeline.
- **Activity 4:** Selecting the indicators with complete information (baselines, current values and targets), to be used for estimating the physical progress of contracted projects and the overall progress of the strategy (see Annex 2). Note: the list of indicators used in the context of this report was determined by the availability of historical data. The system of indicators should be further improved for future evaluations.
- **Activity 5:** Providing recommendations and guidelines to IDA ITI DD for future monitoring activities.

For a short-list of strategic projects, the evaluation team also requested additional project level monitoring data (i.e. financing requests and progress reports). However, MPWDA did not have access to such documents, as Beneficiaries are submitting progress reports directly to Managing Authorities. Given the short timeline of this project, and the limited institutional arrangements for exchange of project level data, documents were not retrieved in due time. Nevertheless, the evaluation team managed to find additional sources of information: project fiches and monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, and qualitative and quantitative information provided by Beneficiaries.

Step 7: Collecting & analyzing qualitative and quantitative information from Beneficiaries

An online survey (see Annex 4) was submitted to all SIDDDD Beneficiaries, in order collect information on the perceived relevancy and effectiveness of the strategy, as well as the added value of the ITI mechanism. In addition, in-depth interviews were performed for a selected number of strategic projects, with high allocation or high representativity of SIDDDD interventions (Annex 3).

Step 8: Drafting the final report and disseminating project results

The final phase of project implementation was aimed at drafting the Evaluation Report and disseminating the project results.

1.3. Structure of the report

The Evaluation Report incorporates findings, conclusions and recommendation for the five evaluation criteria (coherence, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value) and related evaluation questions, and is structured around seven sections, as follows:

- **External Coherence**: assessing the consistency, complementarity, harmonization and coordination of SIDDDD with six other local strategies, namely the strategies for Tulcea county, Tulcea city, Sulina city, Isaccea city, Baia commune and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve
- **Relevance and Internal Coherence**: assessing the relevance of the strategy, taking into consideration the current needs, as well as the logical links among the objectives and planned interventions
- **Financial Allocation**: assessing the split of financial resources among pillars and sectors, as well as the consistency of allocations with types of planned interventions
- **System of Indicators**: assessing the coverage of specific sectorial objectives and interventions, by result and output indicators
- **Interim Results**: assessing the current financial and physical progress of the strategy, as well as the outcomes perceived by beneficiaries and stakeholders
- **Institutional Arrangements and Delivery Mechanism**: presenting the institutional organization and approach to implementation, along with identified areas of improvement
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Function**: assessing aspects related to monitoring and evaluation, namely the existing set-up for data collection, aggregation and reporting, planning of external evaluations, follow up and communication of results.

The report includes in the annexes: the table of recommendations, with suggested deadlines and responsible institutions (Annex 1), the list of output and result indicators, used for estimating the progress of the strategy (Annex 2), the in-depth analyses of eight selected projects (Annex 3), the results of the online survey, submitted to all project beneficiaries (Annex 4), the reconstruction of theory of change (Annex 5) and logical framework (Annex 6) and the analyses of six local strategies, implemented in Danube Delta (Annex 7).

1.4. Methodological limitations

The local strategy was lacking some quantifiable information, to allow the proper evaluation of financial and physical progress:

- **Missing financial planning**: the evaluation team received only the contracted amounts for the programming period 2014-2020, through ITI mechanism, and not the entire budgetary needs and allocations of the strategy.
- **Missing monitoring data**: the evaluation team managed to collect complete information for a limited number of output and result indicators. Therefore, the current system of indicators is based on the availability of historical data, not on a sound methodological approach, to ensure the relevancy of indicators in relation to the ambitious SIDDDD strategic and sectorial specific objectives.

Moreover, all project activities were conducted during the sanitary crisis generated by Covid-19. This resulted in the team conducting the large majority of the assessment through virtual means. It limited to some extent the teams' access to various key documents and various stakeholders were not readily available to participate in interviews.

Chapter 2

2. External Coherence

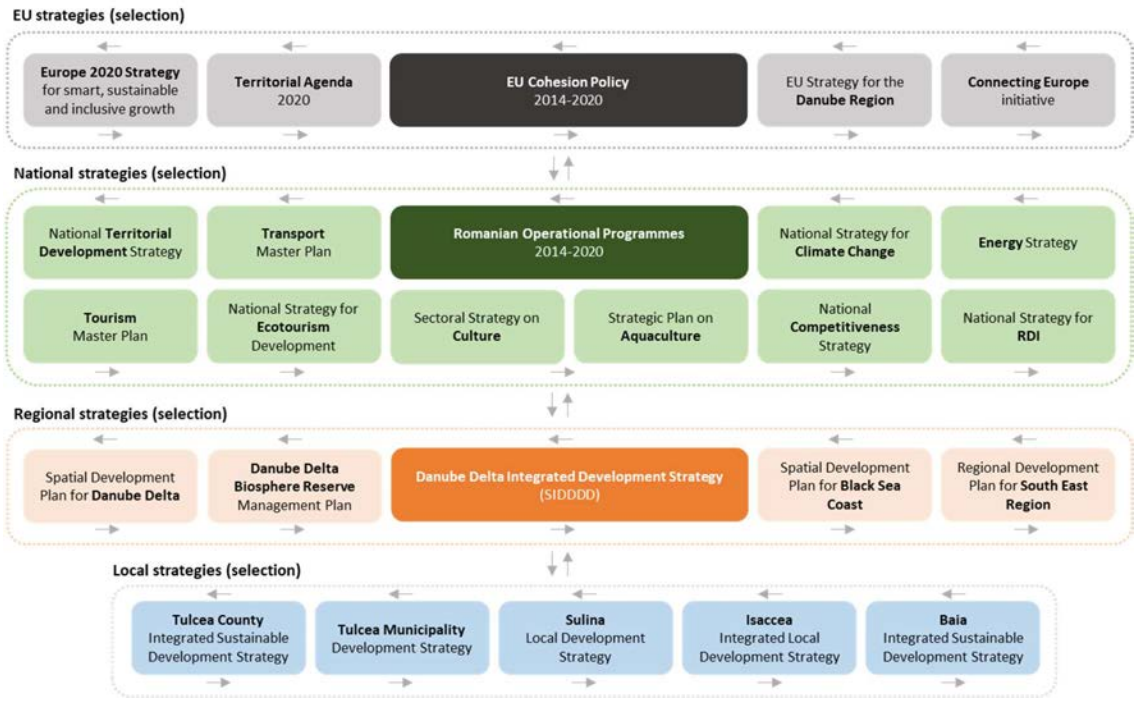
2.1. Description of the evaluation process

This section presents the conclusions regarding the coherence of the SIDDDD with other local strategies, in terms of consistency, complementarity, harmonization and coordination. The results are based on the strategic documents and monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD.

2.2. Findings

The development of the Danube Delta area is highly influenced by the European, national, regional and local strategies. First of all, the EU Strategies are defining the general objectives and investment priorities to which all Member States commit to adhere. The EU Strategies are an important source of financing for Members States, but they also come with certain obligations - all strategies implemented by the Member States, and in particular the interventions financed through EU Funds, need to demonstrate the alignment with EU objectives. The National Strategies are then defining the national strategic approach in relation to various topics and sectors (e.g. transport, tourism, energy, etc.), which are embedded into regional strategies. In Danube Delta area, we note the existence of several Regional Strategies, which should be aligned with each other, to avoid conflicting interventions or duplication of efforts. Finally, the Local Strategies are able to respond to the immediate and specific needs of the citizens, while contributing to the regional, national and EU strategies. The interactions among the four layers of strategies - local, regional, national and EU - are illustrated in a synthetic manner in the below figure.

Figure 3: Synergies among local, regional, national and EU strategies



Source: Evaluators' interpretation based on the analysis of local, regional, national and EU strategies

The external coherence of SIDDDD with European and National Strategies was already addressed in the planning stage of the strategy. Therefore, in the context of this project, the evaluation team focused on the external coherence with the regional and local strategies (i.e. strategies for Tulcea county, Tulcea city, Sulina city, Isaccea city, Baia commune, and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve), to better understand the complementarities among different interventions and identify possible conflicting objectives that undermine the overall progress. The below sections include the main conclusions, while the full analyses are presented in Annex 7.

Tulcea county integrated sustainable development strategy

The Tulcea county strategy is well aligned with the Delta Danube strategy. The strategic vision of the county is harmonized with the integrated strategic vision of the SIDDDD and both plans have similar strategic objectives. Most sectoral objectives from the Delta Danube strategy have been incorporated in the county plan, except a few issues like energy efficiency or fishery which are outside the purview of the county. The county projects also respond to the priority areas set by the SIDDDD. Despite some limitations regarding sectors and territorial competence, there is a good level of correlation between the two plans in terms of priority areas, and the interventions at the county level indicate that they could contribute in achieving the objectives and targets of the Delta Danube strategy.

Tulcea municipality development strategy

With same coverage period as the SIDDDD (2016-2030), the Tulcea city strategy has a high level of alignment (about 90 percent) with the Danube Delta document in terms of objectives, areas, and measures/interventions. The SIDDDD pillars are well reflected in the city priorities and measures. The main difference among the two documents is related to the focus area, as Tulcea is entirely urban, whereas the Delta Danube plan covers predominantly rural areas. Also, the city emphasizes less on IT&C and health issues. The local strategy is listing 240 proposals that are mostly correlated with the SIDDDD, although some go beyond the areas of interventions in the Delta Danube plan. Only half of the proposals have indicators and around a quarter received financing. The projects implemented by Tulcea with EU funds makes the city the second largest recipient of the ITI program.

Sulina local development strategy

The strategy of Sulina is well-correlated in terms of vision, strategic and sectoral objectives with the SIDDDD. Despite having a different structure and wording, the city strategy embraces nearly all objectives from the SIDDDD, pointing to similar values and elements. The two documents have comparable objectives - although Sulina has a different approach, as the priorities seemed to be drawn in a more straightforward and concise manner. Sulina is implementing over RON 11 million projects with ITI funds, which would support the objectives of the Delta Danube strategy.

Isaccea integrated local development strategy

The strategy of Isaccea is about 70 percent aligned with the SIDDDD at the level of objectives, priority areas and specific objectives. The main differences are in terms of structure, as the local plan was developed before the SIDDDD, and coverage period (the city strategy runs up to 2020). Also, compared to SIDDDD, Isaccea does not focus too much on IT&C and health sectors. But these differences did not affect the overall approach since the city strategy is quite consistent with the Delta Danube plan. Only 25 percent of the local project portfolio has been financed so far. The projects contracted by Isaccea make around 1 (one) percent of the ITI program, even though the city has 2.4 percent of the population in the SIDDDD area.

Baia integrated sustainable development strategy

Although Baia strategy was approved before the SIDDDD, the commune's key development areas and measures are connected to the strategic and sectorial objectives of the Delta Danube plan. Both documents have similar strategic approach, although different structures, methodologies, details, and coverage period (Baia

plan goes until 2020). 10 of the 25 local objectives are under implementation - of which three interventions with ITI/EU funds (around RON 9 million). As local projects are linked to some of the SIDDDD pillars, they could help achieve the regional sectoral objectives regarding transport and public service delivery.

Delta Danube biosphere reserve management plan

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR) Management Plan is aligned to a very large extent with the SIDDDD, at the level of objectives, principles, and actions. The main distinctions are about the structure of the document - management plan vs. strategy - and coverage period (the DDBR plan covers a much shorter span). In addition to the plan, there is a Visiting Strategy for each of the nine sub-regions of the DDBR. Some interventions in the SIDDDD have considered the recommendations from the Visiting Strategy. The projects in the DDBR area are well correlated with the interventions from the Delta Danube Strategy. The ten activities under implementation in the DDBR account for the third largest financial share of the ITI program, after Tulcea County and Tulcea city. To ensure a better correlation, the individual zone strategies should be integrated in the implementation plan of the SIDDDD.

2.3. Conclusions

Most of the analyzed local development strategies are coherent with the SIDDDD and take into consideration its vision, objectives, and priorities, but with different levels of correlation. There is a strong positioning in the case of Tulcea county and Tulcea city, a good level of alignment for Isaccea, Sulina and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, and an acceptable degree of correlation in the case of Baia commune.

2.4. Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Re-evaluate the external consistency with EU, national, regional and local strategies, at the beginning of the new programming period.

This recommendation considers the fact that, for each programming period, new objectives are established at European Union level, which are then translated into the national, regional and local strategies. It is noted that it is unlikely that the overall SIDDDD will be updated (given cumbersome approval processes – previously 2 years), however various implementation support documents such as a short or medium term action or implementation plan (annual plan or 3 -5 year plan for example), financial plans to match implementation plan or updated prioritization methodologies action plan, financial plan, etc.) could be updated to ensure continued relevance.

Chapter 3

3. Relevance and Internal Coherence

3.1. Description of the Evaluation Process

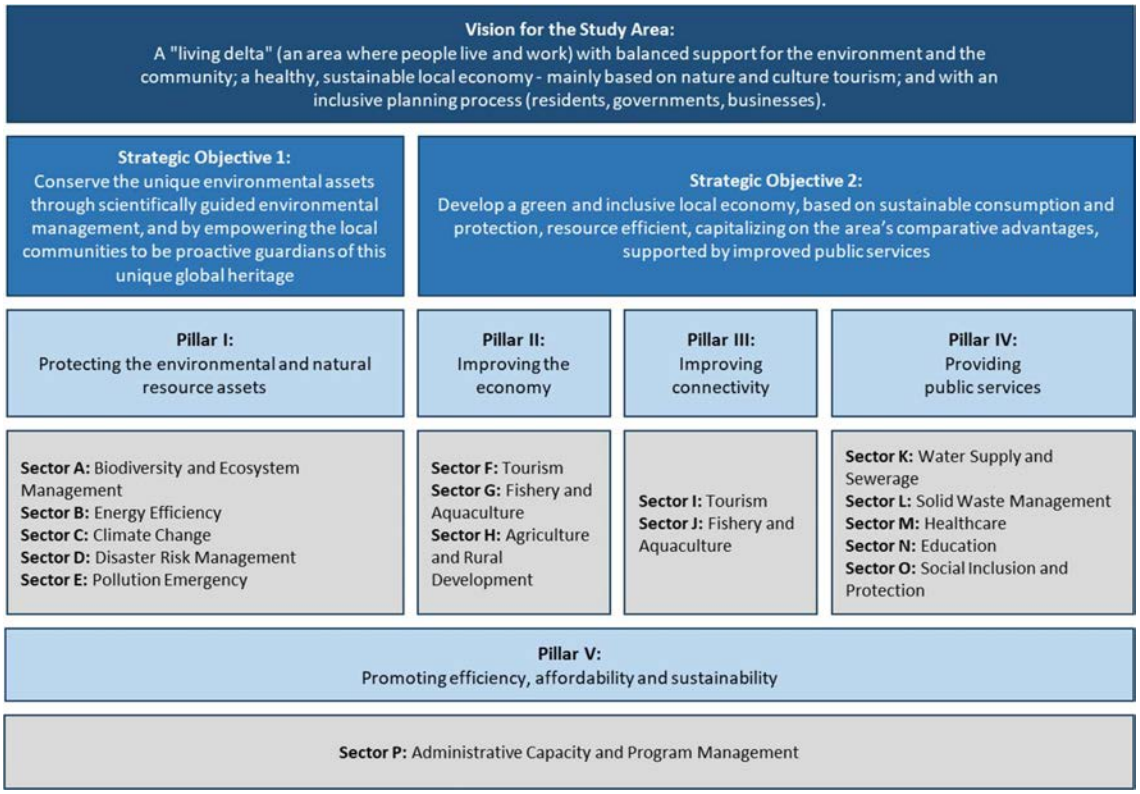
The analyses presented in this section are aimed at evaluating the relevance and internal coherence of the strategy, taking into consideration the needs assessment and the reconstructed logic of intervention.

The results are based on information presented in the strategy, on the list of contracted projects provided by the Inter-Community Development Agency for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta (IDA ITI DD), and on an online survey submitted to all beneficiaries of the contracted projects.

3.2. Findings

The Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development in Danube Delta (SIDDDD) was designed under the coordination of the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (MPWDA), in the period June 2013 - August 2016, when the final text was approved through a government decision. The process started with the Diagnostic Report, which outlined opportunities and constraints for the study area. The next step was the Vision report, which captured a forward looking ideal of where the community wants to be and what the region has the potential to be. Based on these inputs, two strategic objectives were derived, with focus on maintaining the unique natural values through an adequate management involving local communities, on one hand, and developing local green inclusive economies based on sustainable and efficient use of resources, on the other hand. As presented in the below figure, the two strategic objectives are connected to five pillars and 16 Sectors.

Figure 4: Links among vision, strategic objectives, pillars and sectors



Source: Reconstruction based on strategic documents

The two strategic objectives are further split into 52 sectorial specific objectives, measured by result indicators, and 137 planned interventions, measured by output indicators[4]. The objective tree is presented in Table 2 Objective tree below.

Table 2 Objective tree

Strategic Objective 1: Conserve the unique environmental assets through scientifically guided environmental management, and by empowering the local communities to be proactive guardians of this unique global heritage
01 Developing of the planning and biodiversity and ecosystem management capacity (including monitoring)
02 Preserving, protecting and capitalizing the natural heritage and combating / reducing the impact of the anthropic polluting activities
03 Developing research, education and training in biodiversity and natural heritage protection fields
04 Supporting eco-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
05 Increasing the energy efficiency of the study area in economic, residential and public buildings and public service provision fields
06 Increasing the use of renewable energy sources within the study area
07 Improving local expertise, information availability and energy efficiency awareness
08 Developing a climate friendly and resilient area by integrating climate change into local public policies and planning
09 Promoting development of a low carbon economy through targeted adaptation measures and by reducing GHG emissions
10 Developing partnerships and financing instruments in the field of climate change
11 Raising the awareness of the population and businesses on climate change
12 Reducing the vulnerability to all risks, while improving the quality of emergency services, based on national and county risk assessment, and develop and maintain an adequate response capacity
13 Assessing the main risks, elaborating risk maps for earthquakes and floods, and implementing projects to reduce these risks
14 Elaborating a County Integrated Information System for the Management of Emergency Situations as part of the National Information System for Disaster Management
15 Developing an advanced information management system for hazardous wastes which may cause a pollution spill and represents a threat to the DD
16 Reducing pollution risks and the response time by developing a prevention plan, providing adequate equipment and training of human resources

[4] The list of indicators was updated in the context of this project, with support from the personnel of Inter-Community Development Agency for ITI Danube Delta, in order to allow the measurement of physical progress of the strategy and of the projects. This was necessitated due to the initial indicator list associated with the strategy containing some indicators for which data could not be aggregated at the level of Danube Delta territory. This amended draft list of indicators used in the assessment is with the IDA ITI DD for further refinement and will be subject to formal adoption or agreement between various stakeholders (including MPWDA) if it is to be used for ongoing monitoring and evaluation and future reporting purposes.

Strategic Objective 2: Develop a green and inclusive local economy, based on sustainable consumption and protection, resource efficient, capitalizing on the area's comparative advantages, supported by improved public services
17 Developing and promoting the Danube Delta as an integrated tourism destination with a rich portfolio of sustainable tourism products and services by capitalizing the natural and cultural heritage
18 Establishing a local destination management mechanism based on the active participation and ownership of local stakeholders
19 Encouraging local population to run small tourism businesses that meet quality and sustainability standards and that are economically viable
20 Correcting the ecological imbalance among predator and prey fish species and restoring environmental quality
21 Increasing the economic value of fishing and aquaculture activities
22 Increasing quality job opportunities in the fishing sector
23 Promoting the integration of agri-food producers (especially organic products) into the value-chain in order to help them benefit from the advantage of being close to external markets and from the tourism opportunities in the area
24 Supporting diversifications of agricultural and non-farm activities for job creation by encouraging active involvement of local communities
25 Promoting young farmers' access to land to enable improved revenue flows to the local population
26 Preserving, protecting, capitalizing and promoting the natural and movable and immovable cultural heritage in rural areas
27 Improving the local population / farmers' access to information regarding the possibilities of tapping Common Agricultural Policy funds -create a special agriculture extension team for the Danube Delta
28 Increasing territorial connectivity to ensure access to the markets in Tulcea, the rest of Romanian and the EU; equal connectivity for enterprises, individuals, and goods in the DD territory, taking great care to protecting the existing environmental heritage
29 Increasing accessibility in the Core DD area to support the development of tourism and fisheries, and the mobility for the residents of sparsely populated areas
30 Improving health and protecting the environment by minimizing emissions and the consumption of resources (including energy) by the transport system
31 Providing full access to broadband internet network
32 Supporting widespread private, business and public use of ICT
33 Ensuring synergies with other sectors to promote the transfer of knowledge, services and economic development
34 Providing drinking water in order to meet the quality of life standards and the economic development objectives, subject to demand, financial feasibility, and operation and maintenance constraints
35 Supporting the collection of wastewaters in a centralized manner (subject to demand, financial feasibility, and operation and maintenance constraints) and moving away from the current use of pit latrines which constitute a health hazard in prone to flood areas
36 Adopting treatment methods of centrally collected wastewater either in a conventional or a more low-cost way
37 Improving the recycling rate to achieve the corresponding EU target of 50% to which Romania is committed
38 Implementing of waste reduction, reuse and recycling in local communities, in order to assure efficient and sustainable management, resource saving, environmental protection and tourism destination development
39 Management of floating waste material

40 Increasing the capitalization degree of waste collected from households and businesses
41 Improving the access to primary health care (PHC) services based on prevention and early detection and treatment of chronic diseases
42 Supporting the effective control of epidemics, early warning and coordinated response, and risk factors surveillance
43 Improving health infrastructure for primary, secondary and tertiary health care, and the related service delivery system adjusted to modern technologies
44 Providing lifelong learning opportunities to create labor skills necessary for the 21st century economy
45 Supporting secondary and vocational education that prepare students for the global knowledge economy and for the specificities of the local economy
46 Increasing the quality of the primary education and early-education systems
47 Reducing labor related and human capital disparities among Roma people by providing improved integrated services in all dimensions and aspects of exclusion (education, health, housing, employment)
48 Improving social outcomes by making social protection programs more relevant and efficient in the Danube Delta area
49 Preserving the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in the study area
Strategic Objectives 1 and 2
50 Providing efficient and cost-effective public services
51 Improving evidence-based strategic and budgetary planning across all levels of governance in the DD region in order to support environmental and economic objectives
52 Increasing participatory decision-making in synergy with the environmental and economic objectives

Source: Reconstruction based on strategic documents

The Needs Assessment, performed in the planning phase of the strategy, identified measures and interventions to achieve the overarching strategic objectives and underlying sector specific objectives. The final list of projects was selected at local level, with the involvement of various stakeholders. As of March 2020, a total of 1024 projects have been contracted to solve the identified needs, with an eligible value of 970 mil EUR.

Table 3 Summary of key needs by sectors and related contracted projects

Identified needs	**Related contracted projects**	
	Number	**Eligible value, EUR**
Sector A: Biodiversity and ecosystem management	**18, *out of which 2 completed***	**44 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Biodiversity conservation and restoration; Hydrological modelling tools; De-silting works, and other hydrological improvements; Ecological restoration, including reforestation; Building, monitoring and information facilities; Reducing solid waste pollution in natural areas; Investments to control and reduce the nitrates pollution of waters **Policy and regulatory needs:** Revision to the DDBR Law; Enhancements to other laws; DDBR policy enhancements **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Monitoring and evaluation of the conservation status of species and habitats; Monitoring and modelling of sedimentation dynamics; Modernization of Info Points; Organizing information / awareness campaigns on biodiversity and environmental protection; Establishment of the International Centre for Advanced Studies for biodiversity conservation; FS and TP for projects aimed at restoring damaged natural habitats		

Identified needs	Related contracted projects	
	Number	Eligible value, EUR
Sector B: Energy efficiency (EE) and Sector C: Climate change (CC)	**71, *out of which 19 completed***	**64 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Investments in improving EE in public buildings, public lighting, households; EE improvements in heating, water, waste, and public transport sectors; Developing a program for promoting the use of renewable energy sources; Establishing a local climate change fund for residents, SMEs; Measures for mitigation of and adjustment to climate change **Policy and regulatory needs:** Developing local policies and EE monitoring, including incentives; Developing local policies and procedures to monitor GHG **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Performing energy audits of buildings; Drafting mobility plans in transport; Building planning capacity of local councils in the areas of EE and CC; Organizing public education and awareness campaigns		
Sector D: Disaster risk and Sector E: Pollution emergency	**9, *out of which 2 completed***	**18 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Developing the necessary infrastructure and purchase of boats, vehicles, to increase response time; Flood protection works; Pollution monitoring equipment **Policy and regulatory needs:** Elaboration of a methodology for risk assessment; Introduction of a regulation on boats monitoring; Studies related to environmental liability and pollution incident-related data sharing **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Developing an Integrated Disaster Management and Information System (IDMIS); Risk assessment for floods, earthquakes, coastal erosion and forest and reed fire; Developing contingency plans for disasters; Organizing training and public awareness actions		
Sector F: Tourism	**195, *out of which 15 completed***	**91 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Improvement of access (roads around attractions, signage, paths, docks) and services; Development of tourism infrastructure (info-kiosks, signage, resting places / panoramic views, information centers upgrading) and restoration of cultural sites; Development of accommodation infrastructure (modernization of facilities, camping areas); Workforce development (training centers for hospitality, guiding, agriculture, crafts, fishing); Facilities for attractions / visitor services; Restoration of cultural heritage; Development of cultural centers for the intangible heritage promotion and conservation; Functional reconversion of industrial sites and revitalization of urban centers, mainly in Sulina; Supporting SMEs in tourism, in terms of sustainability, quality and durability **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Drafting guidelines and standards for transport, destinations, hospitality facilities and services; Ensuring safety, security and health policy frameworks for tourism; Developing policies that allow and support the development of SMEs and entrepreneurship; Destination management policies/guidelines; Ensuring links to national level policies and plans; Review of tax collection system **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Developing distinct brand for tourism and related products; Creation of transport providers association; Establishment of strengthened visitor centers and local hotel associations; Ensuring institutional collaboration with upper and lower levels (national, local); Development of destination management mechanism; Development of a system for data collection, analysis and dissemination; Design of trails, water routes etc.; Drafting guidelines for accommodations; Performing market analysis / access strategies		
Sector G: Fishery and Aquaculture	**21, *out of which 1 completed***	**34 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: New fishery shelters that offer optimal conditions for temporary housing and mooring; Artificial reproduction stations; Arranging recreational / sports fishing areas; Dredging of waterways and lakes; Renaturation of agricultural polders; Fisheries Zoning; Increasing the added value and competitiveness of fishery and aquaculture **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Reduce/eliminate VAT on commercial fishery (revised tax collection system); Implementing DDBRA Monitoring, Control Surveillance reform plan		

Identified needs	Related contracted projects	
	Number	Eligible value, EUR
Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs: Hydrology/sedimentation modelling; Fish stock assessment; Ensuring and monitoring water quality in aquaculture		
Sector H: Agriculture and Rural Development	**557, *out of which 125 completed***	**132 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Modernizing facilities for production / collection / processing / marketing of produce; Rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure; Diversification, increasing added value and competitiveness of agricultural (including ecoagriculture) and non-agricultural activities (cane, renewable energy, traditional sectors / crafts) and supporting entrepreneurship / SMEs in these fields; Fostering consolidation and strengthening the economy of small farms; Conservation and valorization of local natural and cultural heritage, including traditions **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Concession of land to young farmers; Enlarging access to vocational education; Modernizing agricultural quality control systems **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Fostering local community involvement in LEADER; . Fostering producer groups; Advisory service and training for farmers/rural workforce promotion and marketing of natural and cultural (movable and immovable) heritage, in rural areas		
Sector I: Transport	**68, *out of which 21 completed***	**523 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Rehabilitation of various county roads; Improvement of inland waterways and ports; Development of the water sports infrastructure (marine and mooring docks); Tulcea airport modernization Mobility in urban centers; Encouraging private initiatives in transport and logistics **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Drafting of policies for transport concessions, including procurement processes; Drafting regulations for small businesses to transport clients **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Feasibility studies; Support for public-private partnership (PPP) transactions		
Sector J: Information & Communication Technology (ICT)	**42, *out of which 14 completed***	**18 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Modernization / expansion of ICT infrastructure across the study area; Purchase of equipment for Public Access Points to Internet (PAPIs); Support for investments made by SMEs in ICT **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Open data policies; Development of local e-government services **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Facilitation of ICT use; Development of digital literacy programs; Creating an E-portal		
Sector K: Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management	**2, *out of which 0 completed***	**2 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Expansion / rehabilitation of water supply and wastewater collection and treatment systems (new or rehabilitated systems) across the study area to improve quality and efficiency of services **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Review of subsidy policies **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Feasibility studies (FS) and designs of investments; Capacity building of operators; Preparation of service contracts		
Sector L: Solid Waste Management	**2, *out of which 0 completed***	**2 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Development of systems for selective handling of waste; Establishment of waste collection points and transport facilities in tourist areas; Purchase of equipment for collecting floating waste; Increasing the recovery degree of waste collected from households and businesses **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Updating national and regional waste management programs; Enhancing regulation, inspection and enforcement in the sector; Drafting subsidy policies **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Institutional collaboration, and inter-city/ community cooperation; Study on financial sustainability; Waste composition studies; Development of public awareness programs		

Identified needs	Related contracted projects	
	Number	Eligible value, EUR
Sector M: Health	**7, *out of which 0 completed***	**6 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Rehabilitation of buildings; Purchase of lab and IT equipment; vehicles, boats for emergencies; and shelters near hospitals; Supporting infrastructure for telemedicine; Modernization of sanitary facilities in schools; Building multifunctional centers in Babadag, Sulina and Sf. Gheorghe; Improved, integrated facilities at Tulcea Emergency County Hospital; Rehabilitation of Măcin hospital building, equipment provision, and a palliative center **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Review the provider payment system for primary care services in rural and remote areas; Review the legal framework for ambulatory care within the public hospitals; Linking national telemedicine policy with standards and protocols; Incentives for medical staff using the telemedicine system **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Feasibility studies and designs; Capacity improvements at local Public Health Directorate (PHD); Building diagnostic laboratories; Training of emergency response staff; Building skills in public health laboratory management; Information / education campaigns; Ambulatory services, long term care and palliative capacity development		
Sector N: Education	**10, *out of which 0 completed***	**16 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Providing access to quality primary and lower secondary education for all; Providing an increased access to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC); Creation of virtual classrooms for remote locations (ICT investments) for distance learning; Providing increased access to technical and vocational education **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Support for enrolment and retention in ECEC; Approaches to ensure qualified teachers in all locations; Approaches to bring early school leavers back to school; Incentives for participation in lifelong learning programs **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Plans for access to education; Improved school, after school programs & student counselling; Improved vocational training; Partnerships between employers and education / training providers; Support to Community Permanent Learning Centers		
Sector O: Social Inclusion and Protection	**6, *out of which 0 completed***	**12 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Development of early childhood (0-6 years) institutional infrastructure in communities with high share of Roma population; Making schools more friendly for all children; Establishment of integrative and multifunctional community centers; Urban regeneration of disadvantaged neighborhoods (integrated interventions on the access of population in these areas to education, health, housing and employment); Social and youth housing; Development of social enterprises in disadvantaged areas **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Implementation of measures in the sectors of education and health, housing, employment; Community grants as part of educational intervention; Regulating housing ownership rights (cadaster) **Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs:** Involving parents in early childhood education partnerships; Implementing formal and nonformal education measures beyond school hours; Increasing participation of Roma girls at all levels of education; Developing human capital among Roma women; Information / education campaigns (civic spirit), including in development; Planning		
Sector P: Administrative Capacity and Program Management	**16, *out of which 7 completed***	**8 mil EUR**
Physical Investment Needs: Development of facilities, purchase of vehicles, office equipment **Policy and Regulatory Needs:** Development of subsidy policy; Promoting a strong sense of ownership on the processes and outcomes of interventions among the beneficiaries; Formulating (O&M) operating and maintenance policies; Improving overall project management capacity; Strengthening the coordination between the public institutions in biodiversity conservation and ecological reconstruction of the Danube Delta; Facilitating public access to information and public services and increasing transparency of public services (e-government); Promoting an effective and efficient implementation and monitoring/control system; Providing specific support measures relating to investments within each Operational Program		

Identified needs	Related contracted projects	
	Number	Eligible value, EUR
Institutional Development & Technical Assistance Needs: Improving household access to public services; Review of O&M requirements, responsibilities and capacity; Technical assistance support for priority administrative functions, including (but not limited to) updating/completing various territorial management instruments, such as town/village plans, urban/village data banks, cadaster and land book etc.; Technical assistance support project administration, including (but not limited to) drafting general documents, technical documents, procurement, accounting, environmental assessment; construction supervision etc.		

Source: Reconstruction based on strategic documents and monitoring information provided by IDA ITI DD, as of March 2020

As presented in Table 3 above, and further detailed in Chapter 4, the financial allocations among different sectors of the strategy are highly uneven; therefore an update in the needs assessment would better guide the prioritization of interventions for the second phase of implementation, by identifying the needs already tackled in the first programming period, and the areas for improvement left for the second programming period. This can be performed in the context of the future impact evaluation (n.b. at the time of this evaluation report, the majority of contracted projects are still ongoing, and their outputs and results are only partially visible). Moreover, a quantification of needs would better serve for the financial planning of the strategy and for setting the final targets.

Given the high level of stratification of the strategy (vision, strategic objectives, pillars, sectors, specific sectorial objective, interventions, projects), the logical links among objectives and planned interventions, as well as the logical links between planned interventions and selected projects, are not always clear. As can be depicted from the graphical representation of the logic of intervention, included in Annex 5, for some sectorial specific objectives, the planned interventions do not seem to have a direct contribution. For example, no dedicated interventions were identified for Sectorial Objective A.4 "*Supporting eco-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises*" (although some of the beneficiaries are implementing eco-friendly projects). Moreover, for some interventions, the list of selected projects seems to have a limited scope when compared to the ambitious related objectives (e.g. purchase of equipment vs actual works for protecting the natural resources). These aspects can be further investigated in the context of the future impact evaluation – for example did the purchase of equipment result in actual works completed. This could be further addressed through the identification of additional projects under the specific objectives.

Nevertheless, the strategy is perceived by stakeholders and beneficiaries as highly relevant for the Danube Delta development. According to the online survey deployed in the context of this project (see Annex 4), approximately two thirds of the beneficiaries consider that SIDDDD has covered to a large or very large extent the development needs of the institution of which they are part, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region. This can be related to the participatory approach in designing the strategy. The above presented objectives and related interventions are the result of continuous consultations with all stakeholders at national and local levels, including civil society. Local authorities made valuable contributions both to the needs analysis and to the identification of project pipeline. Local businesses, NGOs and civil society were invited to take part in several meetings. Based on received comments, the draft strategy was adjusted several times, and the final strategic document was submitted for public consultation in the framework of the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) procedure.

3.3. Conclusions

The SIDDDD managed to set the directions for a future development of the area, establishing the higher-level vision and strategic objectives, as well as the priority sectors and related sectorial specific objectives and interventions.

Projects are selected at local level, based on specific criteria, set by strategic and implementation documents. However, considering the high level of stratification of the strategy, the logical links among the needs, objectives, interventions and selected projects are not always clear. This can be further explored in the context of the future impact evaluation, after the completion of the first set of contracted projects.

Nevertheless, due to the intensive participatory approach, the strategy is perceived to be highly relevant for the needs of the society. According to the online survey deployed in the context of this project, approximately two thirds of the beneficiaries consider that SIDDDD has covered to a large or very large extent the development needs of the institution of which they are part, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region.

3.4. Recommendations

Recommendation 2. Update the needs assessment, in the context of a future impact evaluation.

An update of the Needs Assessment would be necessary in order to identify the needs that have been already tackled through the first set of contracted projects, and the needs that remain to be addressed during the second phase of implementation. Moreover, a quantification of remaining needs would better serve for the financial planning of the strategy and for setting the final targets.

Recommendation 3. Update the implementation supporting documents on a regular basis

The strategy should be a "living" document, highly responsive to the changing needs of the society, which are influenced by internal and external factors (i.e. on one hand, the implemented projects within SIDDDD, and on the other hands, the interventions planned under other national and local strategies, or political, environmental, social, technological, legal and economic changes). An update of implementation documents is expected in the context of a possible future impact evaluation. As noted in recommendation 1, while the regular update of the strategy document may not be practical, supporting documents towards implementation (i.e. shorter-term implementation plans) could be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure relevance.

Recommendation 4. Provide a clearer representation of the logic of intervention, to be used by different stakeholders and beneficiaries, in implementation and monitoring.

A reconstruction of the logical framework was already performed in the context of this project. However, updates may be necessary once the final list of indicators is approved. Moreover, for the future programming period, it is also recommended to assess the links between objectives, interventions and selected projects.

Chapter 4

4. Financial Allocation

4.1. Description of the Evaluation Process

The analyses performed under this section are aimed at assessing the split of financial resources among pillars and sectors, as well as the consistency of allocations with types of planned interventions.

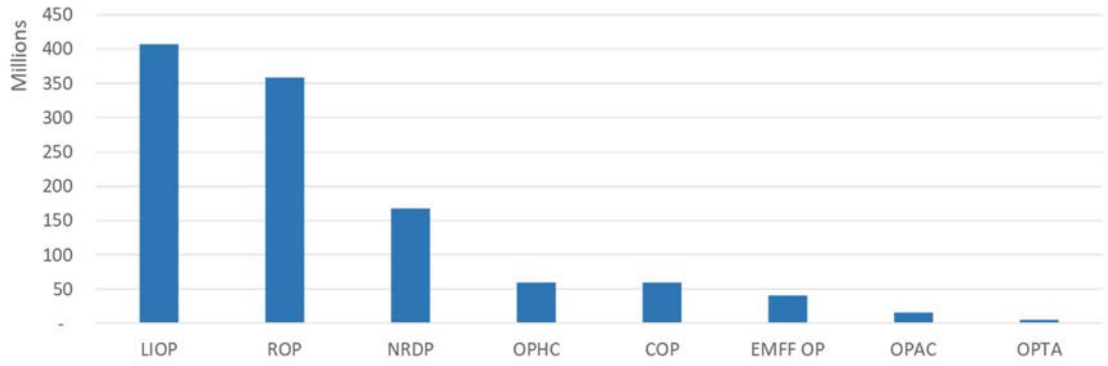
Considering that the strategy itself does not include a budget, the analysis is based on the financial allocations set by the national operational programmes for ITI Danube Delta, and on the monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, consisting of eligible values of contracted projects and payments to beneficiaries, as of March 2020. It should be noted, however, that monitoring data was provided in different currencies and aggregation is based on an approximation of the exchange currency. Findings

Financial Allocation for Danube Delta Strategy

Danube Delta strategy identifies possible sources of financing for all planned interventions. More precisely, the strategy will receive support from all European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), including European Maritime and Fisheries Funds (EMFF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, through all of the eight Romanian Operational Programmes, by means of the ITI[5] mechanism. This may be complemented by national funds or other sources of financing.

The budget is set only in connection to the ITI mechanism, for 2014-2020 programming period, and amounts to EUR 1.1 billion. As can be depicted from Figure 5 below, 84% of funds come from three OPs, respectively OP Large Infrastructure (37%), Regional OP (32%) and National Rural Development Plan (15%). Lower allocations were attributed from Human Capital (5%), Competitiveness (5%), Fisheries (3%), Administrative Capacity (1%) and Technical Assistance (1%).

Figure 5: Allocated amounts, by Operational Programmes (EU Funds) (EUR)



LEGEND	
LIOP	Large Infrastructure Operational Programme
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
NRDP	National Rural Development Plan
OPHC	Operational Programme Human Capital
COP	Competitiveness Operational Programme
EMFF OP	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme
OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance

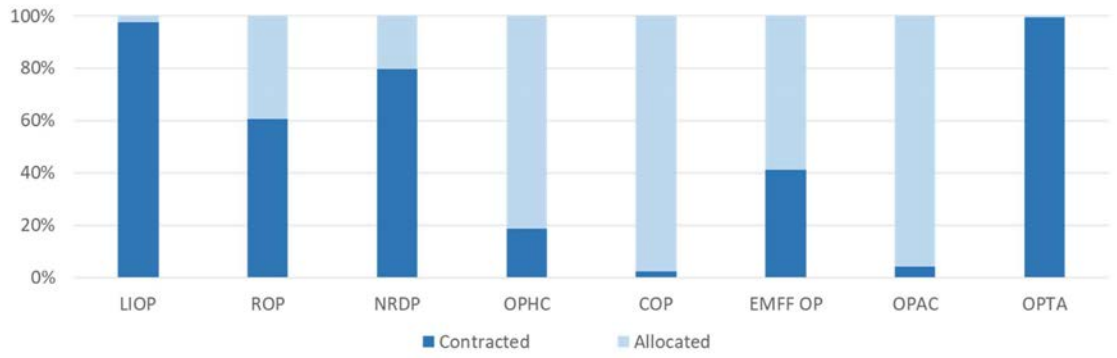
[5] As set out in Article 36(1) of the Common Provision Regulations, ITI is a delivery mechanism which allows Member States to implement integrated strategies for a specific territory, drawing on funding from at least two different priority axes in the same or different operational programmes. ITI can combine ERDF, ESF and the Cohesion Fund, and be complemented by financial support from the EAFRD and EMFF where complementarities exist.

Source: Information retrieved from strategic documents of the Operational Programmes 2014-2020

The justification for the allocated budget (i.e. computation methodology, based on identified needs, planned interventions, and standard unit costs) is not provided in any of the consulted strategic documents. As such, we cannot conclude if the allocated amounts are based on a bottom-up approach that takes into consideration the prioritization of the local needs and the phasing of the Danube Delta Strategy.

As of March 2020, a total of 1,024 projects were contracted for financing, amounting to 70% of the total EU Funds allocation. As illustrated in Figure 6 below, a good pipeline was achieved for Technical Assistance, Large Infrastructure and Rural Development. On the other side, the low number of contracted projects in the area of Competitiveness, Human Capital and Administrative Capacity triggers the risk of decommitment with regards to EU Funds. Nevertheless, the programmes with low performance in terms of contracted values have a lower allocation of EU Funds; and new calls are expected to be launched by the end of this years.

Figure 6: Contracted amounts, by Operational Programmes (EU Funds) (% out of allocated)



LEGEND	
LIOP	Large Infrastructure Operational Programme (97.71%)
ROP	Regional Operational Programme (60.53%)
NRDP	National Rural Development Plan (79.65%)
OPHC	Operational Programme Human Capital (18.82%)
COP	Competitiveness Operational Programme (2.23%)
EMFF OP	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme (41.17%)
OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity (4.27%)
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance (99.27%)

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

Financial Split among Pillars and Sectors

The SIDDDD does not provide information regarding the planned split of financial allocations among pillars, sectors and interventions. As such, the analysis is based on the total eligible value of contracted projects, as of March 2020, including EU Funds and state budget, and on the observed links among the contracted projects and the pillars and sectors of the strategy. It should be noted, however, that EU Funds were allocated only for the programming period 2014-2020, while the Danube Delta strategy has a longer horizon, towards 2030. More precisely, our analysis is limited to the current situation, and does not reflect the entire planning of the strategy.

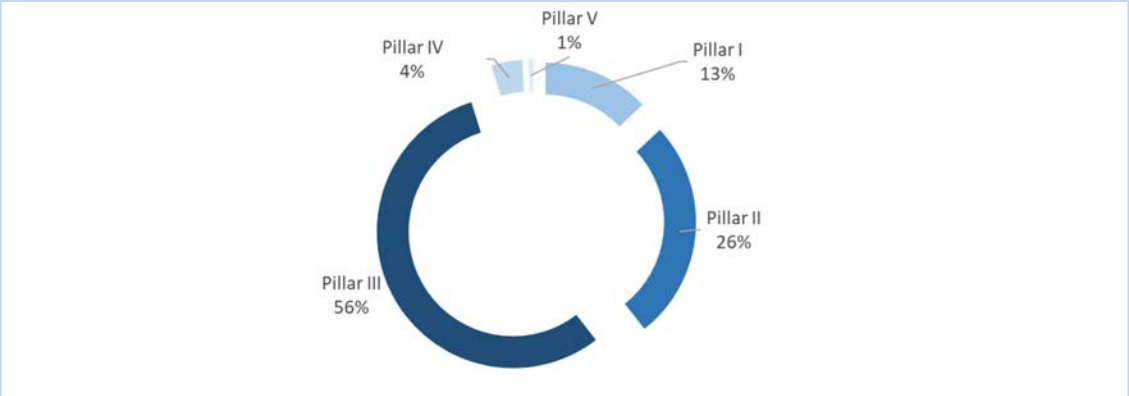
Currently, the majority of funds are directed towards Pillar 3: Improving connectivity (56%) and Pillar 2: improving the economy (26%); while lower emphasis is given to Pillar 1: Protecting the environmental and natural resource assets (13%), Pillar 4: Providing public services (4%) and Pillar 5: Promoting efficiency, accessibility and sustainability (1%) (see Figure 7 below).

The focus on certain Pillars is not evidenced in Danube Delta Strategy; on the contrary, the local strategic documents emphasizes the complementarities and synergies among the five pillars:

"The tourism potential will remain constrained, unless urban services (water, sanitation and garbage collection) and tourism infrastructure are improved. Services such as health and education will have to rely increasingly on virtual communication tools, as practiced in other remote locations in the world. Increasing the speed and access of ICT services will enable better provision of health services and schooling. More tourism benefits will emerge, once more attractions and services – from aquaculture, recreational fishing, and organic farming to guided tours - are developed. The natural and cultural assets of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve are the key attractions of the region and will drive its sustainable development - restoring, protecting and enhancing these assets is therefore of utmost priority" (ISDD DD, page 86).

On the other hand, the strategy does mention that identified needs cannot be solved at once, during the first phase of implementation. As such, some pillars of the strategy may be better tackled during the 2020-2030 period.

Figure 7: Share of contracted amounts, by Pillars (EU Funds + State Budget) (%)



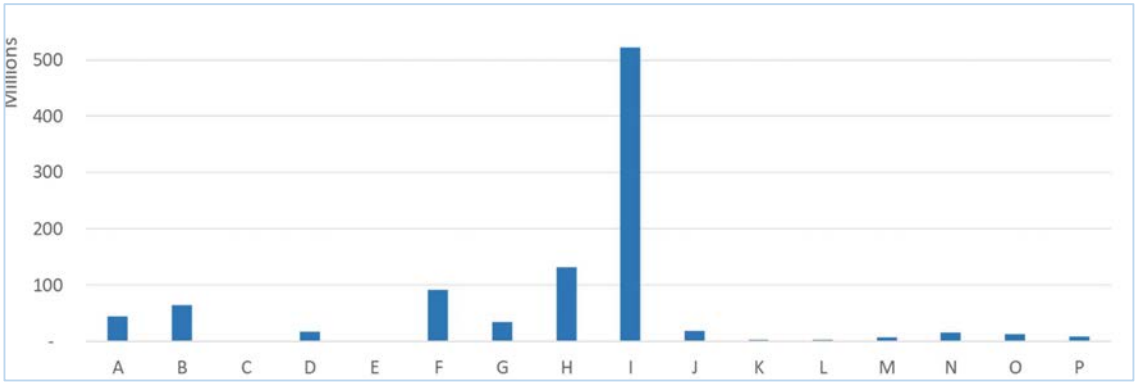
LEGEND	
Pillar I	Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets
Pillar II	Improving the Economy
Pillar III	Improving Connectivity
Pillar IV	Providing Public Services
Pillar V	Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The high concentration of resources for improving connectivity is determined by Sector I: Transport, which takes 54% of the total allocation of ITI-DD funds. This can be linked to the national Master Plan for transport, which foresee several strategic projects in Danube Delta, aimed at modernizing and developing road infrastructure, and also at building a suspension bridge over Danube. Based on the interview with the representatives of the National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration (NCRIA), the budget allocations for these projects were established directly with the Management Authority of the Operational Programme Large Infrastructure, prior to the development and approval of the Danube Delta Strategy. Nevertheless, NCRIA makes efforts to align the national plans with the local strategy, and all projects were submitted for approval to the stakeholders of the Danube Delta Strategy.

As can be depicted from Figure 8 below, some sectors have little or no allocation for 2014-2020 programming period. For example, six sectors have a share of contracted eligible value below 1% out of total allocation, namely Sector C: Climate change (0.0%), Sector E: Pollution emergency (0.1%), Sector K: Water supply and sewerage systems and integrated water management (0.2%), Sector L: Solid waste management (0.3%), Sector M: Health (0.7%) and Sector P: Administrative capacity and program management (0.8%). In some cases, the local administrations managed to find other sources of funding: water and wastewater projects were financed from the central budget under the National Local Development Program (NLDP), while the City of Tulcea was able to match the money from ITI with funds from the local budget. Nevertheless, for the sectors with limited budgets, a low progress towards achieving the sector specific objectives is expected.

Figure 8: Contracted amounts, by Sectors (EU Funds + State Budget) (EUR)



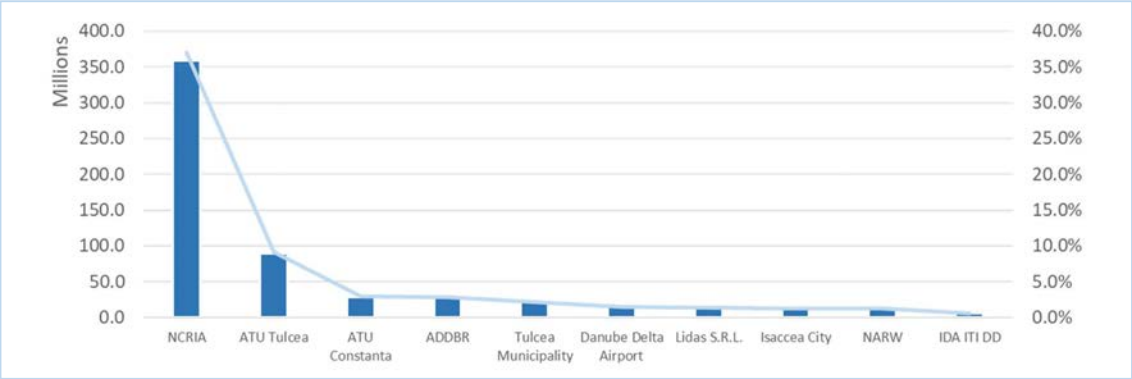
LEGEND	
Sector A	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management
Sector B	Energy Efficiency
Sector C	Climate Change
Sector D	Disaster Risk Management
Sector E	Pollution Emergency
Sector F	Tourism
Sector G	Fishery and Aquaculture
Sector H	Agriculture and Rural Development
Sector I	Transport
Sector J	Information and Communication Technology
Sector K	Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management
Sector L	Solid Waste Management
Sector M	Healthcare
Sector N	Education
Sector O	Social Inclusion and Protection
Sector P	Administrative Capacity and Program Management

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The ABC Analysis[6] of project beneficiaries shows that half of the ITI contracted amounts are linked to two beneficiaries, planning to implement projects for improving connectivity and transport infrastructure. As of March 2020, the National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration contracted two projects with a total eligible value of 359 mill. EUR (37% of total contracted values) and the Administrative Territorial Unit for Tulcea County contracted 15 projects with a total eligible value of 89 mill EUR (9% of total contracted values). Significant amounts of funds were also contracted by Administrative Territorial Unit for Constanta County (3% of total contracted values), Administration of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation (3% of total contracted values), Tulcea Municipality (2% of total contracted values) and Autonomous Administration "Danube Delta" Airport (2% of total contracted values). All other beneficiaries have a below 2% share of total contracted amounts.

[6] The ABC analysis is a type of inventory categorization method in which inventory is divided into three categories, A, B, and C, in descending value. A has the highest value items, B is lower value than A, and C has the lowest value.

Figure 9: Contracted amounts, by Beneficiaries (EU Funds + State Budget) (EUR)



LEGEND	
NCRIA	National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration
ATU Tulcea	Administrative Territorial Unit Tulcea
ATU Constanta	Administrative Territorial Unit Constanta
ADDBR	Administration of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation
Tulcea Municipality	Tulcea Municipality
Danube Delta Airport	Autonomous Administration "Danube Delta" Airport
Lidas S.R.L.	Lidas S.R.L.
Isaccea City	Isaccea City
NARW	National Administration Romanian Waters
IDA ITI DD	Inter-Community Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

4.2. Conclusions

Danube Delta Strategy lacks detailed planning in terms of financial allocations. Strategic documents do not mention the total budget of the strategy, needed or available, nor the allocations per pillars, sectors and interventions. Consequently, the adequacy of available resources cannot be measured. Monitoring data of contracted projects are able to reflect only the current status of contracted resources, and not the entire planning of the strategy. In order to achieve the ambitious goals of the Danube Delta Strategy by 2030, it is strongly recommended to identify the financial requirements as soon as possible, as well as the sources of financing.

The majority of available EU Funds are concentrated towards improving connectivity and transport. This may be a consequence of the national strategic planning, and in particular connected to the lines of financing established in the Romanian Operational Programmes. The road projects being undertaken are also generally large in scale and just in terms of size per project will outweigh smaller projects in terms of monetary value. The owners of the local strategy are not able to redirect the EU Funds towards other sectors compared to what was planned in the national documents. However, the Danube Delta Strategy should present a planning for tackling all sectors, including those with scarce allocation of EU Funds.

4.3. Recommendations

Financial planning and monitoring are key elements in delivering strategic objectives. As such the recommendations are oriented towards building a sufficiently detailed annual budget that includes adequate comparisons between actual, historical and budgeted expenditures and detailed explanations obtained for all significant variations. This is particularly important for strategies financed by means of EU Funds, which have clear deadlines and are subject to possible decommitments (for further details, see also Chapter 6, including findings on financial progress). These recommendations are made with the acknowledgement of the complexity

of the ITI area under consideration, as well as the multitude of stakeholders involved in the implementation process.

Recommendation 5. Strategic and implementation documents should include at least some attempt at capturing a budget for the Danube Delta Strategy. This would ideally be for the period 2016-2030, and include budget needs, budget availability, split by pillars, sectors and, where possible, by interventions. In a further best practice case, this should be further broken down into funding periods (assuming correlation with EU funding periods) and then into annual budget plans**.** While this seem an extensive and complex undertaking, it would represent a significant step forward in terms of planning and monitoring of financial resources and particularly create a much clearer link between needs and actual financing secured for projects.

As further detailed in Chapter 6, SIDDDD had a slow progress in terms of financial spending. A proper planning and monitoring of financial resources, by years, would signal possible major deviations, including the risk of decommitment of EU Funds, and would allow for the implementation of corrective measures in due time (e.g. additional communication campaigns, technical assistance and capacity building for beneficiaries, etc.). Below are some best practice recommendations that could be applied should a stronger focus on budget planning be introduced.

The budget should take into consideration: (1) the quantified needs at the beginning of implementation, (2) quantified status of needs based on the already implemented projects and possible contextual changes and (3) types of interventions completed and planned for the 2020-2030 period along with the related (4) unitary costs. The financials allocation should follow a logic of sequentially and priorities. Danube Delta Strategy has many ambitious policies to implement. The focus remains to develop the area inside Danube Delta in an integrated manner, by improving the quality of life and, at the same time, boosting the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

Table 4 Suggested format for representation of financial allocation

Pillar / Sector / Intervention	Estimated Budget (Needed) (RON)	Justification	Estimated Budget (Available) (RON)	Source of Available Budget
Pillar I Out of which Sector A Out of which Intervention 1	*to be completed with needed amounts for implementing the strategy's objectives and planned interventions*	*to be completed with computation methodologies for estimated budgetary needs*	*to be completed with the allocated / available amounts, out of needed amounts*	*to be completed with the split of available amounts by types of sources*

Estimation of unitary costs for implementing the various types of planned interventions can rely on the cost of completed projects during the first phase of implementation of Danube Delta Strategy, as well as on the available statistic data at local and national level, and at the level of Member States with similar characteristics. Moreover, the owners of the Danube Delta Strategy may draw on the experience of the Managing Authorities with regards to estimated costs for implementing eligible projects under the national Operational Programmes.

The table below offers a template for the format in which financial planning could be approached:

Table 5: Suggested format for representation of financial planning

Pillar / Sector / Intervention	Allocated Budget (RON)	Payments (RON)	Deviations from initial planning	Corrective measures
YEAR 1				
Pillar I Out of which Sector A	*to be completed with portion of available amounts planned to*	*to be completed with the certified eligible expenditure during the first year*	*to be completed with the difference between allocated amounts for year 1 and payments*	*to be completed, as per need, with proposed corrective measures*

Pillar / Sector / Intervention	Allocated Budget (RON)	Payments (RON)	Deviations from initial planning	Corrective measures
Out of which Intervention 1	*be spent during the first year* *Out of which, national budget* *Out of which, EU Funds*	*Out of which, national budget* *Out of which, EU Funds*	*registered during year 1*	
YEAR 2				
YEAR 3				

Recommendation 6. Financial progress should be evaluated throughout implementation and, where needed, reallocations should be performed.

Danube Delta Strategy has a long horizon and therefore budgetary adjustment may be needed, based on contextual changes (e.g. the sanitary crisis may generate a different prioritizations of investments), new needs that may arise or additional financial resources identified throughout implementation (e.g. national and local budgets or reallocations among different ITI created in the new programming period).

In particular, for EU Funds, the owners of the strategy may decide to use financial indicators, to observe the status of the total eligible expenditures, compared to the total allocations, and take corrective decisions, as per need. For that purpose, a better tracking should be performed for the available, contracted and used resources, by types of funds. The necessity for reallocation should be evaluated on an annual basis, as well as in the context of the planned interim evaluations.

Chapter 5

5. System of Indicators

5.1. Description of the Evaluation Process

The analyses performed under this section are aimed at assessing the coverage of specific sectorial objectives and interventions, by result and output indicators.

It should be noted, however, that the list of indicators was updated in the context of this project, and the methodology for data collection and aggregation is still in a draft format. The current list of indicators is based on the completed or ongoing projects; additional indicators may be needed to cover all expected outcomes and outputs of the strategy.

5.2. Findings

Danube Delta Strategy included a list of indicators, and while stating some measurement units and sources of data did not include indicator definitions, baselines or targets (not possible to determine during strategy drafting process). These indicators were not actively used for monitoring the implementation of the strategy at the time of this evaluation. Moreover, the majority of indicators were designed to capture only the immediate outputs; while some indicators included in the strategy required data that cannot be aggregated at territorial level.

Taking into consideration the above bottlenecks, the evaluation team suggested an update on the list of indicators. The updated version, developed with the support of IDA ITI DD personnel, relies more heavily on the monitoring system of the Operational Programmes. As evidenced in a report published by the European Commission[7], this was a decision taken by most Member States, in order to avoid doubling the monitoring activities for projects implemented with EU Funds.

However, the current list of indicators can capture only the progress achieved in the current phase of implementation of the SIDDDD. The system of indicators belonging to the Operational Programmes is set for the period 2014-2020, while Danube Delta Strategy has a longer implementation horizon. The specific indicators were established five years later after the approval of the strategy, and therefore the intermediate targets were based on the contracted projects, and not necessarily on what was initially planned. Finally, given the short deadline for this evaluation, the joint efforts of the evaluation team and IDA ITI DD were channeled to capture the current progress of the projects (measured by means of output indicators), and not the entire planning (measured by means of result indicators).

Therefore, the system of indicators is subject to further development and improvement, which can be performed also in the context of the future impact evaluation, in particular with regards to result indicators. Changes should be made also in the context of the new programming period, in collaboration with all stakeholders of the strategy. Beneficiaries are required to report the progress of the project based on the general rules of the Operational Programmes, but also on the specific rules for ITI area, which requires a good partnership between the owners of the Danube Delta Strategy and Managing Authorities in defining the programmes' guidelines.

[7] European Commission. (2018). Assessing the performance of integrated territorial and urban strategies. P20 Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/assessing_integrated_strategies/assessing_integrated_strategies_en.pdf

Output Indicators

The updated list of output indicators is highly connected to the indicators set at the level of Operational Programmes. A total of 88 output indicators were retrieved from the national programmes and 43 additional indicators were designed to capture the specificity of the area.

For the programme specific indicators, the Managing Authorities have already defined the measurement units, computation and aggregation methodologies, and relevant sources of information. With regards to the 43 additional indicators, specific for ITI DD area, the computation and aggregation methodologies are still in a draft format and subject for formal approval.

Although the output indicators do not cover all planned interventions, they are able to capture the general physical progress of the strategy. The lack of coverage is generated by the broadness of the strategy, which comprises 137 interventions, connected to 52 specific objective and 16 sectors. As such, defining a longer list of indicators, based on a one-to-one relation, would imply an excessive burden for the monitoring system.

Result Indicators

The updated list of indicators is partially able to capture the sectorial specific objectives included in the strategy.[8] This was determined by the low availability of statistical data for measuring long-term results and by the limited interaction with responsible institutions, in the context of the sanitary crisis generated by COVID-19. However, additional result indicators are expected to be added by the owners of the strategy, or by the evaluation team, in the context of the future impact evaluation. The below paragraphs present the missing links in relation to each sector.

The result indicators selected for Sector A "Biodiversity and eco-system management" are rather restrictive compared to the broad objectives set by the strategy. Objective A1 refers to an improved management capacity, which is not specifically measured by any indicator. Objective A2 is partially captured by result indicators; indicator IA6 measures the immediate results of the projects (i.e. built infrastructure) and not the long-term effects (i.e. the effectiveness of the newly built infrastructure). Objective A3 is aimed at improving research, education and training, while the result indicator measures only the number of permits received by researchers. Finally, the disruption pointed in Table 6 is related to the fact that interventions under this sector are not particularly designed to support the eco-friendly SMEs and therefore no indicators were set in relation to Objective A4.

Table 6: Result Indicators - Sector A Biodiversity and eco-system management

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
A1. Developing of the planning and biodiversity and ecosystem management capacity (including monitoring)	Medium	• 2S36 Number of Natura 2000 sites with active preservation measures • I.A.5 The share of economically valuable fish
A2. Preserving, protecting and capitalizing the natural heritage and combating/reducing the impact of the anthropic polluting activities	Medium	• I.A.6 Number of flood protection infrastructure objectives within the DDBR built / rehabilitated / upgraded

[8] In the tables, coverage of Results Indicators is considered Low, Medium or High, based on the following descriptions:
Low relevance = the specific objective is not captured by result indicators (i.e. selected result indicators are not directly linked to the SO)
Medium relevance = the specific objective is partially captured by result indicators (i.e. the result indicators are directly linked to the SO, however, they do not capture all intended changes)
High relevance = the specific objective is captured by result indicators

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
A3. Developing research, education and training in biodiversity and natural heritage protection fields	Medium	• I.A.8. Number of permits issued by DDBRA for researchers involved in the internationally recognized diversified research program on DD's natural and cultural systems and resources
A4. Supporting eco-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	Low	Not available

The result indicators selected for Sector B "Energy efficiency" are covering only one of the three specific objectives, respectively Objective B1. The use of renewable sources is not monitored, although the strategy is supporting pilot projects that promote wind, solar energy, heat pumps and biomass (Objective B2). Also, awareness could be monitored by means of social surveys (Objective B3)**.**

Table 7: Result Indicators - Sector B Energy Efficiency

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
B.1 Increasing the energy efficiency of the study area in economic, residential and public buildings and public service provision fields	High	• CO32 Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public buildings • I.B.1 Number of renovated public buildings
B.2 Increasing the use of renewable energy sources within the study area	Low	Not available
B.3 Improving local expertise, information availability and energy efficiency awareness	Low	Not available

The result indicator set for Sector C "Climate change" is highly relevant but captures only the long-term intended changes. The strategy was also aimed at creating a mandate unit in charge of addressing climate change issues (Objective C1), creating public-private partnerships (Objective C3) and raising awareness regarding the climate change (Objective C4), which are not captured by the current system of indicators.

Table 8: Result Indicators - Sector C Climate change

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
C.1 Developing a climate friendly and resilient area by integrating climate change into local public policies and planning	Low	Not available
C.2 Promoting development of a low carbon economy through targeted adaptation measures and by reducing GHG emissions	High	CO34 Estimated annual decrease in greenhouse gases
C.3 Developing partnerships and financing instruments in the field of climate change	Low	Not available
C.4 Raising the awareness of the population and businesses on climate change	Low	Not available

The result indicators selected for Sector D "Disaster risk management" offer a medium coverage of specific objectives. Indicator 2S49 is able to capture the adequacy of response capacity at disasters, but additional indicators are needed to measure the effects of preventing measures (i.e. reduced number of incidents). Indicator ID1 reflects only the immediate results of the interventions (i.e. newly built infrastructure) and not the long-term effects (i.e. effectiveness of the newly built infrastructure).

Table 9: Result Indicators - Sector D Disaster risk management

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
D.1 Reducing the vulnerability to all risks, while improving the quality of emergency services, based on national and county risk assessment, and develop and maintain an adequate response capacity	Medium	• 2S49a Average response time to emergencies for firefighting and other situations • 2S49b Average response time to emergencies for providing first aid
D.3 Elaborating a County Integrated Information System for the Management of Emergency Situations as part of the National Information System for Disaster Management	Medium	
D.2 Assessing the main risks, elaborating risk maps for earthquakes and floods, and implementing projects to reduce these risks	Medium	• I.D.1 Number of inhabitants who benefit from flood protection measures as a result of making investments in infrastructure

A high coverage is ensured for Sector E "Pollution emergency". The set of indicators is relevant for both specific objectives and captures the intended changes.

Table 10: Result Indicators - Sector E Pollution Emergency

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators
E.1 Developing an advanced information management system for hazardous wastes which may cause a pollution spill and represents a threat to the DD	High	• I.E.1 Number of pollution incidents in the DD region (annually) • I.E.3 Average time to stop pollution incidents (days)
E.2 Reducing pollution risks and the response time by developing a prevention plan, providing adequate equipment and training of human resources	High	

The result indicators selected for Sector F "Tourism" offer a medium coverage. Indicators are relevant for measuring the development of tourism in Danube Delta; however, they do not capture "sustainability", an important aspect of Danube Delta strategy, reiterated also by specific sectorial objectives.

Table 11: Result Indicators - Sector F Tourism

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
F.1 Developing and promoting the Danube Delta as an integrated tourism destination with a rich portfolio of sustainable tourism products and services by capitalizing the natural and cultural heritage	Medium	• II.A.1 Tourist arrivals (annually) • II.A.2 Number of DDBR entry permits • II.A.4 Occupancy rates for authorized / official accommodation • II.A.5 Average length of stay (nights) • II.A.6 Share of tourist accommodation structures open all year (%) • II.A.8 The ratio between non-residents and residents owning land in DD
F.2 Establishing a local destination management mechanism based on the active participation and ownership of local stakeholders	Medium	
F.3 Encouraging local population to run small tourism businesses that meet quality and sustainability standards and that are economically viable	Medium	

A high coverage is ensured for Sector G "Fishery and aquaculture". The set of indicators is relevant for all specific objectives and captures the intended changes. However, the term "quality" should be better defined by the strategy or implementing documents (n.b. reference to Objective G3).

Table 12: Result Indicators - Sector G Fishery and aquaculture

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
G.1 Correcting the ecological imbalance among predator and prey fish species and restoring environmental quality	High	• II.B.2 Size of predatory fish species populations • II.B.3 Caras (prussian carp) population dynamics
G.2 Increasing the economic value of fishing and aquaculture activities	High	• 1.1 Variation in production value • 1.2 Variation in production volume
G.3 Increasing quality job opportunities in the fishing sector	Medium	• 1.7 Jobs (ENI) created in the fisheries sector or complementary activities • 1.8 Jobs (ENI) maintained in the fisheries sector or complementary activities • II.B.1 Number of fisheries jobs by specific activities (newly created through projects)

The result indicators selected for Sector H "Agriculture and rural development" are rather restrictive compared to the broad objectives set by the strategy. Objective H1 is aimed at promoting the integration of local producers into the value-chain, while the selected indicators are only measuring the pre-requisites, respectively creation of adequate rural infrastructure. Objective H3 is tailored to a specific age group, which is not specifically captured by indicators. Objective H4 is monitored only through output indicators, counting the percentage of initiatives and not their actual effectiveness. Finally, Objective H5 is not captured by any indicator.

Table 13: Result Indicators - Sector H Agriculture and rural development

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
H.1 Promoting the integration of agri-food producers (especially organic products) into the value-chain in order to help them benefit from the advantage of being close to external markets and from the tourism opportunities in the area	Medium	• II.C.3 Share of irrigation infrastructure rehabilitated through ITI projects out of total viable irrigation infrastructure (%) • II.C.10 % of modernized communal and village infrastructure, out of which after school, sports facilities, dispensary, agricultural road, forest road, modernized local roads, kindergartens, street lighting, modernized high schools and schools, parks and playgrounds, markets, bridges and footbridges, water network, sewerage network, networks for population safety
H.2 Supporting diversification of agricultural and non-farm activities for job creation by encouraging active involvement of local communities	Medium	• II.C.8 % of farmers who have started a non-agricultural activity
H.3 Promoting young farmers' access to land to enable improved revenue flows to the local population	Medium	

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
H.4 Preserving, protecting, capitalizing and promoting the natural and movable and immovable cultural heritage in rural areas	Medium	• II.C.9 % of initiatives / projects that capitalize on the cultural heritage of the area
H.5 Improving the local population / farmers' access to information regarding the possibilities of tapping Common Agricultural Policy funds - create a special agriculture extension team for the Danube Delta	Low	Not available

The result indicators selected for Sector I "Transport" offer medium coverage. Indicators are relevant for measuring connectivity and accessibility. However, the "sustainability" component is again neglected by the monitoring system (i.e. effectiveness of planned interventions in improving health and protecting the environment).

Table 14: Result Indicators - Sector I Transport

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
I.1 Increasing territorial connectivity to ensure access to the markets in Tulcea, the rest of Romanian and the EU; equal connectivity for enterprises, individuals, and goods in the DD territory, taking great care to protecting the existing environmental heritage	High	• 2S13 Passengers boarded and disembarked in airport transport • III.A.1 Travel time between Tulcea and Constanța • III.A.2 Travel time between Tulcea and Brăila • III.A.3 Travel time between Tulcea and Galați • III.A.4 Volume of goods transported by inland waterways
I.2 Increasing accessibility in the Core DD area to support the development of tourism and fisheries, and the mobility for the residents of sparsely populated areas	High	
I.3 Improving health and protecting the environment by minimizing emissions and the consumption of resources (including energy) by the transport system	Low	Not available

The result indicators selected for Sector J "Information and communications technology" cover only part of the intended changes. More precisely, the indicators are monitoring the access to broadband internet networks (Objective J1) and the use of ICT (Objective J2). However, no indicator was selected for measuring the results of research and development (Objective J3).

Table 15: Result Indicators - Sector J Information and communications technology

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
J.1 Providing full access to broadband internet network	High	• 3S8 NGA broadband coverage / availability as a percentage of households
J.2 Supporting widespread private, business and public use of ICT	High	• 3S14 Percentage of citizens who regularly use the Internet out of total population • III.B.1 The degree of regular use of the Internet at national level

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
J.3 Ensuring synergies with other sectors to promote the transfer of knowledge, services and economic development	Low	Not available

A high coverage is ensured for Sector K "Water supply and sewerage systems and integrated water management". The set of indicators is relevant for all specific objectives and captures the intended changes.

Table 16: Result Indicators - Sector K Water supply and sewerage systems and integrated water management

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
K.1 Providing drinking water in order to meet the quality of life standards and the economic development objectives, subject to demand, financial feasibility, and operation and maintenance constraints	High	IV.A.1 Share of rural population connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI-funded projects (%) IV.A.2 Share of population in cities connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI-funded projects (%)
K.2 Supporting the collection of wastewaters in a centralized manner (subject to demand, financial feasibility, and operation and maintenance constraints) and moving away from the current use of pit latrines which constitute a health hazard in prone to flood areas	High	IV.A.3 Share of rural population connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI-funded projects (%) IV.A.4 Share of population in cities connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI-funded projects (%)
K.3 Adopting treatment methods of centrally collected wastewater either in a conventional or a more low-cost way	High	IV.A.5 Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in rural areas IV.A.6 Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in cities

The result indicators selected for Sector L "Solid waste management" provide for a medium coverage of specific objectives. More precisely, the indicators are relevant for measuring the total quantity of collected and recycled waste (Objectives L1 and L3); however, they do not measure the degree of capitalization (Objective L4). An additional indicator would be needed for monitoring the management of floating waste material (Objective L3).

Table 17: Result Indicators - Sector L Solid waste management

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
L.1 Improving the recycling rate to achieve the corresponding EU target of 50% to which Romania is committed	High	2S25 Amount of biodegradable waste stored IV.B.2 Total amount of recyclable waste recovered from the total quantity collected (%)
L.2 Implementing of waste reduction, reuse and recycling in local communities, in order to assure efficient and sustainable management, resource saving, environmental protection and tourism destination development	High	
L.3 Management of floating waste material	Low	Not available
L.4 Increasing the capitalization degree of waste collected from households and businesses	Medium	IV.B.1 Total amount of household waste collected and transported (tones / year)

A high coverage is ensured for Sector M "Health". Indicator IV C.3. "*Life expectancy at birth*" is relevant for all specific objectives and captures the intended changes. On the other hand, indicator IV.C.2 "*Number of emergency units*" measures only the immediate outputs of the implemented projects.

Table 18: Result Indicators - Sector M Health

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
M.1 Improving the access to primary health care (PHC) services based on prevention and early detection and treatment of chronic diseases	High	IV.C.2 Number of emergency units IV.C.3 Life expectancy at birth
M.2 Supporting the effective control of epidemics, early warning and coordinated response, and risk factors surveillance	High	
M.3 Improving health infrastructure for primary, secondary and tertiary health care, and the related service delivery system adjusted to modern technologies	High	

A high coverage is ensured for Sector N "Education". The set of indicators is relevant for all specific objectives and captures the intended changes.

Table 19: Result Indicators - Sector N Education

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
N.1 Providing lifelong learning opportunities to create labor skills necessary for the 21st century economy	High	4S201 People who get a job, including those who are self-employed 4S6 Persons who, upon termination of participation, acquire a qualification 4S110 Certified persons as a result of the support provided 4S111 People who find a job as a result of the support received IV.D.1 Inclusion rate in pre-school / primary / secondary / upper secondary education in rural areas IV.D.2 Inclusion rate in pre-school / primary / secondary / upper secondary education for Roma citizens IV.D.3 School dropout rate (%) IV.D.5 Number of people who benefit from support projects for training / exchange of good practices
N.2 Supporting secondary and vocational education that prepare students for the global knowledge economy and for the specificities of the local economy	High	
N.3 Increasing the quality of the primary education and early-education systems	High	

The result indicators selected Sector O "Social inclusion and protection" cover only part of the intended changes. They are highly relevant for the sector, but do not capture the expected result of sectorial objective O2, respectively to preserve the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities.

Table 20: Result Indicators - Sector O Social inclusion and protection

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
O.1 Reducing labor related and human capital disparities among Roma people by providing	High	

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
improved integrated services in all dimensions and aspects of exclusion (education, health, housing, employment)		4S155 Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion from marginalized communities who acquire a qualification upon participation, of which: Roma
O.3 Improving social outcomes by making social protection programs more relevant and efficient in the Danube Delta area	High	4S156 Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in marginalized communities who have a job, including those who are self-employed, upon completion IV.E.1 Number of kindergartens and other educational services for children under 6 in disadvantaged communities IV.E.2 Number of children integrated in nurseries / kindergartens in disadvantaged communities IV.E.3 Number of children integrated in the preparatory class and who participated in preschool education IV.E.4 Number of students at risk of dropping out of school at the beginning and end of the school year IV.E.5 Number of children involved in different types of complementary educational measures (after school, summer kindergartens, school tutoring, etc.) IV.E.6 Number of centers that have implemented complementary education measures in the ITI territory IV.E.7 No of school mediators employed full time in the school system
O.2 Preserving the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in the study area	Low	Not available

The result indicators selected for Sector P "Administrative capacity and program management" cover only part of the intended changes. They are relevant for Specific Objective P1 and P3, but do not capture the expected result of Specific Objective P3, respectively to increase participatory decision-making in synergy with the environmental and economic objectives.

Table 21: Result Indicators - Sector P Administrative capacity and program management

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
P.1 Providing efficient and cost-effective public services	High	5S18 Local authorities and public institutions that have implemented standard mechanisms and procedures for substantiating long-term strategic decisions and planning 5S19 Local authorities and public institutions in which unitary quality and performance management systems developed through the program have been implemented according to the Action Plan for prioritizing and staging the implementation of quality management 5S20 Local authorities and public institutions in which measures to simplify procedures for citizens
P.2 Improving evidence-based strategic and budgetary planning across all levels of governance in the DD region in order to support environmental and economic objectives	High	

Specific Objectives (SO)	Coverage by RI	Result indicators (RI)
		have been implemented in accordance with the Integrated Plan for the simplification of procedures for citizens developed at national level V.A.3 Number of projects implemented within the Danube Delta ITI
P.3 Increasing participatory decision-making in synergy with the environmental and economic objectives	Low	Not available

5.3. Conclusions

The updated system of indicators serves its current purpose, that is to capture the outputs and results of ongoing and completed projects, during the current phase of implementation (corresponding to the current EU programming period).

For most output indicators, the evaluation team and IDA ITI DD personnel managed to provide guidelines for data collection and aggregations, including definitions, computation methodology and sources of information. Moreover, the majority of indicators have baselines and intermediate targets, starting from the list of contracted projects. Final targets should be set after the approval of the new financing lines.

However, additional result indicators are needed in order to reflect all desired changes included in the strategy, during the entire timeline of implementation. The current list of indicators does not cover all sectorial specific objectives and related interventions (in particular, objectives with no current allocation were omitted). As such, they may over-estimate the progress of the strategy, by monitoring only the specific objectives with registered progress.

5.4. Recommendations

The system of indicators was already improved in the context of this project, with high support from IDA ITI DD personnel. The below recommendations are aimed at further completing the list of indicators, in order to capture the entire strategy, and providing guidance for their future monitoring.

Recommendation 7. Set additional result indicators, to capture all sectorial specific objectives.

Result indicators should reflect the overall progress of the strategy, not only the objectives with financial allocations. The system of indicators can rely both on quantitative result indicators (to be added and monitored by IDA ITI DD), and qualitative result indicators (to be added and assessed by the evaluation team, in the context of future progress and impact evaluations). A limited number of result indicators can be selected, one per each sector; however, in this scenario, the indicators should be carefully designed in order to capture the overarching expected changes, and not the intermediate results of interventions.

Recommendation 8. Set additional output indicators, as per need, to capture the majority of interventions.

The current list of output indicators is set based on the ongoing or completed projects. Additional indicators may be required after the approval of the new financing lines, in order to capture the majority of interventions (at least 75% of the total budget of the strategy). Although it is not recommended having indicators in relation to each of the 137 interventions, a closer monitoring is required for interventions with high allocations.

Recommendation 9. Finalize the system of indicators with guidelines for data collection and monitoring.

All indicators should include the following elements: (1) title of the indicator, (2) measurement unit, (3) baseline, (4) intermediate and final targets, (5) source of information, (6) definition, (7) computation methodologies, (8) aggregation methodologies, (9) responsible for data collection, aggregation and reporting, (10) deadlines for data reporting.

Chapter 6

6. Interim Results

6.1. Description of the Evaluation Process

The analyses performed under this section are aimed at depicting the current financial and physical progress of the strategy, as well as the outcomes perceived by beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Considering that EU Funds are the main source of financing for Danube Delta Strategy, a high focus was placed on the deadlines for (de)commitment and absorption set by Common Provisions Regulation and Funds Specific Regulations[9]. The financial progress was computed at the level of strategy (payments out of total allocations) and at the level of projects (payments out of total contracted amounts).

As stated throughout this report, the methodological approach for measuring the physical progress of the strategy was limited by the availability of monitoring data, respectively by the lack of baselines and targets, which should have been defined in the planning phase of the strategy. Some interim targets were selected with support from IDA ITI DD, based on the contracted projects; however, their adequacy should be checked in the context of a future ex-ante evaluation (i.e. targets should be attainable, but also ambitious to justify the spent amounts).

Findings are based on the monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, as well as on the online survey and in-depth interviews with the beneficiaries of the strategy.

6.2. Findings

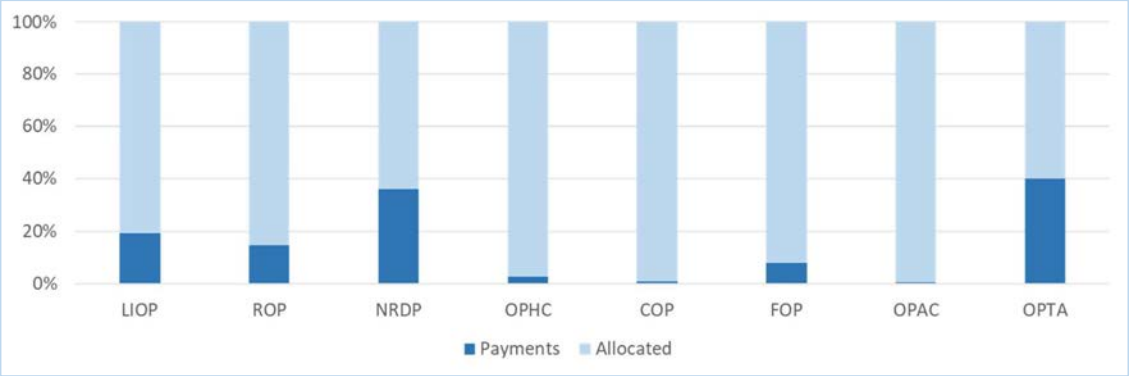
Financial progress of the strategy

The current budget of Danube Delta Strategy is mainly based on the financial allocations set by Operational Programmes 2014-2020, through ITI DD instrument. As further detailed in Chapter 4, the total allocation of EU Funds amounts to 1.1 billion EUR, while the contracted amounts represent 70% of total allocations, as of March 2020. In order to avoid the risk of decommitment, Romania needs to ensure the pipeline of projects for the remaining 30% of funds by the end of the year (note: the final deadline may be extended by the European Commission, in the context of sanitary crisis generated by Covid-19).

Considering the tight deadlines imposed for spending EU Funds, the pace of financial progress in ITI DD area is rather slow. As presented in Figure 10 below, the level of absorption (payments out of allocations) is below 20% after the first 4 years of actual implementation. The highest levels are registered for Operational Programme Technical Assistance (40%), which ensured the functioning of the ITI mechanism; National Development Rural Plan (36%), which has the highest number of completed projects; and Large Infrastructure (19%) and Regional Operational Programme (15%), used for the implementation of large infrastructure projects. Lower progress was registered for Operational Programme Human Capital (3%), Competitiveness (1%) and Administrative Capacity (1%).

[9] The purpose of decommitment is to encourage financial discipline (see Recital 73 of the CPR) and to avoid situation when the EU funds are 'frozen' at the programmes' accounts and are not being used for a long time. In this respect, Art. 86 and Art. 136 of the CPR define the arrangements for decommitment. In the programming period 2014-2020, it is based on the so-called N+3 rule: the annual allocation to the programme must be spent within 3 years following the year of its commitment.

Figure 10: Level of absorption of EU Funds dedicated to ITI DD, by Operational Programmes (%)

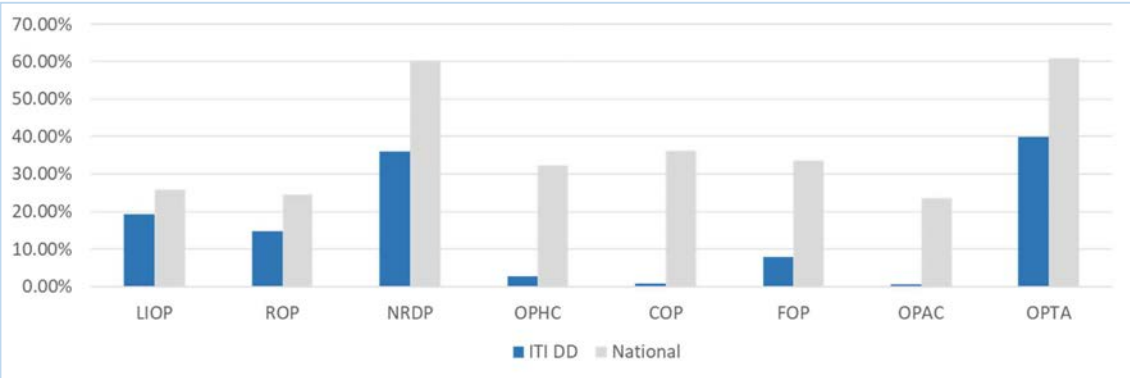


LEGEND	
LIOP	Large Infrastructure Operational Programme
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
NRDP	National Rural Development Plan
OPHC	Operational Programme Human Capital
COP	Competitiveness Operational Programme
EMFF OP	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme
OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The level of absorption of EU Funds achieved for ITI DD is slightly lower compared to the level of absorption attained at national level (see Figure 11 below). This can be justified by the novelty of ITI instrument, which required intensive preparatory activities at the beginning of the programming period – developing and approving the local Danube Delta Strategy, setting the institutional framework for the implementation of the strategy and of the ITI instrument, developing inter-institutional agreements and procedures, promoting the strategy and the financing mechanism. The same progress variations among local and national levels were noticed also in other Member States implementing ITI funded strategies. According to Cohesion Policy (CP) data platform, in comparison to other CP projects, the implementation of operations funded under ITI and ISUD experienced substantial delays at the beginning of the 2014-2020 period (European Parliament, 2019[10]).

Figure 11: Level of absorption of EU Funs, at ITI DD and national level, by Operational Programmes (%)



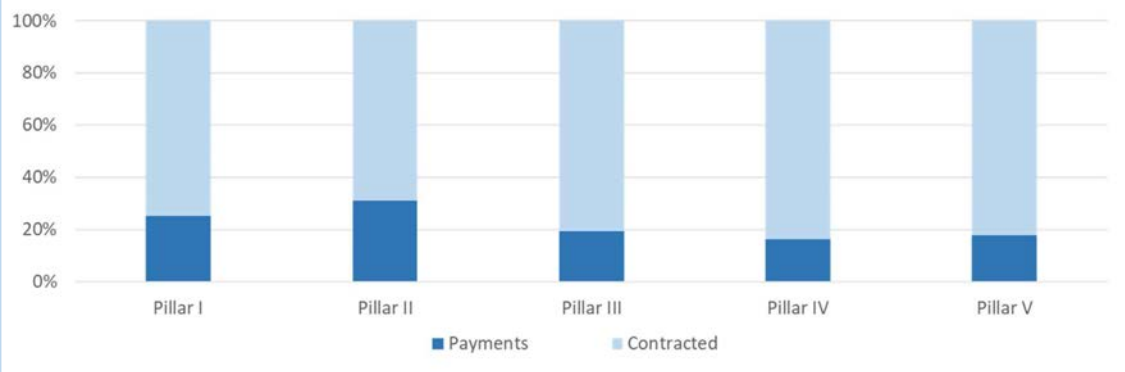
[10]European Parliament. (2019). *Integrated Territorial Investments as an effective tool of the Cohesion Policy.* P.8. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/162823/25032019_CONT_Briefing_ITI_Final.pdf

LEGEND	
LIOP	Large Infrastructure Operational Programme
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
NRDP	National Rural Development Plan
OPHC	Operational Programme Human Capital
COP	Competitiveness Operational Programme
EMFF OP	Fisheries Operational Programme
OPAC	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD and information published on the Ministry of European Funds website, March 2020

The level of financial progress registered for contracted amounts is rather low for all pillars of the strategy. The highest levels were attained for Pillar II "Improving the Economy" (31%) and Pillar I "Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets" (26%). Lower levels were achieved for Pillar III "Improving Connectivity" (19%), Pillar V "Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability" (18%) and Pillar IV "Providing Public Services" (17%). The low progress of projects may be linked to the long preparatory activities, aimed at obtaining the necessary documentations and permits, which postpone the actual implementation of works (based on the interviews with beneficiaries). In particular, the large infrastructural projects require additional time for planning and solving technical problems (see also the project summaries included in Annex 3).

Figure 12: Payments out of contracted eligible values, by Pillars (EU Funds + National Budget) (%)

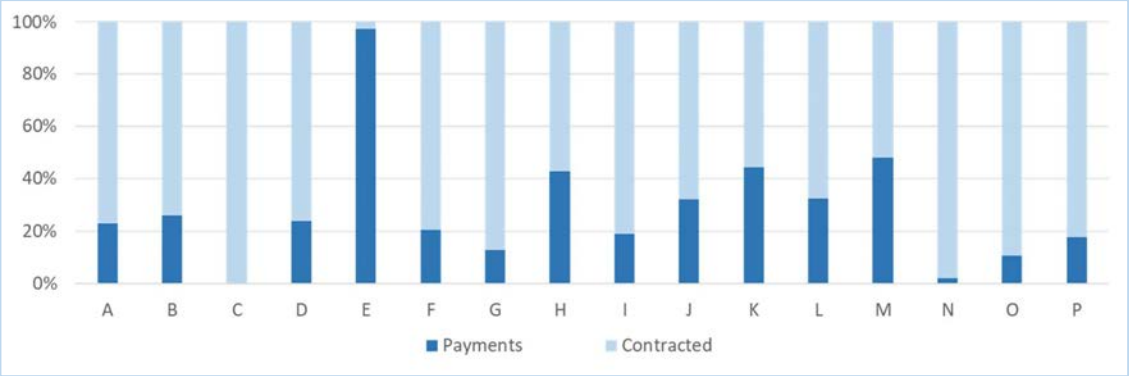


LEGEND	
Pillar I	Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets
Pillar II	Improving the Economy
Pillar III	Improving Connectivity
Pillar IV	Providing Public Services
Pillar V	Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

Important variations can be observed among the sectors of the strategy, but should not be interpreted in all cases as a reflection of performance as the progress is connected to the timing of the calls, the timeline of the projects and the number of projects. For example, a high progress was achieved in spending the money committed to Sector E "Pollution Emergency"; however, this refers to only one project contracted in 2017. The low level achieved for Sector N "Education" can be explained by the fact that most projects related to this sector had a later start and are due to be completed in 2022.

Figure 13: Payments out of contracted values, by Sectors (EU Funds + National Budget) (%)

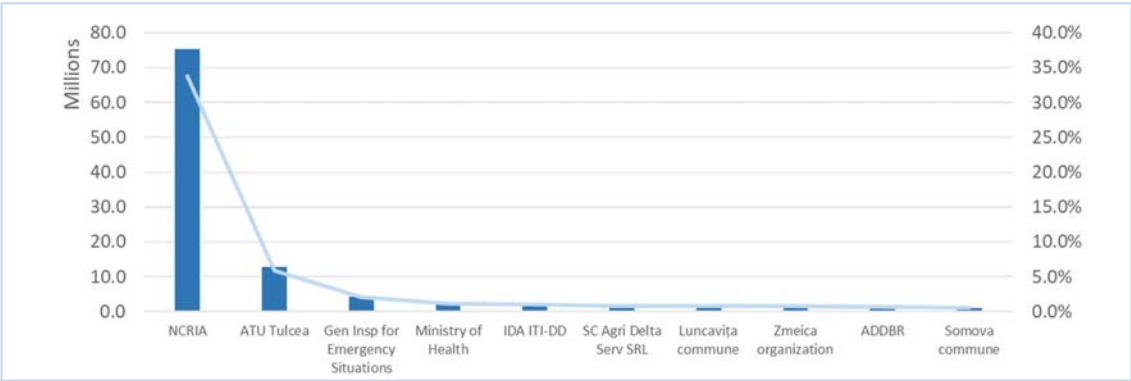


LEGEND	
Sector A	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management
Sector B	Energy Efficiency
Sector C	Climate Change
Sector D	Disaster Risk Management
Sector E	Pollution Emergency
Sector F	Tourism
Sector G	Fishery and Aquaculture
Sector H	Agriculture and Rural Development
Sector I	Transport
Sector J	Information and Communication Technology
Sector K	Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management
Sector L	Solid Waste Management
Sector M	Healthcare
Sector N	Education
Sector O	Social Inclusion and Protection
Sector P	Administrative Capacity and Program Management

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The analysis at beneficiary level reveal that the majority of funds (40%) were absorbed by two beneficiaries, respectively National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration (NCRIA) and Administrative Territorial Unit (ATU) for Tulcea. These are the beneficiaries with the highest committed amounts, implementing projects in the area of transport infrastructure. An above-average percent of payments was absorbed also by the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, Ministry of Health, IDA ITI DD and SC Agri Delta Serv SRL. All other beneficiaries have a below 1% share.

Figure 14: Payments, by Beneficiaries (EU Funds + National Budget) (EUR)



LEGEND	
NCRIA	National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration
ATU Tulcea	Administrative Territorial Unit Tulcea
Gen Insp for Emergency Situations	General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations
Ministry of Health	Ministry of Health
IDA ITI DD	Inter-Community Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta
SC Agri Delta Serv SRL	SC Agri Delta Serv SRL
Luncavita commune	Luncavita commune
Zmeica organization	Isaccea City
ADDBR	Administration of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation
Somova Commune	Somova Commune

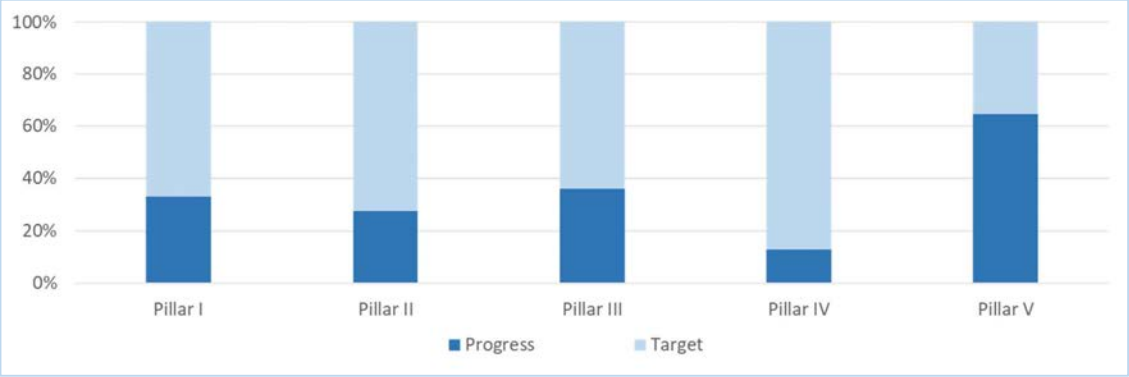
Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

Physical progress of the strategy

The overall physical progress of the strategy, measured by means of output indicators, amounts to 35% towards the end of the programming period. Considering the lack of monitoring data for previous years, the pace of project implementation cannot be assessed (i.e. possible improvements in the later years). However, an acceleration is needed in order to meet the N+3 rule associated to EU Funds. More precisely, all projects should be completed, both in terms of financial and physical progress, by the end of 2023.

Some variations can be observed among the five pillars of the strategy (see Figure 15 below). The highest levels of financial progress were attained by Pillar V "Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability" (65%), Pillar III "Improving Connectivity" (36%) and Pillar I "Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets" (33%); while lower levels were registered for Pillar II "Improving the Economy" (27%) and Pillar IV "Providing Public Services" (13%). A closer monitoring is recommended in particular for Pilar III "Improving Connectivity", which has the highest committed amounts and includes strategic projects in Danube Delta region. In case of significant deviations from the initial planning, the owners of the Danube Delta Strategy should decide, in close partnership with the Managing Authorities of the national Operational Programmes, the necessity of project phasing.

Figure 15: Progress of output indicators, by Pillars (%)



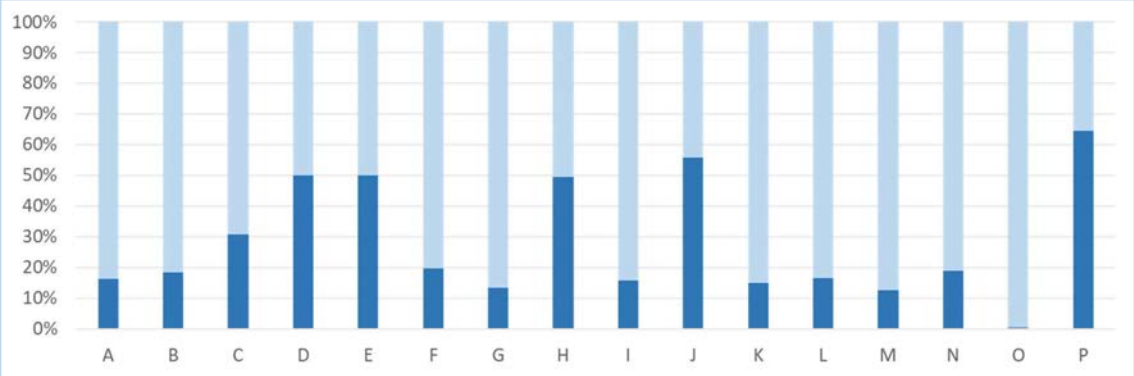
LEGEND	
Pillar I	Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets
Pillar II	Improving the Economy
Pillar III	Improving Connectivity
Pillar IV	Providing Public Services
Pillar V	Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

Similar to financial progress, significant variations can be observed with regards to physical progress among the sectors of the strategy, which should not be necessary interpreted as a reflection of performance. The

progress is also linked to the timing of the launched calls, project signature and deadlines. The highest progress was achieved by Sector P "Administrative Capacity and Program Management" (65%), which ensured the implementation of the ITI mechanism. A good progress was also achieved by Sector J "Information and Communication Technology" (56%), Sector D "Disaster Risk Management" (50%), Sector E "Pollution Emergency" (50%) and Sector H "Agriculture and Rural Development" (49%).

Figure 16: Progress of output indicators, by Sectors (%)



LEGEND	
Sector A	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management
Sector B	Energy Efficiency
Sector C	Climate Change
Sector D	Disaster Risk Management
Sector E	Pollution Emergency
Sector F	Tourism
Sector G	Fishery and Aquaculture
Sector H	Agriculture and Rural Development
Sector I	Transport
Sector J	Information and Communication Technology
Sector K	Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management
Sector L	Solid Waste Management
Sector M	Healthcare
Sector N	Education
Sector O	Social Inclusion and Protection
Sector P	Administrative Capacity and Program Management

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The analysis of achieved physical progress, correlated to the status of projects, reveal some broken links in the logic of intervention. For example, Sector C "Climate Change" has no contracted projects, but a good progress of output indicators (31%); while Sector B "Energy Efficiency" has a good progress in terms of completed projects, but a lower progress achieved at the level of output indicators (18%). This is mainly triggered by the specific indicator I.C.2 "Number of households with a better classification of energy consumption due to the implementation of energy efficiency measures", which was attained by the projects implemented under Sector B, but was set to measure the progress of Sector C.

Table 22: Status of project implementation, by Sectors

Sector	Contracted projects (No)	Completed projects (% ouf of total no of projects)	Progress of output indicators (% out of total targets)
A Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management	18	11%	16%
B Energy Efficiency	71	27%	18%

Sector	Contracted projects (No)	Completed projects (% ouf of total no of projects)	Progress of output indicators (% out of total targets)
C Climate Change	0	0%	31%
D Disaster Risk Management	8	25%	50%
E Pollution Emergency	1	0%	50%
F Tourism	195	8%	20%
G Fishery and Aquaculture	21	5%	13%
H Agriculture and Rural Development	557	22%	49%
I Transport	68	31%	16%
J Information and Communication Technology	42	33%	56%
K Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management	2	0%	15%
L Solid Waste Management	2	0%	17%
M Healthcare	7	0%	13%
N Education	10	0%	19%
O Social Inclusion and Protection	6	0%	1%
P Administrative Capacity and Program Management	16	44%	65%
Total	**1024**	**20%**	**35%**

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

Interim results and impacts

The overall progress with regards to result indicators is estimated at 42%. It should be noted, however, that computed progress may be over-estimated in relation to all pillars, by the fact that selected indicators do not capture all specific objectives included in the strategy. For further details, please consult Chapter 5, which includes analyses of the relevancy and coverage of the system of indicators.[11]

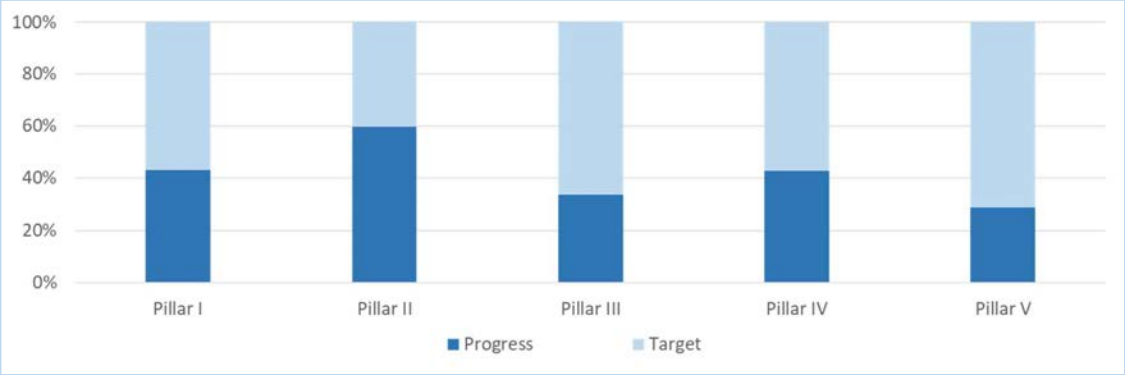
80% of projects are still under implementation, and the majority of outcomes and impacts are expected to be more visible towards the end of 2023. The large infrastructure projects, which are expected to produce significant economic impacts in Danube Delta area, are currently in an incipient status, and therefore are not yet captured in the current analyses. According to NCRIA representatives, a high-quality transport infrastructure and better transport links will contribute to the regional development of Dobrogea, without disturbing the habitat of Danube Delta. For example, the suspension bridge over the Danube will help reduce travel time and vehicle operating costs, while reducing pollution. The works carried out have already led to an economic development of the area, beneficial both for inhabitants and for SMEs and micro-enterprises (for further information on selected strategic projects, see Annexure 3).

The highest progress in terms of result indicators was achieved by Pillar II "Improving the Economy" (60%), Pillar IV "Providing Public Services "(43%) and Pillar I "Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource

[11] For some indicators, the progress is 100% - for example, no pollution incidents were registered in Danube Delta, in the monitored period; and therefore, the target is achieved. However, in order to maintain the good level of indicators, additional projects may be needed in the future and additional projects may be required to ensure a good level of preventive actions also for the future period.

Assets" (43%), followed by Pillar III "Improving Connectivity" (34%) and Pillar V "Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability" (29%).

Figure 17: Progress of result indicators, by Pillars (%)

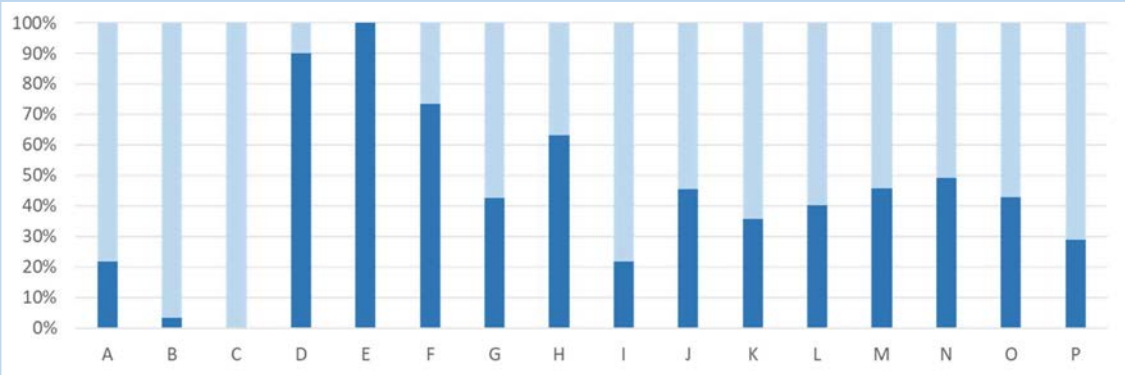


LEGEND	
Pillar I	Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets
Pillar II	Improving the Economy
Pillar III	Improving Connectivity
Pillar IV	Providing Public Services
Pillar V	Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The analysis at sectorial level captures significant variations: the highest progress was achieved by Sector E "Pollution Emergency" (100%) and Sector D "Disaster Risk Management" (90%), whilst the lowest progress was registered for Sector C "Climate Change" (0%) and Sector B "Energy Efficiency" (3%). Nevertheless, as stated in previous sections, the system of result indicators should be further improved, in order to provide a better image of the progress towards the strategy's objectives.

Figure 18: Progress of result indicators, by Sectors (%)



LEGEND	
Sector A	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management
Sector B	Energy Efficiency
Sector C	Climate Change
Sector D	Disaster Risk Management
Sector E	Pollution Emergency
Sector F	Tourism
Sector G	Fishery and Aquaculture
Sector H	Agriculture and Rural Development
Sector I	Transport
Sector J	Information and Communication Technology

LEGEND	
Sector K	Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management
Sector L	Solid Waste Management
Sector M	Healthcare
Sector N	Education
Sector O	Social Inclusion and Protection
Sector P	Administrative Capacity and Program Management

Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, March 2020

The perception of beneficiaries with regards to the results of the strategy is slightly different compared to the image captured by indicators. According to the online survey, the highest impacts were observed for tourism (Sector F) and environment and biodiversity (Sectors A, B and C); while the lowest impacts are perceived with regards to disaster risk management (Sector D), transport (Sector I) and water supply and sanitation (Sector K). For full results of the online survey, please consult Annex 4.

6.3. Conclusions

During its first phase of implementation, the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development of Danube Delta region registered a low progress, especially in relation to the tight deadlines imposed for EU funded strategies. The level of absorption of EU funds is below 20% (payments out of total allocations), and the general physical progress of projects amounts to 35% (current status of output indicators, compared to baselines and interim targets). The low pace of implementation can be justified by the novelty of the ITI mechanisms, which required complex preparation activities - developing and approving the local Danube Delta Strategy, setting the institutional framework for the implementation of the strategy and of the ITI instrument, developing inter-institutional agreements and procedures, and promoting the strategy and the financing mechanism.

Nevertheless, the beneficiaries of projects implemented through ITI mechanism are already able to perceive some important environmental and economic developments, generated by the strategy. Two thirds of respondents to the online survey appreciate that both tourists and residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in the area[12]. Moreover, 51% of respondents to the online survey consider that implemented projects have a positive impact on the environment. Some important impacts are also expected in relation to the large transport infrastructure projects, implemented by the National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration and by Tulcea Administrative Territorial Unit.

The overall results and impacts of the strategy will be better reflected in a future impact evaluation, as the outcomes of a strategy are fully visible only after the completion of projects. The fact that beneficiary perception is more positive than actual assessed implementation is a positive indicator that future impact assessment should yield even better results, but with the caveat that progress on projects must progress towards completion within reasonable timelines.

6.4. Recommendations

The below recommendations are aimed at improving the pace of financial and physical progress of the strategy, during the next programming period. Additional recommendations, for creating better premises for monitoring and evaluation, are provided in the relevant sections of this report.

Recommendation 10. Select and implement appropriate remediation actions to address the root causes for the limited physical progress of the strategy (as identified in this report).

Problems and remediation actions at strategy level may include (1) delays in the strategy set-up → action: advance planning of implementation mechanisms for the next programming period), (2) low quality of project

[12] Noting that a perception survey, as conduced here involving project beneficiaries, is an expression of the respondent's opinion. In the design of this project it was considered that a perception survey would complement and add to the actual quantitative analysis – demonstrated in the findings presented here.

proposal → action: technical assistance for beneficiaries, including capacity building projects, (3) low inflow of project applications → action: communication of funding opportunities by multiple means (4) slow certification and processing of submitted project progress reports → action: increase the number and capacity of human resources, (5) problems in the cooperation among strategy owners → action: define clear roles and procedures for the implementations of the strategy.

Problems and remediation actions at project level may include (1) unrealistic project's spending plan → action: closer evaluation and guidance for submitted projects, (2) lack of previous experience in implementing EU Funded projects → action: improved guidelines for beneficiaries, in terms of clarity and level of details.

Recommendation 11. Identify and implement the appropriate methods for accelerating project expenditure (either at ITI, strategy or project level), while taking into consideration the challenges associated to each method.

Methods at strategy level may include (1) overcommitment of strategy funds → challenge: the strategy has to ensure other sources of financing should the projects use their allocated budgets as initially planned at a full capacity, (2) additional and/ or targeted calls for project proposals → challenge: these calls are usually ad-hoc and require active preparation and specific procedures, (3) waiting (reserve) list of projects → challenge: long waiting times may determine possible changes in the project idea as compared to a submitted application.

Methods at the project level may include (1) close monitoring of projects' spending and mid-term assessment of projects' spending → challenge: additional human or financial resources required for monitoring activities, (2) decommitment of projects' budgets with low spending level → challenge: additional procedures to be developed and followed by the strategy owners, (3) additional allocations to already running projects → challenge: this should be fully justified with supporting documents and subject to approval by the relevant parties.

Chapter 7

7. Institutional Arrangements and Delivery Mechanism

7.1. Description of the Evaluation Process

The analyses performed under this section are aimed at presenting the institutional organization and approach to implementation, along with identified areas of improvement, as they emerged during the evaluation of strategy progress. This subject will be further scrutinized in a separate evaluation, performed by the Ministry of European Funds.

7.2. Findings

The implementation of the strategy is managed at national level by the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (MPWDA), based on an inter-institutional agreement with all the other ministries involved, including the Managing Authorities of the programmes supporting ITI:

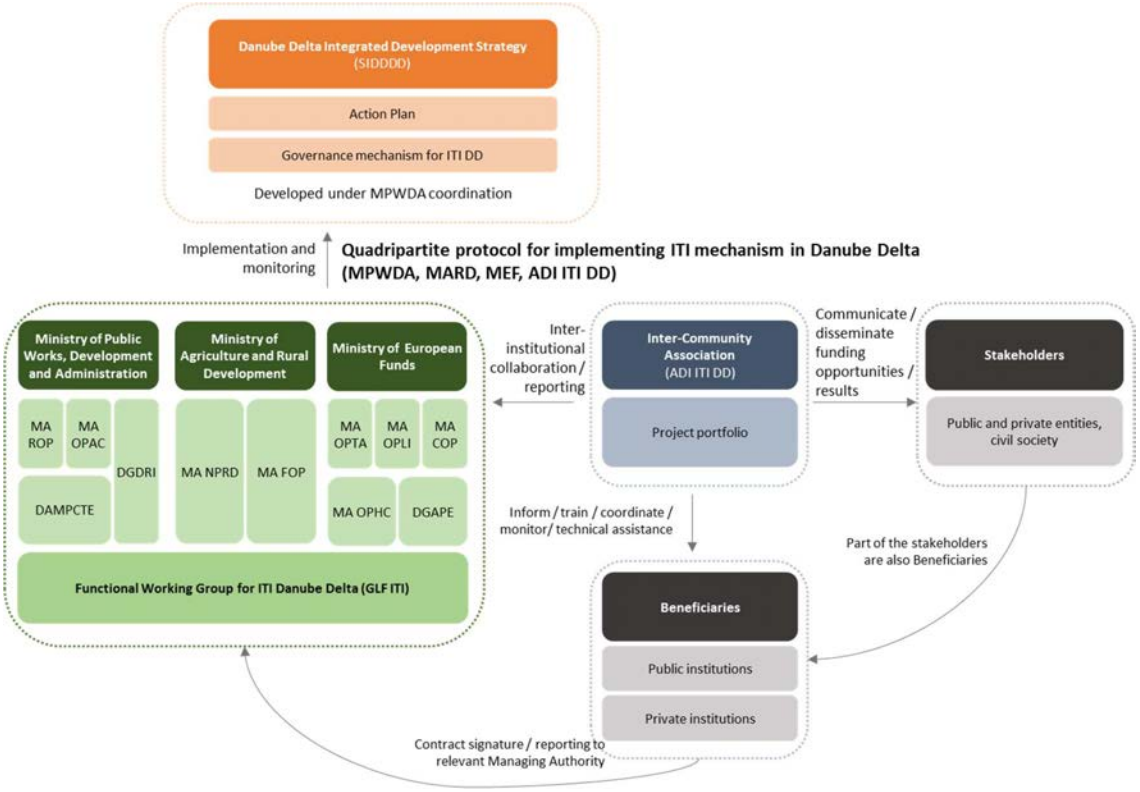
- MPWDA is also the Management Authority for the OP Administrative Capacity (POCA), Regional Operational Programme (ROP) and European Territorial Cooperation Programmes.
- The Ministry of European Funds (MEF) is the national coordinator of European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020, as well as the Management Authority for the OPs Technical Assistance, Large Infrastructure, Human Capital, and Competitiveness.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is the national authority responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy and of the Common Fisheries Policy, as well as the Management Authority for the National Rural Development Program (NRDP) and the Fisheries and Maritime Affairs OP.

At local level, a new body has been created, Inter-Community Development Agency (IDA) for ITI DD. The role of IDA ITI DD is rather limited and comprises tasks related to project planning and implementation: the prioritization of the projects included in the strategy; support to potential beneficiaries to prepare funding applications; support to beneficiaries to implement/manage the projects, through management consultancy related for example to the implementation of public procurement procedures; and monitoring and periodic reporting to the MPWDA on the implementation of projects.

Taking into consideration the positive feedback received by IDA ITI DD from beneficiaries, with regards to communication of funding possibilities and support granted during project planning and implementation, further responsibilities could be granted for the next programming period, in order to build on the already developed human capacity. According to EU Regulations and ITI Guidance Fiche[13], the delegation of other tasks in addition to project selection is possible, and given the territorial nature of an ITI, delegation of some or most implementation tasks to an authority responsible for or closely involved in the development of the territory in question may constitute an effective approach to delivery. In this scenario, the need for additional human resources or technical assistance must be evaluated.

[13] Link: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_iti.pdf

Figure 19: Institutional arrangement for implementing SIDDDD and ITI mechanism



Source: Graphical illustration based on strategic documents

According to beneficiaries perception, the above institutional arrangements, as well as the selected delivery mechanism (ITI DD) created the necessary framework for a successful implementation of the SIDDDD. Based on the online survey (for further details see Annex 4), the ITI mechanism has significantly contributed to making European funding more accessible, especially for local and central public authorities and for the non-governmental sector. At the level of all beneficiaries, the mechanism generated an increase in the availability share for accessing European funds, contributing significantly to the increase of entrepreneurial capacity. The efficiency of the ITI mechanism is also considered high. Approximately two thirds of the beneficiaries consider that the ITI mechanism has covered to a large or very large extent the development needs of the institution which they are a part of, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region. 78% of the beneficiaries considered that they achieved all or most of the projected results, and implemented projects have a high or very high sustainability.

Nevertheless, for the future programming period, additional procedures and implementation tools could be created, establishing detailed roles for a strategic planning at local level (see Chapter 3 Relevance and Internal and Chapter 4 Financial Allocation) as well as for enabling the monitoring and evaluation function (see Chapter 8 Monitoring and Evaluation).

7.3. Conclusions

During the programming period 2014-2020, Romania managed to create functional institutional arrangements for the implementation of Danube Delta Strategy. All relevant stakeholders were involved in planning, implementation and monitoring activities, ensuring compliance with the European Regulations for EU Funded strategies, while taking into consideration the local needs and objectives. Given the good feedback received from beneficiaries with regards to the activity of IDA ITI DD, further responsibilities could be delegated in the future to the local institution, in order to leverage on the created human capacity.

Moreover, according to beneficiaries perception, the institutional arrangements, as well as the selected delivery mechanism (ITI DD) created the necessary framework for a successful implementation of the SIDDDD. Based on the online survey, the ITI mechanism has significantly contributed to making European funding more accessible, especially for local and central public authorities and for the non-governmental sector. At the level of all beneficiaries, the mechanism generated an increase in the availability share for accessing European funds, contributing significantly to the increase of entrepreneurial capacity.

For the next programming period, Romania can focus on further developing procedural aspects, to have a clearer delegation of roles, with tasks and deadlines assigned in relation to all aspects of the strategy, and in particular for planning (i.e. identifying quantifiable needs and targets; setting budgetary allocations) and monitoring at national and local level (i.e. data collection and aggregation; use of results and follow-up).

7.4. Recommendations

The functional institutional arrangements now in place ensures the implementation of the strategy, in line with European, national and local objectives. As mentioned in the introduction, the Ministry of European Funds are conducting a separate analysis of the institutional arrangements of the ITI mechanism. It was therefore agreed that this research team will not focus on this topic, and only presents here a high-level overview for purposes of completeness. No official recommendations are made and further improvements in **the governance of Danube Delta Strategy and ITI mechanism** will be dependent on the **results of the analysis conducted by the Ministry of European Funds.**

Chapter 8

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

8.1. Description of the Evaluation Process

The analyses performed under this section are aimed at assessing aspects related to monitoring (namely the existing set-up for data collection, aggregation and reporting) **and evaluation** (planning of external evaluations, follow up and communication of results).

8.2. Findings

Assessment of monitoring system

The EU requirements for monitoring the interventions financed under ITI mechanism are ensured by the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes. Beneficiaries are submitting progress reports, including programme and project indicators, directly to the relevant Managing Authority; and data are being aggregated by programme and by priority axis, to allow assessment of the progress made towards the objectives of the programme and therefore towards Europe2020 objectives.

However, the current implementation documents do not provide for a proper monitoring and aggregation of data at the level of the SIDDDD. The strategy lacks clear procedures for monitoring and evaluation, including planned activities, responsible institutions and deadlines. The institutions in charge of monitoring the local projects and the overall strategy have partial access to project documentations (i.e. financing requests, progress reports, status of project indicators); as consequence, available information does not provide for a clear global image of the progress made towards the sectorial and strategic objectives of the strategy. And most importantly, the strategy itself does not include quantifiable baselines, targets and milestones, for financial and physical progress.

In the context of this project (and while not part of the original scope), the evaluation team provided support in developing the prerequisites for a future monitoring of the strategy. More precisely, along with IDA ITI DD personnel, a system of indicators was developed, with measurement units, definitions, computation methodologies, sources of information, baselines, interim targets, deadlines and responsible for data collection and aggregation. The list of indicators is still in a draft format and would require formal approval and adoption to ensure the longer-term implementation. The evaluation team also drafted the methodological approach for the performance measurement system (presented as a separate deliverable), including recommendations and guidelines for developing a monitoring and evaluation procedure.

Evaluation planning

The EU requirements for evaluation and reporting on the effectiveness of ITI mechanism are captured by the evaluations planned in relation to each Operational Programme. More precisely, the evaluation performed by the Managing Authorities, with external support, will cover the entire programme, including the projects implemented in the ITI DD area.

In addition, MPWDA decided to conduct, with external support, a progress evaluation at the level of Danube Delta Strategy. The current report captures the overall progress of the strategy, measured through output and results indicators, as well as its internal and external coherence, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and EU added value, with different levels of details, determined by the available information.

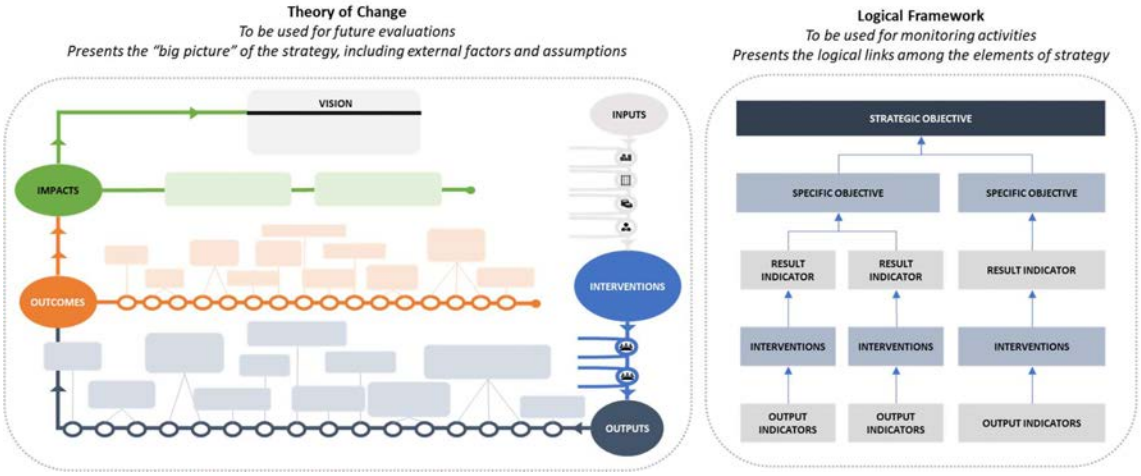
At the moment, no information is provided with regards to future evaluations, during the period 2020-2030. An evaluation plan would be needed, in order to ensure the complementarity among the evaluation themes planned by different stakeholders of the strategy, respectively the owners of the local strategy and the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes.

Reconstruction of theory of change

The theory of change[14] is partially evidenced throughout Danube Delta Strategy. The strategic document describes the socio-economical context of the ITI DD region, and presents the vison, strategic and sectorial objectives, and planned interventions. However, the links between objectives and activities are not always evidenced; the expected medium- and long-term changes are not clearly stated; and the inputs of the strategy, respectively financial allocation and human resources, are not mentioned.

In order to provide a better illustration and understanding of the strategy, the team reconstructed the theory of change (see Annex 5), as well as the logical framework (see Annex 6). The reconstructed theory of change presents the "big picture" of the strategy, including external factors and assumptions, and is particularly useful in evaluation activities, to support the identification of (1) specific evaluation questions, especially in relation to those elements of the theory of change for which there is no substantive evidence yet; (2) relevant variables that should be included in data collection; (3) expected medium and long term outcomes that can be used as markers of success; (4) aspects of implementation that should be examined; and (5) potentially relevant contextual factors that should be addressed in data collection and in analysis. On the other hand, the logical framework can be used for monitoring activities, as it explains the direct links among the elements of the strategy, and in particular between specific objectives and result indicators and between interventions and output indicators.

Figure 20: Difference between "theory of change" and "logical framework"



Source: Evaluators' assessment of the two models

The reconstructed theory of changes (see Annex 5) illustrates the following elements:

- **Engaged inputs**: (1) Institutional arrangements for implementing the ITI mechanism in Danube Delta, respectively the quadripartite protocol among Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (MPWDA), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Ministry of European Funds (MEF), and the newly created Inter-Community Development Association (IDA ITI DD); (2) Strategic planning and implementation documents, respectively the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy for Danube Delta and related Action Plan; (3) Financial resources consisting of EU Funds committed for ITI DD, national funds and private funds, as co-financing rates; and (4) Human

[14] As defined by Carol Weiss, theory of change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or "filling in" what has been described as the "missing middle" between what a certain policy does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved.

resources involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy and of the ITI mechanism.

- **Evaluators' assumptions related to adequacy of inputs (to be tested by the future evaluations):** (Assumption 1) Romania managed to ensure functional institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SIDDDD and of the ITI mechanism , with clear delegated responsibilities and tasks; (Assumption 2) There is a good coordination and communication among the institutions responsible for implementing the SIDDDD and the ITI mechanism (e.g. for drafting beneficiary guidelines, launching calls, monitoring projects, etc.); (Assumption 3) The strategy is relevant and consistent, reflecting the updated societal and environmental needs of the region; (Assumption 4) There is a logical link among the objectives of the strategy and the planned interventions, respectively selected projects; (Assumption 5) Sufficient funds are allocated to all sectors of the strategy, reflecting the quantified needs and objectives; and the cost of interventions; and (Assumption 5) The human resources allocated for planning, implementing and monitoring the strategy are adequate both in terms of number and technical skills.
- **Planned interventions:** (1) First set of planned interventions, consisting of more than 1,000 projects contracted during the programming period 2014-2020; (2) Second set of planned interventions, consisting of future projects to be contracted during the 2021-2027 programming period.
- **Expected outputs related to the 16 sectors of the strategy:** (1) Biodiversity: normative acts & management plans, conservation and restoration works; (2 and 3) Energy efficiency and climate change: renovated residential and public buildings, energy efficient public lighting; (4 and 5) Disaster risk management and pollution emergency: prevention & intervention plans, information management system, equipment for emergency units; (6) Tourism: accommodation facilities, restored touristic objectives; (7) Fishery and aquaculture: fishery shelters and aquaculture developments; (8) Agriculture and rural development: rural infrastructure (road, public utilities, education structure), support to agricultural holdings; (9) Transport: transport infrastructure (road, naval, airport), public means of transportation (boats); (10) Information and communication technology: broadband internet, digitalized libraries, e-government systems; (11 and 12) Water supply and sewerage and waste management: wastewaters treated, citizens connected to a centralized drinking water and sewerage system, waste collected and recycled; (13, 14 and 15) Health, education and social inclusion: medical / educational / social infrastructure, medical / educational / social services, medical equipment and (6) Administrative capacity: internal procedures, certified staff, co-financed salaries.
- **Prerequisites for the expected outputs (to be tested by future evaluations)**: (Prerequisite 1) Beneficiaries are aware of the funding opportunities, mainly as result to the official communication campaigns; (Prerequisite 2) Beneficiaries are interested to implement projects with EU and National funding (i.e. the strategy is relevant; and the implementation rules are acceptable); (3) Beneficiary have the capacity to implement projects, human and financial.
- **Expected outcomes related to the 16 sectors of the strategy:** (1) Biodiversity: restored eco-systems; (2 and 3) Energy efficiency and climate change: reduced GHS emissions; (4 and 5) Disaster risk management and pollution emergency: reduced vulnerability to disasters and pollution; (6) Tourism: increased tourism flow; (7) Fishery and aquaculture: increased aquaculture output volume and value; (8) Agriculture and rural development: increased rural GDP per capita; (9) Transport: reduced travel time and fatalities; (10) Information and communication technology: increased broadband coverage; (11 and 12) Water supply and sewerage and waste management: improved water quality and improved recycling rate; (13, 14 and 15) Health, education and social inclusion: increased access to quality healthcare / education / social services and (6) Administrative capacity: improved performance of public institutions.
- **Expected impacts related to strategical objectives**: (1) Improved quality of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and conservation of biodiversity and (2) Improved human well-being and social equity.

- **External factors that may influence, positively or negatively, the expected outcomes and impacts (to be investigated by future evaluations)**: (1) EU, national, regional and local strategies are expected to contribute to the objectives of the SIDDDD, through implemented projects; (2) environmental and socio-economic changes may alter the relevance of the strategy and (3) the ongoing sanitary crisis generated by Covid-19 may influence the effectiveness of some interventions financed under SIDDDD, including the timely completion.
- **Vision as formulated within the strategy**: "*A living delta (an area where people live and work) with balanced support for the environment and the community; a heathy sustainable local economy – mainly based on nature and culture tourism; and with an inclusive planning process (residents, government, business)*".

On the other side, the logical framework (see Annex 6) includes only the elements presented in the strategy, respectively the links among strategic objectives, pillars, sectors, specific objectives (measured by result indicators) and interventions (measured by output indicators). However, as mentioned throughout the report, the system of indicators was not formalized at the moment of this evaluation, and future updates may be required.

8.3. Conclusions

The projects implemented under the SIDDDD were monitored by different stakeholders, respectively the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes, the Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, and the Community Development Agency ITI DD. Monitoring activities ensured the compliance with reporting rules for EU Funded projects.

However, monitoring data were not aggregated at the level of SIDDDD, in order to verify the progress towards achieving the objectives set at local level. For this purpose, further procedures and instruments are needed, to establish clear roles and responsibilities for data monitoring and aggregation, to guide the methodological approach, to set deadlines for monitoring and reporting and to communicate the use of results.

8.4. Recommendations

Recommendation 12. Develop a monitoring and evaluation procedure, defining clear responsibilities for each institution involved in implementing Danube Delta Strategy.

The strategy defines in general terms the responsibilities of each institution involved in the implementation of the Danube Delta Strategy and of the ITI DD instrument. However, a specific procedure for monitoring and evaluation would better guide the collection and aggregation of data at local level, as well as the planning and follow-up for the external evaluations.

The procedure should define the expected results related to monitoring and evaluation functions: purpose of monitoring and evaluation activities, responsible institutions, and expected deliverables (see Table 23 below).

Table 23: Expected results of monitoring and evaluation

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Purpose	Determine whether strategy and projects are progressing according to plan	Determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, EU added value and impact of the strategy and projects
Use of findings	Take corrective actions to ensure that strategy and project objectives are met	Incorporate lessons learned in strategic planning and decision-making process to improve future programmes
Timing	Continuous	Selective (based on evaluation plan)
Focus	Outputs / activities, expected accomplishments	Outcomes, impact

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Responsible	MPWDA and IDA ITI DD, with the support of Managing Authorities	MPWDA and IDA ITI DD, with the support of Managing Authorities and external evaluators
Deliverables	Quarterly and Annual Implementation Reports	Evaluation Reports with findings, lessons learned and recommendations

The procedure should also define the concrete actions to be taken in order to achieve the expected results for the monitoring and evaluation function (see Table 24).

Table 24: Suggested monitoring and evaluation activities and responsible institutions

Actions	Responsibilities
Develop a monitoring and evaluation procedure	MPWDA: develop, update and approve IDA ITI DD: endorse MAs: endorse
Develop a system of indicators, along with quantifiable targets	MPWDA: develop, update and approve IDA ITI DD: endorse MAs: endorse
Collect and aggregate monitoring data	IDA ITI DD: collect and aggregate MAs: transmit monitoring data to IDA ITI DD, every 3 months
Monitor the progress of indicators, based on aggregated data	IDA ITI DD: monitor progress and suggest remediation actions MPWDA: approve remediation actions and follow-up MAs: endorse remediation actions
Develop an evaluation plan	MPWDA: develop, update and approve IDA ITI DD: endorse MAs: endorse
Launch external evaluations, along with corresponding documentation	MPWDA: develop and approve documentation; launch and oversight evaluations; approve final deliverables IDA ITI DD: endorse documentation; oversight evaluations; endorse final deliverables MAs: endorse documentation (i.e. terms of reference)
Develop and monitor follow-up plans	MPWDA: develop, update, approve and monitor IDA ITI DD: endorse, monitor MAs: endorse
Communication of results for monitoring and evaluation activities	MPWDA: communication through different channels (e.g. internal meetings, conferences, press releases) IDA ITI DD: communication through official website

For the period 2021-2023, the evaluation team provided a monitoring tool, in excel version, to support the activities of IDA ITI DD, along with a set of recommended practical steps:

- The output indicators must be updated in the IDA ITI DD database as soon as a project is completed by its program manager, but not later than the beginning of the evaluation period established by IDA ITI DD annually.
- The outcome indicators should be updated annually by contacting the sources of these indicators in accordance with the law. It would be preferable to agree an information exchange protocols with ISU Tulcea, ISJ Tulcea and Constanța and other institutions that provide more indicators for SIDDDD.

- The targets may be increased only in the event of new projects. At the end of the first planning cycle (2023), the targets of the output indicators should be 100% attained.
- The non-achievement of the targets at the level of 2023 must be evidence based explained such as: lack of funding, delays due to Covid-19, project beneficiaries did not reach their targets, other well-founded causes.

Recommendation 13. Grant access to relevant data to all institution in charge of monitoring and evaluation.

Currently, the monitoring data related to ITI DD projects are collected by Managing Authorities, in relation to each Operational Programme. In order to assess the progress of the Danube Delta Strategy, these data should be aggregated at the level of ITI DD area, by the strategy owners. For that purpose, the institution in charge with monitoring Danube Delta Strategy should have access to financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports and any other monitoring data submitted by Beneficiaries, including the progress of indicators.

Recommendation 14. Develop and communicate the evaluation plan for Danube Delta Strategy.

The evaluation plan should include the following elements: (1) indicative list of evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale, (2) methods to be used for the individual evaluations and their data requirements, (3) provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected, (4) a timetable, (5) a strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations, (6) human resources involved, (7) the indicative budget for implementation of the plan, and possibly (8) a training plan.

The table below presents an indicative list of possible evaluation themes, along with a synthetic methodological approach. The proposed methodologies are in line with EU guidelines for evaluation of EU funded strategies; and takes into account the fact that ITI DD contribution to the Specific Objectives of the Romanian Operational Programmes is already captured in the evaluations carried out by the Managing Authorities.

Table 25: Indicative list of evaluation themes and suggested methodologies

Evaluation Theme 1: Impact evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the first phase of implementation 2016-2023
Subject and rationale
The first set of contracted projects are due to be finalized in 2023. A first impact evaluation could be carried out in order to verify the overall effects of the strategy on Danube Delta region. At the same time, the evaluation can point out areas of improvement, for the second phase of the strategy implementation.
Evaluation questions
EQ1 Impact: What are the gross and net effects of the strategy? Are there any unexpected effects or spillovers? EQ2 Effectiveness: Have the expected effects been obtained? Have the objectives been achieved? EQ3 Efficiency: At what price have the results been achieved? EQ4 Coherence: Is there a correspondence between the intervention's objectives and those of other interacting public actions? (Convergence to the achieved results) EQ5 Relevance: How well do the (original) objectives of the strategy (still) correspond to the needs of Danube Delta citizens? EQ6: What is the added value resulting from ITI DD mechanism?
Methods to be used
ESPON methodology for conducting territorial impact assessments Theory-based and counterfactual analysis Cost-benefit analysis for measuring efficiency
Types of information and sources of information:
Contextual data (to be collected from Eurostat, INSSE and other relevant sources) Strategic and implementation documents (to be provided by the contracting authority)

Monitoring data (to be provided by the contracting authority)

Financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports (to be provided by the contracting authority)

Micro data at beneficiary and non-beneficiary level data (to be collected by means of online surveys, interviews and focus groups)

Evaluation Theme 2: Ex-ante evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the second phase of implementation

Subject and rationale

Based on the results of the impact evaluation, the owners of the strategy may decide to make certain amendments to the strategic or implementation documents of Danube Delta Strategy. The ex-ante evaluation can assess the impact of such changes on the internal consistency of the strategy.

Moreover, the owners of the strategy need to establish the long-term targets and prepare the financial planning for the second phase of the Strategy. The ex-ante evaluation can assess the adequacy of the planned financial resources in relation to expected changes.

Finally, the strategic view may change at European and national level, in the context of the EU programming period 2021-2027. The ex-ante evaluation can verify the external coherence with the objectives of the operational programmes, in particular for ITI mechanism.

Evaluation questions

EQ1 External consistency: Are the specific objective of Danube Delta Strategy consistent with the objectives of the Operational Programmes, respectively with the Thematic Objectives and Investments Priorities set at EU level for 2021-2027 programming period?

EQ2 Internal consistency: How is the internal consistency of strategy ensured (i.e. links among identified needs, planned interventions and expected results)?

EQ3 Financial allocation: To what extent is the financial allocation consistent with the specific objectives of the strategy?

EQ4 Indicators: Are the current output and results indicators relevant for the strategy? How will the output indicators contribute to results? Are the quantified target values of the indicators sufficiently ambitions and yet realistic?

EQ5 Human resources and administrative capacity: To what extent are the human resources and administrative capacity adequate to implement the strategy?

EQ 6 Monitoring and data collection: To what extent are the monitoring and data collection procedures adequate to perform evaluations

Methods to be used

To be decided by the evaluation team

Types of information and sources of information:

Strategic and implementation documents (to be provided by the contracting authority)

Internal procedures (to be provided by the contracting authority)

Evaluation Theme 3: Interim evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the period 2022-2025

Subject and rationale

A first interim evaluation would be necessary in an early stage of the second phase of implementation, in order to identify possible areas of improvement in the set-up of the strategy.

Evaluation questions

EQ1 Effectiveness: What is the observed progress towards the expected changes set by the strategy?

EQ2 Physical progress: What is the physical progress of the strategy and contracted projects (result and output indicators)? In case of delays, what are the main causes and suggested remediation actions?

EQ3 Financial progress: What is the financial progress of the strategy and contracted projects (payments out of allocated, respectively out of contracted amounts)? In case of delays, what are the main causes and suggested remediation actions? EQ4 Internal and external factors: What are the internal and external factors influencing the implementation of the strategy? Are there any areas of improvement to facilitate the implementation of the strategy?
Methods to be used
To be decided by the evaluation team
Types of information and sources of information:
Contextual data (to be collected from Eurostat, INSSE and other relevant sources) Strategic and implementation documents (to be provided by the contracting authority) Monitoring data (to be provided by the contracting authority) Financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports (to be provided by the contracting authority) Micro data at beneficiary and non-beneficiary level data (to be collected by means of online surveys, interviews and focus groups)
Evaluation Theme 4: Interim evaluation of Danube Detta Strategy, for the period 2025-2028
Subject and rationale
A second interim evaluation would be necessary towards the end of the second phase of implementation, in order to assess the progress of the strategy.
Evaluation questions
EQ1 Effectiveness: What is the observed progress towards the expected changes set by the strategy? EQ2 Physical progress: What is the physical progress of the strategy and contracted projects (result and output indicators)? In case of delays, what are the main causes and suggested remediation actions? EQ3 Financial progress: What is the financial progress of the strategy and contracted projects (payments out of allocated, respectively out of contracted amounts)? In case of delays, what are the main causes and suggested remediation actions? EQ4 Internal and external factors: What are the internal and external factors influencing the implementation of the strategy? Are there any areas of improvement to facilitate the implementation of the strategy?
Methods to be used
To be decided by the evaluation team
Types of information and sources of information:
Contextual data (to be collected from Eurostat, INSSE and other relevant sources) Strategic and implementation documents (to be provided by the contracting authority) Monitoring data (to be provided by the contracting authority) Financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports (to be provided by the contracting authority) Micro data at beneficiary and non-beneficiary level data (to be collected by means of online surveys, interviews and focus groups)
Evaluation Theme 5: Impact evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the second phase of implementation 2023-2030
Subject and rationale
The second set of contracted projects are due to be finalized in 2030. A second impact evaluation could be carried out in order to verify the overall effects of the strategy on Danube Delta region. At the same time, the evaluation can assess the opportunity for a new local strategy.
Evaluation questions

EQ1 Impact: What are the gross and net effects of the strategy? Are there any unexpected effects or spillovers?
EQ2 Effectiveness: Have the expected effects been obtained? Have the objectives been achieved?
EQ3 Efficiency: At what price have the results been achieved?
EQ4 Coherence: Is there a correspondence between the intervention's objectives and those of other interacting public actions? (Convergence to the achieved results)
EQ5 Relevance: How well do the (original) objectives of the strategy (still) correspond to the needs of Danube Delta citizens?
EQ6: What is the added value resulting from ITI-DD mechanism?
Methods to be used
ESPON methodology for conducting territorial impact assessments
Theory-based and counterfactual analysis
Cost-benefit analysis for measuring efficiency
Types of information and sources of information:
Contextual data (to be collected from Eurostat, INSSE and other relevant sources)
Strategic and implementation documents (to be provided by the contracting authority)
Monitoring data (to be provided by the contracting authority)
Financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports (to be provided by the contracting authority)
Micro data at beneficiary and non-beneficiary level data (to be collected by means of online surveys, interviews and focus groups)

The contracting authority should ensure the availability of necessary data, in line with the methodological approach selected for each evaluation. This may include internal procedures, planning and implementing documents at strategy and project level and monitoring data at strategy and project level, to be collected from different institutions. The table below suggest an indicative timeline for each evaluation theme.

Table 26: Indicative timeline for strategy evaluation

Evaluation Theme	Planning the Evaluation	Conducting the Evaluation	Disseminating Results
Evaluation Theme 1: Impact evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the first phase of implementation 2016-2023	January 2022	February 2023 – August 2023	September 2022
Evaluation Theme 2: Ex-ante evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the second phase of implementation	January 2022	February 2024 – May 2023	December 2022
Evaluation Theme 3: Interim evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the period 2022-2025	January 2026	February 2026 – May 2026	June 2026
Evaluation Theme 4: Interim evaluation of Danube Detta Strategy, for the period 2025-2028	January 2028	February 2028 – May 2028	June 2028
Evaluation Theme 5: Impact evaluation of Danube Delta Strategy, for the second phase of implementation 2023-2030	January 2030	February 2030 – August 2030	September 2023

Chapter 9

9. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

The Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development in Danube Delta (SIDDDD) managed to set the directions for a future development of the area; it established the higher-level vision and strategic objectives, as well as the priority sectors and related sectorial specific objectives and interventions. This was a particular challenge, considering the dual directions of Danube Delta development, respectively the improvement of the quality of life for citizens, while preserving the ecological assets. Both strategic and implementation documents were designed based on a participatory approach, incorporating feedback from all relevant stakeholders, public and private, including civil society, which ensured a high relevancy for the societal needs. As result, the majority of beneficiaries consider that SIDDDD has covered the needs of the institution of which they are part, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region, in general.

A good external consistency was identified in relation to all analyzed local strategies (Tulcea county and Tulcea municipality, Sulina, Baia and Isaccea cities, and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve). More precisely, the local strategies have similar objectives as SIDDDD and are expected to contribute to the overall results of the SIDDDD. In particular, the projects implemented by the Tulcea county are in line with the priority sectors of the SIDDDD, and they can support the progress towards the final targets of the SIDDDD.

The financial allocations for the implementation to date (amounting to 1.1 billion EUR in current programming period) were concentrated towards a very limited number of sectors, based on the availability and eligibility of EU Funds. The strategy had allocations from all of the eight Operational Programmes, by means of the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI); however the highest allocations were connected to the Operational Programmme Large Infrastructure (OPLI), Regional Operational Programme (ROP) and National Rural Development Plan (NRDP), which determined a high concentration of resources for transport infrastructure (Pillar III "Improving Connectivity , Sector I "Transport") and rural development (Pillar II "Improving the Economy, Sector H "Rural Development" and Sector F "Tourism"). While the prioritization and concentration of resources are generally considered a good practice, and even a requirement when using EU Funds, the owners of the strategy should ensure that all sectors are sufficiently funded by the end of the second implementation phase.

With regards to the transport infrastructure, interventions were mainly linked to the national Master Plan for transport, which foresees several strategic projects in Danube Delta, aimed at modernizing and developing road infrastructure. Based on the interview with the representatives of the National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration (NCRIA), the budget allocations for these projects were established directly with the Management Authority of the OPLI, prior to the development and approval of the Danube Delta Strategy. Nevertheless, NCRIA makes efforts to align the national plans with the local strategy, and all projects were submitted for approval to the owners of the Danube Delta Strategy.

One of the largest projects under implementation in ITI Danube Delta, implemented by NCRIA, is aimed at building a suspension bridge over the Danube. A high-quality transport infrastructure, with better transport links, is expected to contribute to the regional development, without disturbing the natural habitat. The bridge will help reduce travel time and vehicle operating costs, while reducing pollution. The works carried out for the main bridge have already led to an economic development of the area, beneficial both for inhabitants and for small and medium enterprises, as well as micro-enterprises. Works are expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

The Tulcea Administrative Territorial Unit is also implementing large transport infrastructure projects, aimed at rehabilitation and modernization of county roads, intersections and roads sidewalks, bicycle lanes and construction of bus stops. In the long run, these projects are expected to contribute to the development of tourism and commercial activities in the ITI Danube Delta area. In particular, one of the projects is aimed at ensuring a better access to ancient touristic objectives - Histria fortress, Danube Delta biosphere area - Gura Portiței, Mamaia de Nord resort, Vadu reservation, Corbu, Midia-Năvodari plant and Midia port. Works are expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

Another strategic project in ITI Danube Delta has already led to an increased safety and security at Danube Delta Airport. The project consists in the implementation of works and in the acquisitions of equipment, aiming to ensure passengers safety and security. The planned activities provide for a new fire prevention and extinction draw; a perimeter road to facilitate access to the aircraft in the shortest time; a TVCI monitoring system, to prevent incursions inside the airport and facilitate the general monitoring of wildlife; and luggage and passenger control equipment, which is already in place and functional. Other necessary equipment will be purchased for winter.

With regards to rural development, a high number of projects were designed to support the development of agricultural holdings (e.g. purchase of new modern equipment and construction works), including modernization and establishment of agrotouristic pensions. However, based on the interviews with beneficiaries, the current sanitary crisis is expected to generate some delays in implementation for the ongoing projects. The owners of the SIDDDD should seek solutions to support beneficiaries, in partnership with the Managing Authorities of the Operational Programmes (e.g. extended deadlines, additional funds dedicated to beneficiaries affected by the sanitary crisis).

For the remaining sectors, lower allocations were attributed during the first programming period. Six sectors have a share of contracted eligible value below 1% out of total allocation, namely Sector C: "Climate change" (0.0%), Sector E: "Pollution emergency" (0.1%), Sector K: "Water supply and sewerage systems and integrated water management" (0.2%), Sector L: "Solid waste management" (0.3%), Sector M: "Health" (0.7%) and Sector P: "Administrative capacity and program management" (0.8%). In some cases, the local administrations managed to find other sources of funding: water and wastewater projects were financed from the central budget under the National Local Development Program (NLDP), while the City of Tulcea was able to match the money from ITI with funds from the local budget. Nevertheless, for the sectors with limited budgets, a low progress towards achieving the sector specific objectives is expected, which should be remediated during the second phase of implementation (e.g. with additional sources of funding or a better distribution of EU Funds).

The pace of financial and physical progress of the strategy was rather slow during the first years of implementation, for all pillars and sectors. In particular, the level of absorption of EU Funds (payments out of allocations) is below 20% after the first 4 years of implementation. The highest levels were registered for Operational Programme Technical Assistance (40%), which ensured the functioning of the ITI mechanism; National Development Rural Plan (36%), which has the highest number of completed projects; and Large Infrastructure (19%) and Regional Operational Programme (15%), used for the implementation of large infrastructure projects. Lower progress was registered for Operational Programme Human Capital (3%), Competitiveness (1%) and Administrative Capacity (1%). Moreover, the physical progress of the strategy, measured by means of output and result indicators, is estimated at 30%, towards the first interim targets. It should be noted, however, that the strategy has lacked a proper system of indicators; and the list of indicators and associated targets were selected in the context of this project, while knowing the results of completed projects, as well as the status of ongoing projects.

Nevertheless, the limited progress can be justified by the novelty of the ITI instrument, which required intensive preparatory activities at the beginning of the programming period – developing and approving the local Danube Delta Strategy, setting the institutional framework for the implementation of the strategy and of the ITI instrument, developing inter-institutional agreements and procedures, promoting the strategy and the financing mechanism. The same bottlenecks were noticed also in other Member States implementing ITI funded strategies. According to the European Commission's CP data platform, in comparison to other Cohesion Policy projects, the implementation of operations funded under ITI and ISUD experienced substantial delays at the beginning of the 2014-2020 period.

For the second implementation phase (equated to the 2021 – 2027 programming period), it is recommended to further leverage the already created institutional arrangements and local human capacity (i.e. Inter-Community Development Association) What is required could be better implementation guidelines, tools and procedures: updated needs assessment, with quantifiable targets; financial planning, with needed and available

budget, split by pillars and sectors; relevant result and output indicators, with baselines, targets, sources of information, and computation methodologies; and monitoring and evaluation plans and procedures, with clear responsibilities and deadlines.

As a general conclusion, the SIDDDD, as well as the ITI mechanism, created the prerequisites for a sustainable development in the Danube Delta, with the involvement of all national and local stakeholders. High efforts were made to create a functional framework, including strategic planning, institutional arrangements and implementation documents and procedures; and the interim results of the implemented projects are already well perceived by the local society. However, some areas of improvement were identified, with regards to planning and monitoring function, which can be addressed in the context of the new programming period 2021-2027.

Annexes

Annex 1. Table of recommendations

Completed by the Evaluation Team			To be completed by the Client	
Recommendation	**Deadline**	**Responsible**	**Accepted (Yes / No)**	**Justification for rejection**
Recommendation 1 (External coherence): Re-evaluate the external coherence with European Union, national and local strategies, at the beginning of the new programming period. This recommendation considers the fact that, for each programming period, new objectives are established at European Union level, which are then translated into the national and regional strategies. It is noted that it is unlikely that the overall SIDDDD will be updated (given cumbersome approval processes – previously 2 years), however various implementation support documents such as a short or medium term action or implementation plan (annual plan or 3 -5 year plan for example), financial plans to match implementation plan or updated prioritization methodologies action plan, financial plan, etc.) could be updated to ensure continued relevance.	2022, after the approval of the national strategies, as part of the ex-ante evaluation	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with support from external evaluators (ex-ante evaluation)		
Recommendation 2 (Relevance): Update the needs assessment, in the context of the future impact evaluation, in order to identify the needs that have been already tackled through the first set of contracted projects and the needs that remain to be addressed during the second phase of implementation. Moreover, a quantification of remaining needs would better serve for the financial planning of the strategy and for setting the final targets.	2022, as part of the impact evaluation	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with support from external evaluators (impact evaluation)		
Recommendation 3 (Relevance): Update the supporting implementation documents, in anticipation of a future impact assessment. The strategy should be a "living" document, highly responsive to the changing needs of the society. As noted in recommendation 1, while the regular update of the strategy document is not practical, supporting documents towards implementation (such as shorter- term implementation plans) could be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure relevance.	Continuous, as per need	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with support from relevant stakeholders Impact and interim evaluations can also cover this topic		
Recommendations 4 (Internal coherence): Provide a clearer representation of the logic of intervention, to be used by different stakeholders and beneficiaries, in implementation and monitoring. A reconstruction of the logical framework	2022, as part of the ex-ante evaluation	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with		

Completed by the Evaluation Team			To be completed by the Client	
Recommendation	**Deadline**	**Responsible**	**Accepted (Yes / No)**	**Justification for rejection**
was already performed in the context of this project. However, updates may be necessary once the final list of indicators is approved. Moreover, for the future programming period, it is also recommended to further assess the links between objectives and selected projects.		support from external evaluators (ex-ante evaluation)		
Recommendation 5: Strategic and implementation documents should include at least some attempt at capturing a budget for the Danube Delta Strategy. This would ideally be for the period 2016-2030, and include budget needs, budget availability, split by pillars, sectors and, where possible, by interventions. In a further best practice case, this should be further broken down into funding periods (assuming correlation with EU funding periods) and then into annual budget plans**.** While this seem an extensive and complex undertaking, it would represent a significant step forward in terms of planning and monitoring of financial resources and particularly create a much clearer link between needs and actual financing secured for projects.	2022, after the approval of the national strategies	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with support from relevant stakeholders An ex-ante evaluation could verify the adequacy of planned financial resources		
Recommendation 6 (Efficiency): Financial progress should be evaluated throughout implementation and, where needed, reallocations should be performed. Danube Delta Strategy has a long horizon and therefore budgetary adjustments may be needed, based on contextual changes (e.g. the ongoing Covid-19 crisis may generate a different prioritizations of investments), on the new needs that may arise, or additional financial resources identified throughout implementation.	Continuous, as per need	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with support from relevant stakeholders Impact and interim evaluations can also cover this topic		
Recommendation 7 (System of indicators): Set additional result indicators, to capture all sectorial specific objectives. Result indicators should reflect the overall progress of the strategy, not only the objectives with financial allocations. The system of indicators can rely both on quantitative result indicators (to be added and monitored by Inter-Community Development Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta), and qualitative result indicators (to be added and assessed by the external evaluation team, in the context of future progress and impact assessments).	2022, as part of the impact evaluation	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, with support from external evaluators (impact evaluation)		

Completed by the Evaluation Team			To be completed by the Client	
Recommendation	**Deadline**	**Responsible**	**Accepted (Yes / No)**	**Justification for rejection**
Recommendation 8 (System of indicators): Set additional output indicators, as per need, to capture the majority of interventions. The current list of output indicators is set based on the ongoing or completed projects. Additional indicators may be required after the approval of the new financing lines, in order to capture the majority of interventions (at least 75% of the total budget of the strategy). Although we do not recommend having indicators in relation to each of the 137 interventions, a closer monitoring is required for interventions with high allocations.	2022, after the approval of the new financing lines and selected local projects	Inter-Community Development Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta		
Recommendation 9 (System of indicators): Complete the system of indicators with guidelines for data collection and monitoring. For all indicators, the following information should be provided: title of the indicator; measurement unit; baseline; intermediate and final targets; source of information; definition; computation methodologies; aggregation methodologies; responsible for data collection, aggregation and reporting; deadlines for data collection, aggregation and reporting.	End of 2020, for interim targets 2022 for final targets, after the approval of the new financing lines	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration and Inter-Community Development Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta		
Recommendation 10 (Effectiveness): Select and implement appropriate remediation actions to address the root causes for the limited physical progress of the strategy (as identified in this report). Remediation actions at strategy level may include: advance planning of implementation mechanisms for the next programming period; technical assistance for beneficiaries, including capacity building projects; communication of funding opportunities by multiple means; increased number and capacity of human resources involved in implementing and monitoring the strategy; clear roles and procedures for the implementations of the strategy. Remediation actions at project level may include closer evaluation and guidance for submitted projects and improved guidelines for beneficiaries.	2023, after the approval of the national strategies	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, in cooperation with Managing Authorities of the Romanian Operational Programmes An ex-ante evaluation could also verify the adequacy of implementation arrangements		
Recommendation 11 (Effectiveness): Identify and implement the appropriate methods for accelerating project expenditure (either at ITI, strategy or project	2022, after the approval of the	Ministry of Public Works, Development and		

Completed by the Evaluation Team			To be completed by the Client	
Recommendation	**Deadline**	**Responsible**	**Accepted (Yes / No)**	**Justification for rejection**
level), while taking into consideration the challenges associated to each method.Methods at strategy level may include: overcommitment of strategy funds; additional and/ or targeted calls for project proposals; waiting (reserve) list of projects. Methods at the project level may include closer monitoring of projects' spending and mid-term assessment of projects' spending; decommitment of projects' budgets with low spending level; additional allocations to already running projects.	national strategies	Administration, in cooperation with Managing Authorities of the Romanian Operational Programmes An ex-ante evaluation could also verify the adequacy of implementation arrangements		
Recommendation 12 (Monitoring and evaluation function): Develop a monitoring and evaluation procedure, defining clear responsibilities for each institution involved in implementing Danube Delta Strategy. The strategy defines in general terms the responsibilities of each institution; however, a specific procedure for monitoring and evaluation would better guide the collection and aggregation of data at local level, as well as the planning and follow-up for the external evaluations.	2022, as part of the ex-ante evaluation	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders An ex-ante evaluation could also verify the adequacy of monitoring and evaluation function		
Recommendation 13 (Monitoring and evaluation function): Grant access to relevant data to all institution in charge of monitoring and evaluation. Currently, the monitoring data related to implemented projects are collected by Managing Authorities, in relation to each Operational Programme. In order to assess the progress of the Danube Delta Strategy, these data should be aggregated at local level, by the strategy owners. For that purpose, the institution in charge with monitoring Danube Delta Strategy should have access to financing contracts, financing requests, progress reports and any other monitoring data submitted by beneficiaries, including the progress of indicators.	Continuous	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, in cooperation with Managing Authorities of the Romanian Operational Programmes		

Completed by the Evaluation Team			To be completed by the Client	
Recommendation	**Deadline**	**Responsible**	**Accepted (Yes / No)**	**Justification for rejection**
Recommendation 14: Develop and communicate the evaluation plan for Danube Delta Strategy. The evaluation plan should include the following elements: indicative list of evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale; methods to be used for the individual evaluations and their data requirements; provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected; a timetable; a strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations; human resources involved in monitoring and evaluation; the indicative budget for implementation of the evaluation plan; and possibly a training plan.	2022, as part of the ex-ante evaluation	Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration, in cooperation with Managing Authorities of the Romanian Operational Programmes, and with external support from ex-ante evaluators		

Annex 2. List of output and result indicators and estimated interim progress

Note: The below tables include only the output and result indicators used for estimating the interim progress of the strategy, with complete information - baselines, targets and interim values. The other indicators, with no historical data available, are not presented in this annex.

Output Indicators

Table 27: List of Output Indicators and Interim Progress

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
Pillar I Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets							33%
Sector A Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management							16%
CO23	The surface of the supported habitats in order to obtain a better conservation stage	Ha	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,364	52	4%
2S38	Approved sets of measures / management plans / action plans	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4	2	50%
2S94	Number of sites / areas / species / habitats (as appropriate) benefiting from approved management plans / action plans	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	27	15	56%
2S95	Number of Natura 2000 sites with administrator / operational custodian 4.1A	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	10	-	0%
2S97	Number of sites / areas / species / habitats (as appropriate) benefiting from active conservation measures implemented	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	12	-	0%
2S98	Number of Natura 2000 sites with administrator / operational custodian 4.1B	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	12	5	42%
2S100	Active measures implemented for species X (for action plans related to species whose area cannot be identified exhaustively)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	15	1	7%
CO27	Private investment combined with public support for innovation or R&D projects	EUR	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2,269,248	-	0%
I.A.1	DDRDB Management Plan implemented	Yes/No	ARBDD	-	1	-	0%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
I.A.2	Management Plans of other Natura 2000 sites in the ITI territory	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	3	-	0%
I.A.3	Number of sets of measures and actions of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve based on widely accepted monitoring data and state of the art hydrological, sedimentation and demographic models implemented	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	9	3	33%
I.A.4	The surface of the supported habitats in order to obtain a better conservation stage	Ha	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,363	52	4%
Sector B Energy Efficiency							18%
I.B.2	Number of renovated residential buildings	Number	IDA ITI	-	20	11	55%
I.B.3	The length of the rehabilitated / extended thermal network	Km	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	13	-	0%
1S8	Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public lighting	KWh/an	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	845	-	0%
Sector C Climate Change							31%
I.C.1	Number of interventions and investments for climate change adaptation measures	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	10	2	20%
I.C.2	Number of households with a better classification of energy consumption due to the implementation of energy efficiency measures	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,116	462	41%
Sector D Disaster Risk Management							50%
2S50	Units equipped for emergencies	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	1	100%
2S81	Funding application submitted for analysis and approval to the European Commission / Independent Evaluation Body	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	1	50%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
2S82	Supporting documentation for the elaboration of the financing application (Feasibility Study, Institutional Analysis, Cost Benefit Analysis, Environmental Impact Assessment, etc.)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%
I.D.2	Number of disaster response drills (annual)	Number	ISU Tulcea	1	7	4	50%
I.D.3	Hazardous waste inventory and existing information management system (yes or no)	Yes/No	MMAP/ANPM	-	1	-	0%
I.D.4	Number of intervention plans available	Number	ISU Tulcea	-	2	2	100%
Sector E Pollution Emergency							50%
I.E.2	Number of emergency response drills (annually)	Number / year	ISU Tulcea	1	3	2	50%
Pillar II Improving the Economy							27%
Sector F Tourism							20%
CO9	Increase of the expected number of visits to cultural and natural heritage sites and supported attractions	Number visits / year	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	25,865	3,959	15%
1S23	Restored cultural heritage objectives	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	8	1	13%
1S68	Public buildings built / modernized / extended	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4	-	0%
CO38	Open spaces created or rehabilitated in urban areas	Square meters	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	21,022	-	0%
CO39	Public or commercial buildings constructed or renovated in urban areas	Square meters	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	22,090	-	0%
1S67	People living in small and medium sized cities where local development strategies have been implemented	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	10,052	-	0%
P6B301	Number of modernized historical monuments	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
II.A.3	Number of boats available for tourists at the main exit points and nodal points (monitored routes)	Number	Căpitănia zonală Tulcea	31	57	57	100%
II.A.7	Number of traditional houses maintained / rehabilitated included in the tourist circuit	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	20	10	50%
Sector G Fishery and Aquaculture							13%
II.B.4	Number of investments / projects in aquaculture / processing / fisherman safety	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	15	2	13%
Sector H Agriculture and Rural Development							49%
II.C.6	The area of land granted to farmers out of publicly available land	Ha	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4,364	4,364	100%
P2A13	Number of holdings receiving aid for investments in agricultural holdings	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	450	368	82%
P3A12	Public and private investments for food processing and marketing = total project wave (euro) of total ITI agricultural investments	EUR	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	18	4	25%
P3A13	Number of farms receiving investment aid for food processing and marketing	EUR	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	6	1	17%
P5A13	Number of projects receiving investment aid for irrigation	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	62	44	71%
P5A14	Target area (ha) for irrigation through ITI projects	Ha	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	8,038	2,010	25%
P5D11	Number of projects with investments in manure storage platforms	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	9	4	44%
P6A11	Number of holdings receiving start up aid / support for investments in non agricultural activities	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	7	6	86%
P6B200	Number of projects benefiting from infrastructure investment aid	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	53	19	36%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
P6B201	Length of agricultural roads (m) = agricultural road	Meters	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	18,528	1	0%
P6B203	Water network length (m)	Meters	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	44,917	4	0%
P6B204	Sewer network length (m)	Meters	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	87,952	4	0%
P6B205	Length of modernized local roads (m)	Meters	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	161,831	11	0%
P6B206	Number of modernized high schools and colleges	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	1	100%
P6B207	Number of modernized kindergartens	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	6	1	17%
P6B208	Number of modernized after schools	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	1	50%
P6B300	Number of projects that benefit from aid for investments in the local cultural and natural heritage	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	13	5	38%
P6B301	Number of modernized historical monuments	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	1	100%
P6B302	Number of modernized cultural centers	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	12	5	42%
P6B41	Number of LAGs selected	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	5	5	100%
P6B42	Population targeted by the LAG	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	130,000	130,000	100%
II.C.1	Number of farmers / associations with access to promotion networks	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	122	31	25%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
II.C.2	Number of participants in education / training programs through PNDR	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	317	79	25%
II.C.4	The surface of unproductive forested land (through PNDR projects 2014 2020 in the ITI territory on M.8 APIA)	Ha	APIA Tulcea	2	121	64	52%
II.C.5	Number of flood protection interventions (through ITI projects)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	11	11	100%
Pillar III Improving Connectivity							36%
Sector I Transport							16%
CO13	Total length of newly built roads connected to TEN T	Km	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	23	2	9%
CO14	Length of reconstructed / modernized roads connected to TEN T	Km	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	133	2	2%
1S11	Implemented operations for public and non motorized transport	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%
2S17	Length of reconstructed / modernized roads connected to TEN T	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	-	0%
2S6	Ports located on modernized TEN T	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	-	0%
CO13a	Total length of newly built TEN T roads	Km	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	23	-	0%
III.A.5	Number of interventions on improved access to key services during the winter	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI	-	11	11	100%
Sector J Information and Communication Technology							56%
CO10	New households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2,000	400	20%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
211B1	Number of uncovered localities that will be covered by the project implementation	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	14	2	14%
211B2	Number of broadband Internet access points	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4,339	234	5%
233B1	Number of students in preuniversity education, active users on the national learning platform, in total number of students in pre university education (%)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	20	-	0%
233B2	Number of preuniversity teachers, active users on the national learning platform, out of the total number of pre university teachers (%)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	15	-	0%
233C1	Number of digitized cultural heritage elements, uploaded on the platform created by the project	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	550,000	550,000	100%
233C2	Number of "Digitized Cultural Heritage Elements" and provided to europeana.eu	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	200,000	200,000	100%
233C3	Number of rare documents already digitized, and number of rare documents digitized by the project, uploaded on Europeana.eu	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,795	1,795	100%
233C4	Number of objects already digitized in library collections and number of objects in library collections digitized by the project uploaded to Europeana.eu	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	81,525	81,525	100%
233C5	Number of objects already digitized, belonging to the national heritage, in museum collections and number of objects from the national heritage digitized by the project, which are uploaded on Europeana.eu	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	116,680	116,680	100%
233W1	Number of high school students using the internet via wireless campus, out of the total number of high school students (%)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	20	13	65%
233W2	Number of teachers using the internet via wireless campus, out of the total number of teachers (%)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	15	10	67%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
233W3	Number of gymnasium units that benefit from wireless equipment through the implementation of the project	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4,500	2,999	67%
3S17	Schools using OER, WEB 2.0 in education (no of schools)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	18	18	100%
III.B.3	Number of prehospital and hospital units using telemedicine systems	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%
Pillar IV Providing Public Services							13%
Sector K Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management							15%
IV.A.7	Number of inhabitants connected to a centralized drinking water system through ITI	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	112,582	28,146	25%
IV.A.8	Number of inhabitants connected to a centralized sewerage system through ITI	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	94,815	9,482	10%
IV.A.9	Number of wastewater treatment plants	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	8	1	10%
Sector L Solid Waste Management							17%
CO17	Additional waste recycling capacity	Tons/year	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	39,745	39,745	100%
2S28	Closed / rehabilitated non compliant landfills	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	-	0%
IV.B.3	Total quantity deviated from storage out of the total quantity collected (%)	%	ANPM/APM Tulcea	-	22	-	0%
IV.B.4	Total quantity of household waste collected separately (dry fraction) (tones /	Tons/year	ANPM/APM Tulcea	-	11,681	-	0%
IV.B.5	Total quantity of household waste collected separately (wet fraction) (tones /	Tons/year	ANPM/APM Tulcea	-	46,722	-	0%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
IV.B.6	Number of inhabitants and visitors participating in educational activities related to waste management (number of people)	Number	IDA IDM Tulcea	-	40,000	-	0%
Sector M Healthcare							13%
1S35	Beneficiaries of medical infrastructure built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped (for community and outpatient medical services)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	5,000	-	0%
1S36	Medical units built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped (for community and outpatient medical services	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%
1S37	Emergency reception units (tertiary level)	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	1	50%
S77	Rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped County Hospital	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%
Sector N Education							19%
4S36	Employees who benefit from training programs	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	326	-	0%
4S17	Supported businesses	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	36	-	0%
4S8	People receiving support	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	490	66	13%
CO35	The capacity of childcare or education infrastructures to receive support	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	175	-	0%
1S53	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support vocational and technical education	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,609	341	21%
1S65	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support preschool	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	268	255	95%
1S66	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support school	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2,727	85	3%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
Sector O Social Inclusion and Protection							1%
4S161	Supported services at the level of marginalized communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	18	-	0%
4S160	People at risk of poverty and social exclusion from marginalized communities who benefit from integrated services, of which: Roma	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,062	37	3%
4S162	Marginalized communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion (of which: in rural areas) receiving support, of which: those with a Roma minority population	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4	-	0%
1S42	Beneficiaries (adults with disabilities) of day center infrastructure for people with disabilities, rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	130	-	0%
1S43	Beneficiaries (adults with disabilities) of deinstitutionalization infrastructure built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	53	-	0%
IV.E.9	Number of persons who have benefited from regular property rights	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	180	-	0%
Pillar V Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability							65%
Sector P Administrative Capacity and Program Management							65%
5S23	Local public administration staff who have been certified at the end of their training	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	80	80	100%
5S25	Public authorities and institutions supported to develop operational procedures on anti corruption preventive measures and related indicators	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	1	100%
5S26	Staff from public authorities and institutions who have been certified to complete courses in the field of corruption prevention, transparency, ethics and integrity	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	150	150	100%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Progress (2020)
6S22	Quarterly reports prepared by the ITI coordinating structure approved by the Ministry of European Funds	Number	IDA ITI DD	-	39	16	41%
6S9	Personal number in the structure coordinating the ITI, whose salaries are co financed by the OPTA full time equivalent annually	Number	IDA ITI DD	-	126	76	61%
V.A.1	Number of public authorities and institutions that have implemented unitary measures to reduce administrative burdens, to implement quality and performance management systems	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	2	1	50%
V.A.2	Number of revised normative acts aimed at improving the legal and institutional framework in the Danube Delta	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1	-	0%
Total progress							**35%**

*Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, as of May 2020; Interim Progress computed as ((Current value – Min value) / (Max value – Min value)) *100%*

Result Indicators

Table 28 List of Result Indicators and Interim Progress

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Performance (2020)
Pillar I Protecting the Environmental and Natural Resource Assets							43%
Sector A Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management							22%
2S36	Number of Natura 2000 sites with active preservation measures	Number sites	MMAP	-	22.0	5.0	23%
I.A.6	Number of flood protection infrastructure objectives within the DDBR built / rehabilitated / upgraded	Number	AFDJ GALATI	5.0	24.0	9.0	21%
Sector B Energy Efficiency							3%
I.B.1	Number of renovated public buildings	Number	IDA ITI DD	7.0	50.0	10.0	7%
CO32	Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public buildings	KWh/year	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	8,476,539.6	-	0%
Sector C Climate Change							0%
CO34	Estimated annual decrease in greenhouse gases	Equivalent tons CO2	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,105,740.1	-	0%
Sector D Disaster Risk Management							90%
2S49a	Average response time to emergencies for firefighting and other situations	Minutes	ISU Tulcea	20.0	15.3	15.3	100%
2S49b	Average response time to emergencies for providing first aid	Minutes	ISU Tulcea	15.0	14.0	14.3	70%
I.D.1	Number of inhabitants who benefit from flood protection measures as a result of making investments in infrastructure	Number	AFDJ Galați	5,265.0	11,758.0	11,758.0	100%
Sector E Pollution Emergency							100%
I.E.1	Number of pollution incidents in the DD region (annually)	Number/year	ISU Tulcea	-	-	-	100%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Performance (2020)
Pillar II Improving the Economy							60%
Sector F Tourism							73%
II.A.1	Tourist arrivals (annually)	Number	INS	1,236,072.0	1,776,709.2	1,480,591.0	45%
II.A.4	Occupancy rates for authorized / official accommodation	%	INS	24.7	32.5	32.5	100%
II.A.5	Average length of stay (nights)	Number nights	INS	1.2	2.6	2.6	100%
II.A.2	Number of DDBR entry permits	Number	ARBDD	61,925.0	424,946.0	424,946.0	100%
II.A.8	The ratio between non residents and residents owning land in DD	%	ATUs	7.2	6.0	6.9	22%
Sector G Fishery and Aquaculture							43%
1.1	Variation in production value	EUR - thousands	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4,341.0	906.0	21%
1.2	Variation in production volume	Tons	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,746.4	499.0	29%
1.7	Jobs (ENI) created in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	ENI	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	89.0	12.0	13%
II.B.2	Size of predatory fish species populations	Number	INCDDD	26.0	31.0	31.0	100%
II.B.3	Caras (Prussian carp) population dynamics	Number	INCDDD	47.0	49.0	48.0	50%
Sector H Agriculture and Rural Development							63%
II.C.3	Share of irrigation infrastructure rehabilitated through ITI projects out of total viable irrigation infrastructure (%)	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	7.9	1.1	14%
II.C.8	% of farmers who have started a non agricultural activity	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	4.9	4.9	100%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Performance (2020)
II.C.9	% of initiatives / projects that capitalize on the cultural heritage of the area	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	0.0	0.0	100%
II.C.10	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure, out of which after school, sports facilities, dispensary, agricultural road, forest road, modernized local roads, kindergartens, street lighting, modernized high schools and schools, parks and playgrounds, markets, bridges and footbridges, water network, sewerage network, networks for population safety	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	11.7	4.5	38%
Pillar III Improving Connectivity							34%
Sector I Transport							22%
III.A.2	Travel time between Tulcea and Brăila	Minutes	www.distanța.ro	81.0	64.0	84.0	-18%
III.A.3	Travel time between Tulcea and Galați	Minutes	www.distanța.ro	85.0	65.0	85.0	0%
III.A.4	Volume of goods transported by inland waterways	Tons/year	Căpitănia zonală Tulcea	3,083,976.2	3,313,994.2	3,275,392.0	83%
Sector J Information and Communication Technology							46%
3S8	NGA broadband coverage / availability as a percentage of households	%	ANCOM	69.5	72.3	69.5	0%
III.B.1	The degree of regular use of the Internet at national level	%	DESI	60.0	80.0	74.0	70%
3S14	Percentage of citizens who regularly use the Internet out of total population	%	DESI	56.0	80.0	72.0	67%
Pillar IV Providing Public Services							43%
Sector K Water Supply and Sewerage Systems and Integrated Water Management							36%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Performance (2020)
IV.A.1	Share of rural population connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI funded projects (%)	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	23.6	5.9	25%
IV.A.2	Share of population in cities connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI funded projects (%)	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	16.4	1.6	10%
IV.A.3	Share of rural population connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI funded projects (%)	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	8.7	0.9	10%
IV.A.4	Share of population in cities connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI funded projects (%)	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	46.3	-	0%
IV.A.5	Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in rural areas	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	36.4	25.6	70%
IV.A.6	Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in cities	%	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	100.0	100.0	100.0	100%
Sector L Solid Waste Management							40%
2S25	The amount of biodegradable waste stored	Mil. tons/year	MMAP/ANPM	-	2,336.1	-	0%
IV.B.1	Total amount of household waste collected and transported (tones / year)	Tons/year	ANPM/APM Tulcea	57,039.0	58,403.0	58,039.0	73%
IV.B.2	Total amount of recyclable waste recovered from the total quantity collected (%)	%	ANPM/APM Tulcea	4.1	20.0	11.6	48%
Sector M Healthcare							46%
IV.C.2	Number of emergency units	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	3.0	2.0	67%
IV.C.3	Life expectancy at birth	Years	INSP	73.5	75.5	74.0	25%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Performance (2020)
Sector N Education							49%
4S201	People who get a job, including those who are self employed	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	90.0	9.0	10%
4S6	Persons who, upon termination of participation, acquire a qualification	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	170.0	17.0	10%
IV.D.2	Inclusion rate in pre school / primary / secondary / upper secondary education for Roma citizens	%	ISJ Tulcea	2.0	2.5	2.5	100%
IV.D.5	Number of people who benefit from support projects for training / exchange of good practices	Number	ISJ Tulcea + Constanța	45.0	400.0	318.0	77%
Sector O Social Inclusion and Protection							43%
4S155	Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion from marginalized communities who acquire a qualification upon participation, of which: Roma	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	12.0	-	0%
4S156	Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in marginalized communities who have a job, including those who are self-employed, upon completion	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	166.0	-	0%
IV.E.1	Number of kindergartens and other educational services for children under 6 in disadvantaged communities	Number	ISJ Tulcea + Constanța	99.0	101.0	101.0	100%
IV.E.4	Number of students at risk of dropping out of school at the beginning and end of the school	Number	ISJ Tulcea + Constanța	251.0	251.0	271.0	0%
IV.E.5	Number of children involved in different types of complementary educational measures (after school, summer kindergartens, school tutoring, etc.)	Number	ISJ Tulcea + Constanța	130.0	3,392.0	3,392.0	100%

Code	Indicators	MU	Source	Baseline (2016)	Interim Target (2023)	Interim Value (2020)	Performance (2020)
IV.E.6	Number of centers that have implemented complementary education measures in the ITI territory	Number	ISJ Tulcea + Constanța	5.0	36.0	36.0	100%
IV.E.7	Number of school mediators employed full time in the school system year	Number	ISJ Tulcea + Constanța	5.0	5.0	5.0	0%
Pillar V Promoting Efficiency, Affordability and Sustainability							29%
Sector P Administrative Capacity and Program Management							29%
5S18	Local authorities and public institutions that have implemented standard mechanisms and procedures for substantiating long term strategic decisions and planning	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1.0	-	0%
5S19	Local authorities and public institutions in which unitary quality and performance management systems developed through the program have been implemented according to the Action Plan for prioritizing and staging the implementation of quality management	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1.0	1.0	100%
5S20	Local authorities and public institutions in which measures to simplify procedures for citizens have been implemented in accordance with the Integrated Plan for the simplification of procedures for citizens developed at national level	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1.0	-	0%
V.A.3	Number of projects implemented within the Danube Delta ITI	Number	Beneficiaries / IDA ITI DD	-	1,027.0	164.0	16%
Total progress							**42%**

*Source: Monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD, as of May 2020; Interim Progress computed as ((Current value – Min value) / (Max value – Min value)) *100%*

Annex 3. In-depth analysis for eight selected projects

Methodological approach for project selection

The Evaluation Team performed an in-depth analysis of eight selected project, in order to gather additional information on the financial and physical progress of strategic projects, achieved results and sustainability, factors hampering the project implementation - including the context generated by the sanitary crisis, and perceived added value of the ITI mechanism, as well as areas of improvement.

Selection was made based on the following criteria: value of the project (total contracted value, from EU funds and state budget), expected impact on the ITI territory (for example, large infrastructure projects), and representativeness (high number of similar projects). The most relevant projects (see Table 29 below) were identified with the support of the Inter-Community Development Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta (IDA ITI DD).

Table 29: Selected projects for in-depth analysis and criteria used for project selection

No	Selected Projects	Criteria for project selection		
		High value	High impact	High representativeness
1	Suspension bridge over Danube	X	X	
2	Modernization of transport infrastructure DJ 226	X	X	
3	Increasing safety and security at Danube Delta Airport	X	X	
4	Technical Assistance for IDA ITI DD		X	
5	Purchase of a briquetting line			X
6	Establishment of an agrotouristic pension			X
7	Establishment of an almond plantation			X
8	Development of an agriculture holding			X

Sources of information for project data

Data was gathered from three different sources (see Table 30 below), namely data and opinions provided by project Beneficiaries, monitoring data provided by IDA ITI DD and progress reports provided by Managing Authorities of the Romanian Operational Programmes 2014-2020. This approach took into consideration the context of the sanitary crisis, which limited the access to project data, in particular to quantitative information.

Table 30: Selected projects for in-depth analysis and sources of information for project data

No	Selected Projects	Sources of information		
		Beneficiaries	IDA ITI DD	MAs
1	Suspension bridge over Danube	X	x	
2	Modernization of transport infrastructure DJ 226	X	X	
3	Increasing safety and security at Danube Delta Airport	X	X	
4	Technical Assistance for IDA ITI DD		X	X
5	Purchase of a briquetting line	X	X	
6	Establishment of an agrotouristic pension	X	X	
7	Establishment of an almond plantation	X	X	
8	Development of an agriculture holding	x	X	

Findings

Findings are presented in eight detailed and separate sections, included at the end of this annex. Please use the below links to access the information for the project of interest:

Project 1: Suspension bridge over Danube

Project 2: Modernization of transport infrastructure DJ 226

Project 3: Increasing safety and security at Danube Delta Airport

Project 4: Technical Assistance for IDA ITI DD

Project 5: Purchase of a briquetting line

Project 6: Establishment of an agrotouristic pension

Project 7: Establishment of an almond plantation

Project 8: Development of agriculture holding

Conclusions

The physical and financial progress of the eight analyzed progress are in line with the initial planning. However, two of the largest infrastructure projects, aimed at improving transport connectivity in the Danube Delta (i.e. suspension bridge over Danube and modernization of the county road DJ 226) are in an incipient phase with regards to execution of works. This is mainly due to the complexity of the project, which required long preparation of technical documents. Considering the high value of the two projects and the tight deadlines with regards to the EU n+2 / n+3 rule, a close monitoring is needed in order to avoid the risk of financial corrections.

The progress of the ongoing projects, as well as their sustainability, may be affected by the sanitary crisis generated by Covid-19. Depending on the nature of the project, some beneficiaries were forced to stop all activities, in compliance with decisions taken at national level. Delays in project implementation may occur also taking into consideration the impossibility to acquire raw materials. In particular, beneficiaries implementing activities in the tourist sector, may not be able to meet in due time the indicators set in the initial planning. In this case, additional support is needed on behalf of the Managing Authorities, such as updating the rules of the national Operational Programmes.

Some short-term results of the projects are already visible in the ITI region – increased safety at the local airport, due to the purchased equipment; functional mechanism to implement Danube Delta Strategy, due to technical assistance; increased quality of accommodation facilities, due to the newly built infrastructure; and improved competitiveness of the micro and small enterprises, due to projects aimed at their development and modernization. Even the projects in an incipient status managed to contribute to the economic development, through procurement of services for planning and execution of works. The long-term results will be measured upon the completion of projects.

The added value of the ITI mechanism is perceived differently among the interviewed beneficiaries. For individuals and small farming holdings, the main benefit of the mechanism is related to easier access to funding opportunities, by securing the EU Funds at Danube Delta region, and thus limiting the competitiveness during application process. For local stakeholders, the mechanism created a strategic approach in project selection, able to respond to the specific needs identified at local level. The largest beneficiary of the ITI funds was not significantly influenced by the newly created mechanism, as the projects were already set up according to the national strategies.

Some areas of improvement with regards to the ITI mechanism were also identified during the interviews. In particular, the beneficiary guidelines should enable partnerships among Tulcea and Constanta counties, for developing larger strategic projects. Other problems encountered by beneficiaries were related to the clarity of guidelines for individual beneficiaries, high level of co-financing rates in the aviation sector, low ceilings for financing new touristic infrastructure, which bear higher costs in the Danube Delta, possible fluctuations in currency exchange rates and high level of bureaucracy.

EVALUATION SUMMARIES FOR THE EIGHT SELECTED PROJECTS

Project 1: Suspension bridge over Danube

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Suspension bridge over the Danube (85% ITI DD territory)		117135
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
National Company for Road Infrastructure Administration (NCRIA)		27th of April 2015 – 31st of December 2023 (ongoing)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
Large Infrastructure	1,7 billion RON	0.4 billion RON (20.69% of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS OF ACTIVITIES		
The general objective of the project is to build a suspension road bridge over the Danube in Brăila area. The project also includes the construction of a main road between Braila and Jijila, with two access viaducts, and a connecting road to Macin. The financial and physical progress of the project largely follows the initial planning. Works have begun for the main bridge.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
A high-quality transport infrastructure and better transport links will contribute to the regional development of Dobrogea, without disturbing the habitat of the Danube Delta. The bridge will help reduce travel time and vehicle operating costs, while reducing pollution. The works carried out for the main bridge have already led to an economic development of the area, beneficial both for inhabitants and for SMEs and micro-enterprises.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
Given the nature of the project, a high sustainability is expected. According to the information provided by the beneficiary, the works have a warranty period of 10 years and the materials used are of the highest quality.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
NCRIA is one of the largest Beneficiaries of the Operational Programme Large Infrastructure, and therefore the relation with the Managing Authority is a direct one, which allowed for a prompt response and solution to any problems identified in the planning and implementation phases.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Considering the complexity of the project, the problems encountered are mainly technical, related to special works that require time for analysis and documentation, including the relocation of utilities. However, the beneficiary tries to ensure the proper implementation of the project, so as not to significantly exceed the scheduled completion deadline.		
OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING		
NCRIA plans to build four express roads in the ITI DD area, namely (1) Brăila - Tulcea - Constanța, (2) Brăila - Focșani, (3) Brăila- Galați and (4) Brăila - Buzău. They will also be funded through the Operational Programme Large Infrastructure.		
ITI MECHANISM		

Based on an interview with NCRIA representatives, involved in the planning and implementation of this project, the local strategy for Danube Delta is considered beneficial. However, the projects implemented by CNAIR are based on the General Master Plan for Transport, and financial allocations coming from EU Funds are discussed directly with the MAs of the Romanian OPs. Therefore, the ITI mechanism is not an influencing factor in the preparation and implementation of CNAIR projects. The Master Plan was not updated upon the development of Danube Delta Strategy.

Project 2: Modernization of transport infrastructure DJ 226

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on the route DJ 226 Corbu - Sacele - Istria - Mihai Viteazu		121195
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
Administrative Territorial Unit Constanta		1st of October 2016 – 30th of November 2022 (ongoing)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
Regional	107 million RON	0 RON (0% of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS OF ACTIVITIES		
The specific objectives of the project include the rehabilitation and modernization of the county road DJ 226 on the route Corbu-Săcele-Istria-Mihai Viteazu; intersections and roads sidewalks, bicycle lanes and construction of bus stops. Currently, the project is in the phase of awarding the contract for design, execution and technical assistance. The execution of works has not started.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
The road will ensure the connection between Constanța and Tulcea, but also the access of tourists to ancient touristic objectives - Histria fortress, Danube Delta biosphere area - Gura Portiței, Mamaia de Nord resort, Vadu reservation, Corbu, Midia-Năvodari plant, Midia port. The transport will be fluidized, including for workers, from the city of Năvodari, to the localities Lumina, Corbu, Săcele, Mihai Viteazu. The project is expected to contribute in the long run to the development of tourism and commercial activities in the ITI Danube Delta area.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
Given the nature of the project, a high sustainability and replicability is expected. The beneficiary is currently implementing a similar project for the modernization and rehabilitation of the county road DJ 226 A Cetatea Histria - DN22 / Tariverde.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
Constanța County Council has a service dedicated to the preparation of European projects, with qualified staff. The guides are well written and the communication with IDA ITI DD was very good.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
The problems encountered on this project were related to the cumbersome circuit for obtaining DDBRA approvals in the protected area. Moreover, the National Road Company imposed the arrangement of intersections with national roads, which are outside the cadastral boundaries.		
OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING		

Another project underway envisage the rehabilitation of the Histria Fortress, but it has not yet been submitted.
ITI MECHANISM
The guidelines for ITI area should enable partnerships between Constanța County and Tulcea County. The modernization of the county road DJ 226 stops at the border with Constanta; a partnership would have allowed for the works to be carried out along the entire length of the road. Also, in the current context, generated by Covid-19, a partnership project between Constanța County and Tulcea County would be useful for emergencies.

Project 3: Increasing safety and security at Danube Delta Airport

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Increasing passenger safety and security at "Danube Delta" Airport Tulcea - ensuring passenger safety at "Danube Delta" Airport Tulcea		123542
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
Autonomous Administration "Danube Delta" Airport		1st of February 2018 – 31st of December 2023 (ongoing)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
Large Infrastructure	59 million RON	4,5 million RON (7.53% out of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS OF ACTIVITIES		
The project consists in the implementation of works and in the acquisitions of equipment for the Danube Delta Airport, aiming to ensure passengers safety and security. The planned activities provide for a new fire prevention and extinction draw; a perimeter road to facilitate access to the aircraft in the shortest time; a TVCI monitoring system, to prevent incursions inside the airport and facilitate the general monitoring of wildlife; and luggage and passenger control equipment, which is already in place and functional. Other necessary equipment will be purchased for winter. The beneficiary estimates that all project activities will be underway by the end of April.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
This project will lead to an increased safety and security for airport passengers; and is expected to generate an increased volume of passengers transiting the airport.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
Given the nature of the project, a high sustainability is expected. All purchased equipment is necessary for the proper functioning of the airport.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
The budget allocated for interventions in Danube Delta, as well as the list of selected projects, were communicated in due time. Therefore, Beneficiaries had enough time to prepare their projects. Moreover, the Beneficiary had a very good collaboration with the MAs, which led to the solution of all problems encountered during project implementation.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
The procurement procedure is very cumbersome, and the staff works under pressure to avoid making mistakes. Simpler and clearer rules are needed. Also, procedures should allow for the selection of a small number of bidders. At the moment, anyone can participate in the public procurement procedure, and the process is lengthy, especially in case of appeals.		

OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)
CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING
The project can be continued with additional activities to increase the safety of passengers, operators and of the airport. Security control needs to be more thorough, as the airport needs to be prepared for any situation. Other projects are considered to contribute to the reduction of pollutants, respectively the endowment of the airport with electrical equipment, using an advanced technology.
ITI MECHANISM
In the field of aviation, one of the major problems in accessing ITI funds is related to the percentage of co-financing. Depending on the number of passengers, the co-financing percentage can be 25% or even 50%. Aviation projects are costly, and some smaller airports cannot secure their own resources.

Project 4: Technical Assistance for IDA ITI DD

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Technical assistance for ensuring the functioning of the ITI mechanism from the perspective of SIDDDD and of the IDA ITI Danube Delta structure at executive and partnership level		116755
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and financing contract)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
Inter-Community Development Association for Integrated Territorial Investment in Danube Delta (IDA ITI DD)		1st of January 2016 – 31st of December 2018 (completed)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
Technical Assistance	8.2 million RON	8.0 million RON (98% out of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: progress reports)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS OF ACTIVITIES		
The general objective of the project was to ensure the coordination, preparation, updating, implementation and monitoring of the Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development in Danube Delta, the Action Plan and the Danube Delta ITI mechanism. Project activities included the co-financing of staff wages, purchase of equipment, help desk for ITI beneficiaries and dissemination of information.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
The project ensured the proper functioning of IDA ITI DD, while supporting eligible beneficiaries to access and use the EU Structural and Investment Funds allocated under the 2014-2020 Operational Programmes and promoting the ITI mechanism and the results of its implementation at local, national and European level.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
All results were maintained upon project completion.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: progress reports)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
Not available.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Not available.		

OTHER COMMENTS (Source: progress reports)
CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING
Not available.
ITI MECHANISM
Not available.

Project 5: Purchase of a briquetting line

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Diversification of the economic activity of the company S.C. AGRIDAS INTERCOM by purchasing a briquetting line		064000I0021723800019
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
S.C. AGRIDAS INTERCOM S.R.L.		21st of June 2018 – 21st of June 2020 (completed)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
NRDP	185,584 EUR	185,584 EUR (100% of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS OF ACTIVITIES		
The objective of the project was to create a briquetting line. The activities were successfully completed - the establishment of a straw bale shredder, the purchase of a briquetting press and of a front loader. Additional purchases were also made, from own resources.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
The beneficiary has as object of activity the cultivation of cereals, and the project led to the capitalization of the straws left on the field. Two jobs have also been created in the context of this project.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
The results of the project are expected to be sustainable on the long term, as the briquetting line is a source of income for the beneficiary. The project can be replicated by potential beneficiaries working in agriculture. In order to be profitable, the production of briquettes must be made with raw materials from own sources; collection of straws from the field can be rather expensive.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
The financing lines dedicated to ITI DD facilitate the access of farmers in the area to non-reimbursable funds. The beneficiary considers that he could not have obtained funding through national programs. Also, the extensive experience of the beneficiary in the agricultural field led to the successful completion of the project.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
The only problem encountered was related to the functionality of the online platform for project submission. The beneficiary was the first to submit an online application and received several error messages. The local and national authorities were not prepared to offer the needed support.		
OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING		

The beneficiary would like to apply for other projects financed through ITI mechanism - implementing an irrigation system and opening of a bakery.
ITI MECHANISM
The beneficiary recommends evaluating all applications submitted in a funding call. In the event that certain applications are subsequently withdrawn, applications with a lower score should be approved. The guidelines can also be improved in terms of clarity, the use of accessible language and the provision of concrete examples. In the field of agriculture, especially in the ITI Danube Delta region, more investments are needed in irrigation. The current weather conditions do not allow to perform farming activities without access to water.

Project 6: Establishment of an agrotouristic pension

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Agrotouristic pension Drill		062000I001172380003
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
SC Vision Delta Drill SRL		12th of October 2017 – 12th of October 2022 (ongoing)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
NRDP	70,000 EUR	49,000.00 EUR (70% out of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS ACTIVITIES		
The objective of the project was to build a five-room agrotouristic pension. To date, all deadlines set by the business plan and the financing agreement have been met and the construction works have been completed. However, in the context of the crisis generated by Covid-19, there may be delays in field visits for classifying the pension, and thus obtaining the functioning permit.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
The project was expected to generate revenue this spring. However, given the sanitary crisis, the beneficiary does not know whether the planned turnover can be reached within the deadline (65% of the value of the first tranche of financing, within 48 months since contract signature).		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
Given the current context, the sustainability of the project cannot be estimated. Similar projects are implemented in Danube Delta area, in order to align accommodation units to a certain standard.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
The beneficiary prepared part of the project documentation, including the geo study, before contract signature, with own sources of funding. This enabled him to reach deadlines.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
According to the beneficiary, the staff who reviewed the application was not sufficiently informed with regards to the requirements included in the NRDP guidelines. The business plan was initially declared ineligible because the beneficiary was not domiciled in Sfântu Gheorghe. This was not an eligibility condition, and the project was approved following the appeal.		
OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		

CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING
The beneficiary plans to apply for photovoltaic panels and complementary activities to the agrotourism activity.
ITI MECHANISM
For investors outside ITI DD region, an online platform would be useful to obtain the necessary documentation and pay local fees (n.b. reference to local public institutions). Distance is not necessarily an impediment, but it extends the submission deadline. Financial allocations should also take into consideration the cost of investments in localities accessible only by water. At the moment, all beneficiaries receive the same amount of funding.

Project 7: Establishment of an almond plantation

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Establishment of an almond plantation, land fencing, construction works and well drilling for agricultural purposes in Jurilovca commune, Sălcioara locality, Tulcea county		041A00I0051723800010
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
SC Real Nucet SRL		31st of October 2019 – 31st of October 2021 (ongoing)
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
NRDP	762,417 EUR	134,701 EUR (18% out of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS ACTIVITIES		
The general objective of the project is to set up an almond plantation. Up to current date, the following activities were completed: preparing the land, planting the seedling and purchasing the fruit machines. The beneficiary was planning to also implement the irrigation system; however, the necessary raw materials cannot be purchased in the context of the crisis generated by Covid-19. The project also provides for the construction of a storage hall. The beneficiary is waiting for the technical approval to start the works. The equipment for conditioning, processing and packaging fruit products will be purchased as part of the following activities.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
The results are expected to be visible in seven years, when the orchard is able to bear fruits.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
Given the incipient status of the project, sustainability cannot be estimated.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
Funding opportunities have been well communicated by IDA ITI DD. The consulting firm employed by the beneficiary had the necessary experience to handle all project documentation.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
The beneficiary did not receive approval to purchase a higher power tractor offered by the supplier at the same price. According to the beneficiary, decisions taken by the Payment Agency for Rural Development and Fishing (AFIR) are not unitary, as similar changes were approved for other projects, implemented in other counties.		
OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		

CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING
At the moment, the situation generated by Covid-19 is worrying. All activities have been blocked.
ITI MECHANISM
The projects implemented in the ITI area have started already to produce visible social effects – new jobs were created, and the general appearance of the commune has visibly improved.

Project 8: Development of agriculture holding

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD)		
TITLE		SMIS
Development of the agricultural holding Samoilă Marius Agricultura PFA		0410V0I0021723800011
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Source: data provided by IDA ITI DD and interview with Beneficiary)		
BENEFICIARY		TIMELINE
Samoilă Marius Agricultura PFA		14th of February 2018 – 14th of February 2020
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	ELIGIBLE VALUE	PAYMENTS
NRDP	277,389 EUR	274,469 EUR (99% of eligible value)
RESULTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
OBJECTIVES AND STATUS ACTIVITIES		
The objectives of the project were to expand and modernize the farm and purchase additional equipment. All activities have been completed according to the initial planning.		
RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTION TO DANUBE DELTA STRATEGY		
The beneficiary managed to minimize its expenses, and the works are of a better quality, due to the new equipment.		
SUSTENABILITY AND REPLICABILITY		
The project is expected to be sustainable and highly replicable, taking into consideration the high number of farmers in need of new equipment.		
LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT		
The ITI mechanism facilitated the access to finance for farmers in the Danube Delta area, by reducing competition. The beneficiary had extensive experience in agriculture, as well as in implementing projects with European funds. The consulting company employed by the beneficiary prepared all the project documentation and was actively involved during the implementation.		
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Beneficiaries at times have difficulty distinguishing between staff working for MA's and other entities such as IDA ITI DD, but were able to resolve administrative queries ultimately through a central help desk in Constanta		
OTHER COMMENTS (Source: interview with Beneficiary)		
CURRENT NEEDS AND SOURCE OF FINANCING		
In the Danube Delta area, projects are needed for the development of the irrigation system.		
ITI MECHANISM		

Fluctuations of the exchange rate RON-EUR can cause problems to beneficiaries implementing large projects. Bureaucracy also makes it difficult to access funds - a lot of documents are needed.

Annex 4. Results of the online survey

Analysis upon the opinion of the Structural and Investment European Funds beneficiaries from the ITI Danube Delta area, regarding the Territorial Integrated Investment Strategy

SUMMARY

For the evaluation of the Integrated Territorial Investment Strategy in the area of the Danube Delta, an opinion poll was carried out in March-April 2020 from among the beneficiaries of the financing obtained through the ITI mechanism. The survey was representative for this type of stakeholders.

The study highlights that, in the perception of the beneficiaries, the ITI mechanism has significantly contributed to making European funding more accessible, especially for local and central public authorities and for the non-governmental sector. At the level of all beneficiaries, the mechanism generated an increased the availability share for accessing European funds, contributing significantly to the increase of entrepreneurial capacity.

The efficiency of the ITI mechanism is high. Approximately two thirds of the beneficiaries consider that the ITI mechanism has covered to a large or very large extent the development needs of the institution which they are a part of, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region.

The effectiveness of the projects is high, 78% of the beneficiaries considered that they achieved all or most of the projected results.

The impact on the development of tourism is, in the perception of the beneficiaries, high. Two thirds of the beneficiaries of funding obtained through the ITI DD mechanism appreciate that both tourists and residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in the area. At the environmental level, the perceived impact is average: 51% of the interviewed beneficiaries consider that the projects they implemented had a positive impact on the environment. The perceived impact on the development of economic opportunities is average, with an average of 0.8 supported / newly created companies per implemented project and 3.8 new jobs per project.

78% of the beneficiaries responding to the opinion poll considered that the implemented projects have a high or very high sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

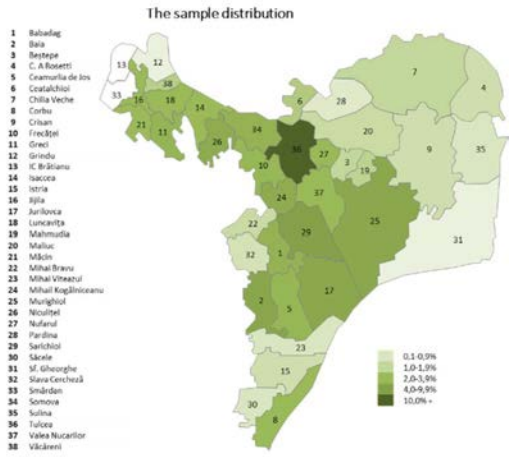
Data collection

The evaluation study of the results of the Integrated Territorial Investment Strategy at the level of the beneficiaries of financing through the Operational Programs was carried out based on the opinion poll. During March-April 2020, 693 questionnaires were completed with representatives of the institutions receiving funding through the ITI mechanism. Respondents to the opinion poll were selected from two sources: 1) Register of notices of compliance with the Integrated Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Danube Delta, issued by the Agency for Intercommunity Development ITI Danube Delta and 2) MySMIS database of FESI funding beneficiaries through the ITI mechanism on March 18, 2020.

The method used for applying the questionnaires was a CATI type method. The sampling was exhaustive, and all 891 unique beneficiaries were contacted at least three times with the request to answer the questionnaire. The main reasons for refusal were the lack of available time and the transfer to the consultant. The projects financed by PNDR (the National Program for Rural Development) benefited mostly from consultancy. The analysis of the beneficiaries' database showed a focus on consulting at the level of a very small number of companies. For example, the consulting company of Mrs. Ciucă Aneta prepared 77 of the financed projects, Chirilă Aurelia - 37 financed projects, the Donciu family - 25 projects (Donciu Georgiana - 16 projects, Donciu Marian - 9 projects, etc.

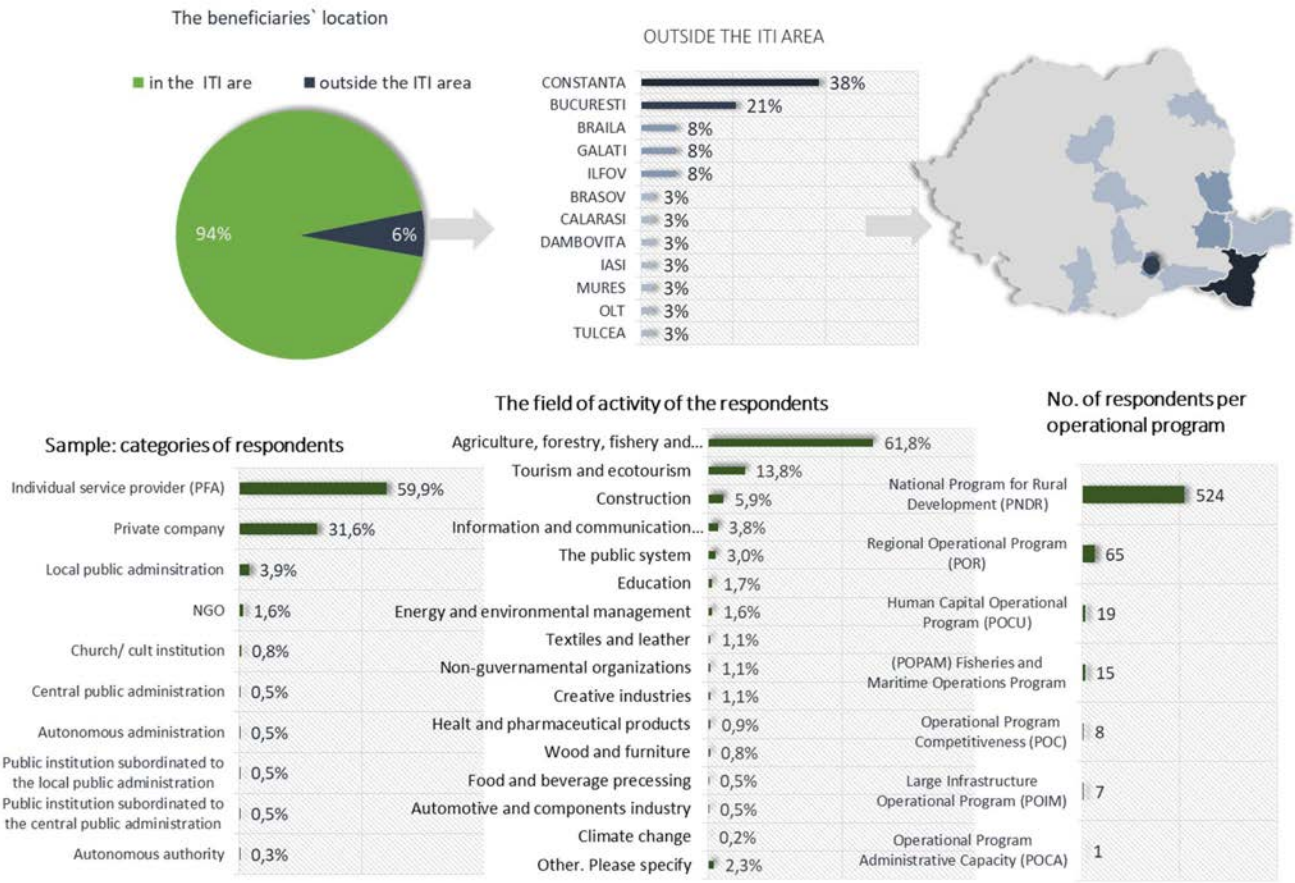
The data collection followed both the territorial coverage - beneficiaries from 36 of the 38 localities in the ITI area were interviewed and the thematic coverage - beneficiaries of all 8 operational programs were interviewed. The resulting sample is representative of all beneficiaries of FESI funding to be obtained through the ITI mechanism, with a margin of error of +/- 2%, for a 95% confidence interval.

Sample structure



94% of the beneficiaries participating in the opinion poll reside in the localities in the Danube Delta ITI area. 6% are located outside the area, predominantly in Constanța and Bucharest-Ilfov. Brăila and Galați are the counties that form a second circle of interest for financing from European funds through the ITI mechanism.

Most questionnaires (15.3% of the total) were completed in Tulcea. Sarichioi, Baia, Jurilovca, Murighiol, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Niculițel, Babadag, Somova and Greci and the localities in the top number of respondents to the survey. IC Brătianu and Smârdan are the two localities, no questionnaires were completed. Given the high share of PNDR in the structure of beneficiaries, the majority of respondents to the opinion poll were authorized individuals (60%) and representatives of private companies (32%). This type of structure reflects the high level of segmentation of the agricultural activity in the ITI Danube Delta area. 6% of the questionnaires were completed by representatives of public institutions, and 3% by representatives of NGOs.



The distribution of the respondents at the operational program level shows the numerical prevalence of PNDR-524 respondents referred to projects funded by PNDR and the POR-65 (Operational Regional Programme) respondents, whereas these are the two operational programs that can be evaluated statistically, after which there were the POCU-19 (the Operational Programme for Human Capital) respondents and the POPAM-15 (Operational Program for Fishing and Maritime Affairs) respondents, whereas these last two programs allow the estimation of several trends and then the POC-8 (Operational Competitive Programme) respondents, the POIM-7 (Operational Programme for Large Infrastructure) respondents and POCA-1 (Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity) respondents can be estimated. In the case of these last three programs the data will be analyzed from a qualitative point of view.

The use of the Register of ADI Compliance Notices allowed the inclusion in the sample of a number of 21 non-beneficiaries of PNDR, respectively companies or self-employed legal persons that were positioned below the threshold of the minimum allowed score.

The categories of respondents presented in the previous graph were grouped into four subcategories:

- Large = public authorities that include: central, local public administrations and their subordinate institutions
- Medium = public interest authorities: autonomous authorities, autonomous administrations, NGOs, cultural institutions
- Small = private companies
- Very small / individual = authorized individuals

The significant differences between these categories of beneficiaries will be mentioned each time they occur. The project portfolio of these four categories of beneficiaries is different: large beneficiaries have projects in most operational programs except POPAM; the small ones have, for the most part, projects financed by ROP and PNDR; and the individual beneficiaries have, almost exclusively projects financed by PNDR.

Questionnaire structure

The questionnaire presented in the Annex has three main components:

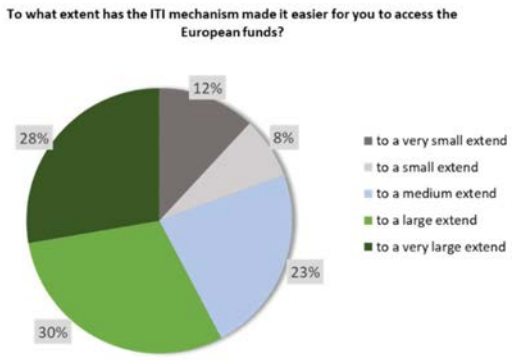
- component aimed at the general evaluation of the elements of the effects of the ITI mechanism in achieving the strategic development objectives in the Danube Delta region;
- a component aimed at assessing the impact and experiences gained in a project funded by the ITI mechanism (the last completed project, or the most advanced project in terms of implementation) was taken as a benchmark;
- an economic-demographic component of the beneficiary and identification of the respondent.

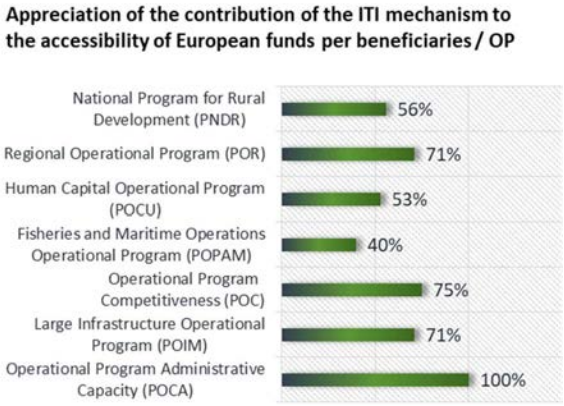
Methodological limitations

The study is burdened by two methodological limitations: 1) the volume of respondents for four of the eight operational programs is below the statistical threshold of 20 cases and 2) the level of knowledge and expertise of beneficiaries in assessing the elements of interest in evaluating the Sustainable Integrated Development Strategy of the Danube Delta is significantly different within the same category of beneficiaries.

The study reflects the opinion of the beneficiaries of European funds as stakeholders in the evaluation process of DDISDS. This is not a population impact study.

MAIN RESULTS



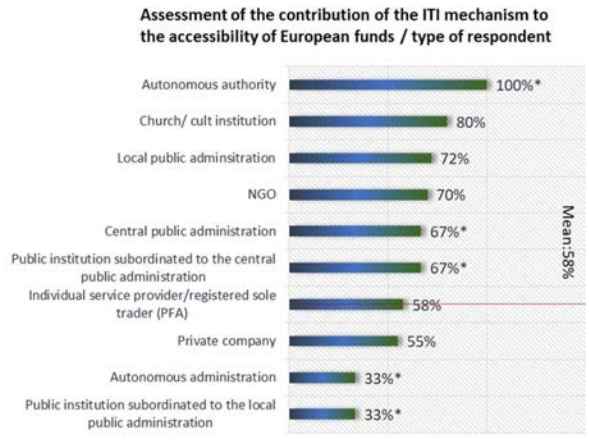


Relevance of the ITI mechanism

All survey participants, regardless of the Operational Program through which they were funded, stated that without the structural funds they would not have been able to achieve the objectives achieved through the projects by this date.

The ITI mechanism is considered relevant by most of the beneficiaries interviewed. 58% of beneficiaries consider that the ITI mechanism has facilitated the process of accessing European funds. However, one in five beneficiaries (20%) considers that this mechanism has not significantly contributed to increasing access. There are no significant differences in the level of urban / rural residence environment.

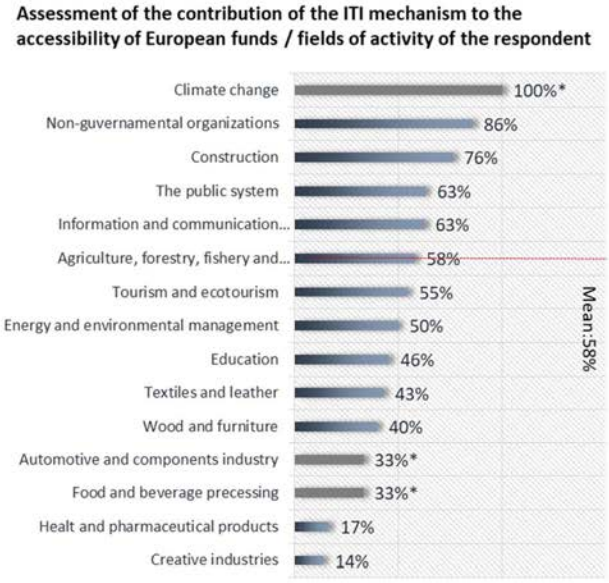
Although from a statistical point of view, we do not record a significant contingency coefficient for the entire sample, given the low number of beneficiaries for some operational programs, the correlation analysis shows that the ITI mechanism is considered more relevant by program beneficiaries, as well as operational with a small audience POC, POCA and PIM (Integrated Development Programmes). The beneficiaries of the POR also have a high level of appreciation of the contribution of the ITI mechanism in increasing the access to European funds (71% of them declare a high level of satisfaction with this mechanism). POPAM beneficiaries have a rather reserved attitude towards the ITI mechanism. 60% of POPAM beneficiaries do not consider the contribution of the ITI mechanism to the increase of the accessibility of European funds in the Danube Delta area to be significant. At the level of POCU and PNDR beneficiaries, the opinion regarding the contribution of the ITI mechanism to accessibility tends to be favorable: 53% of the POCU beneficiaries are satisfied with the efficiency of the mechanism, respectively 56% of the PNDR beneficiaries.

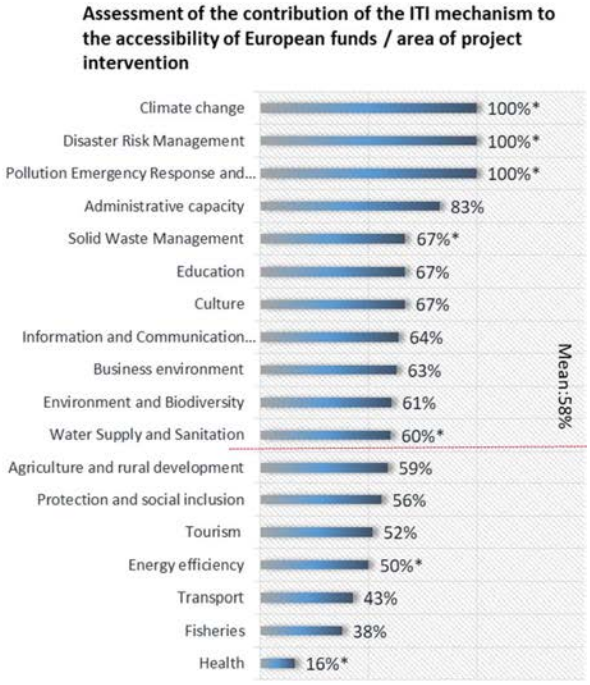


The categories of beneficiaries with the highest levels of satisfaction with the contribution of the ITI mechanism to the accessibility of European funds are: local public administrations (72% positive assessment), central public authorities * (67% positive assessment) and NGOs (70% positive assessment). The highest degree of dissatisfaction was registered among private companies (22% dissatisfaction), institutions subordinated to local public authorities and autonomous administrations *.

The positive assessment of the ITI mechanism's contribution to the accessibility of European funds in the Danube Delta was higher for beneficiaries working in areas such as: climate change*, civil society, construction, public administration, information and communication technology and significantly lower for

beneficiaries working in: creative, health and pharmaceutical industries, wood industry, textiles and leather, education and energy and environment management.



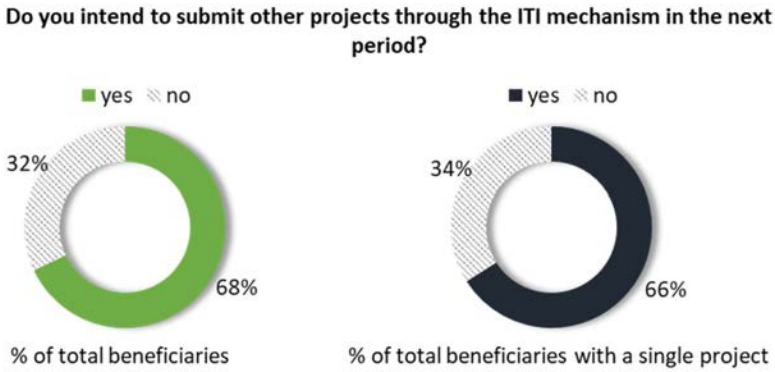


The ITI mechanism has created a greater openness to projects on administrative capacity development, education and culture. In terms of trends, there is also a very high appreciation of the relevance of the ITI mechanism by beneficiaries with projects in the field of climate change, disaster risk management, pollution prevention and emergency response and solid waste management. A lower level of appreciation of the ITI's contribution to accessibility is perceived by the beneficiaries of interventions in the fields of health, fisheries, transport and energy efficiency trends.

The positive assessment of the role of the ITI mechanism in increasing accessibility significantly correlates with the number of projects that a beneficiary has implemented: the higher the number of projects in implementation, the more efficient the ITI mechanism is considered. Most beneficiaries (95%) implemented a single project. The beneficiaries with more than one implemented project are the local public administrations (average = 4.2 projects), the central public administrations (average = 2 projects) and the NGOs (average = 1.9 projects).

The number of implemented projects increases with the increase of the institutional dimension of the beneficiary. If in the case of PFA we have on average 1.01 projects carried out so far, the average is 3.41 projects in the case of public administration and subordinated institutions.

Taking into account the data presented above, we consider that the ITI mechanism is relevant both for the development of the capacity to access funds at the level of public administration and civil society and for the creation of an availability to access funds at the level of other categories of beneficiaries: 68% of total beneficiaries stated that they intend to apply in the near future for a new ITI-funded project. 66% of those who implemented a single project intend to repeat this experience in the next period.



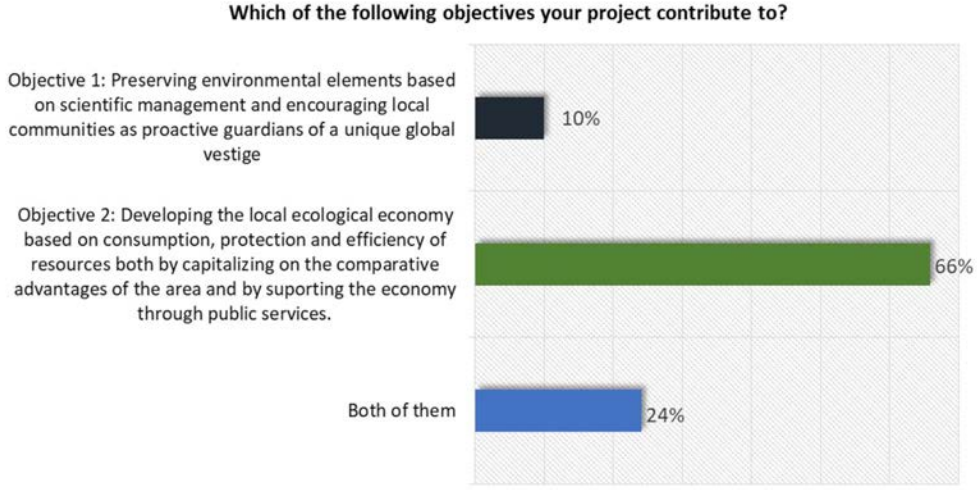
The larger the institutional size of the beneficiary, the greater the intention to implement new projects, from 66% in the case of PFA to 85% in the case of public authorities.

Efficiency of the ITI mechanism

The degree of maturity of the projects financed in the 2014-2020 exercise registered in the survey is of average level: 32% of the analyzed projects have been completed or are waiting for the approval of the final report, 50% are in implementation and 18% of the projects are in the approval phase. We note that the beneficiaries were asked to refer to the project with the highest level of maturity in order to obtain a consistent evaluation. This project will be labeled during this analysis as a "mature project".

Among the programs with a significant number of beneficiaries and mature projects, the ROP is the most advanced, with 40% of the projects completed. The general level of project maturity recorded in this survey, 200 completed projects out of 618 approved, shows that next year the impact on the general population can be consistently assessed, and the value of the following year's result indicators is significant for impact assessment.

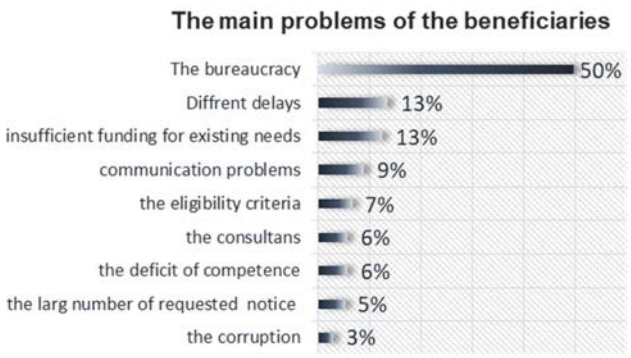
Achieving the environmental objective is considered a priority by large institutions (public administration and



subordinates) while the development of the local economy is the priority objective of small institutions (SMEs, PFA). Given the prevalence of PNDR beneficiaries in the sample, most respondents appreciate that the mature projects they implement have made a major contribution to achieving the strategic objective (SO) no. 2, respectively the development of a local ecological economy, based on consumption, protection and efficiency of resources by capitalizing the comparative advantages of the area, economy supported by public services. We mention that, in the application of the questionnaires, in the direct communication, it was observed that the beneficiaries perceive, for the most part, the two strategic objectives as disjoint: economic development vs. environment protection. Hence the relatively low share (24%) of those who appreciate that the mature project it implements addresses both objectives.

Development focus (SO2) characterizes the beneficiaries of most operational programs, with the exception of POIM* and POCA*. In their case, most beneficiaries consider that mature projects address both strategic objectives.

The main factors blocking the absorption of European funds through the ITI mechanism, identified at the level of the total sample were:



- excessive bureaucracy[15] (mentioned by 50% of respondents, in close correlation with the need to consult consultants),
- delays in project evaluation, delays in repaying money[16] (13%),
- difficulty in securing co-financing, or in covering the costs necessary to prepare the documentation required for the financing application [17] (13%),
- lack of information, difficulty communicating with representatives of managing authorities [18] (9%),
- difficult eligibility criteria, which require additional coverage costs [19] (7%),
- lack of consultants, their low quality, or the large sums they charge for the services provided [20] (6%),
- incompetence of civil servants in control institutions, or in approval institutions [21] (6%),
- multiple, successive, or non-specific endorsement [22] (5%)
- corruption in management institutions, lack of transparency in the evaluation of projects, discriminatory nature of monitoring and controls [23] (3%).

There are a number of differences in the hierarchy of blocking factors identified by the beneficiaries, depending on the operational program through which they were financed:

- For POCU beneficiaries, bureaucracy, co-financing, restrictive eligibility criteria, incompetence of civil servants are the first positions;
- Bureaucracy and communication deficit are the main bottlenecks identified by POC beneficiaries;

[15] The category includes: a lot of documentation that requires a lot of roads, hundreds of km to obtain the necessary papers from state institutions, the multitude of documents that respond to the information obligations in the general and specific guides;

[16] The category includes: the long time (up to one year) from the time the project is submitted until the signing of the contract, the period in which bank loan agreements are lost, and the validity of the submitted documents expires, requiring resumes of document submissions; delays in carrying out the financing contract, delays in reimbursement, invoking bureaucracy;

[17] Egg. liquidity shortage, lack of capital, lack of co-financing, restrictive conditions in granting bank loans necessary for co-financing, difficulties in covering the amounts needed to prepare the financing application (approval, documents, consultants etc);

[18] Egg. lack of communication of local authorities with those requesting opinions, advice, information, lack of information on the funding mechanism, high level of specialization required to understand the guidelines (closely correlated with bureaucracy and the need for advice), lack of concrete information, lack of a flow of information to answer frequently asked questions, lack of training in the field of communication including consultants;

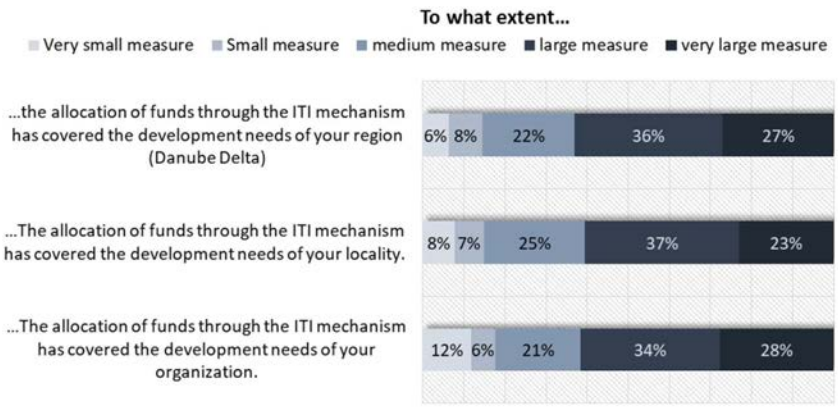
[19] Egg. extremely restrictive qualification criteria, not adapted to the conditions and context of the Danube Delta area, the required environmental factors, much too restrictive, lack of clarity on how to award the score used in selection, acceptance for funding of projects that are not implemented of institutions headquartered in the ITI area;

[20] Egg. low number of consultants, lack of their skills, lack of time and communication skills so that the project is clear to the beneficiary, high costs of consultants, up to 30% of the amount requested;

[21] Egg. requesting different formats, issuing different formats than necessary, contradictory requests of successive control teams, ignorance of the requirements by the issuing authorities for the transmission of useful documents and quickly;

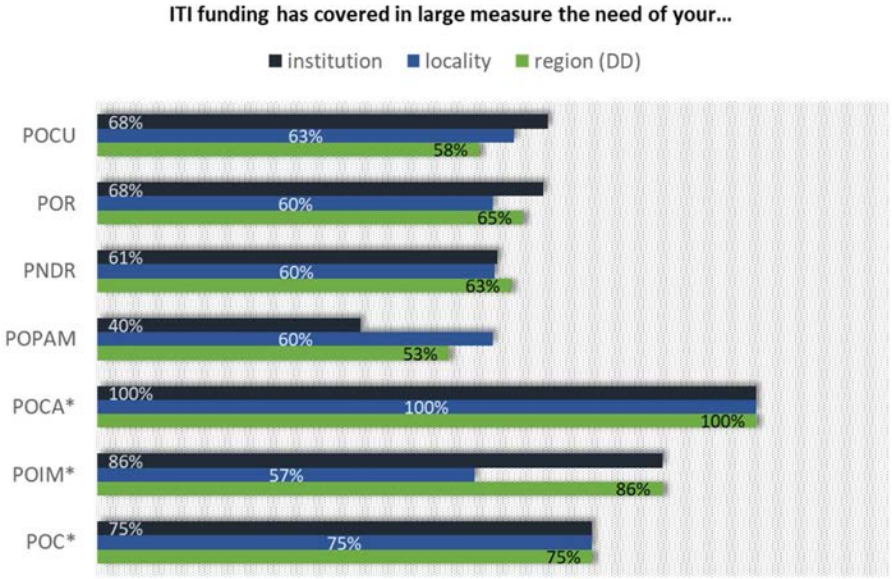
[22] issuance of AFIR opinions with great difficulty (PNDR) issuance of opinions from the Ministry of Culture with difficulty (POCU), DSP (issuance after a year and a half), opinions whose usefulness is not clear (eg Telekom).

- For PNDR beneficiaries, the hierarchy of blocking factors coincides with the main problems identified in general;
- For POPAM beneficiaries, bureaucracy, co-financing and the incompetence of civil servants are the main problems.;
- The operation of MySMIS is perceived as the main blocking factor by the POCA project management;
- For POIM beneficiaries, excessive bureaucracy and lack of suppliers and labor force are the main identified bottlenecks;



- ROP beneficiaries consider that bureaucracy, evaluation delays, co-financing thresholds and lack of communication are the main bottlenecks.

Approximately two thirds of the beneficiaries consider that the ITI mechanism has covered to a large or very large extent the development needs of the institution of which they are part, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region. (Chart 13) The beneficiaries of the four programs consistent in terms of the number of respondents (POCU, POR, PNDR, POPAM) perceive these programs as having similar contributions in covering the needs of the locality. POPAM is perceived as less satisfactory in terms of the needs of companies in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, and ROP and PNDR as the most important financing instruments for the development of the region. The level of appreciation towards POCA, POIM * and POC is high for all three areas of impact: institution, locality and region.



The institutional dimension correlates with the perception of the adequacy of funds. Large beneficiaries appreciate to a greater extent than small ones that the allocation through the ITI mechanism has covered the development needs of the organization.

Effectiveness of the ITI mechanism

78% of the beneficiaries responding to the opinion poll consider that they have achieved all or most of the projected results. With the exception of 3% of PNDR beneficiaries with completed projects who did not meet their project indicators, all other respondents stated that these indicators were met. 68% of PNDR beneficiaries, 69% of ROP beneficiaries, 100% of POPAM beneficiaries and 50% of POCU beneficiaries with ongoing projects state that the project indicators have been reached in the majority.

The main project indicators achieved in the PNDR were: the purchase of equipment (44% of respondents mentioned this indicator as being met), the construction of premises and buildings (16%) and the purchase of land (14%). We appreciate that PNDR has significantly influenced the agricultural machinery market in the area, especially tractors and excavators of different sizes, land transactions and the construction market. The result indicators mentioned significantly in the POCU targeted the participation in training courses especially in the field of management (63% of the respondents with POCU projects mentioned this type of indicators). Equipment purchases were the indicators with the highest degree of mention in the case of POPAM projects (50% of total respondents) and ROP (59% of total respondents).

With respect to procedures and processes, the beneficiaries of ITI funding mentioned as main difficulties: accessing and using the MySMIS system, preparing the award documentation and the request for reimbursement.

What were the main difficulties your institution faced during the implementation of the project?

	POCU	POC*	PNDR	POPAM	POCA*	POIM*	POR
The preparation of the assignment documentation	7%	50%	1%	94%	67%	0%	0%
The management of the work assignment procedure	27%	8%	11%	1%	0%	50%	9%
Monitoring and assuring the quality of the work performed	0%	0%	4%	1%	0%	0%	9%
Monitoring the physical progress (eg difficulties in quantifying indicators)	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Assuring the financial progress (eg difficulties regarding accounting records, making ineligible expenses, etc.)	7%	0%	11%	1%	0%	0%	7%
Delays in preparing / updating technical documentation (eg traffic study, technical design ...)	7%	8%	17%	1%	0%	0%	12%
The preparation of the reimbursement requests	20%	8%	27%	2%	0%	0%	28%
Accessing and using the MySMIS system	27%	25%	18%	0%	33%	50%	26%
The long time required to validate / reimburse the expenses	7%	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%	9%
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Monitoring and ensuring the quality of the work performed is more difficult for large beneficiaries with large projects than for individual beneficiaries. Also, the dissatisfaction with the time required to reimburse the expenditure is higher in the case of public administration than in the case of private, individual beneficiaries.

The main positive experiences of the beneficiaries take into account the results of the completed projects or in the process of completion, respectively the endowments, equipment and purchases made. The main negative experiences concern the above-mentioned elements: excessive bureaucracy, long duration of project approval and reimbursement of costs, implementation difficulties

Positive experiences

POCU-ITI comes with a great advantage and a rare opportunity for the development of the area. It's a unique opportunity for us.

POC- Funding is more than welcome. The cultural sector needed a digital library and not only the sector but also at the national level. We do not have digital libraries in Romania. We now have the opportunity to develop this large-scale strategic project.

PNDR- I managed to access the funds and I bought everything I needed, otherwise I would never have succeeded

POR- Through this mechanism the rehabilitation of the historical monument will be realized. This is a unique opportunity because the necessary amounts cannot be obtained from the state budget. I collaborated very well with ADR Sud Est Tulcea office.

Negative experiences

POC- It took a long time to start this project. We were told to come up with innovative ideas, and we submitted the project in March 2016, contracted it in August 2018 and it lasted 2 years until December 2019. The innovative idea ages in 3 years. The time is very long until the guide comes out. It takes a long time for an innovative niche project. Others who move much faster also innovate. We were lucky because not many players appeared on the market, and neither did other entities that would have invested.

POR- The bureaucracy was cumbersome. The analysis took a long time. We submitted the project in November 2017 and signed as late as February 2019. Our project involved some minor acquisitions, but it was simple technically. Nevertheless, things moved very hard. Most institutions do not issue the necessary documents and online papers, although the system is digitized.

PNDR- When the project was verified, in August the auditor wanted to see the culture of radishes and wheat which in that month was not possible, because the wheat is already threshed and the radishes did not exist yet in August. Moreover, because I declared red radishes, cucumbers and peppers in the project, when I did the settlement I was able to use only the invoices that had solely these products. I could not include the invoices that included dill, parsley, or spinach because with APIA you can declare these crops only once a year, in the spring. I was thus able to do the settlement only in the fall.

PNDR- I was asked for unnecessary opinions. For example: opinion from the Public Health Directorate, which must be submitted to the funding file. Why? I bought a truck to transport the hives, a scale and a solar wax melter. Why do I need to have a public health opinion?

POCU - We did not find anywhere enough staff to guide the selected people through recruitment. There is a great lack of psychologists specializing in career guidance.

POPAM- The main problems come from restrictive simplistic language and the unclear guides. But the worst thing is the interpretable provisions. They enable POPAM experts to interpret the various funding applications differently. I believe that the ITI strategy in the field of animal husbandry development was not taken into account.

POR- The intermediate body has often requested completion of the submitted documents. Often these were not justified. If at the second evaluation I made the documents according to the requirements of the first evaluation, they were still not considered to be good enough. They were constantly asking for something else. Usually what they asked for at one time was not valid anymore for the next evaluation.

The impact of the ITI mechanism

Measuring the perception of beneficiaries on the impact of their projects (presented in the following table) highlights three areas: business development (high averages of impact for all beneficiaries of all operational programs), tourism and environment and biodiversity. Comparisons of average impact assessments, by category of beneficiaries, built according to the program through which they were funded, show that the areas with the lowest level of impact visibility are: disaster risk management, transport and water supply and sanitation.

The average of impact perceived at the level of the intervention areas by the beneficiaries of each OP

	POCU	POC*	PNDR	POPAM	POCA*	POIM*	POR
Environment and Biodiversity	4,3	5,2	6,0	8,1	7,0	8,0	5,2
Energy efficiency	4,1	4,0	4,1	3,4	8,0	2,3	4,9
Climate change	6,1	4,2	4,2	3,1	9,0	5,0	4,6
Disaster Risk Management	3,4	3,8	3,7	3,6	6,0	6,3	3,8
Pollution Emergency Response and Prevention	5,3	6,7	5,0	5,7	7,0	8,7	6,2
Tourism	6,9	6,5	5,6	6,8	8,0	3,7	5,5
Fisheries	5,5	7,3	4,7	6,3	9,0	3,7	4,8
Agriculture and rural development	6,4	6,2	7,9	4,7	10,0	3,7	4,6
Transport	3,5	4,2	4,4	2,1	9,0	2,8	3,7
Information and Communication Technologies	3,1	4,8	4,2	3,7	10,0	7,3	4,7
Water Supply and Sanitation	2,8	3,7	3,9	3,6	9,0	5,8	3,8
Solid Waste Management	2,8	4,0	3,8	3,6	8,0	5,0	4,1
Health	4,4	5,5	4,9	4,3	9,0	6,3	4,3
Education	3,3	5,5	3,9	3,4	10,0	5,2	3,8
Protection and social inclusion	3,9	5,2	3,8	3,5	9,0	4,2	4,0
Administrative capacity	3,7	6,2	4,8	4,9	9,0	7,3	4,6
Business environment	6,5	6,8	6,1	6,3	10,0	6,2	6,2
Culture	3,4	4,8	4,1	3,4	8,0	5,0	3,8
	4,4	5,3	4,7	4,5	8,6	5,4	4,6

The differences in environments show that the size of the institution correlates directly with the perceived impact of the following topics: environment, energy efficiency, disaster risk management, pollution prevention and emergency response, water supply and sanitation, solid waste management, culture and, obviously, administrative capacity. The inverse correlation (the smaller the size of the beneficiary - PFA - the greater the perceived impact) is recorded in the case of agriculture and rural development.

Impact on tourism

48% of the beneficiaries of European funding in the Danube Delta believe that tourists consider the quality / price ratio for services in the Danube Delta as high or very high. 49% of beneficiaries consider that tourists believe that the value for money is average. This opinion is of a general nature. There were no statistically significant differences either depending on the institution to which the interviewee belongs, or depending on the operational program through which it was funded.

The perception of tourists' appreciation of the quality / price ratio is similar regardless of the size of the beneficiary.

How do tourists perceive the quality / price ratio for services in the Danube Delta area?

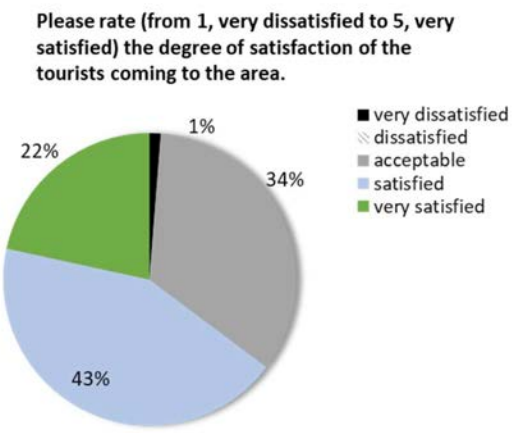
Most beneficiaries estimate that about half of the tourists who visit the Danube Delta return to the region annually (Chart 16). POPAM beneficiaries are the most optimistic, estimating that 57% of annual tourists return to the region. POIM beneficiaries consider that only 37% of tourists return. Beneficiaries of central public authorities consider that only 29% of tourists return, while beneficiaries of local public authorities, or NGOs consider

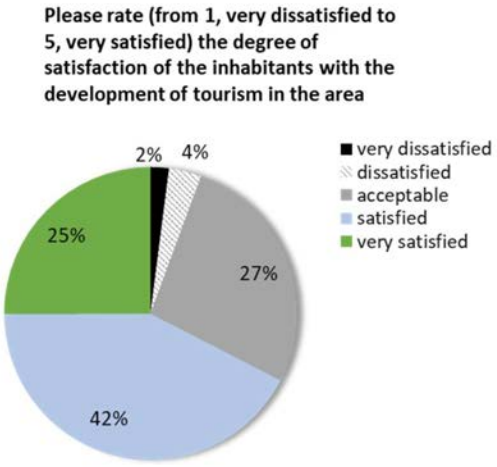
that 55-56% of tourists return annually. Operators in the field of tourism and agro-tourism estimate that 57% of tourists return annually while those in construction or the environment estimate that the share of tourists returns is 40-42%.

The comparison of averages between PNDR funding beneficiaries and non-PNDR beneficiaries does not show statistically significant differences[24]: beneficiaries consider that 54% of tourists return annually, non-beneficiaries consider that 52% of tourists do so. Therefore, the implementation of a project does not significantly change the perception of PNDR beneficiaries on the tourist flow in the area.

Two thirds of the beneficiaries of funding through the ITI DD mechanism appreciate that both tourists and residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in the area. (Figure 18). Although the statistical analysis does not register a significant contingency, it is noted that the beneficiaries of POCA, POC, POIM appreciate more the degree of satisfaction of tourists coming to the area (average 86%). The lowest level of appreciation of the satisfaction of tourists coming to the area was registered among NGOs: only 40% of NGOs consider that tourists are satisfied or very satisfied, compared to the average appreciation at the sample level of 77%.

The satisfaction of the inhabitants regarding the development of tourism in the area was appreciated as above average (average = 69%) by the central and local public authorities and by the representatives of the cult institutions (87%) and below average (37%) by the NGOs. and institutions subordinated to local public administrations. For an in-depth analysis of these differences it is appropriate to collect data at the level of the population as final beneficiaries. There were no statistically significant differences between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of funding in assessing the satisfaction of residents with the development of tourism in the area.





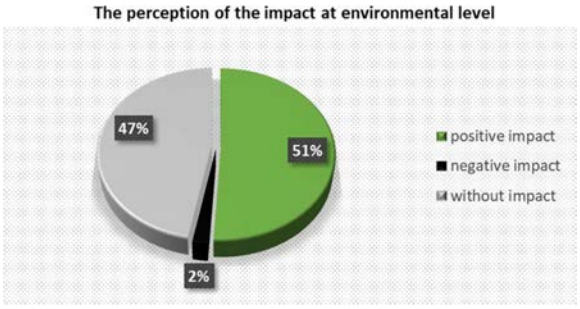
Large institutions (public administration) have the highest level of appreciation for the satisfaction of tourists coming to the area and for the satisfaction of residents regarding the development of tourism in the area.

Environmental impact

Most of the beneficiaries interviewed (51%) consider that the projects they implemented had a positive impact on the environment. PNDR beneficiaries have an above average level of appreciation. 53% of them consider that the projects were beneficial for the environment because an ecological agriculture (egg. without herbicides, insecticides, sulphates), natural (egg. bee honey) was used, ecological installations were purchased (egg. solar melters, beeswax), or lightly polluting machinery (egg. 6 euro trucks). The beneficiaries of POPAM and POCU appreciate to a lesser extent the impact of the projects carried out on the environment (POPAM-33%, POCU-32%). Types of POCU interventions perceived as beneficial for the environment: the purchase and installation of solar panels, the promotion of businesses involving the reduction of carbon emissions, such as ecotourism, the promotion of environmentally sound waste management, such as the introduction of sewerage and the

[24] Semnificația diferențelor de medie conform ANOVA

abandonment of makeshift rural toilets. Beneficial effects on the environment identified by POPAM beneficiaries: population growth with fish species, ecological fish farming without pollutants, increasing habitat yield through drainage works, widening of defense walls, deepening of riverbeds, acquisition of pumping stations. Types of positive environmental interventions identified by ROP beneficiaries: purchase of non-polluting equipment, development of water-sewer infrastructure, greening actions, use of biodegradable materials, purchase and use of solar installations, purchase of euro 6 equipment, construction of environmentally friendly waste platforms solid. The beneficiaries of POIM consider that the impact on the environment was a positive one through: management plans for protected areas, biodiversity conservation actions, through the ecological management of solid waste. Other actions with a positive impact on the environment mentioned by POCA and POC beneficiaries: recycling of used paper, training courses that also included an environmental component, burying fiber optics and improving urban aesthetics.

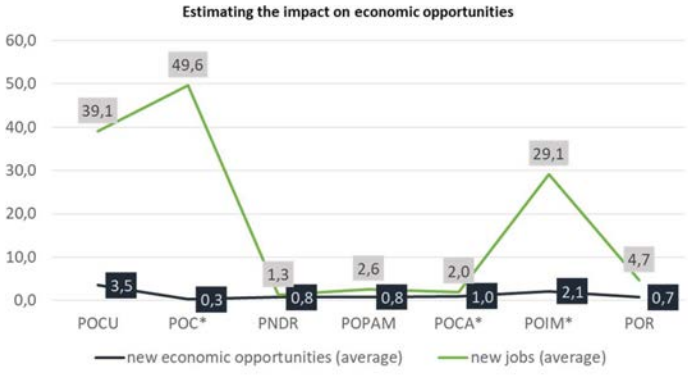


Negative effects on the environment were identified only by the beneficiaries of PNDR, POPAM and POR, respectively: the use of self-pollinating plant varieties, which reduces affects the natural development of the bee population, the treatment of crops with substances that also affect bees, manure growth with the increase of tourism due to the lack of recycling platforms, grazing of goats, invasive for the environment, pollution generated by means of transport and agricultural equipment, consumption of fuel and energy from non-renewable sources.

Impact on economic opportunities

The economic opportunities were operationalized in two components: 1) number of supported companies / enterprises, established through the implementation of the project, other than those of the direct beneficiaries (respondents to the questionnaire) and 2) number of new jobs created as a result of the implementation of the projects.

For the two components, at the level of the general sample, an average of 0.8 supported / newly created companies per implemented project and 3.8 new jobs per project were registered. However, on these two components, the differences between the beneficiaries are significant[25]. Most economic opportunities were developed by POCU beneficiaries (average 3.5 / project) and POIM (average 2.1 / project), and least by POC beneficiaries (average 0.3 / project). The POCU and POC projects are highlighted by the large number of newly created jobs, 39.1- POCU and 49.6- POC. PNDR projects are on the last position with 1.3 new jobs / approved project. We mention that about a third of the PNDR projects consider seasonal jobs.



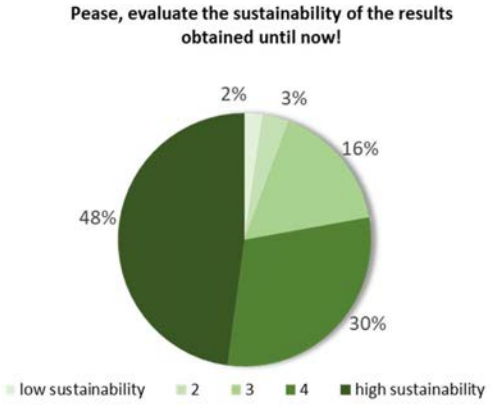
The sustainability of the projects financed by the ITI mechanism

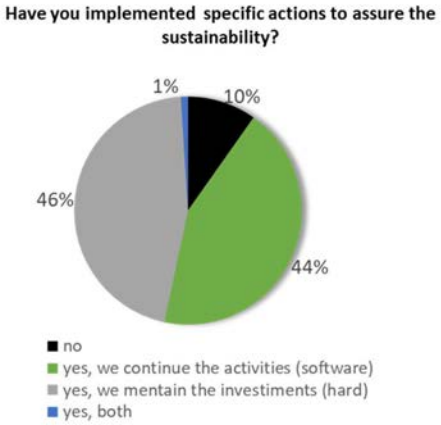
91% of the interviewed beneficiaries stated that the results of the implemented projects will be made available to the target groups and the locals from the Danube Delta region. The 9% who stated that they do not know if

[25] ANOVA Test, p=0.00

the results will be disseminated are beneficiaries of PNDR, POCU, POIM and POR with projects that are in the beginning phase and who cannot project the results they will obtain.

78% of the beneficiaries responding to the opinion poll considered that the implemented projects have a high or very high sustainability. 90% of them state that they have already implemented specific actions in order to ensure the sustainability of the results after the completion of the project (continuation of activities for software measures and maintenance of results for hard measures / investments).





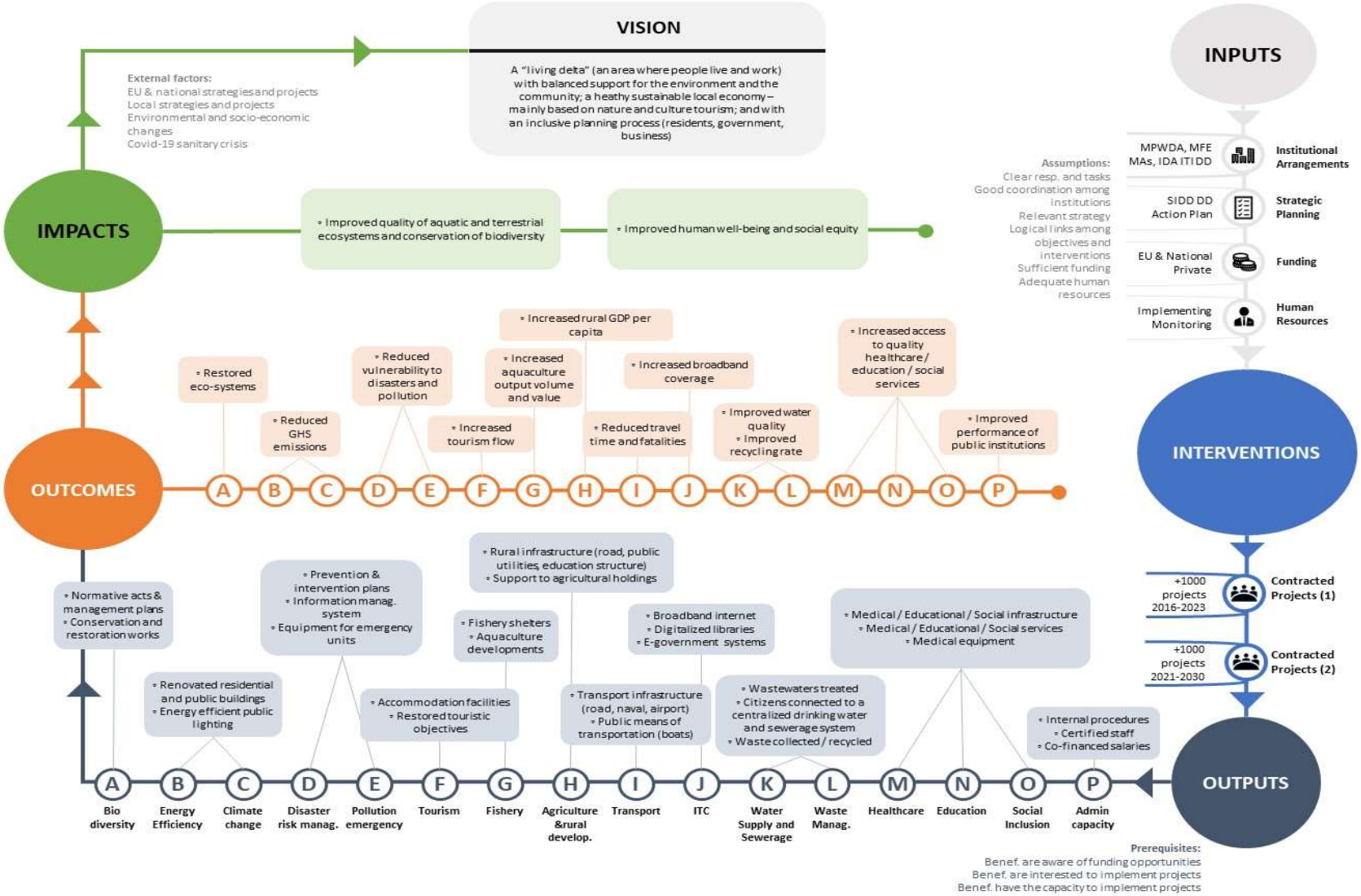
There were no statistically significant differences in the assessment of sustainability, depending on the categories of operational programs through which the projects were funded. At the level of POPAM and POCU, higher shares of beneficiaries were registered who have not yet implemented actions to ensure sustainability.

The perception of sustainability does not differ significantly depending on the size category of the beneficiary.

CONCLUSIONS

- 58% of beneficiaries consider that the ITI mechanism has facilitated the process of accessing European funds
- The ITI mechanism is appreciated to a greater extent by local public administrations (72% positive assessment), central public authorities * (67% positive assessment) and NGOs (70% positive assessment). The beneficiaries consider that the areas of intervention in which the ITI mechanism has contributed the most in terms of making European funds accessible are: developing administrative capacity, education, culture.
- The ITI mechanism is relevant both for the development of the capacity to access funds at the level of public administration and civil society and for the creation of an availability of access to funds at the level of all categories of beneficiaries.
- The efficiency of the ITI mechanism was mostly assessed from the perspective of economic development. Approximately two thirds of the beneficiaries consider that the ITI mechanism has covered to a large or very large extent the development needs of the institution of which they are part, of their locality and of the Danube Delta region.
- Bureaucracy is the main bottleneck mentioned by most beneficiaries.
- In the perception of the beneficiaries, the effectiveness of the projects is high. 78% of the beneficiaries responding to the opinion poll consider that they have achieved all or most of the projected results. In particular, the procurement and investment components have been completed.
- At the level of procedures and processes, the beneficiaries of ITI funding mentioned as main difficulties: accessing and using the MySMIS system, preparing the award documentation and the request for reimbursement.
- The impact on the development of tourism is, in the perception of the beneficiaries, medium-high. Two thirds of the beneficiaries of funding through the ITI DD mechanism appreciate that both tourists and residents are satisfied with the development of tourism in the area.
- At the environmental level, the perceived impact is average: 51% of the interviewed beneficiaries consider that the projects they implemented had a positive impact on the environment. Only 2% of beneficiaries also identified negative effects on the environment.
- The perceived impact on the development of economic opportunities is average, with an average of 0.8 supported / newly created companies per project implemented and 3.8 new jobs per project.
- 78% of the beneficiaries responding to the opinion poll appreciated that the implemented projects have a high or very high sustainability.

Annex 5. Reconstructed theory of change



Annex 6. Reconstructed logical framework

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL I GENERAL

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR A BIODIVERSITY AND ECO-SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
A.1 Developing of the planning and biodiversity and ecosystem management capacity (including monitoring) A.2 Preserving, protecting and capitalizing the natural heritage and combating / reducing the impact of the anthropic polluting activities	**OPLI Indicator:** 2S36 Number of Natura 2000 sites with active preservation measures **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** I.A.5 The share of economically valuable fish species I.A.6 Number of flood protection infrastructure objectives within the RBDD built / rehabilitated / upgraded	I1. Development and implementation of measures to reduce the amount of waste in natural areas I2. Marking and signaling of strictly protected areas and buffer zones, sport fishing areas, canals and lakes, camping and parking areas, etc. and the implementation of a monitoring and information system, including technology, such as motion-activated cameras, observation towers, etc. I3. Improving evidence-based management by developing and implementing a modern / efficient monitoring system and a predictive model for sedimentation dynamics in the Danube Delta I4. A detailed institutional analysis (review of functioning) of the DDBRA and related administrative reforms, in order to improve its managerial performance and the legislative framework governing the management of the DDBRA area, to enable residents to become active participants in the protection and management of natural resources. Capacity building measures for communities and DDBRA I5. Works for the restoration and optimization of the hydrological regime in the Danube Delta, including equipment and operational costs for physical interventions in order to restore the natural circulation of water and areas with important habitats I6. Restoration of ecological systems and natural habitat within the Natura 2000 network, including in lakes in natural lake complexes, affected by alluvial processes caused by anthropogenic interventions, through ecological clearing and reconstruction works, for species subject to conservation concerns, together with developing an integrated monitoring system covering the entire SD area (including cross-border areas), supporting evidence-based decision-making and community participation I7. Studies and Technical Assistance for the conservation of biodiversity and the restoration of ecosystems and natural habitats within the Natura 2000 network affected by anthropogenic impacts I8. Identification of additional polders, eligible for ecological restoration. These will include feasibility studies and technical projects for the restoration of natural habitats affected by non-ecological activities in agricultural, fisheries and forestry polders - full or partial ecological restoration works I9. Natural capitalization studies to establish the most valuable uses of land and natural resources for optimal management I10. Reforestation of areas where natural forest vegetation has disappeared or degraded I11. Investments to support local action to reduce nitrate pollution of waterways, pollution from agricultural activities and animal husbandry I13. Integrated pest management - development and implementation of an integrated mosquito control strategy I14. Integrated reed management strategy	**OPLI Indicators:** CO23 The surface of the supported habitats in order to obtain a better conservation stage 2S38 Approved sets of measures / management plans / action plans 2S94 Number of sites / areas / species / habitats (as appropriate) benefiting from approved management plans / action plans 2S95 Number of Natura 2000 sites with administrator / operational custodian - 4.1A 2S97 Number of sites / areas / species / habitats (as appropriate) benefiting from active conservation measures implemented 2S98 Number of Natura 2000 sites with administrator / operational custodian - 4.1B 2S100 Active measures implemented for species X (for action plans related to species whose area cannot be identified exhaustively) **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.A.1 DDRDB Management Plan implemented I.A.2 Management Plans of other Natura 2000 sites in the ITI territory I.A.3 Number of sets of measures and actions of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve based on widely accepted monitoring data and state-of-the-art hydrological, sedimentation and demographic models implemented I.A.4 The surface of the supported habitats in order to obtain a better conservation stage I.A.7 Number of approved normative acts that support the conservation of the natural heritage of the DD
A.3 Developing research, education and training in biodiversity and natural heritage protection fields	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.A.8. Number of permits issued by DDBRA for researchers involved in the internationally recognized diversified research program on DD's natural and cultural systems and resources	I12. Establishment of the International Center for Advanced Studies for DANUBIUS-RI River Systems	**COP Indicators:** CO24 Number of new researchers in the supported entities CO25 Number of researchers working in improved research Infrastructures CO27 Private investment combined with public support for innovation or R&D projects
A.4 Supporting eco-friendly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	Not available	Not available under Sector I.A	Not available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR B ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
B.1 Increasing the energy efficiency of the study area in economic, residential and public buildings and public service provision fields	**ROP Indicators:** CO32 Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public buildings **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.B.1 Number of renovated public buildings	I16. Improving the energy efficiency of public buildings (schools, hospitals, administrative buildings, etc.) I17. Extending and improving the energy efficiency of public lighting I18. Supporting the improvement of energy efficiency of households	**ROP Indicators:** 1S8 Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public lighting **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.B.2 Number of renovated residential buildings I.B.3 The length of the rehabilitated / extended thermal network:
B.2 Increasing the use of renewable energy sources within the study area	Not available	II15. Promoting the use of renewable energy sources. Investments in pilot projects that promote the use of renewable energy sources (wind, solar energy, heat pumps, biomass, micro - hydro, etc.) and non - polluting technologies, including the development and implementation of green propulsion systems in the Delta	Not available:
B.3 Improving local expertise, information availability and energy efficiency awareness	Not available	Not available	Not available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR C CLIMATE CHANGE

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
C.1 Developing a climate friendly and resilient area by integrating climate change into local public policies and planning	Not available	I20. Establish a unit with a clear mandate to address climate change issues, with a small number of dedicated and knowledgeable employees and able to operate cross-sectors	Not available
C.2 Promoting development of a low carbon economy through targeted adaptation measures and by reducing GHG emissions	**ROP Indicator:** CO34 Estimated annual decrease in greenhouse gases	Not available at the level of Sector I.C	**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** I.C.2 Number of households with a better classification of energy consumption due to the implementation of energy efficiency measures
C.3 Developing partnerships and financing instruments in the field of climate change	Not available	I19. Creation of a SC partnership platform, including a community-driven climate adaptation fund dedicated to low-income families, micro-grants or a loan mechanism to support SMEs and a partnership facility to promote public-private partnership for innovative measures on climate change	**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** I.C.1 Number of interventions and investments for climate change adaptation measures
C.4 Raising the awareness of the population and businesses on climate change	Not available	I21. Development of good practice guides with clear and easy local guidance on implementing climate change policies	Not available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR D DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
D.1 Reducing the vulnerability to all risks, while improving the quality of emergency services, based on national and county risk assessment, and develop and maintain an adequate response capacity	**OPLI Indicator:** 2S49a Average response time to emergencies for firefighting and other situations 2S49b Average response time to emergencies for providing first aid	I22. Providing special machinery and equipment for ISU and SMURD interventions in disaster situations I24. Modernization, rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure elements of the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations "Delta" of Tulcea County in Tulcea + Măcin + Crișan + Babadag + Topolog	**OPLI Indicator:** 2S50 Units equipped for emergencies **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.D.2 Number of disaster response drills (annual) I.D.4 Number of intervention plans available
D.3 Elaborating a County Integrated Information System for the Management of Emergency Situations as part of the National Information System for Disaster Management		I25. Creating and maintaining an inter-institutional database with risk factors	**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** I.D.3 Hazardous waste inventory and existing information management system (yes or no)
D.2 Assessing the main risks, elaborating risk maps for earthquakes and floods, and implementing projects to reduce these risks	**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** I.D.1 Number of inhabitants who benefit from flood protection measures as a result of making investments in infrastructure	I23. Flood protection works in fourteen cities / communes	**OPLI Indicator:** 2S81 Funding application submitted for analysis and approval to the European Commission / Independent Evaluation Body 2S82 Supporting documentation for the elaboration of the financing application (Feasibility Study, Institutional Analysis, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Environmental Impact Assessment, etc.)

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR E POLLUTION EMERGENCY

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
E.1 Developing an advanced information management system for hazardous wastes which may cause a pollution spill and represents a threat to the DD E.2 Reducing pollution risks and the response time by developing a prevention plan, providing adequate equipment and training of human resources	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.E.1 Number of pollution incidents in the DD region (annually) I.E.3 Average time to stop pollution incidents (days)	I26. Complete, coherent and comprehensive plans for the prevention and response to pollution emergencies, covering both water and land, as well as mobile and fixed sources of pollution I27. Creating an inter-institutional team to respond to pollution emergencies I28. Purchase of equipment for the first intervention team to have quick access in the localities in the center of the Delta where the pollution incident takes place I29. Creating and maintaining an inter institutional database with responsibility for the environment, for data exchange and better coordination between agencies	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** I.E.2 Number of emergency response drills (annually) I.E.4 Number of pollution prevention plans available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR F TOURISM

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
F.1 Developing and promoting the Danube Delta as an integrated tourism destination with a rich portfolio of sustainable tourism products and services by capitalizing the natural and cultural heritage F.2 Establishing a local destination management mechanism based on the active participation and ownership of local stakeholders F.3 Encouraging local population to run small tourism businesses that meet quality and sustainability standards and that are economically viable	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.A.1 Tourist arrivals (annually) II.A.2 Number of RBDD entry permits II.A.4 Occupancy rates for authorized / official accommodation II.A.5 Average length of stay (nights) II.A.6 Share of tourist accommodation structures open all year (%) II.A.8 The ratio between non-residents and residents owning land in DD	I30. Development and construction of tourist infrastructure I31. Institutionalization of a Management Organization for the Danube Delta (OMD) destination correlated with the development of the Danube Delta brand I32. Elaboration and implementation of a program with multiple destinations for the development of products and attractions I33. Implement a support mechanism for sustainable and innovative tourism, based on nature and culture and for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and tourism for a green local economy I34. Implementation of an extensive program for beautification of settlements and revitalization of urban centers I35. Program to improve the quality of accommodation units and services I36. Interventions related to cultural heritage (rehabilitation, conservation, etc.) I37. Development of a program for interpreting (learning) destinations I38. Development and development of an emergency and first aid program for tourism workers and service providers I39. Establishment of a research observatory specialized in tourism	**ROP Indicators**: CO9 Increase of the expected number of visits to cultural and natural heritage sites and supported attractions 1S23 Restored cultural heritage objectives 1S68 Public buildings built / modernized / extended CO38 Open spaces created or rehabilitated in urban areas CO39 Public or commercial buildings constructed or renovated in urban areas 1S67 People living in small and medium-sized cities where local development strategies have been implemented **NRDP Indicators**: P6B301 Number of modernized historical monuments **ISSDDD Specific Indicators** II.A.3 Number of boats available for tourists at the main exit points and nodal points (monitored routes) II.A.7 Number of traditional houses maintained / rehabilitated included in the tourist circuit

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR G FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
G.1 Correcting the ecological imbalance among predator and prey fish species and restoring environmental quality	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.B.2 Size of predatory fish species populations II.B.3 Caras population dynamics	I40. Sedimentation reduction in large lakes I41. Dredging large lakes to restore water depth I43. Support the artificial reproduction of valuable species, such as pike, pikeperch and other declining species and the construction / modernization of simple landing facilities in areas with high density of fishermen I44. Improving fish habitat I45. Regulation or elimination of camping for uncontrolled fishing	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.B.4 Number of investments / projects in aquaculture / processing / fisherman safety
G.2 Increasing the economic value of fishing and aquaculture activities	**FOP Indicators:** 1.1 Variation in production value 1.2 Variation in production volume 1.7 Jobs (ENI) created in the fisheries sector or complementary activities 1.8 Jobs (ENI) maintained in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	I42. Diversifying the activities of commercial fishermen by developing complementary activities - improving eco-tourist sites, shelters to meet the needs of fishermen, building simple landing facilities in areas with high density of fishermen. Promoting and providing training services for fisheries and sustainable recreational / sport fishing I46. Propose tax incentives, such as the elimination of the water tax I47. Improving the collection and analysis of fisheries data I48. Strengthening the analytical capacity of INCDD I49. Improving research and development activities related to fisheries in research institutes, public institutions and fishermen's associations I50. Improving aquaculture including by supporting the business environment I51. Support for small-scale fish processing. Diversifying household and village fish processing by introducing small-scale canned packaging units (for crucian carp and other cheap fish species, such as slugs and bream) and improving smoking systems (small electric smokers), mainly to produce delicacies for visiting tourists	
G.3 Increasing quality job opportunities in the fishing sector	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.B.1 Number of fisheries jobs by specific activities (newly created through projects)		

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR H AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
H.1 Promoting the integration of agri-food producers (especially organic products) into the value-chain in order to help them benefit from the advantage of being close to external markets and from the tourism opportunities in the area	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.C.3 Share of irrigation infrastructure rehabilitated through ITI projects out of total viable irrigation infrastructure (%) II.C.10 % of modernized communal and village infrastructure, out of which after school, sports facilities, dispensary, agricultural road, forest road, modernized local roads, kindergartens, street lighting, modernized high schools and schools, parks and playgrounds, markets, bridges and footbridges, water network, sewerage network, networks for population safety	I52. Establishment and modernization of facilities for the production / collection / processing / marketing of agricultural products I53. Modernization of rural infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads, schools, etc.) I55. Completion of land restitution and registration in the land book for land / farm consolidation I56. Support for organic farming in Natura 2000 areas I57. Expanding access to vocational education for agriculture I58. Modernization of quality control systems for agricultural products I60. Providing consultancy and training for farmers / rural labor force I61. Encouraging organic farming I63. Modernization / rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure I64. Consolidation and modernization of small farms I66. Modernization of the technical endowments of the farms I67. Bottom-up initiatives for local development I70. Granting land, including through concessions granted by the Tulcea County Council to local farmers to encourage agricultural activities and increase income levels I71. Encourage the establishment of producer groups / organizations I72. Stimulating the creation of short supply chains for the benefit of tourism activities I73. Supporting the branding / certification of agricultural products and their marketing on international markets I74. Providing incentives for maintaining agricultural activities in the center of the Delta I77. Modernization of educational infrastructure (especially for primary and secondary education)	**NRDP Indicators:** P2A13 No. of holdings receiving aid for investments in agricultural holdings P3A12 Public and private investments for food processing and marketing = total project wave (euro) of total ITI agricultural investments P3A13 No of farms receiving investment aid for food processing and marketing P5A13 No. of projects receiving investment aid for irrigation P5A14 Target area (ha) for irrigation through ITI projects P5D11 No. of projects with investments in manure storage platforms P6B200 No of projects benefiting from infrastructure investment aid P6B201 Length of agricultural roads (m) = agricultural road P6B202 Forest road length (m) = forest road P6B203 Water network length (m) P6B204 Sewer network length (m) P6B205 Length of modernized local roads (m) P6B206 No of modernized high schools and colleges P6B207 No of modernized kindergartens P6B208 No of modernized after-schools P6B41 No. of LAGs selected P6B42 Population targeted by the LAG **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.C.1 Number of farmers / associations with access to promotion networks II.C.2 Number of participants in education / training programs through PNDR II.C.6 The area of land granted to farmers out of publicly available land
H.2 Supporting diversification of agricultural and non-farm activities for job creation by encouraging active involvement of local communities H.3 Promoting young farmers' access to land to enable improved revenue flows to the local population	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.C.8 % of farmers who have started a non-agricultural activity	I65. Creating small non-agricultural businesses I62. The practice of agricultural activities by the younger generations	**NRDP Indicators:** P6A11 No. of holdings receiving start-up aid / support for investments in non-agricultural activities
H.4 Preserving, protecting, capitalizing and promoting the natural and movable and immovable cultural heritage in rural areas	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** II.C.9 % of initiatives / projects that capitalize on the cultural heritage of the area	I54. Initiating actions to protect, improve and promote natural and cultural resources I68. Afforestation of agricultural and non-agricultural lands in the Danube Delta region I69. Preservation of local heritage and traditions (including crafts) I75. Supporting the rehabilitation of flood protection infrastructure I76. Farmers 'and processors' access to risk management tools I78. Implementation of an extended program for the revitalization of the localities in the Delta Center by carrying out architectural rehabilitation projects and increasing the quality of public spaces	**NRDP Indicators:** P6B300 Number of projects that benefit from aid for investments in the local cultural and natural heritage P6B301 No modernized historical monuments P6B302 Number of modernized cultural centers II.C.4 The surface of unproductive forested land (through PNDR projects 2014-2020 in the ITI territory on M.8 APIA) II.C.5 Number of flood protection interventions (through ITI projects)
H.5 Improving the local population / farmers' access to information regarding the possibilities of tapping CAP funds - create a special agriculture extension team for the Danube Delta	Not available	I59. Organizing information events on local and European funding, including training projects	Not available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR I TRANSPORT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
I.1 Increasing territorial connectivity to ensure access to the markets in Tulcea, the rest of Romanian and the EU; equal connectivity for enterprises, individuals, and goods in the DD territory, taking great care to protecting the existing environmental heritage I.2 Increasing accessibility in the Core DD area to support the development of tourism and fisheries, and the mobility for the residents of sparsely populated areas	**OPLI Indicators:** 2S13 Passengers boarded and disembarked in airport transport **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** III.A.1 Travel time between Tulcea and Constanța III.A.2 Travel time between Tulcea and Brăila III.A.3 Travel time between Tulcea and Galați III.A.4 Volume of goods transported by inland waterways	I79. Modernization of the national road DN 22 Constanța - Tulcea - Măcin - Brăila including construction of a bridge over the Danube in the Brăila-Măcin area I81. Modernization of the county road DJ229, sector I and II, Niculițel - Zebil - Sarichioi I82. Modernization of the county road DJ222N, Tulcea - Pardina - Chilia Veche I83. Modernization of the county road DJ226 Tronson DN22B - Corbu - Săcele - Istria - Mihai Viteazu I86. Modernization of county roads (regional transport infrastructure): DJ222B Tronson Baia-Ceamurlia de Sus; DJ222 Tronson Visina- Ceamurlia de Sus; DJ 223A Tronson Enisala - Babadag - Russian Glory; DJ 226A Tronson Cetatea Histria - DN22 / Tariverde I84. Modernization and increase of the operational capacity of the ports of Tulcea, Sulina, Măcin, Isaccea, Mahmudia and Chilia I87. Rehabilitation and modernization of the Sulina Canal I85. Development and modernization of airport infrastructure	**ROP Indicators:** CO13 Total length of newly built roads connected to TEN-T CO14 Length of reconstructed / modernized roads connected to TEN-T **OPLI Indicators:** 2S17 Modernized airports 2S6 Ports located on modernized TEN-T CO13a Total length of newly built TEN-T roads **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** III.A.5 Number of interventions on improved access to key services during the winter
I.3 Improving health and protecting the environment by minimizing emissions and the consumption of resources (including energy) by the transport system	Not available	I80. Sustainable public transport system, adapted to the specificities of the Delta center	**ROP Indicator:** 1S11 Implemented operations for public and non-motorized transport **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** III.A.6 Number of public and private boats made available to passengers

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR J INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
J.1 Providing full access to broadband internet network	**COP Indicator:** 3S8 NGA broadband coverage / availability as a percentage of households	I88. Internet / ultra-fast internet for an ecological tourism	**COP Indicators:** CO10 New households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps 211B1 Number of uncovered localities that will be covered by the project implementation 211B2 Number of broadband Internet access points
J.2 Supporting widespread private, business and public use of ICT	**COP Indicator:** 3S14 Percentage of citizens who regularly use the Internet out of total population **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** III.B.1 The degree of regular use of the Internet at national level	I89. Improving e-government services and local public monitoring systems I90. Supporting ICT for business through e-portal and providing facilities I91. Formulation and implementation of open data policies I92. Increasing the vertical integration of ICT innovation solutions in the local economy I97. Development of ICT infrastructure and systems and digital skills to support education, health, online culture and digital inclusion	**COP Indicators:** 233B1 No of students in pre-university education, active users on the national learning platform, in total number of students in pre-university education (%) 233B2 No of pre-university teachers, active users on the national learning platform, out of the total number of pre-university teachers (%) 233C1 No of digitized cultural heritage elements, uploaded on the platform created by the project 233C2 Number of "Digitized Cultural Heritage Elements" and provided to europeana.eu 233C3 Number of rare documents already digitized, and number of rare documents digitized by the project, uploaded on Europeana.eu 233C4 No of objects already digitized in library collections and number of objects in library collections digitized by the project uploaded to Europeana.eu 233C5 No of objects already digitized, belonging to the national heritage, in museum collections and number of objects from the national heritage digitized by the project, which are uploaded on Europeana.eu 233W1 No of high school students using the internet via wireless campus, out of the total number of high school students (%) 233W2 No of teachers using the internet via wireless-campus, out of the total number of teachers (%) 233W3 No of gymnasium units that benefit from wireless equipment through the implementation of the project 3S17 Schools using OER, WEB 2.0 in education (no of schools) **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** III.B.2 Number of inhabitants using e-government systems III.B.3 No of prehospital and hospital units using telemedicine systems III.B.4 Number of newly established public information access points (PAPIs)
J.3 Ensuring synergies with other sectors to promote the transfer of knowledge, services and economic development	Not available	I93. Increasing private investment in RDI and encouraging demand for RDI I94. Increasing the transfer of knowledge, technology and staff with RDI skills through partnerships between the private and research environment I95. Increasing the excellence of the scientific base as a promoter of innovation through the development of R&D infrastructure I96. Increasing involvement in research at EU level by unlocking the potential for excellence in RDI, such as through the Horizon 2020 framework program, and by attracting advanced talent and skills into the national RDI system	Not available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR K WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE SYSTEMS AND INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
K.1 Providing drinking water in order to meet the quality of life standards and the economic development objectives, subject to demand, financial feasibility, and operation and maintenance constraints	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.A.1 Share of rural population connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI-funded projects (%) IV.A.2 Share of population in cities connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI-funded projects (%)	I98. Projects in areas with a population equivalent of more than 2,000 I99. Projects in areas with a population equivalent of less than 2,000	**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** IV.A.7 Number of inhabitants connected to a centralized drinking water system through ITI
K.2 Supporting the collection of wastewaters in a centralized manner (subject to demand, financial feasibility, and operation and maintenance constraints) and moving away from the current use of pit latrines which constitute a health hazard in prone to flood areas	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.A.3 Share of rural population connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI-funded projects (%) IV.A.4 Share of population in cities connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI-funded projects (%)		**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** IV.A.8 Number of inhabitants connected to a centralized sewerage system through ITI
K.3 Adopting treatment methods of centrally collected wastewater either in a conventional or a more low-cost way	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.A.5 Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in rural areas IV.A.6 Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in cities		**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** IV.A.9 Number of wastewater treatment plants

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR L SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
L.1 Improving the recycling rate to achieve the corresponding EU target of 50% to which Romania is committed L.2 Implementing of waste reduction, reuse and recycling in local communities, in order to assure efficient and sustainable management, resource saving, environmental protection and tourism destination development	**OPLI Indicator:** 2S25 The amount of biodegradable waste stored **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.B.2 Total amount of recyclable waste recovered from the total quantity collected (%)	I101. Investments in waste management systems for separate waste management (infrastructure for waste separation at source, collection, sorting and transport) I102. Public education and awareness program on waste management I103. Compost bins for rural households for biodegradable waste processing I104. Investments in units for the treatment and disposal of construction and demolition waste	**OPLI Indicators:** CO17 Additional waste recycling capacity 2S28 Closed / rehabilitated non-compliant landfills **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.B.3 Total quantity deviated from storage out of the total quantity collected (%) IV.B.4 Total quantity of household waste collected separately (dry fraction) (tones / year) IV.B.5 Total quantity of household waste collected separately (wet fraction) (tones / year) IV.B.6 Number of inhabitants and visitors participating in educational activities related to waste management (number of people)
L.3 Management of floating waste material	Not available	I100. Collection of waste floating from river channels	Not available
L.4 Increasing the capitalization degree of waste collected from households and businesses	**ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** IV.B.1 Total amount of household waste collected and transported (tones / year)	I105. Recovery of waste collected from the population and economic agents	Not available

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR M HEALTH

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
M.1 Improving the access to primary health care (PHC) services based on prevention and early detection and treatment of chronic diseases	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.C.2 Number of emergency units IV C.3. Life expectancy at birth	I113. Information, education and communication campaigns on the healthy and hygienic environment I116. Increasing the prevalence of health programs focused on prevention and screening	Not available
M.2 Supporting the effective control of epidemics, early warning and coordinated response, and risk factors surveillance		I106. Strengthening the response capacity of the Public Health Directorate (DSP) by developing and implementing an environmental health surveillance system	Not available
M.3 Improving health infrastructure for primary, secondary and tertiary health care, and the related service delivery system adjusted to modern technologies		I107. Rehabilitation / modernization of IT facilities and equipment I108. Modernization, endowment and organization of a functional circuit within the Tulcea Emergency Hospital (including for the integrated outpatient clinic) and for the Măcin Hospital I109. Rehabilitation / transformation of the TB pavilion within the Tulcea Emergency Hospital into a social center (residential care shelter) I110. Creation of public outpatient clinics by rehabilitating closed hospital buildings in Babadag and Sulina I111. Ensuring the interoperability of medical information systems at the level of healthcare (telemedicine and e-health) I112. Reforms to increase the profitability of the governance / management of the sector (financing mechanism in hospital for stimulating public outpatient systems, family medicine and telemedicine) I114. Ambulances for emergency medical care and civil rehabilitation works I115. Providing area-specific training for medical staff	**ROP Indicators:** 1S35 Beneficiaries of medical infrastructure built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped (for community and outpatient medical services) 1S36 Medical units built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped (for community and outpatient medical services 1S37 Emergency reception units (tertiary level) S77 Rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped County Hospital **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.C.1 Number of integrated primary socio-medical care centers built / rebuilt

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR N EDUCATION

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
N.1 Providing lifelong learning opportunities to create labor skills necessary for the 21st century economy N.2 Supporting secondary and vocational education that prepare students for the global knowledge economy and for the specificities of the local economy N.3 Increasing the quality of the primary education and early-education systems	**OPHC Indicators:** 4S201 People who get a job, including those who are self-employed 4S6 Persons who, upon termination of participation, acquire a qualification 4S110 Certified persons as a result of the support provided 4S111 People who find a job as a result of the support received **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.D.1 Inclusion rate in pre-school / preschool / primary / secondary / upper secondary education in rural areas IV.D.2 Inclusion rate in pre-school / preschool / primary / secondary / upper secondary education for Roma citizens IV.D.3 School dropout rate (%) IV.D.5 Number of people who benefit from support projects for training / exchange of good practices	I117. Ensuring relevant, accessible and stimulating lifelong learning programs in sustainable tourism, agriculture and fisheries in Community Lifelong Learning Centers I118. Creating an education and training network for students living in remote areas or in areas with less than 2000 inhabitants, in order to provide access to quality primary and secondary education for all I119. Providing support for the establishment of vocational schools (by building / modernizing / expanding infrastructure) that are relevant, attractive and comprehensive and that produce a workforce with knowledge and skills at international standards and relevant to the global requirements of nature-based tourism and the market recreational fishing I120. Strengthen the services provided by kindergartens and nurseries by developing, supporting, rehabilitating and providing equipment to increase access to education and care for preschool children I121. Bringing back to school students who drop out of school early through school-by-school and second-chance programs I122. Creating partnerships between employers, education and training providers and research bodies to make the education system perform better in addressing labor market needs	**OPHC Indicators:** 4S36 Employees who benefit from training programs 4S17 Supported businesses 4S8 People receiving support 4S114 Employees receiving support for participation in CVT (skills training / validation) **ROP Indicators:** CO35 The capacity of childcare or education infrastructures to receive support 1S52 The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support – before preschool 1S53 The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support - vocational and technical education 1S54 The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support - lifelong learning 1S65 The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support – preschool 1S66 The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support – school **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** IV.D.4 Number of students receiving support for participation in education / vocational programs

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR O SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROTECTION

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
O.1 Reducing labor related and human capital disparities among Roma people by providing improved integrated services in all dimensions and aspects of exclusion (education, health, housing, employment) O.3 Improving social outcomes by making social protection programs more relevant and efficient in the Danube Delta area	**OPHC Indicators**: 4S155 Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion from marginalized communities who acquire a qualification upon participation, of which: Roma 4S156 Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in marginalized communities who have a job, including those who are self-employed, upon completion **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** IV.E.1 Number of kindergartens and other educational services for children under 6 in disadvantaged communities IV.E.2 Number of children integrated in nurseries / kindergartens in disadvantaged communities IV.E.3 Number of children integrated in the preparatory class and who participated in preschool education IV.E.4 Number of students at risk of dropping out of school at the beginning and end of the school year IV.E.5 Number of children involved in different types of complementary educational measures (after school, summer kindergartens, school tutoring, etc.) IV.E.6 Number of centers that have implemented complementary education measures in the ITI territory IV.E.7 No of school mediators employed full time in the school system	I123. Development of institutional infrastructure for preschool children (0-6 years) in communities with a high share of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups I124. Expanding the school mediator program in schools with a high percentage of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups I125. Implementing community grants for intervention in education I127. Grants to SMEs for employment for NEETs in relevant areas I128. Improving digital skills among ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups I129. Increasing access to and efficiency in the provision of social services, including related infrastructure	**OPHC Indicators**: 4S161 Supported services at the level of marginalized communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion 4S47 People belonging to vulnerable groups receiving integrated services 4S160 People at risk of poverty and social exclusion from marginalized communities who benefit from integrated services, of which: Roma 4S162 Marginalized communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion (of which: in rural areas) receiving support, of which: those with a Roma minority population **ROP Indicators**: 1S42 Beneficiaries (adults with disabilities) of day center infrastructure for people with disabilities, rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped 1S43 Beneficiaries (adults with disabilities) of deinstitutionalization infrastructure built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped **ISSDDD Specific Indicators**: IV.E.8 No of school mediators trained through specific programs
O.2 Preserving the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities in the study area	Not available	I126. Facilitating the regularization of the property right	**ISSDDD Specific Indicators**: IV.E.9 Number of persons who have benefited from regular property rights

RECONSTRUCTION OF SIDDDD LOG – LEVEL II SECTORIAL
SECTOR P ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

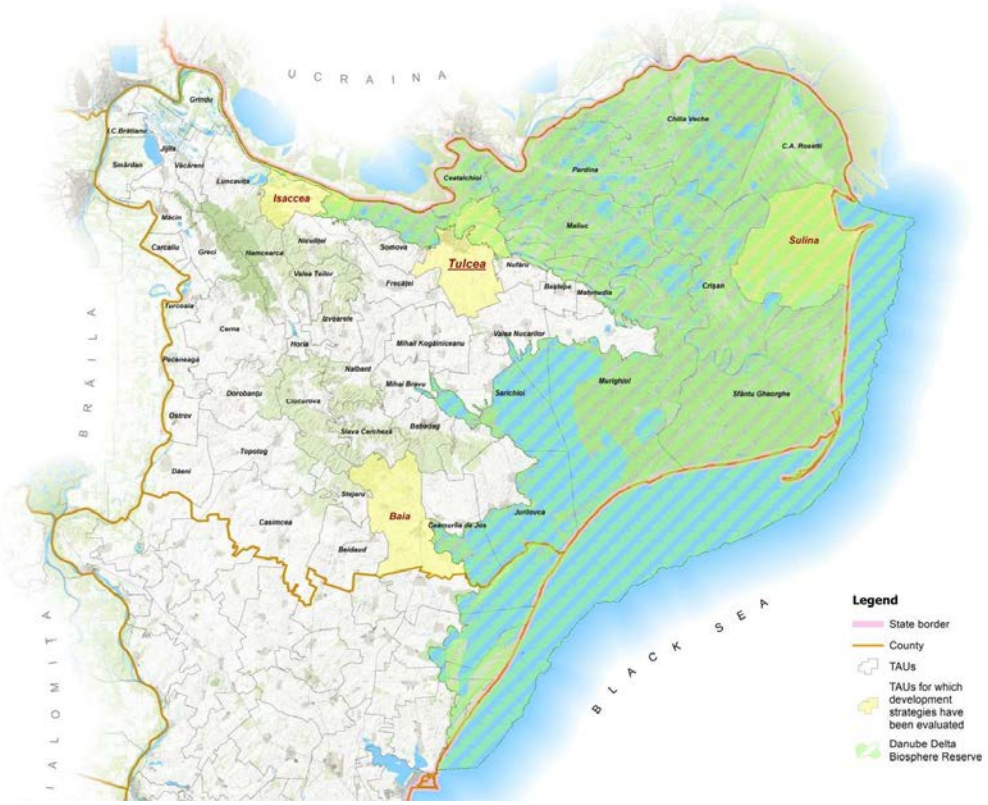
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT INDICATORS	INTERVENTIONS	OUTPUT INDICATORS
P.1 Providing efficient and cost-effective public services P.2 Improving evidence-based strategic and budgetary planning across all levels of governance in the DD region in order to support environmental and economic objectives	**OPAC Indicators:** 5S18 Local authorities and public institutions that have implemented standard mechanisms and procedures for substantiating long-term strategic decisions and planning 5S19 Local authorities and public institutions in which unitary quality and performance management systems developed through the program have been implemented according to the Action Plan for prioritizing and staging the implementation of quality management 5S20 Local authorities and public institutions in which measures to simplify procedures for citizens have been implemented in accordance with the Integrated Plan for the simplification of procedures for citizens developed at national level **ISSDDD Specific Indicator:** V.A.3 Number of projects implemented within the Danube Delta ITI	I130. Strengthening local administrative capacity for strategic and budgetary planning, decision making, human resources management, monitoring and evaluation 131. Identify, develop and implement measures to increase transparency, inclusion, ethics and integrity and to reduce corruption within public authorities and institutions I132. Technical Assistance (TA) for ITI program management I133. Review of regulations to improve the design of household subsidies, in order to improve the accessibility of services and a better targeting and use of financial and natural resources I134. Improving access to and quality of services provided by the judiciary I136. Development and implementation of online services I137. competitiveness	**OPTA Indicators:** 6S22 Quarterly reports prepared by the ITI coordinating structure approved by the Ministry of European Funds 6S9 Personal number in the structure coordinating the ITI, whose salaries are co-financed by the OPTA - full-time equivalent annually **OPAC Indicators:** 5S23 Local public administration staff who have been certified at the end of their training 5S25 Public authorities and institutions supported to develop operational procedures on anti-corruption preventive measures and related indicators 5S26 Staff from public authorities and institutions who have been certified to complete courses in the field of corruption prevention, transparency, ethics and integrity **ISSDDD Specific Indicators:** V.A.1 Number of public authorities and institutions that have implemented unitary measures to reduce administrative burdens, to implement quality and performance management systems V.A.2 Number of revised normative acts aimed at improving the legal and institutional framework in the Danube Delta
P.3 Increasing participatory decision-making in synergy with the environmental and economic objectives	Not available	I135. Actions aimed at ensuring coordination between public institutions with responsibilities in biodiversity conservation and ecological reconstruction of the Danube Delta	Not available

Annex 7. External coherence of SIDDDD with six local strategies (full analyses)

Comparative Analysis of Six Local Strategies with the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Development in Danube Delta

This report includes a review of six local development strategies in order to determine the external coherence of the SIDDDD. It address the evaluation question - Is there a correspondence between the Strategy's objectives and those of other interacting public actions? The results indicated a good coordination among the objectives set by the SIDDDD and the objectives set by the six analyzed local strategies, respectively Tulcea County Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy, Tulcea Municipality Local Strategy, Sulina Local Development Strategy, Baia Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy, Isaccea City Development Strategy and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The local strategies are drafted to complement the interventions financed under the Danube Delta Strategy and to contribute to its final objectives and related targets.

Map 21 – Area covered by SIDDDD depicting areas for which strategies were reviewed



Tulcea County Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy for 2014 – 2020

1. Overview

Tulcea county is Dobrogea region, in the south-east of Romania, with the seat in Tulcea city. It is the fourth largest county by size, spread over 8,499 km^2, which accounts for 3.6 percent of the total area of the country**.** One the six counties of the South-East Region[26], Tulcea makes about a quarter of the overall surface of the region. The county is located on the Danube river, with access to the Black Sea, and it borders Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, in addition to Constanta, Galati and Braila counties.

Tulcea has nearly all landforms, including mountains, plains, delta, sea, and steppe landscapes. One third of the county area is the Danube Delta. In the south-east there are the Razim and Sinoie lagoons. The county is host to the Macin Mountains, the remains of a prehistorical mountains of over 400 million years and the oldest geological formation in the country. Tulcea has 68 protected areas, and one of them is the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR). In addition to Tulcea city, the county has four towns (Babadag, Sulina, Isaccea, and Macin) and 46 communes comprising 133 villages.

As of 2012, there are 243,336 people living in the county (an almost even rural-urban split), with a density of 29 people /km^2, the smallest in the country. The small density is because one third of the county is covered by water, with 43 percent agricultural land, and 12 percent forest. Tulcea has quite a rich ethic mix with 85 percent Romanians, around 5 percent Russian Lipovans, 1.62 percent Roma, and 1.5 percent Turks and Ukrainians altogether. Like many places in Romania, over the past decades the county has experienced a decline in the population, in parallel with aging.

Figure 22 - Tulcea County, Danube Delta.

Source: Tulcea County Council https://www.cjtulcea.ro/sites/cjtulcea/Pages/galerie.aspx

The local economy is based on extractive industry (stone quarries), agriculture (fishery and viticulture with a few popular wineries), trade and tourism. More than a quarter of the labor force is employed by the extractive sector. The unemployment rate is 5.8 percent (2014), while the average income was RON 1,506 (EUR 320) in 2016. Tulcea experienced a 9 percent economic growth between 2008 and 2011. Services account for 44 percent of the county's gross domestic product (GDP), industry

[26] The South East Region comprises six counties, namely Tulcea, Constanta, Buzau, Braila, Vrancea, and Galati.

for 27 percent, agriculture for 11 percent and constructions for 9 percent. The county's GDP was RON 5.1 billion in 2011, with EUR 4,465/capita (in 2012), which represents 0.73 percent disparity compared to the national level. The county budget was RON 487 million in 2012 (EUR 100 million). Fishery and aquaculture are the key components of the local agriculture. 32,000 fishing permits were issued in 2013, almost twice more than in the previous year. Tourism is an important local activity in its various forms - be recreational, fishing & sports hunting, eco-tourism, or scientific tourism. The county has a few wild beaches at the Black Sea and an airport nearby Tulcea city that can operate domestic and international flights.

2. Comparative Analysis

The Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy of the Tulcea County (ISDSTC) for the 2014-2020 period[27] was approved by the Tulcea County Council, the local authority responsible for coordinating the activities of local councils as to ensure public service delivery throughout the county. The ISDSTC aims to be a dynamic document able to adjust and respond to the economic and social environment challenges at the county, national and European level. Although it was approved before the Delta Danube strategy, the county authorities have agreed in advance to correlate the county plan with the SIDDDD and use the ITI DD for the local projects that could support the strategic and sectoral objectives of the SIDDDD.

The ISDSTC is a very large document, with several chapters covering a wide range of issues. The strategy has a chapter on the priorities for the South-East region, which include expanding tourism, modernization of agriculture & fishery and urban infrastructure, and improving access and mobility. For the strategy purposes the county was split into six development regions, namely 1) Sulina-Crisan-Sfantu Gheorghe, 2) Murighiol- Babadag-Baia, 3) Turcoaia-Cerna, 4) Macin-Isaccea, 5) Topolog-Casimcea, and 6) Tulcea city. The document mentions that regions #1, 2 & 3 would receive additional financing through ITI DD. The strategy is designed based on diversifying the county economy according to areas of potential combined with regional development, in which the city of Tulcea has the greatest touristic, commercial, and industrial potential and the Turcoaia-Cerna region the largest agriculture and fishery prospective. The strategy has three main development directions and several objectives. The project portfolio of hundreds of interventions outlined over 200 pages is following the key directions and objectives.

The two strategies have different territorial and period coverage. While the SIDDDD goes until 2030, the county document covers a much shorter period, up to 2020 only. The ISDSTC focuses on the entire Tulcea county, while the SIDDDD targets a limited area – only the DDBR and its neighboring areas in Tulcea, in addition to a few rural communities in Constanta county. As the county strategy focuses on most of the areas covered by the SIDDDD, this allows the county authorities to undertake efforts in line with the strategic and sectoral objectives of the latter.

Both strategic visions are correlated, but employing different approaches. The SIDDDD has a special feature pertaining to specific areas, with two different angles. One angle is about striking a balance between the environment and community by focusing on nature and cultural tourism-based economy in the DDBR, while the other angle emphasizes on economic and urban development in the

[27] Tulcea county development strategy availale at:
https://www.cjtulcea.ro/sites/cjtulcea/Informatii/Pages/programe.aspx

neighboring areas. The Danube Delta strategy's integrated vision focuses on biodiversity, business, and economic environment in the traditional and modern sectors, while in parallel is integrating agriculture and tourism and supporting services in urban areas. By comparison, the county strategy has a broader vision that incorporates all key elements from the SIDDDD – such as European values, smart development, cohesion, and environment protection drawing from the existing potential of the six development regions.

The ISDSTC has two key objectives that are integrated and correlated with the strategic objectives of the SIDDDD. The county's first strategic objective is to develop a sustainable community that should efficiently use and manage resources in the priority areas and in those with economic potential, hence ensuring prosperity, social cohesion, and environment protection throughout the county. The second objective, which is targeting the ITI DD area, aims to preserve the environment through scientific environment management and support from local communities, while developing a sustainable, green economy and improved services drawn from the comparative advantage of the territory.

More specifically, the county document tries to pose an equilibrium between the local socio-economic setting and geographical position by using the Danube Delta's great natural resources potential. The county is seeking to develop tourism with non-pollutant and traditional activities and expand eco-tourism in the Danube Delta region by using local resources, in addition to having a qualified labor force and creating more jobs. Another target is about improving competitiveness and economy through sustainable, smart, and inclusive development, in parallel with diversifying local economy using the natural, cultural, and human heritage. Finally, access to better public services would help improve the quality of life in the county, while local actors would work together with social partners and business environment in the development process. The sectoral objectives of the county strategy are slightly different than the pillars and objectives from the SIDDDD.

The county has three major development areas (as opposed to five pillars in the SIDDDD), namely, i) development of administrative and operational intervention capacity, ii) sustainable economic development, and iii) development of social sector. Each area has a few sub-sectors, with 14 priority areas in total. For example, there are two priority areas under local administration – such as development of administrative capacity and operational capacity for emergencies. Eight priorities are under economic development – e.g., improving transport infrastructure, expanding access to public services, tourism development, and diversifying local economy – and four under social sector, such as social assistance, health, and education. The sub-sectors are further split into 65 sub-priorities or indicative objectives. The two strategies have comparable priorities. The difference is about the areas of interventions – sectoral objectives in the SIDDDD vs. indicative operations in the county plan. Some of the sectoral objectives from the SIDDDD, like biodiversity, fishery, and IT&C, are not included in the strategy, as they are outside the county's purview.

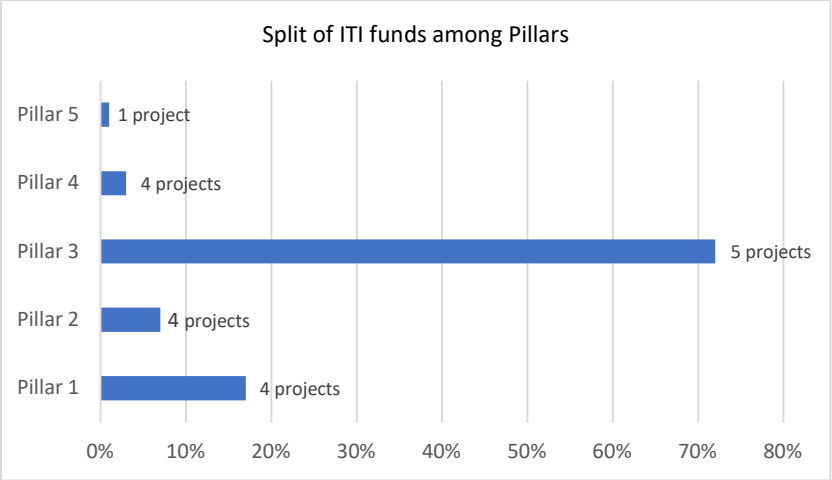
Funding Sources

ITI DD Funds

The strategy is implemented through ITI DD funds under a few EU programs – the Large Infrastructure Operational Program (LIOP), the Regional Operational Program (ROP), the Administrative Capacity Operational Program (ACOP), and Fishery and Maritime Affairs Operational Program (FMAOP). So far, 18 projects have been approved with a total value of nearly EUR 500 million, covering all pillars from the SIDDDD. Almost three quarters of the money is spent on transport projects

(Pillar 3), 17 percent cover interventions on environment and natural resources (Pillar 1), while the lowest shares are in connection to Pillar 2 (7 percent) and Pillar 1 (one percent).

Figure 23. Split of ITI DD funds among pillars



All but one projects are currently under implementation, thus their local socio-economic impact is yet to be assessed. Only one project has been finalized - a RON 40 million integrated solid waste management system.

Table 31. Projects implemented under ITI DD

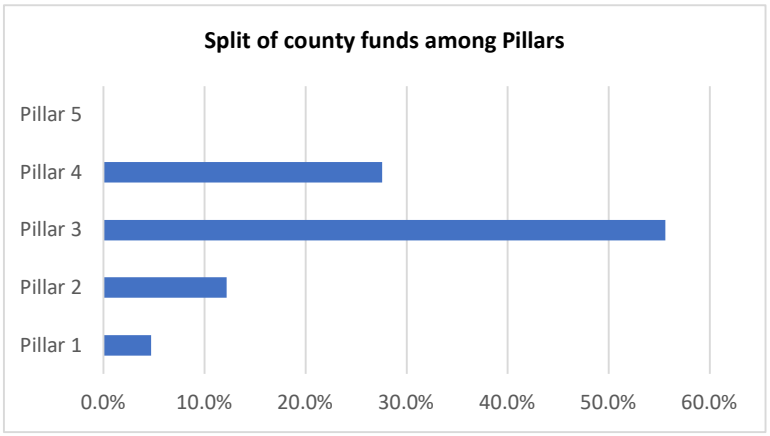
EU Program	Project	Total cost (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar
LIOP	Integrated Solid waste management system in Tulcea County Phase II	40,740,000	Biodiversity and eco-system management /1
ROP	Improving energy efficiency in nursing home Sf. Nectarie in Tulcea City	10,292,000	Energy efficiency/1
ROP	Improving building energy efficiency TBC Hospital Tulcea	17,808,000	Energy efficiency/1
ROP	Building energy efficiency - Contagious diseases hospital Tulcea	17,734,000	Energy efficiency/1
FMAOP	Mooring facilities for small ships and boats in Tulcea city, seafront area	2,616,000	Tourism/2
ROP	Highlighting the historic potential by restoration and conservation of old lighthouse in Sulina	10,158,000	Tourism/2
ROP	Promoting cultural values by restoration and conservation of Panaghia Babadag House museum	3,165,000	Tourism/2
ROP	Highlighting the north-Dobrujan ethnographic patrimony by restoration and modernization of the Ethnographic and Folk Arts Museum Tulcea	18,722,000	Tourism/2
LIOP	Modernization of Tulcea port - from Mm 38+1530 - to Mm 38+800	190,162,000	Transport /3
ROP	Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on Baia-Ceamurlia de Sus route	18,326,000	Transport /3
ROP	Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on Niculitel - Turda-Sarichioi route	76,417,000	Transport /3
ROP	Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on Visina-Ceamurlia de Sus route	40,680,000	Transport /3
ROP	Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on Enisala-Babadag-Slava Rusa route	31,452,000	Transport /3

EU Program	Project	Total cost (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar
ROP	Rehabilitation and functional expansion of Emergency Unit at the Tulcea County Emergency Hospital	7,685,000	Health /4
ROP	Modernization and expansion of Secondary School nr. 14 in Tulcea	3,177,000	Education/4
ROP	Integrated social services by de-institutionalizing adults with disabilities and setting up daily center Mahmudia with 3 sheltered housing	3,024,000	Inclusion and social protection /4
ROP	Integrated social services by de-institutionalizing adults with disabilities and setting up daily center Smardan with 3 sheltered housing	3,447,000	Inclusion and social protection /4
ACOP	Modern administrative solutions – Development and implementation of simplified procedures and mechanisms to support citizens within the Tulcea County Council	3,187,000	Adm. capacity & Progr. management /5
	TOTAL	**498,792,000**	

County and central budget funds

Between 2015 and 2019 Tulcea county implemented dozens of projects financed from different sources, other than EU funds. These interventions are aligned with the county strategy and the SIDDDD priority areas. Part of the county portfolio is financed from the county budget and the central budget through the National Local Development Plan[28] and the investment program in tourism[29]. 27 projects[30] are funded from the county budget, with a total cost of RON 1 billion[31].

Figure 24. Split of county funds among Pillars



[28] The National Local Development Plan (NLDP) is a multi-annual program funded from the state budget targeting local communities and managed by the Ministry of Public Works and Regional Development.

[29] Government Decision 120/2010 approving the list of investment programs and projects in tourism and funding sources and the eligibility criteria, available at: http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/116533

[30] Data from the Tulcea County Council was not available at the time of this report.

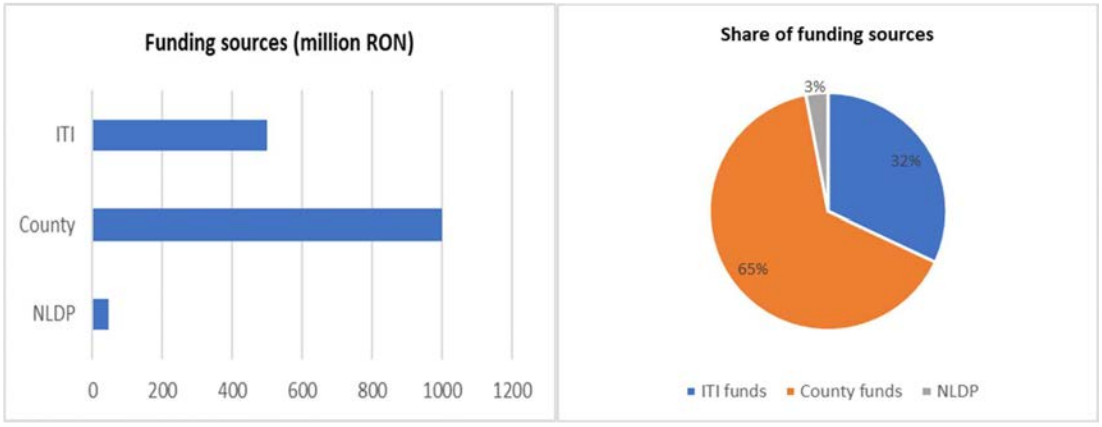
[31] List of projects and budget available at: https://www.cjtulcea.ro/sites/cjtulcea/Buget/Pages/Buget-2020.aspx

Table 32. Projects funded from the county budget in the ITI DD area

	Project	**Total cost (RON)**	**Sectoral Objective /Pillar**
1.	Improving energy efficiency and rehabilitation the Cocos Camp	30,000,000	Energy Efficiency / 1
2.	Improving energy efficiency Panait Cernea County Library	4,000,000	Energy Efficiency /1
3.	Improving energy efficiency Secondary Special School no.14 Tulcea	3,932,000	Energy Efficiency /1
4.	Improving energy efficiency Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	9,500,000	Energy Efficiency /1
5.	Sports tourism base in the Europe Information Center Tulcea	1,900,000	Tourism /2
6.	Development of leisure infrastructure in the touristic area Murighiol	32,794,000	Tourism /2
7.	Development of leisure infrastructure in the touristic area Sarichioi	32,894,000	Tourism /2
8.	Development of leisure infrastructure in the touristic area Sulina	32,844,000	Tourism /2
9.	Highlighting of the ethnographic heritage North-Dobrogea by restoration and consolidation of the Museum of Ethnography and Popular Arts	18,722,000	Tourism /2
10.	Highlighting of archeological and historical heritage North-Dobrogea by improving energy efficiency and rehabilitation of the History and Archeology Museum	5,000,000	Tourism /2
11.	Large basin port infrastructure Sulina Free Zone Administration	82,110,000	Transport /3
12.	Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on Int. National Road 22E Grindu	21,870,000	Transport /3
13.	Modernization of regional transport infrastructure on the Tulcea-Chilia Veche route	184,960,000	Transport /3
14.	Modernization of the Psychiatric Ward of the Tulcea County Hospital	1,378,000	Transport/3
15.	Rehabilitation of county road 222A Horia-Hamcearca-Nifon, km 0+000- km	28,302,000	Transport /3
16.	Rehabilitation of county road 222 Ceamurlia de Sus-Sarighiol de Deal	26,349,000	Transport /3
17.	Naval public transportation in the Danube Delta	221,398,000	Transport /3
18.	Consolidation Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	1,200,000	Health / 4
19.	Extension Emergency Unit – Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	8,255,000	Health /4
20.	Memory Health Psychiatric Hospital	1,653,000	Health/ 4
21.	Rehabilitation and modernization of in-patient infrastructure Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	10,699,000	Health /4
22.	Rehabilitation and modernization of central sterilization station and orthopedic operating room Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	9,616,000	Health / 4
23.	Rehabilitation, modernization & expansion of Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	236,195,000	Health/ 4
24.	Administrative headquarters - Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	2,000,000	Health /4
25.	Wastewater treatment plant and rehabilitation of water network Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	2,600,000	Health / 4
26.	Wastewater treatment plant and rehabilitation of water network Emergency County Hospital Tulcea	2,965,000	Health /4
27.	Rehabilitation and improving energy efficiency of the Jean Bart Cultural Center and School of Folk Arts Tulcea	6,300,000	Education /4
	TOTAL	**1,019,436,000**	

Two infrastructure projects improving county roads in ITI area with RON 46 million from NLDP are linked to Pillar 3 on connectivity. They focus on the rehabilitation of two sections of DN 222 (county road) – the Murighiol-Iazurile-Agighiol route (RON 21 million) and the section at Sarighiol de Deal (nearly RON 25 million), respectively. Overall, the Tulcea county has under execution more than RON 1.5 billion investments funded from EU funds (through ITI DD), county and central budget. The bulk of money (around RON 1 billion) comes from the county budget, nearly half billion RON from ITI DD and RON 46 million from the central budget.

Figure 25 .Projects implemented by Tulcea County Council by funding sources



3. Conclusions

The strategic vision of the Tulcea county strategy is harmonized with the integrated strategic vision of the SIDDDD, which indicates that the county can bring its contribution in achieving the objectives and targets from the Delta Danube strategy. The county plan also accommodates the strategic objectives of the SIDDDD. The two documents have similar sectoral objectives, as the ISDSTC contains most of priorities from the DD plan, with a few exceptions, like energy efficiency or fishery which are handled by other stakeholders. Overall, the county strategy incorporates most of the sectoral objectives from the SIDDDD, and despite some limitations regarding sectors and territorial competence, there is a good level of correlation between the two documents in terms of priority areas. The projects implemented by the Tulcea county are in line with the priority areas of the SIDDDD, and they can support achieving the sectoral and strategic targets of the Delta Danube plan.

Tulcea Municipality Local Strategy 2016-2030

1. City Overview

Tulcea is the seat of the county with the same name (the 4th largest in Romania), around 280 km east of the capital city of Bucharest and 70 km from the Black Sea. The city incorporates the Tudor Vladimirescu village. Tulcea is located on the right bank of the Danube River, in the northern part of Dobrogea region, an area known for its great renewable energy potential and a few large wind farms spread over 313 hectares. The EU Energy and Transport Institute identifies Tulcea area as one with high energy potential (1,700 kWh/m^2).

There are 90,542[32] people living in the city (about 41 percent of the population covered under the DDISDS) of which more than 93 percent ethnic Romanian, with the rest comprising of Lippovan Russian, Roma and Turks. The city is spread over 24,558 hectares – which is 3.3 percent of the area covered by the Danube Delta strategy - with a density of 25.1 people/square km. Forests account for 40 percent of the area, nearly a third is agricultural land, around five percent is water and construction, and the rest is degraded and unproductive land.

Figure 26 - Tulcea city

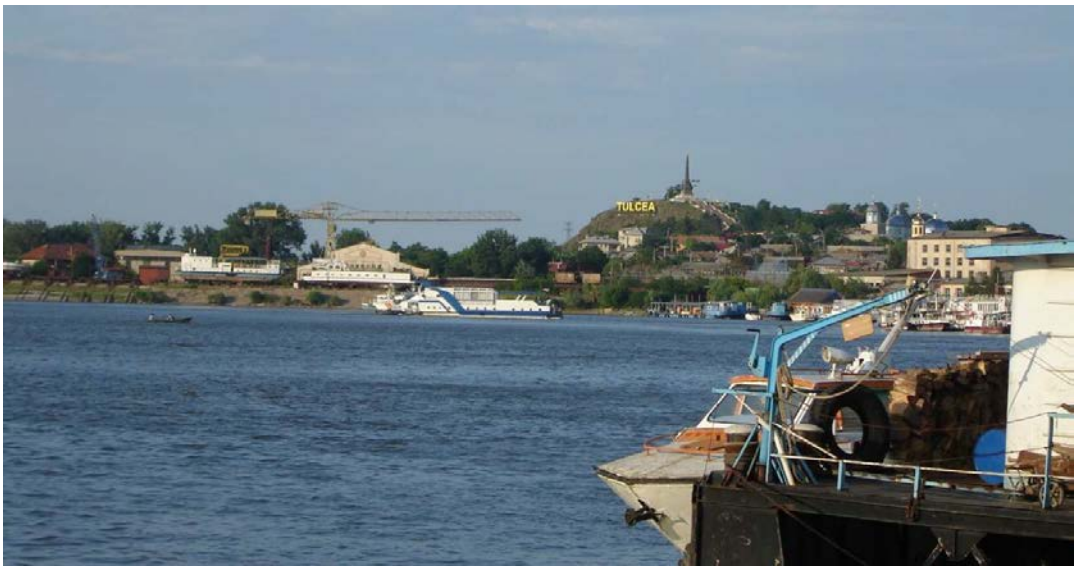


Photo: Manuela Mot

The local economy relies on industry and tourism. The city is host to the only alumina refinery in Romania, a shipyard, and the largest refrigeration complex in the Eastern Europe. Industry employs most of the local labor force, through its various branches including ship construction and maintenance, metallurgical, processing of construction materials, textile, and food industry. The

[32] National Institute of Statistics, data as of January 2015.

annual city budget for 2020 is RON 238.5 million[33]. The average spending per city resident is RON 2,558[34] (around USD 580).

2. Comparative Analysis

Drafted in 2016, the Tulcea Municipality Development Strategy (TMDS) is a 318-page document of which only around 10 percent is an actual development plan, while the rest presents a diagnostic analysis with detailed descriptions of socio-economic and municipal services. The document was drafted at the same time the SIDDDD was approved, hence the city plan covers the same period 2016-2030. The same coverage period allowed Tulcea to incorporate the strategic framework of the SIDDDD into the city strategy.

In line with the European, national, regional, and local strategic framework, the city strategy is considering the domestic environment, such as natural and anthropogenic setting, the utilities/municipal service infrastructure, local development, and social capital. The document provides with a SWOT analysis, highlighting on external opportunities and challenges, and on strong and weak issues related to the domestic environment. The SWOT analysis is the basis of the city strategy.

There is strong alignment between the Tulcea's development plan and the SIDDDD. The strategic vision of the TMDS is aligned with SIDDDD the despite of the fact that it does not clearly refers to the main goal by which people should live in harmony with the nature, an aspect which is somehow indirectly included in the strategic framework. The city strategy took into consideration the coverage period (2016-2030) and the strategic framework from the SIDDDD. There is total alignment between the strategic objectives of the two documents. The city's general objective altogether with its three specific objectives are reflected in the SIDDDD. The priority areas from the local development plan are linked to the pillars from the SIDDDD, and similarly, the local measures are being aligned with the sectorial objectives of the Delta Danube strategy. Also, the activities from the local strategy are correlated with the interventions/projects from the SIDDDD.

The general objective of the TMSD incorporates the transversal principle of empowering local communities from the SIDDDD, while the specific objectives are in line with the Danube Delta' two strategic objectives. At the same time, the eight priority areas from the city plan are included in the 16 sectorial objectives of the SIDDDD. There is some connection at the pillar level. It is the case of areas, like Administrative Capacity (aligned with Pillar 5 of the SIDDDD); Local Infrastructure and Access to Quality Public Services (in line with Pillars 3 and 5); Environment Protection and Sustainable Development (matching Pillar 1); and Economic Dynamic (corresponding to Pillar 2). Also, the priority area on energy efficiency is matching up with the similar sectoral objective from the SIDDDD.

Although it is not a perfect adjustment, there is some good level of matching between the measures and areas of interventions in the city development plan with the 16 sectoral objectives of the SIDDDD. The table below provides a picture of the correlation between the sectoral objectives from the Delta Danube strategy and the measures and areas of interventions from the city plan.

[33] City budget available at: https://www.primariatulcea.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BUGET-2020-MUNICIPIUL-TULCEA.pdf

[34] https://salt.gov.ro/uat-159614; Exchange rate USD 1= RON 4.4 (March 2020)

Table 33. Correlation between Sectoral Objectives in SIDDDD and Measures/Priority Areas in TMDS

R 2. Sectoral Objective SIDDDD	**Measures (M)/Priority Area (PA) in TMDS**
Biodiversity and eco-system management	M 1.1.1.1. M.1.1.2. Conservation of biodiversity and natural patrimony
Energy efficiency	P.A.1.3. Energy efficiency
Climate change	
Disaster risk management	
Emergency situations caused by pollution	
Tourism	P.A .2.3. Elements of territorial identity M.1.2.5. Improving leisure infrastructure
Fishery and aquaculture	
Agriculture and rural development	
Transport	M.1.2.1. Improving transport infrastructure and utility network
Information Technology and Communications	
Water supply, sewage and integrated water management	M.1.2.2. Improving water and wastewater infrastructure
Solid waste management	M1.1.1.2. Reducing the negative impact on environment
Health	M.2.2.2 Health
Education	M.2.2.1 Education
Social inclusion and protection	M.2.2.3 Employment
Administrative capacity and program management	P.A. 3.1. Administrative Capacity

The only sectorial objective that is missing and which should have been considered by the city strategy is related to IT&C. There is only one activity on IT&C in connection to Administrative Capacity objective, targeting the computerization of local services. Other objectives that are not reflected in the strategy are not in the purview of the local administration.

The TMDS comprises a list of 73 activities, mostly in environment protection, energy efficiency, transport, local public services, and development of administrative capacity, and they are aligned with the SIDDDD and EU programs. Only very few activities in health and social inclusions are correlated with projects under SIDDDD. The local strategy project portfolio is listing 240 interventions that are aligned with SIDDDD, while in some sector areas the city surpasses those from the Delta Danube plan. However, most interventions are rather on paper only since they do not have budgets nor have been prioritized. The city managed to get the necessary money or has identified the funding sources for a few projects only. Some specific activities should be financed from the local and state budget.

The TMDS has a list of 116 output indicators by measures, but no outcome or impact indicators. The strategy has a section on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), laying out tools and institutions to be involved in the process, but the results are yet to be assessed. The SIDDDD's M&E mechanism follows only a mathematical model for the territorial evaluation of the strategy's impact and has only a list of M&E indicators which are not assigned by projects or interventions. Hence, there is only some peripheral correlation to output indicators regarding energy efficiency. But the poor design of M&E component is quite common feature to most strategies in Romania, SIDDDD included, as they lack relevant elements, such as reference values, source definitions and targets.

Ten projects in Tulcea have received 105.5 million (EUR 21.6 million) under Intercommunity Development Association (IDA) ITI Danube Delta. They focus on energy efficiency, water supply & sewage, administrative capacity, education, social and tourism. Nearly half of the money helped improve infrastructure in schools and kindergartens and a quarter tackled social services. One of the key projects is the modernization of public lighting to improve energy efficiency of the system. Other

interventions aim to develop leisure infrastructure along the city's main park and lake or promote anti-corruption in the local administration.

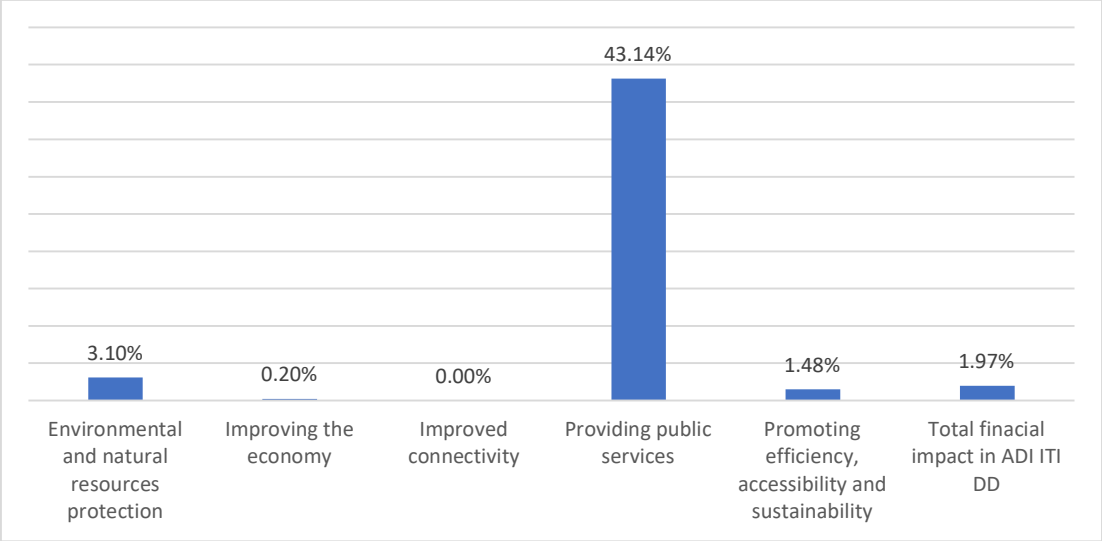
Table 34. ITI projects in Tulcea

Crt.	Project	Total cost (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar SIDDDD
1.	Modernization of street lighting in Tulcea	21,437,020	Energy Efficiency/1
2.	Improving leisure and recreational conditions in Ciuperca park & lake by environment protection measures for communities in FLAG Danube Delta area	2,536,577	Tourism/2
3.	Modernization of infrastructure by educational equipment at the Delta Dunarii Economic College in Tulcea	26,636,225	Education /4
4.	Modernization of infrastructure by educational equipment at Henri Coanda Technical College in Tulcea	26,636,225	Education /4
5.	Modernization of infrastructure by educational equipment at Kindergarten no.12 with extended program in Tulcea	4,591,246	Education /4
6.	Building rehabilitation and expansion of Kindergarten no.13 with extended program in Tulcea	4,938,055	Education /4
7.	Re Start Neptun – integrated local development	13,035,911	Social inclusion & protection / 4
8.	Integrated services for VIITOR	13,025,371	Social inclusion & protection /4
9.	Developing the quality of services in the local public administration	392,860	Adm. Capacity & Prog. Managament /5
10.	Developing a culture to prevent corruption at the local public administration level	304,690	Adm. Capacity & Prog. Managament /5
	Total	**105,575,362**	

Source: IDA ITI Danube Delta

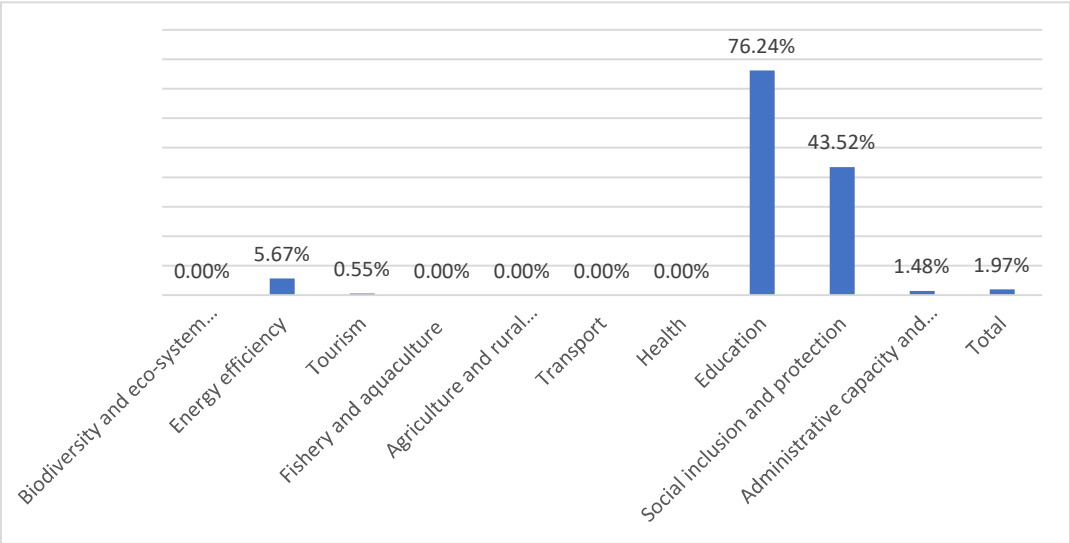
The ITI projects in Tulcea are linked to four of the five pillars of the SIDDDD. The financial impact of the interventions in the city account for 43.1 percent under Pillar 4 on public services, 3.1 percent under Pillar 1 on environment, 1.48 percent under Pillar 5 on energy efficiency, and 0.2 percent under Pillar 2 on economic development. The share of ITI investments in Tulcea with beneficiary the city administration is less than 2 percent of the EU program. The overall EU investments in the city in both public and private sector are much higher – EUR 90,000,000 - about 8 (eight) percent of the program.

Figure 27. Financial share of projects contracted by Tulcea from total ITI projects at pillar level



When it comes to split by sectors, the projects in Tulcea account for more than three quarters of ITI-funded interventions in education, followed by social inclusion & protection (43 percent) and energy efficiency (5.67 percent), and with administrative capacity of 1.48 percent and tourism less than one percent.

Figure 28. Financial impact of projects contracted by Tulcea from ITI funds at sectorial level



Another funding source for the city is the National Local Development Program (NLDP). Tulcea is implementing five projects with money from the state budget with an overall value of RON 27,595,256 which is 26.1 percent of the city interventions through IDA ITI DD. Four projects are matching up the strategic objective of water supply, sewage, and integrated water management.

Table 35. NLDP interventions in Tulcea

Crt.	Project	Budget
1.	Rehabilitation and modernization of water network on Bacului St. and Viticulturii St. in Tulcea	1,762,616
2.	Improving capacity to takeover meteoric waters in Tulcea	18,968,143
3.	Rehabilitation and modernization of water network on Bacului St. and Viticulturii St. in Tulcea	2,577,116
4.	Sewage rainwater on Alexandru cel Bun St. in Tulcea[35]	2,240,105
5.	Rehabilitation kindergarten no.3 at 47, Mircea Voda St. in Tulcea	2,047,274
	Total	**27,595,256**

Source: National Local Development Program, Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration

In parallel, Tulcea is using local money to improve the city's infrastructure. In recent years, Tulcea has undertaken serious efforts to allocate money from the local budget to implement some projects from the city strategy. The amount of local funds (RON 103 million) is matching the money contacted through ITI (RON 105 million). 20 local projects have been executed or are currently under implementation (see the project list below – Table 6). Most projects are infrastructure investments, with nearly half in roads/transport, 28 percent in water & sewage, education (12.6 percent), energy efficiency (9.6 percent), and IT&C (3 percent). It is worth to note that the share of local funds to improve local transport infrastructure (45 percent of the allocation) is close to the stake of funds allocated to roads through ITI. The smallest share, less than 1 (one) percent each is in social protection and tourism.

Table 36. Investments from the local budget in Tulcea

Crt.	Project	Budget 2017-2019 (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar SIDDDD
1.	ITC investments in the City Hall	3,175,000	IT&C / 3
2.	Updating the Development Strategy of Tulcea City	10,000	Adm. Capacity/ 5
3.	Building rehabilitation	5,140,000	Education /4
4.	Rehabilitation Kindergarten no.3 at 47, Mircea Voda Street	3,215,000	Education /4
5.	Expenditures related to feasibility studies	4,683,000	Education /4
6.	Video surveillance system – Touristic objective Traditional fishing village Zaghen Zone lot 1 from DJ 222C	150,000	Tourism /2
7.	Marketing services for "Promoting Tulcea city by development, publishing information materials that ensure essential connection to the FLAG territory with tourists	24,000	Tourism /2
8.	Studies for promoting local culture and historic patrimony Tulcea-Odessa	50,000	Tourism /2
9.	Interior court layout of SIBELL Early Childhood Surveillance and Education Center and setting up a playground for children	267,000	Inclusion & Social Protection

[35] This project is also receiving funds from the local budget.

Crt.	Project	Budget 2017-2019 (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar SIDDDD
10.	Acquisition building for nursing home	450,000	Inclusion & Social Protection
11.	Improving urban services, urban public infrastructure in urban zone Vest	2,925,000	Water & Sewage /4
12.	Improving capacity to takeover meteoric waters in Tulcea	8,736,000	Water & Sewage /4
13.	Rehabilitation and modernization sewage network on Bacului Street and Viticulturii Street	2,400,000	Water & Sewage /4
14.	Other water and sewage projects	9,900,000	Water & Sewage /4
15.	Design related expenditures	4,997,000	Water & Sewage /4
16.	Rehabilitation, modernization and expansion of street lighting in Tulcea, contract # 23515/2006	6,975,000	Energy Efficiency /1
17.	Modernization and remote monitoring of modules, thermal points, CHPs and the hotwater only boiler	6,975,000	Energy Efficiency /1
18.	Consolidation slop in 18, Carierei Street Zone School no.3	597,000	Environment /1
19.	Rehabilitation of road infrastructure	42,418,000	Transport/3
20.	Studies for rehabilitation of road infrastructure	4,086,000	Transport /3
	Total	**103,162,000**	

Source: City of Tulcea

Additionally, there are dozens of projects financed from the local budget in different sectors, including 14 activities in culture, six in social services, four in civic education, 20 in sports, and nine pertaining to religious affairs. Around RON 1.8 million was allocated from the local budget in the 2018-2019 period. However, some of these interventions, like those in sports, have no connection to the SIDDDD, nor to the city strategy.

3. Conclusions

There is a high level of correlation (around 90 percent) between the local strategy of Tulcea and the SIDDDD at the level of objectives, areas, and measures. The only significant difference is regarding the structure of the document. A potential explanation for the structural difference could be related to the fact that Tulcea is entirely urban, with some specifics that do not interfere though with the SIDDDD. At the same time, the IT&C and health sectors are less developed in the TMDS. Also, the local strategy is listing many projects of which only half have (performance) indicators, and even fewer (a quarter) have received financing. The projects contracted so far by Tulcea account for 8.5 percent of the total financial envelope under ITI, which is the second largest after the Braila-Macin bridge, a project which takes about a third of the program.

Isaccea City Development Strategy 2014-2020

1. City Overview

The fourth largest locality in Tulcea County, Isaccea is located on the Danube River, around 37 km far from Tulcea city, and it is partially included in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation. The city incorporates two villages, Tichilești and Revărsarea, respectively, with a total population of 5,026 inhabitants[36], of which about 94 percent are Romanians and the rest Roma, Ukrainians and Turkish. The city area has around 100 km^2, which is 1.4 percent of the total area covered by the SIDDDD, and a low density of 15.2 people/km[37]. Of the total surface of 10,207 hectares, 43 percent is agricultural land, nearly a quarter forest, a third water, with the remaining constructions and degraded land.

Figure 29 - Isaccea City

Source: City of Isaccea, Photo by Militaru Mihaela https://www.isaccea.ro/isaccea/orasul-meu

The local economy is primarily based on agriculture, with a focus on animal husbandry and fishery, with an important beluga fish farm and reproduction station on the site. Other economic sectors in Isaccea include breeding livestock, construction, trade, manufacturing industry and tourism. Isaccea is the port of entry in Romania for the Isaccea-Negru Voda pipeline linking Ukraine and Bulgaria, which brings natural gas from Russia and is supplying to Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, and for the power transmission line through which Romania imports electricity from a power plant in the Transnistrian region of Moldova. In 2017, the city local budget was RON 10.9 million, with annual estimates of RON 13-15 million for the 2018-2020 period.[38] The annual expenses per city resident is RON 3,508[39].

[36] 2011 census; According to National Institute of Statistics, 5,335 people had residence as of January 1st, 2014.

[37] Isaccea Local Development Strategy available at https://www.isaccea.ro/strategia-de-dezvoltare-locala

[38] Annual budget Isaccea City Hall available at https://www.isaccea.ro/images/2017/buget/buget2017-1.pdf

[39] Data available at: https://salt.gov.ro/uat-159614

2. Comparative Analysis

The Isaccea Integrated Local Development Strategy (IILDS) for the period 2014-2020 is a 96-page document of which the actual plan is laid out in only six pages. It was put together before the Danube Delta Strategy, and covers a much shorter period. Because of different timing, the IILDS does not include the strategic framework of the SIDDDD, and it covers only partially some of the issues captured by the EU-funded ITI program.

Like many local development plans, the strategy begins with an assessment of the priorities at the EU, national and regional level, followed by an analysis of the local setting, such as environment, city history, local utilities, social (health, education), social assistance, cultural and tourism infrastructure. The strategy has several SWOT analyses focusing on issues like environment, health, social assistance, tourism, economic potential, industry, agriculture, education, public administration, and culture.

The strategy does not have a vision or mission as such, and outlines only the areas of intervention and priorities based on the EU programs. Interestingly, the city's strategic objective - the efficient use of human and physical resources aimed at ensuring prosperity and quality of living for city residents - is mentioned only at the very end of the document. The strategic objectives at the local level are relatively aligned with the two strategic objectives of the SIDDDD. Since the city plan covers a much shorter period (seven years as compared to a 14 year-span), this could perhaps explain the lack of comprehensive studies supporting the document.

Overall, there is a good level of correlation between the IILDS and SIDDDD in terms of strategic and specific objectives. There are seven local priority areas connected to some of Delta Danube strategy pillars (environment and public services, respectively) and sectorial objectives, like agriculture, tourism, and social protection. There is one key sector, IT&C, which is missing, while other areas that are absent are not in the city's purview. There is an action plan with 23 interventions in areas like environment, energy efficiency, transport, local public services, social inclusion, education, agriculture, and capacity development. These interventions are linked to specific EU programs and investment priorities.

Figure 30. Alignment of Isaccea Strategy with the SIDDDD

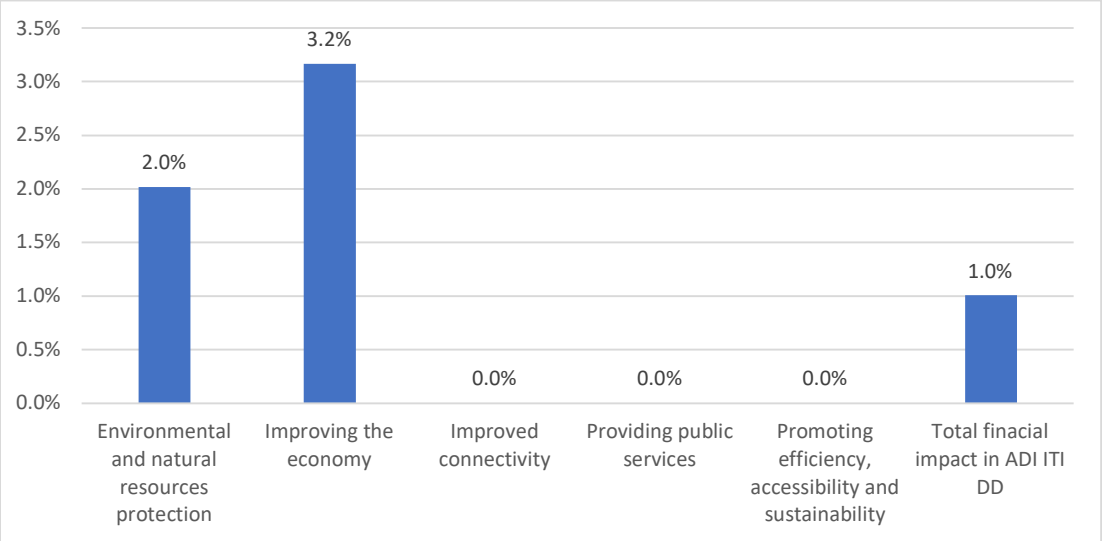
Although they are aligned with the SIDDDD, the interventions are more of a laundry list as they have no budget nor had been prioritized, but only linked to EU programs. So far, the city managed to get ITI funds for six projects, which is about a quarter of the city's project portfolio. These projects cover

energy efficiency, education, social development, transport, and agriculture. Most activities fall under two pillars of the SIDDDD. The financial impact of ITI projects in Isaccea account for 3.2 percent the money contracted under Pillar 2 Improving Economy and for 2 percent under Pillar 1 Environment Protection and Natural Resources. The figure below indicates that the shares related to other pillars is zero because it is difficult to split integrated projects by pillars. Overall, interventions in Isaccea total RON 55 million (EUR 11.2 million) which account for about one percent of the ITI program.

Table 37. ITI projects in Isaccea

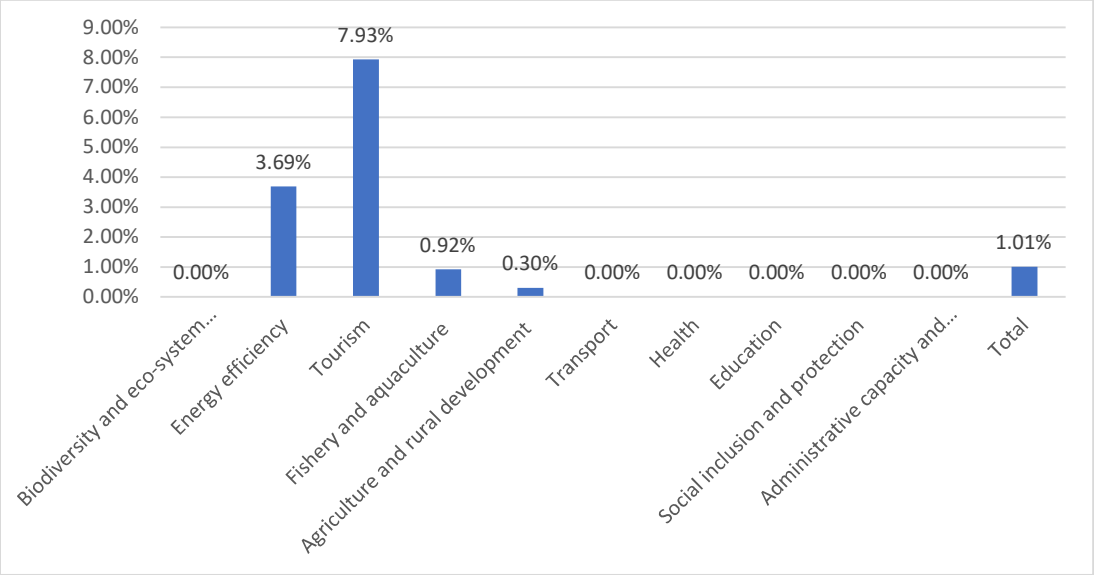
Crt.	Project	Budget (RON)	Sectorial Objective/ Pillar SIDDDD
1.	Increasing energy efficiency of public buildings – Constantin Bratescu Highschool	3,693,366	Energy Efficiency /1
2.	Increasing energy efficiency of public buildings – Constantin Brătescu primary and secondary school	10,251,163	Energy Efficiency /1
3.	Improving education and social services and urban public areas	17,078,109	Urban Revival /2
4.	Urban revival of Ceair area	19,337,568	Urban Revival /2
5.	Fishery Shelter	1,664,254	Fishery /2
6.	Improving access infrastructure to agricultural holdings in Saon area	1,870,393	Fishery /2
	Total	**53,894,853**	

Figure 31. Financial impact of ITI funded projects in Isaccea at the pillar level from the SIDDDD



When it comes to sectorial objectives, the projects in Isaccea under ITI focus on tourism, energy efficiency, fishery, and rural development. The local interventions in Isaccea account for eight percent of overall ITI projects in tourism, for less than 4 percent in energy efficiency, and for a little over one percent in fishery and rural development altogether. The six projects represent one percent of the overall financial envelope available under ITI/EU program.

Figure 32. Financial impact of ITI funded projects in Isaccea based on sectorial objective



Isaccea is implementing four NLDP projects on roads, education, and local administration, with a total funding of RON 14 million (around EUR 2.9 million). By comparison, NLDP projects make for about a quarter (26.2 percent) of the ITI projects in the city. It is worth to mention that one of NLDP projects is complementing two ITI activities. This is the project about improving infrastructure at the main education facility in the city. While the ITI money is used to increase energy efficiency in core buildings, NLDP funds help to modernize the annex /workshop area of the school.

Table 38. Projects in Isaccea financed from the National Local Development Program

Crt.	Project	Budget (RON)	Connection to Sectorial Objective/ Pillar SIDDDD
1.	Modernization of public roads in Isaccea	2,854,645	Transport / 2
2.	Modernization of public roads in Isaccea -Phase II	9,706,850	Transport /2
3.	Rehabilitation, modernization and endowment of annex building/ workshop at Constantin Brătescu Highschool in Isaceea	1,004,752	Education/ 4
4.	Rehabilitation and modernization administrative building of Isaccea	509,671	Admin. Capacity /5
	Total	**14,075,918**	

3. Conclusions

The IILDS is like 70 percent aligned with the SIDDDD at the level of objectives, priority areas and specific objectives. The difference between the two documents is more about the structure, as Isaccea has developed the plan before the SIDDDD, although this does not affect much the overall approach since the city strategy is fairly with the regional plan. However, the significant difference is that in Isaccea has dealt poorly with IT&C and health sectors, as compared to the SIDDDD. At the same time, although the city outlines 23 projects, only six (25 percent of the project portfolio) received financing.

They account for only 1.01 percent of the overall ITI program, even though Isaccea has is 2.4 percent of the population in the SIDDDD area.

Sulina Local Development Strategy

1. Overview

The easternmost point of Romania, Sulina is located at the mouth of the Sulina branch of the Danube River, in the north-west part of the Tulcea County. Stretching along the right side of the Danube branch, it is the only city placed entirely in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR). Sulina is the only Romanian port city at both the Danube and the Black Sea, and the terminal port for the Pan-European Transport Corridor VII on the Danube. With no connection to the land road network, the city can only be reached by water, either on the Danube or on the Black Sea. Ports facilities built along the city seafront allow for mooring of maritime vessels and ships carrying freight and passengers.

Sulina is the only city situated at the lowest average altitude in the country, at only 4 meters above sea level. As part of the largest humid areas in Europe, the city documented some of the climate records in Romania – such as the lowest level of fog, largest amount of solar radiation, most sunny days, and longest period of drought (seven consecutive months). Sulina is spread over 32,960 hectares of which 95 percent water and with only 5 percent land.

A city that used to have 20,000 people a few decades ago, nowadays Sulina has only 4,071 inhabitants, as of 2016.[40] In the past couple of decades the city underwent massive population decline. It is among the localities that experienced over 40 percent decrease of population between 1990 and 2011, and with the second largest decline in Tulcea county. Sulina has a rich ethnic mix - 82 percent of residents are Romanians, nearly 10 percent are Russian Lippovans, and 3 percent Ukrainians and Greeks altogether.

Sulina has a free zone (around 175 hectares), a designated area in which companies are taxed very lightly or not at all to encourage economic activities. In 2000, Sulina and the surroundings were given the status of objective of national interest[41], which enables restoration of local historical monuments and rehabilitation of public infrastructure and equipment.

[40] Sulina Local Development Strategy available at: https://www.primaria-sulina.ro/files/SDL-Sulina_2018-2035_v1.pdf

[41] Government Ordinance 125/2000 available at: http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htp_act_text?idt=24190

Figure 33 - The old lighthouse in Sulina

Source: Sulina City Hall https://www.primaria-sulina.ro/farurile_orasului.html

The local economy is based on fishery, besides to some agriculture and tourism. There are few fishing companies and a few firms active in manufacturing, maritime transport, telecommunications, and commerce, in addition to a shipyard which is nearly bankrupt. Over the time there has been a massive decrease in the amount of fish available in the Danube Delta, which makes access of locals to fish quite problematic and their living more and more difficult. The unemployment rate is 4.82 percent as of 2017 (according to the local strategy)[42], but the actual figures could be higher. The city budget was RON 16.7 million in 2018 and RON 17.6 million in 2019.[43]

2. Comparative Analysis

The Sulina Local Development Strategy (SLDS) was approved in 2018[44], and it covers a 17-year span from 2018 to 2035. It is a 240-page document of which almost three quarters is about the city profile, (demographics, utilities etc.) with a few pages on SWOT analysis, while the rest outlines the priorities and activities for the next period. The city development plan is aligned with local and regional strategies, the SIDDDD, EU and international documents. As it was approved after the SIDDD, the SLDS refers to the Delta Danube strategy. The coverage period is different though, as the local strategy stretches over a longer period (up to 2035), as opposed to the SIDDD which goes until 2030.

The local strategy intends to be an integrated urban policy for the revival of Sulina. The strategic vision is to build a competitive and dynamic city based on tourism development, with additional local specific activities in agriculture and fishery, while maintaining the great multicultural feature. There are similarities between the two strategies as both seek to achieve sustainable economic development based on tourism, while considering inclusion and solidarity. There are some other correlations among

[42] Sulina Local Strategy

[43] Local budgets for 2018 and 2019 available at: https://www.primaria-sulina.ro/files/Hotarare118din2018_aprobare_buget_propriu_anexa1.pdf and https://www.primaria-sulina.ro/files/Hotararea158din2019_anexa1.pdf

[44] Sulina Local Development Strategy available at: https://www.primaria-sulina.ro/files/SDL-Sulina_2018-2035_v1.pdf

them, as both documents share some common values and priorities. Sulina wants to take advantage of its multiculturality, a community with people of different ethnicities and religions, and this is reflected accordingly in the city plan.

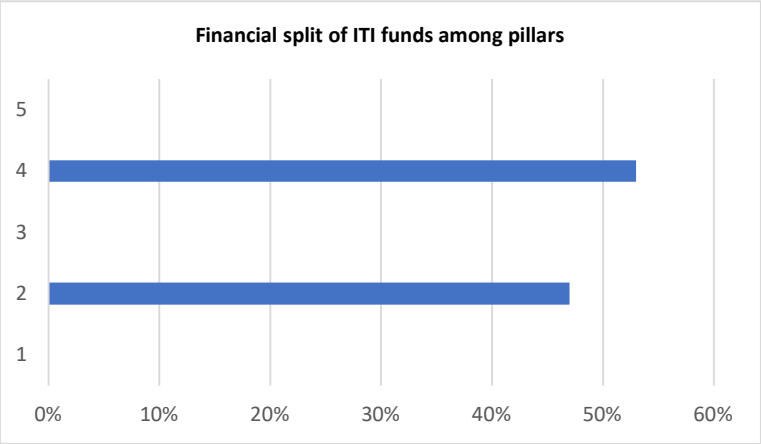
The local strategy's general objective is to turn Sulina into a touristic and leisure center and set a good practice for neighboring places and cities with similar features. The target of improving the quality of life through development of leisure tourism is aligned with similar objectives from the SIDDDD. But despite on emphasizing on tourism development, the local strategy does not mention specifically about preserving the natural values, which is a key feature of the SIDDDD. Anyway, the natural value element appears to be integrated into the specific objectives of the Sulina strategy.

The local strategy has four objectives. They revolve around: i) turning Sulina into a touristic city that could become the regional economic engine; ii) providing optimal living conditions through easy access to public services and the natural and public heritage; iii) a connected city while preserving the unique features given by the special geographical position, and iv) environmental-friendly city. There are 19 key specific objectives that focus on issues like creating jobs in tourism, turning Sulina into a competitive tourist destination, improving public infrastructure and services, rehabilitation of local cultural and environmental heritage, supporting social inclusion, and improving energy efficiency. An important aspect is about improving connectivity and access – by local public transport, naval transport, connection to county roads, non-motorized transport, and expanding freight mobility.

The two documents have some differences in terms of areas of interventions, as the sectoral objectives from the SIDDDD are not specifically mentioned in the local strategy. But despite of having a different structure and wording, the city strategy embraces nearly all 16 sectoral objectives from the SIDDDD. The main difference is in terms of approach, as the city plan seems to do a better job in consolidating the local objectives. The SLDS is listing 91 interventions that would require EUR 294 million investments. It also mentions the implementation period, potential partners, and the funding source for each activity (e.g., local, county, national budget, private sources, and EU funds), and in some cases, it even points to specific EU programs and priority axis.

The Sulina strategy is implemented with different funding sources, including ITI/EU, local and central budget. Three projects are executed with EU funds under ITI DD, with a total value of EUR 11.5 million. The money comes from the Regional Operational Program (ROP) and the Fishery and Maritime Affairs Operational Program (FMAOP). The projects are linked to two pillars of the SIDDDD- two interventions are connected to Pillar 2 Improving Economy and one is linked to Pillar 4 Ensuring Public Services. More than half of ITI DD funds is used for the education project (Pillar 4.).

Figure 34. Financial split among SIDDDD pillars



The three projects correspond to SIDDDD's sectoral objectives of tourism and education. Two activities focus on tourism (rehabilitation of the city library and renovation of the multiethnic cemetery - EUR 5.4 million) – and one on education (rehabilitation of the local high school - EUR 6. 1 million). Since projects are still under implementation, their local impact is yet to be assessed.

Table 39.Projects by SIDDDD sectoral level

EU Program	Project	Total cost (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar SIDDDD
FMAOP	Restoration of the heritage objective multiethnic cemetery	1,903,000	Tourism /2
ROP	Restoration of the city library (historical monument)	3,515,000	Tourism/ 2
ROP	Rehabilitation, modernization and endowment Theoretic Jean Bart Highschool	6,108,000	Education /4
	Total	**11,526,000**	

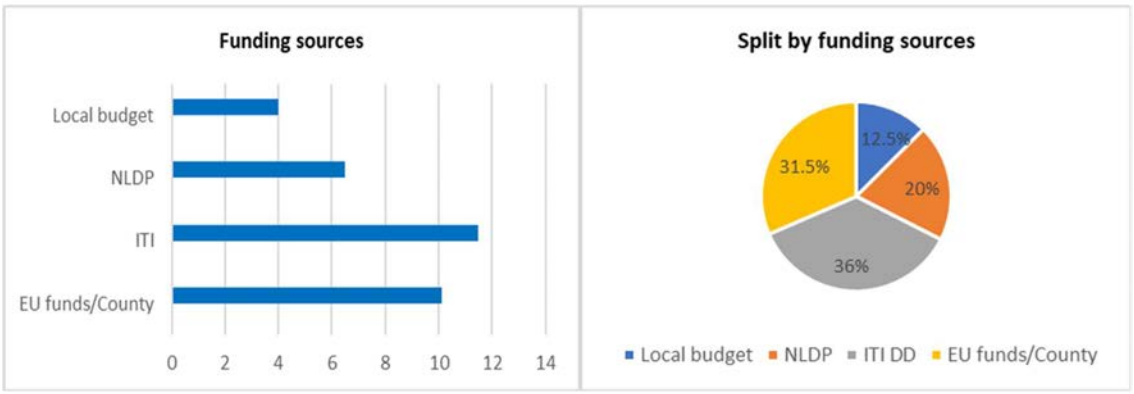
Sulina is also implementing a couple of infrastructure projects funded from the local budget that are reflected both by the local strategy and SIDDDD. These interventions fall under Pillar 3 Improving Connectivity and are linked to the sectoral objective of transport (RON 4 million). This is a significant financial effort for the city, as the cost of projects is about a quarter of the annual budget. The interventions target the modernization of few streets on the left bank of the Danube (Prospect area) and the 4th street on the right bank of the river.

Sulina also benefitted from funds from the central budget through the NLDP (I + II). There are two transport projects with a total cost of RON 6.5 million that are linked to the SIDDDD pillar on connectivity. The interventions would modernize a few city roads - the 3rd street (RON 4.4 million) and 1st street – West section (RON 2.1 million).[45] Additionally, the rehabilitation of the old lighthouse, one of the city's landmarks, is under way. This is a RON 10.1 million project funded through DD ITI (from ROP), but the beneficiary is the Tulcea county.

[45] https://www.mdrap.ro/lucrari-publice/pndl

Overall, there are local projects with a total value of RON 32 million financed through ITI DD, local and central budget. All interventions are aligned with the city plans and the SIDDDD. More than a third of the money is EU funds under ITI DD, around 31 percent is EU money through the county, 20 percent from the NLDP, and the rest comes is local financial effort.

Figure 35.Funding sources and split



The strategy mentions setting up a dedicated monitoring and evaluation unit which to periodically evaluate the implementation of the action plan and monitor the execution of the strategy based on project implementation. Two intermediary evaluations should check if and how objectives were met by 2020 and the end of the 2021-2027 EU programming period, respectively, with an ex-post assessment to be conducted after 2035. There is no update on the progress or activity of this M&E unit.

3. Conclusions

There is some good correlation in terms of vision, strategic and sectoral objectives between the Sulina development plan and the SIDDDD. Both strategies have harmonized visions, which would allow Sulina bring its contribution in achieving the objectives of the SIDDDD. Even though they have different design, the SLDS embraces the strategic objective of the SIDDDD. Although it is differently structured and worded, the local strategy embraces nearly all objectives from the SIDDDD, pointing to similar values and elements. The two documents have comparable objectives - although Sulina's plan has a different approach, as the document is more concise and priorities are presented in a rather compact manner.

Baia Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy

1. Overview

Baia is a commune in the south-east of Tulcea county, around 60 km far from Tulcea city and partially placed in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. It comprises five villages - Baia (the seat of the commune), Camena, Caudagia, Ceamurlia de Sus, and Panduru. The villages are within 20 km from the seat of the commune - Camena is the farthest (19 km) and Panduru is the closest (5 km). The commune is crossed by the Tulcea-Constanta national road and is connected to the railway network.

Figure 36 - Street in Baia

Source: Baia City Hall https://www.primarie-comuna-baia.ro/?p=social_cultural

Baia (formerly Hamangia) is known for its rich archeological sites. One of them showcases a new Middle Neolithic culture of IV-II B.C. millennial, the Hamangia Culture (named after the commune). As of 2013, Baia has 4,588 inhabitants, with a density of 24 people per km^2.[46] Three quarters are Romanian ethnic and a quarter Aromanians, an ethnic group living in the Balkans. The commune is spread over 19,829 hectares of which 12,000 is agricultural land. The largest village is Baia (305 hectares) and the smallest is Caugagia (46 hectares). The commune has a healthcare facility, a few schools, three kindergartens and three pharmacies.

The local economy relies on agriculture with a focus on animal husbandry and crop production, in addition to trade, small industry and services, like oil manufacturing, milling, and car repairing. There is a post-harvest facility, a seed center, and a couple of slaughter houses. There are around 80 local small and medium enterprises. A local fair is organized weekly. Farmers purchased agricultural equipment with support from EU funds. Although Baia has a few cottages and good potential for fishery and hunting due to the surrounding lakes, forests and caves, local tourism is undeveloped.

The commune has some good renewable energy potential. 12 wind turbines were installed by 2015 and investments for additional 200 turbines were further expected at that time. The main source of revenue to the local budget comes from permits for wind turbines. Local authorities are hopeful that

[46] Baia Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy available at: http://www.paginadestart.com/comon/resurse/baia/Strategia_comunei_Baia_2015_2020.pdf

unlocking the energy potential, in addition to modernization of animal husbandry, could develop the local private sector, which would bring about development and create new jobs. The estimated local budget was RON 26.6 million in 2019 and RON 20.3 million in 2020.

2. Comparative Analysis

The Baia Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (BISDS) for 2015-2020[47] was approved by the local council in 2015, before the SIDDDD. The coverage period is much shorter than of the Danube Delta strategy. The local strategy is a 72-page document of which a third talks about the general development context set by national and European strategies, description of the commune, while the rest outlines the SWOT analysis, priority development areas and the action plan. Baia does not have a strategic vision. In contrast, the SIDDDD has a special vision for the DDBR, the area that includes Baia – which is to develop agriculture and business environment with a network of urban centers providing services and integrate tourism into the attraction areas.

The BISDS has five strategic development directions. These are: i) development and modernization of infrastructure, ii) increasing quality of life and environment protection, iii) revival of cultural and sports activities, iv) enabling conditions for private sector development, and v) improving institutional capacity. Each direction has a few specific development measures. There are 25 measures, including rehabilitation and modernization of communal streets & roads and water supply system; expansion of sewage network; modernization and endowment of schools; converting the city hall building into a healthcare center; development of parks and playgrounds; reviving traditions through cultural activities; supporting agriculture and animal husbandry; attracting entrepreneurs in tourism and agro-tourism; and training local staff to access EU funds. Each objective mentions the implementation period and potential funding sources. There is a correlation between the strategic and sectorial objectives of the SIDDDD and the development measures of Baia, although the documents have different structure and approach.

Baia has 10 projects under implementation totaling RON 35 million with money from ITI DD and the central budget. Three projects of RON 9.2 million are financed by ITI DD through the National Rural Development Program (NRDP) and are linked to Pillar 4 Ensuring Public Services from the SIDDDD.

Table 40. Projects funded through ITI DD

EU Program	Project	Total cost (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar
NRDP	Modernization and expansion water supply and sewage in Baia commune	7,166,000	Local Infrastructure/ 4
NRDP	Rehabilitation, modernization and endowment of cultural center in Panduru village	1,260,000	Culture/ 4
NRDP	Rehabilitation, modernization and endowment of cultural center in Camena village	781,000	Culture/4
	Total	**9,207,000**	

[47] Baia Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy available at: http://www.paginadestart.com/comon/resurse/baia/Strategia_comunei_Baia_2015_2020.pdf

Seven projects with a total cost of RON 25.6 million are funded from the central budget through the NLDP. The interventions are aligned with the local strategy and the SIDDDD. Four activities (nearly RON 16 million) focus on modernization of village roads and are related to SIDDDF's Pillar 3 Improving Connectivity. Three projects (around RON 10 million) are linked to Pillar 4 Ensuring Public Services, and focus on street lighting, water & sewage, and education.

Figure 37. NDLP funds corresponding to SIDDDD pillars

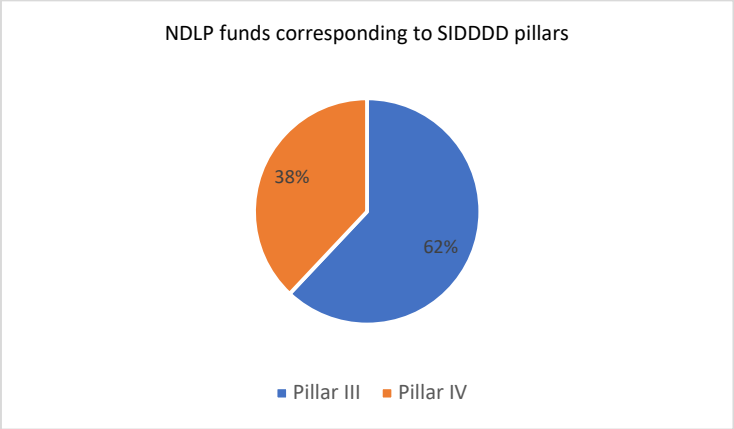
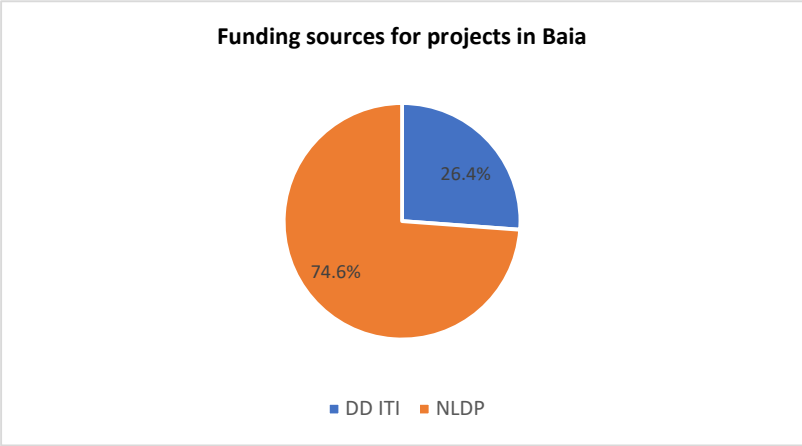


Table 41.Projects funded by NLDP

	Project	**Total cost (RON)**	**Sectoral Objective /Pillar SIDDDD**
1.	Rehabilitation and modernization of communal road 77 Baia-Panduru km 0+005 - 5+000	1,460,000	Transport/3
2.	Modernization and rehabilitation of street infrastructure in the urban area of Ceamurlia de Sus village	9,454,000	Transport/3
3.	Modernization of streets in Camena village	5,003,000	Transport/3
4.	Rehabilitation and modernization of communal road 21, intersection National Road 22D – Camena km 0+600 - 3+100	764,000	Transport/3
5.	Modernization and endowment of secondary school in Baia commune	2,058,000	Education/4
6.	Rehabilitation and modernization of street lighting network in Baia commune	461,000	Street lighting /4
7.	Expansion of water supply and sewage network in Baia commune	6,490,000	Water supply /4
	Total	**25,689,000**	

The main funding source for projects in Baia is the central budget. About three quarters of the money come from the NLDP and only a quarter is EU funds.

Figure 38.Funding sources for projects in Baia



3. Conclusions

Although the Baia strategy was approved before the SIDDDD, the commune's key development areas and measures are connected to the strategic and sectorial objectives of the Delta Danube plan. Both documents have similar strategic approach, although different structures, methodologies, and level of details. As local projects are connected to some of SIDDDD pillars, they can contribute to achieving the sectoral objectives pertaining to transport and public service delivery.

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Management Plan and Visiting Strategy

1. Overview of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

A labyrinth of water and land, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR) is the largest European wetland and reed bed and Europe's main water purification system. The DDBR is a protected area spread over 580,000 hectares in South East of Romania across three counties – Tulcea, Constanta, and Galați. It comprises of a few areas, including the Danube Delta itself, Saraturi-Murighiol Lake, and a small portion of the maritime zone of the Black Sea. The territory of the DDBR accounts for more than three quarters of the total area covered by the SIDDDD. More than half of the Reserve is made of water and land ecosystems of national interest and part of the UNESCO patrimony. 439,508 hectares of the total surface is land and 140,000 is water. 81% of the land in the Reserve is public property of national interest, 12.28% belongs to the counties, around 5% is under local administration and less than one percent is private. A quarter of the water area is labeled as economic zone. More than half of the Reserve is sustainable development area and nearly 40 percent are buffer zones. Around 10% is agricultural land, nearly four percent is forest, and 9 percent is part of the protected area.

Figure 39 - Danube Delta

Photo: Manuela Mot

The DDBR comprises of 27 rural and urban territorial administrative units, such as Tudor Vladimirescu (the village part of Tulcea City), in addition to a few small cities like Isaccea, Sulina and Sfantu Gheorghe. There are 14,295 people[48] living in the Reserve. The area is home to a rich mix of Romanian, Lippovan, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Turkish and Roma scattered along the Delta's small villages and towns. Because it is made mostly of watery land, swamps, and unfavorable land for development of human settlements, the DDBR has one of the lowest densities in Romania, from as low as 1.8 people/km^2 in Sfantu Gheorghe to nearly 14 people/km^2 in Sulina, with an average of 5.4 people km^2.

[48] Population in 2006, according to the DDBR Management Plan.

The local economy in the Reserve is relying on fishery, including maritime fishery, with 27 fishery settlements spread over 40,000 hectares. Other key economic sectors are subsistence agriculture (reed harvesting), animal husbandry, hunting, wood exploitation, forestry, tourism, mineral extraction, and transportation. The Reserve's water resources supply potable water to rural and urban localities, including Tulcea city, and to a few industrial holdings. The Reserve is managed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA) which has double roles as administrator of the protected area and as environment authority.

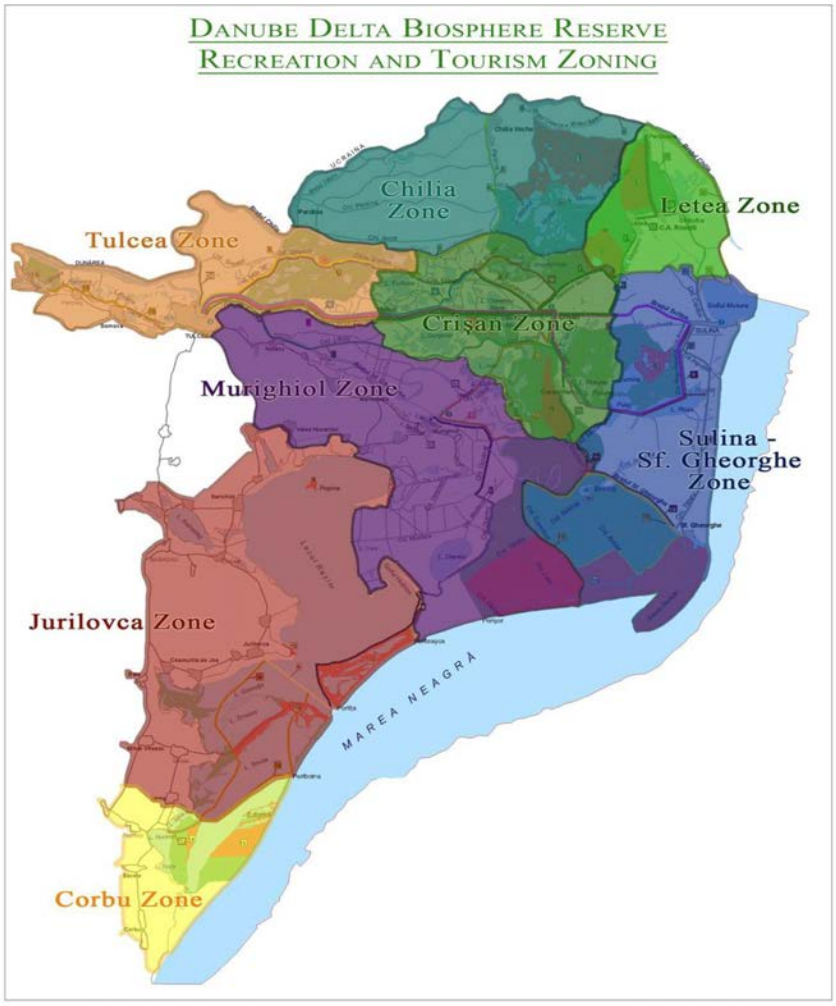
2. Comparative Analysis

Although there are quite a few local strategies for the Reserve, only two of them are quite strategic, namely the DDBR Management Plan and the Visiting Strategy for the DDBR. The Management Plan is part of a comprehensive document called Management Plan and Regulations of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, approved by Government Decision in 2015. It is a 300-page document of which half is the actual management plan for the period 2015-2020.[49] The Visiting Strategy is a 113-page document prepared in 2009, comprising strategies for each of the nine areas in the Reserve. Both plans have considered the key aspect of preserving the DDBR based on a few principles, sectorial and zonal instruments.[50] Since these two plans have been drafted before the SIDDDD, this analysis is assessing whether there is any correlation between the Danube Delta strategy and the two documents about the Reserve. The DDBR has been divided into nine areas (see figure below), and each of them has its own strategy.

[49] The DDBR Strategy is available at http://www.ddbra.ro/documente/admin/2015/1_ANEXA_HG_763_PARTE_I_pag_1_-_149__.pdf The document was published in the Official Journal, part I, no.762 bis on October 13, 2015.

[50] The DDBR Visiting Strategy is available at http://www.ddbra.ro/media/9-%20Strategie%20de%20Vizitare(1).pdf

Figure 40.Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Recreation and Tourism Zoning



Source: Visiting Strategy of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

The SIDDDD is referring to the Management Plan and other programmatic national and international documents, but it does not mention the Visiting Strategy, although this had been drafted years before. The SIDDDD's vision has considered the boundaries set to preserve the biodiversity of the Danube Delta, recognizing that the economic activities and anthropogenic factors are the main polluters in the region.

The Management Plan is based on nine principles and actions calling for a sustainable tourism development in the Danube Delta. These include an integrated monitoring system of environment (surveillance, prognosis, warning, and intervention), promoting the sustainable use of existing resources, setting up a framework to enable NGOs and communities to participate in drafting and implementing development plans, and establishing international cooperation to ensure environment protection. In addition, the strategy calls for the removal of polluters that endanger the health of people and for conservation of biodiversity and specific ecosystems to the natural bio-geographic framework. Additionally, it advocates to prevent ecological risks and damages, as well as to show precaution in decision making. Finally, perhaps one of the most important elements outlined by the strategy is "the polluter pays" principle – under which whoever is responsible for the damages caused to the environment should bear the costs associated to it.

The Visiting Strategy is based on a few key concepts. They include i) zoning the nine areas and drawing individual visions and objectives for each zone; ii) using key elements to promote each zone; iii) capturing specific tourism for each zone; and iv) encouraging slow tourism together with fast tourism only for areas where this would not harm, in addition to preserving the biodiversity.

Box 1. Slow tourism vs. fast tourism

Slow tourism vs. fast tourism. The concept of slow tourism is based on activities performed over a longer period and using less resources, with limited impact on environment and positive economic effects on local communities. For fast tourism, which takes less time and greater amount of energy and resources, nature and local culture are merely the venue for recreational activities, and not the actual target of the touristic pursuit. For example, a four hour-trip in a wooden boat paddling along the Delta Danube will use zero fuel, as opposed to the same trip by a power boat that could require even up to 160 liters of fuel.

The SIDDDD had considered most of the principles from the Visiting Strategy. The first seven principles are directly linked to Pillar 1 of the SIDDDD and its sectoral objectives and interventions. However, principles # 8 and # 9 (precaution in decision making and the polluter pays, respectively) are not explicitly included in the Delta Danube strategy, nor the elements on zoning and slow tourism from the Visiting Strategy. The visiting plan presents with a clear, operational strategy for each of the nine zones of the Reserve.

Box 2. Strategy of Crișan Zone

Strategy of the Crișan Zone based on slow tourism. This area attracts Romanians interested mostly in fishery, as well as international tourists looking for authentic birdwatch and local culture experiences. The strategy focuses on attracting tourists to discover the beauty of the nature and habitats in the region. The main objective is to develop an adequate infrastructure that should enable a genuine slow tourism experience, in addition to developing and promoting integrated activities. It takes into consideration a few elements, such as a directing and bringing visitors to the area and developing partnerships between public and private stakeholders. People should be encouraged to visit certain parts of the region, while pressure on habitats should be distributed through some filters regarding access and time. One way of doing this is, for example, by blocking access in some quasi-natural manner and making more difficult to get to some places or allowing access by non-motorized vehicles only. This calls for measures, like placing a ceiling for visitors for each part of the zone in partnership with the DDBR, local governments and entrepreneurs and with support from the territorial development plan, in addition to regulations to enable access routes for boats. The local partnership should help get access to finance, develop and promote local products, and advertise the region as a unique slow tourism experience to attract tourists and investors. The strategy also calls for setting up a local tourism association and provide training to local travel guides, hotel owners and boat drivers. Also, an open-air recreational center in the village should be developed and the visitor's center should be modernized.

The interventions in the SIDDDD had considered some of the recommendations from the Visiting Strategy. Among these are the establishment of a management organization for the Danube Delta destination, correlated with the development of the Danube Delta brand, and setting up a program

with multiple destinations to develop products and tourist attractions. However, the SIDDDD has no direct reference to the key four principles from the Visiting Strategy, the specific zone strategies, nor the touristic products under these plans.

As of now, ten projects in the DDBR have received EU funds under ITI, totaling RON 132 million (approximately EUR 27 million). All interventions are in line with the DDBR Management Plan, and focus on environment and improving administrative capacity.

Table 42. ITI funded projects in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

Crt.	Project	Budget (RON)	Sectoral Objective /Pillar SIDDDD
1.	Review of DDBR Management Plan and regulations	43,529,702	Biodiversity and eco-system management/1
2.	Improvement of the hydrological conditions in the aquatic natural habitats of the DDBR for the conservation of biodiversity and fishery resources - Lake complexes Dunavăț-Dranov, Razim-Sinoie, and Sinoie-Istria- Nuntași Zone	13,037,015	Biodiversity and eco-system management/1
3.	Conservation of Camaorman Forest	9,283,461	Biodiversity and eco-system management/1
4.	Improvement of the hydrological conditions in the aquatic natural habitats of the DDBR for the conservation of biodiversity and fishery resources - Lake Complexes Șontea-Fortuna, Matița-Merhei, Somova-Parcheș	35,910,901	Biodiversity and eco-system management/1
5.	Improvement of the hydrological conditions in the aquatic natural habitats of the DDBR for the conservation of biodiversity and fishery resources - Lake Complexes Gorgova-Uzlina, Roșu-Puiu	14,286,221	Biodiversity and eco-system management/1
6.	Measure to ensure a favorable protection and conservation status at international level of the endangered habitats and species in the DDBR	16,129,469	Biodiversity and eco-system management/1
	Total	**132,176,901**	

The projects account for 19.11% under Pillar 1 (Environment and Natural Resources Protection) and 60.8% of the total interventions under the sectorial objective Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management. Overall, the six projects with the administration of the Reserve as beneficiary (DDBRA) represent 2.47% of the total financial envelope under IDA ITI DD.

Figure 41.Financial impact of the DDBR projects under ITI by pillar

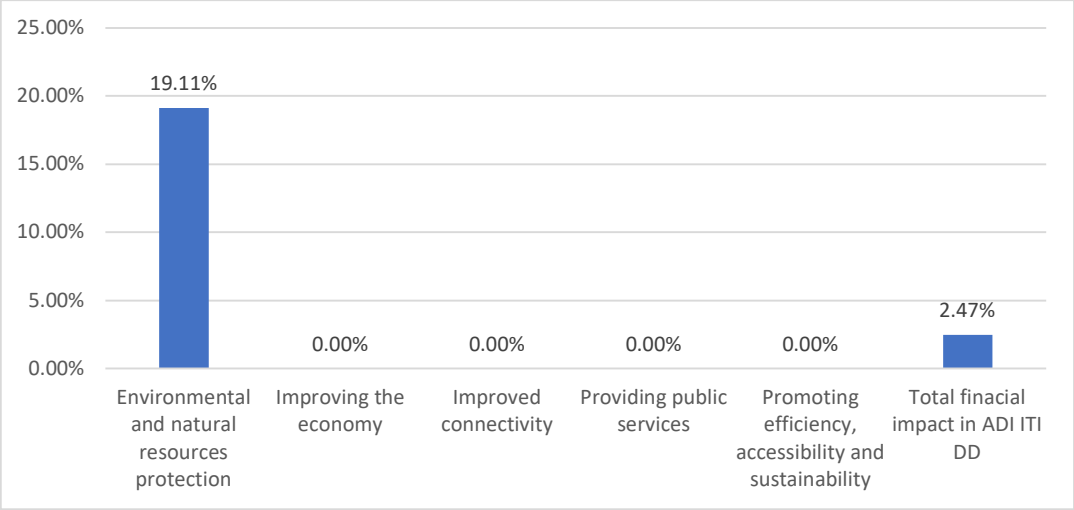
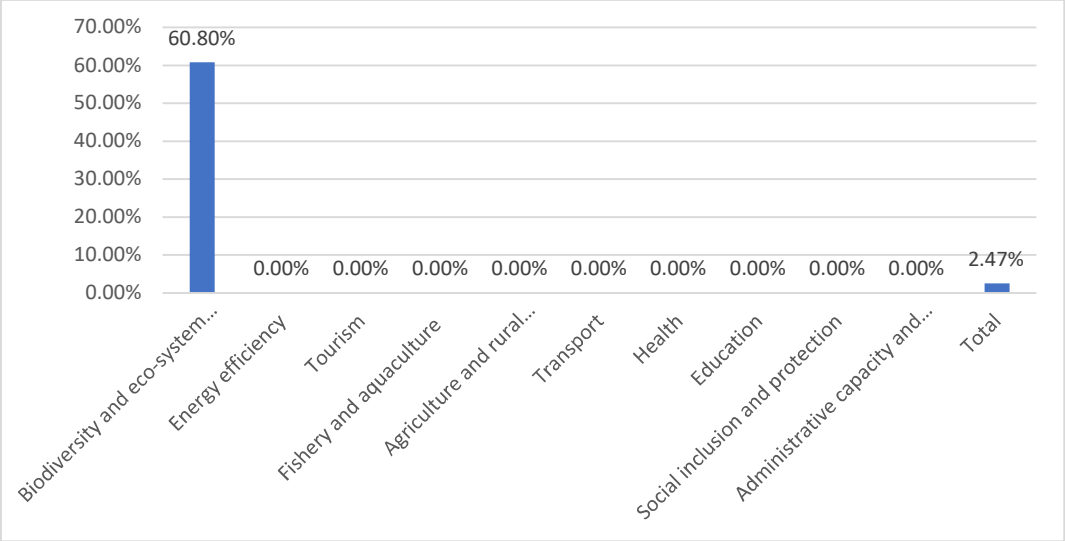


Figure 42.Financial impact of projects financed under ITI in DDBR at the sectoral objective level



In addition, a couple of interventions have been implemented in the DDBR in recent years from other EU funds. The total funds received for these activities is EUR 427,086, which is by comparison one percent of the overall ITI interventions in the Reserve. One of them is Bridging the Danube Protected Areas towards a Danube Habitat Corridor (DANUBEparksCONNECTED), and it is financed from the Danube Transnational Program 2014-2020, Priority Axis 2 - Responsibility toward environment and culture in the Danube region. It is a campaign focusing on counteracting fragmentation of habits to preserve a cohesive ecosystem through Danube-wide strategies and activities to restore and maintain connectivity in all habitat elements, such as water, land, and air. The project was implemented between 2017 and 2019 in partnership with 25 public and private entities from ten countries for a total budget of EUR 3,085,412, of which DDBR contributed by EUR 350,000. The second activity is Life Danube Sturgeons, and it tackles the survival and recovery of sturgeons in the lower Danube region and their long-term protection against illegal fishing and trade. It is part of Priority Area 6 Biodiversity and Landscape Diversity of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and

Sturgeon 2020 program, and runs a budget of EUR 1.8 million of which the Reserve's contribution is EUR 77,305.

The DDBR is also implementing 11 projects with RON 74.3 million (EUR 15.5 million) from their own budget. The money is more than half (56.3%) of the EU funds received under ITI. These interventions are aligned with the sectorial objective from the Delta Danube strategy - Biodiversity and Eco-System Management and Eco-Tourism, respectively. By end December 2019, around a third of the money was used, as some interventions are almost complete, whereas others are at early stage of execution.

Table 43.Projects financed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority

Crt.	Project	Budget (RON)	Project Execution at December 2019 (RON)
1.	Development of access routes and ornithological observers in DDBR	1,889,000	59,000
2.	Ecologic reconstruction for development of Ceamurlia fish development	1,685,000	48,000
3.	Afforestation for shore consolidation	1,373,000	190,000
4.	Fishing shelters	21,424, 800	10,600
5.	Ecologic reconstruction for development of Murighiol fish development	6,093,000	3,521,000
6.	Works to prevent clogging of lakes in DDBR to maintain an optimal regime according to the hydrological model channel decommissioning in the Gorvoga-Uzlina aquatic complex	3,582,800	3,547,000
7.	Hydrological works to improve water flow in the Somova-Parcheș aquatic complex	3,954,000	3,492,000
8.	Works for the decommissioning of main fishing channels and lakes in the Danube Delta, Tulcea county - Phase II	12,328,000	11,613,000
9.	Ecological reconstruction of the Agricultural development of Carasuhat	3,985,000	199,000
10.	Restoration works of the natural forest fund	1,143,000	57,000
11.	Works to improve the hydrological conditions in the Sinoe-Istria-Nuntaşi area	16,926,000	338,000
	TOTAL	**74,383,600**	**23,074,600**

3. Conclusions

The DDBR Management Plan is 90 percent aligned with the SIDDDD in terms of objectives, principles, and actions. The main difference is regarding the structure as one is a is a strategy which is more limited to identifying the objectives and targets, whereas the other is a management plan presenting specific activities and tasks, with roles and responsibilities. The projects from the DDBR are correlated with the interventions from the Delta Danube strategy. The projects under implementation by the DDBRA account for the third largest financial share of the ITI program, after interventions by the County Council Tulcea and those by the City of Tulcea. To ensure a better correlation in the future, the nine individual zone strategies from the Visiting Strategy should be integrated in the implementation plan of the SIDDDD.

Annex 8. Performance Measurement System Methodology

A methodological proposal for a performance measurement system: Danube Delta Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (2030)

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration (MPWDA) requested technical assistance from the World Bank Group to evaluate the interim progress, effectiveness and impact of the Danube Delta Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (SIDDDD).MPWDA, responsible for implementation oversight of the strategy, is eager to understand its overall physical and financial progress and identify opportunities for improvement for the next implementation phase. During the evaluation, the team made a number of recommendations to improve future monitoring and evaluation and produced this report to outline a methodology and support stakeholders in pursuing this improved approach.

This document proposes a simple methodological approach to structure and operate performance measurement systems for entities involved in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the SIDDDD. In the opinion of the evaluation team, the Performance Measurement System (PMS) represents a prerequisite for a functioning strategy, particularly in a complex environment with multiple stakeholders contributing to the ultimate achievement of the strategic vision. Establishing a methodology and agreeing on the standardization of approaches and interpretations is a foundation step towards a functioning system.

This document proposes a 10-step methodological process to (re)design and improve the PMS for the SIDDDD in order to maximize the chances to achieve the strategic vision. It provides practical guidance to IDA ITI DD and MPWDA, the two entities involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Delta Danube strategy implementation process, to handle this complex process aimed at modifying indicators and performance objectives. The PMS process covers a whole range of issues - from defining the object and process of the PMS, setting the performance objective and indicators, outlining methods to calculate indicators, data source and collection, to replacing or adding new indicators, comparing actual performance to the targeted ones, and handling the decision-making process. At the end of the day, this exercise should not only help strengthen the overall M&E system pertaining to the SIDDDD, but also set an example on how to measure performance in connection to other strategies /programs.

1. Introduction

This report is included as an Annexure to the main deliverable (Output 1) of the Territorial Impact Assessment RAS, which is a comprehensive evaluation of the SIDDDD implementation progress. The specific output was agreed as deliverable with the MPWDA, following the identification of the absence of a coherent measurement system as a significant shortcoming. It should be emphasized that it is not found that there is a complete absence of performance measurement, but rather that the organizations involved in monitoring and evaluating of SIDDDD implementation process (MPWDA and IDA ITI DD, hereinafter referred to as the *entities involved*) have developed, over time, their own systems which may not yield comparable results.

Measuring performance should be an ongoing, cyclical process, which improves in quality and refines methods and tools as organizations strengthen their institutional capacity, gain more and more experience, and integrates new models and working tools. A Performance Measurement System (PMS) provides the documented foundation for a permanent and consistent collection, analysis, processing, and reporting of the data on performance achieved in the process of reaching the objectives. In the case of SIDDDD, performance

measurement explicitly targets strategic, pillar, sector, and project objectives, plus those of the non-refundable fund axis and Operational Programs (OP).

Any changes in reviewing/redefining the strategic objectives and performance level of the SIDDDD must be approved by government decision (GD). Given the difficulty and potential long lead time this introduces, the WB team has not recommended any changes to the high-level strategic objectives or the set of high-level indicators in the strategy, but rather focused on the detailed set of indicators feeding into the strategic objectives. This does not however absolve i.e. MPWDA from not participating or providing inputs in the PMS, and the ministry is encouraged to play an active role with IDA ITI DD in refining the system over time. Ultimately supporting and adopting the system, and clarifying the role of different stakeholders will assist in improved overall progress monitoring of the implementation of SIDDDD. During the World Bank project for the evaluation of the SIDDDD in (between March and May 2020) experts from IDA ITI DD has completed the first iteration of an Excel Database used for calculating and reporting the performance indicators. The entity provided relevant feedback to improve some indicators and this should be the basis for the continuous refinement of the PMS.

2. The basics of a Performance Management System (PMS)

A functional performance measurement system (PMS) requires setting and formulating the objectives of the strategy in a clear concise manner. Setting objectives can be a difficult process that should consider a few features. To this end, objectives should be:

i) results-oriented
ii) specific and measurable
iii) achievable within a certain period of time
iv) realistic in terms of time and costs, and
v) mobilizing.

A few simple criteria summarized as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Accessible, Relevant, and Time-bound) should be kept in mind to make sure there is consistency of the objectives.

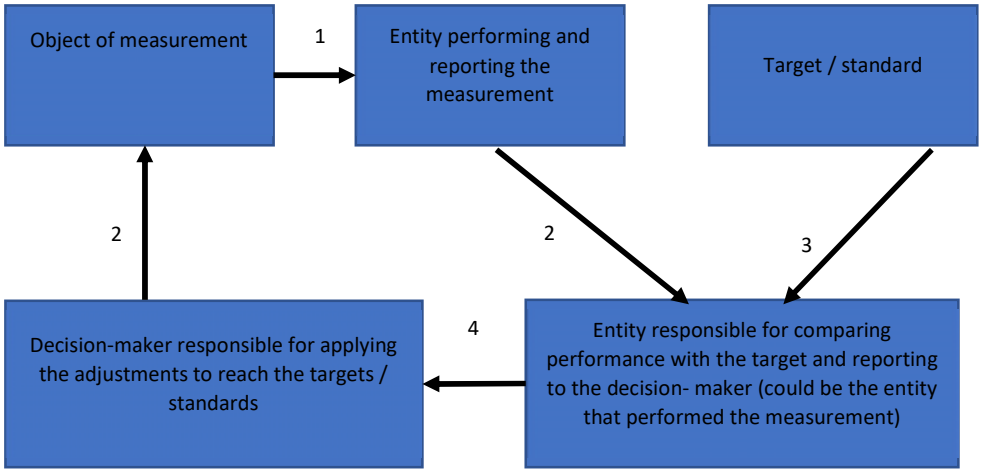
If they are not focused to bring about results, objectives are merely general goals that make it quite difficult to measure the performance. A general goal can turn into a specific objective by applying SMART criteria. For example, a general goal set as “reducing water losses in the distribution network” can become a clear objective by adding a few specifics, like “reducing water losses in the distribution network to 20 percent by 2025”.

The PMS is an important instrument because it underpins the decision-making process by targeting projects, measures, and programs that can help achieve the objectives and targeted performance levels. The system is very useful especially in a dynamic external environment, as it allows ongoing adjustments to the implementation plan of the strategy[51], such as activities, projects, indicators, in an informed and effective manner. Moreover, the PMS can help measure and analyze the unpredictable evolutions of the socio-economic and natural environment (like the situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic), which requires periodic reviews of the strategic plan, objectives and sub-objectives. There are factors like experience, inter-institutional collaboration, institutional capacity, organizational culture that can impact the result, hence hinder bringing the expected outcome. The entities involved in the implementation of the strategy must develop/adjust / improve their own PMS, correlate the system with their roles and responsibilities, and follow similar methodological steps.

The PMS process can be designed as a reverse loop system whose features are repetitiveness and stability (see Figure 1). This requires allocation of adequate resources for different components and tasks, including training staff, logistics, etc.

[51] In SIDDDD the implementation plan is practically integrated into the strategy

Figure 43 - Performance Measurement Process



The development of the PMS is based on a few principles, namely:

- *Definition of results:* set specific outcomes and impacts.
- *Description of targets*: replace strategy's vision statements with clear targets.
- *Measurement of progress:* measure key achievements to show the progress made
- *Performance indicators*: set relevant, simple indicators, generated at reasonable costs.
- *Ownership and stakeholders:* involve specialists from the organization in the design and implementation of the PMS to allow a sense of ownership and improve quality of the system.
- *Analysis and improvement:* continuously analyze and improve the performance indicators.
- *Easy reporting:* report the results achieved under a verifiable, simple system.

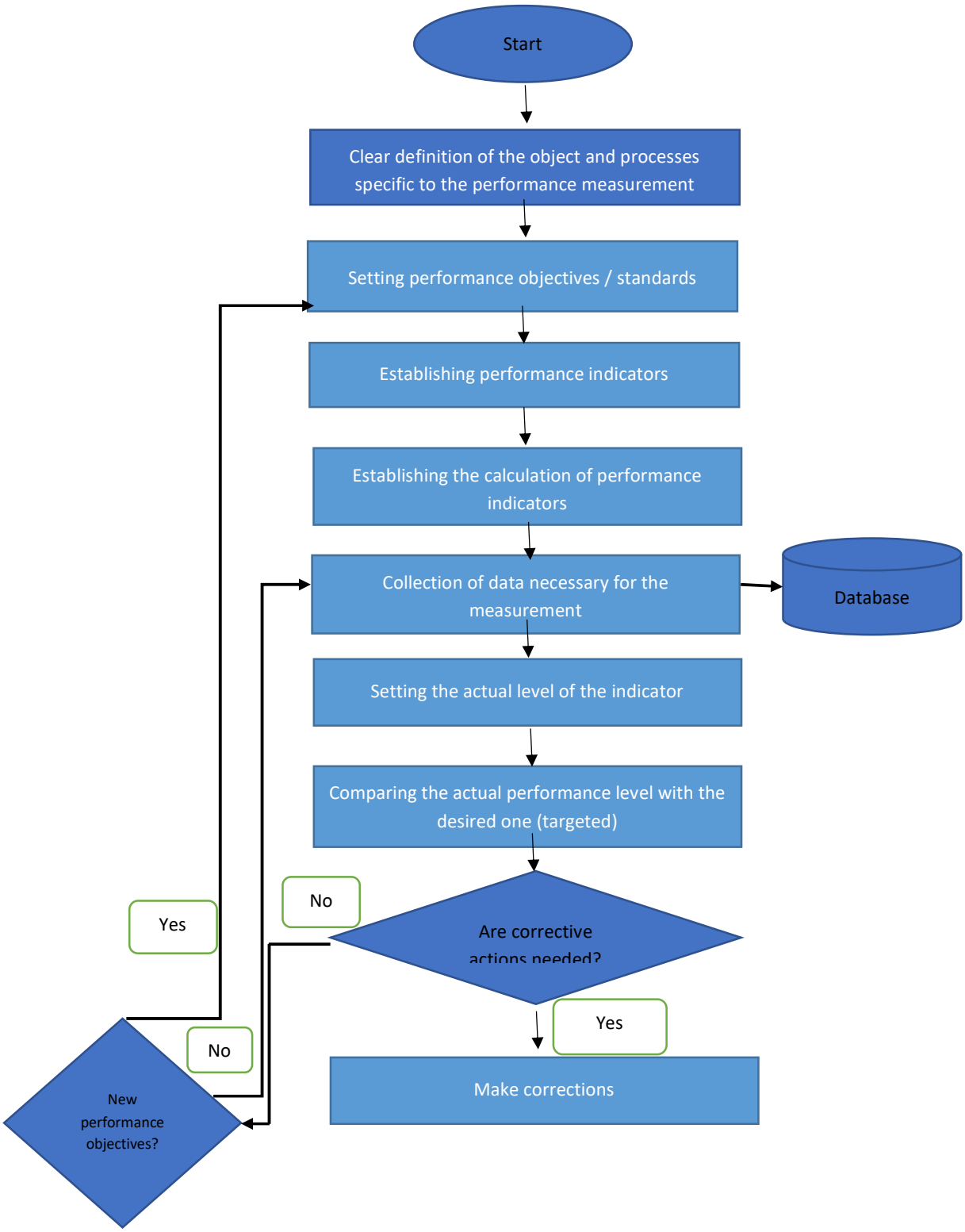
3. Proposed methodological approach for the development of a PMS

The PMS should be designed as a complex management tool, and not as a mere instrument to be used for collecting data related to objectives. A sophisticated, comprehensive tool PMS can operate the necessary changes to address issues or the situations of non-compliance with the standards.

The PMS is a permanent, cyclical process, which improves in quality and refines methods and tools as organizations strengthen their institutional capacity, gain more and more experience, and integrates new models and working tools. The new cycle would allow restart the monitoring activities at a better quality, hence allowing for an overall better performance of the system. The PMS design can be improved and refined under a 10-step methodological process, as following:

1. Define the object and processes
2. Set performance objectives / standards
3. Set performance indicators
4. Set the method to calculate performance indicators
5. Collect data for measurement
6. Calculate the actual level of the indicators
7. Compare actual performances to targeted performances
8. Determine if and what actions are needed to achieve the strategic objective
9. Decide on changes and implementing measures
10. Review and modify the performance of objectives

Figure 44 - Sequence of methodological steps of a generic PMS



Step 1. Clear definition of the object and processes specific to the PMS

This step is critical as it divides responsibilities on PMS among entities involved. In addition, it helps to clarify issues about different concepts regarding the process and approach. Since the DD strategy was approved by a GD and any changes to it would require a new GD, the components of the strategy should be taken into consideration when (re)designing the PMS and defining the object and process of the system.

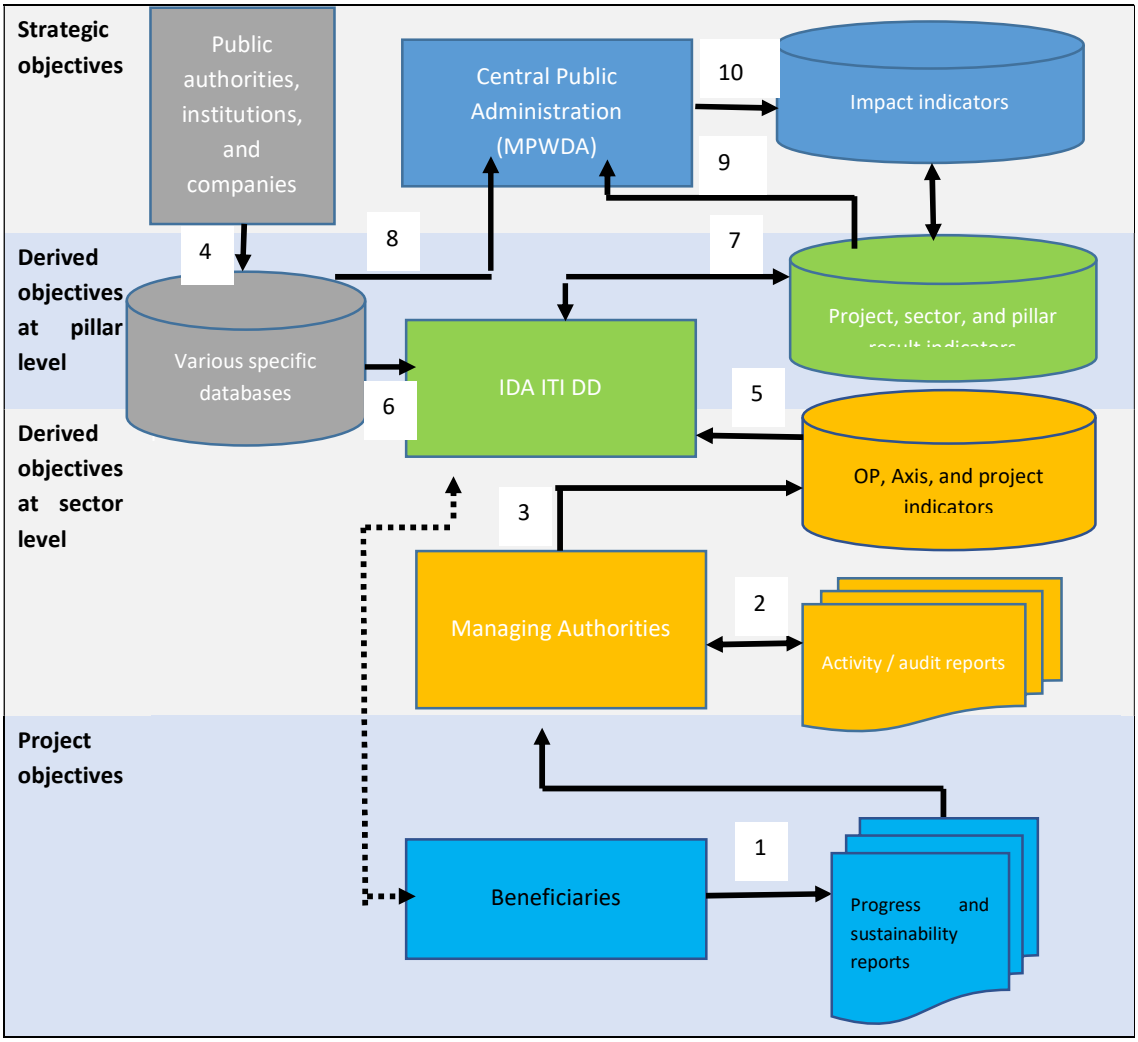
Long-term strategies, like SIDDDD, must be updated from time to time to be able to respond to internal and external environment conditions. Changes could be incorporated into the strategy through a simplified process. For example, while the main body of the strategy - strategic objectives, pillars, areas of intervention, performance standards - should be modified by GD, the revision of the implementation plan and its components could be approved by the MPWDA, the entity responsible for developing the strategy.

When defining the PMS object and process, the entities involved should have in mind a few issues. First, the parties should clarify what would the PMS measures entail and the role of each stakeholder in the institutional arrangement pertaining to this process. Second, they should identify the planning levels, such as strategic objectives, objectives at pillar level, objectives for each area of intervention, or project objectives. Finally, the entities involved will have to decide how to position themselves and in connection to other organizations that could join in the process. This depends on the type and source of data used, information processing and reporting system.

Some of these issues are already clarified in the SIDDDD. *Chapter VII: Monitoring and evaluation of the SIDDDD* outlines the M&E system of the strategy, and indirectly the PMS. According to the strategy, the M&E should support the effective implementation of interventions and absorption of EU funds, on one hand, and assess the long-term impact and sustainable development of interventions, on the other hand. The document also says that the MPWDA and IDA ITI DD are responsible for M&E of the strategy, which again sets the basis for their role with regard to PMS.

The information flow among key stakeholders in the PMS process is outlined in Figure 3 below. It shows the responsibilities with regard to measuring performance based on specific indicators at different levels of the strategic planning, in addition to the relationship between the entities involved and between them and data sources.

Figure 45 – Recommended information flow amongst stakeholders in the PMS



Action 1

As per OPs and financing contracts, beneficiaries of EU funds should prepare and submit progress and sustainability reports to the Managing Authorities (MAs) of the EU programs. The most relevant information in these comprehensive reports is about the levels targeted and achieved of input indicators (costs) and output indicators (immediate results), which can vary depending the type of project.[52] Whenever available, the reports may include information on efficiency indicators, like cost/unit of immediate results, as to allow a comparative analysis and reporting to national and international standards. There is a well-established relationship at various levels between project beneficiaries and IDA ITI DD (marked with a dash line in Figure 3). Although it was not included in the PMS information flowchart, this connection is useful for validating the data from MAs.

[52] In addition to EU funds, local authorities use money from the local budget (city, county etc.) and transfers from the central budget to support investments at the local level in infrastructure (transport/roads), education, health, environment etc. that contribute achieving the SIDDDD objectives. This was highlighted in details by the comparative analysis of local development strategies to the SIDDDD (see main report).

Actions 2 & 3

MAs should check the accuracy of the data in the reports from the beneficiaries and compare it to data from their own audit reports. Subsequently, they should upload the information in their database. Databases should provide easy access to information for entities involved to calculate performance indicators. Certain types of information is needed, including i) financial allocations per program, measures, etc.; ii) value of contracts completed under ITI DD; iii) name and details about projects and beneficiaries; iv) project objectives; v) performance indicators (input, efficiency, immediate results); vi) targets connected to indicators; vii) level of indicators achieved; and viii) project financial progress reports.

Action 4

Beneficiaries of EU projects, such as local authorities and public companies, put in their databases information on the implementation of the DD strategy and calculation of performance indicators. The MPWDA should help reach an agreement between different local entities and IDA ITI DD in order to provide relevant information and facilitate access to data useful for the PMS. Such agreements could cover data exchange that could be of interest to IDA ITI DD, the protocol for accessing data by the IDA ITI DD or provided to respective parties, and the frequency of data exchange/provided. Such agreements not only reduce the time and resources used by IDA ITI DD in getting the data, but would also encourage cooperation among different parties.

For example, some useful information on results and impact indicators is available at the Territorial Statistics Directorates. An agreement at the national level between the National Institute of Statistics (NSI) and the IDA ITI DD/MPWDA would open access to statistical indicators on specific data and information at the level of territorial administrative units (TAUs), such as cities, towns, communes etc. Perhaps such agreement could be easily reached since the NSI is mentioned in the SIDDDD as an information source for the M&E of the strategy implementation. Other relevant information could be provided by other public sector entities at both national and local level.

At national level, the information could be available at MAs for OPs and service/ energy suppliers, such as Romgas, the natural gas operator, and Transelectrica, the electricity transmission system operator. At sub-national level, data could come from decentralized and deconcentrated bodies at the local/county level, like School Inspectorates, Employment Agencies, Agencies for Payments and Social Inspection, Agencies for Environmental Protection, Public Health Directorates, Directorates for Agriculture and Rural Development, Inspectorates for Emergency Situations. In addition, data can be also obtained from the Danube Delta National Research and Development Institute, the Administration of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, county councils, city halls, the Tulcea Airport and the Tulcea Zonal Captaincy (managing the Tulcea port). These entities could provide relevant information to help calculate the performance indicators of the SIDDDD or identify new indicators.

Actions 5, 6 and 7

Here the IDA ITI DD collects, validates, and processes the data that can help put together the indictors of the strategy, and calculates the indicators in *Action 7*. During Action 7, the IDA ITI DD calculates the indicators (mostly output and outcome indicators) to measure achievements by project/sector/pillar objectives, and subsequently add the level of achievement in its own Excel database. The Excel database must follow the format that has been agreed upon by IDA ITI and World Bank experts (see **Annexure 1** Indicator Sheet & **Annexure 4** M&E Report). Nevertheless, this model is not set in stone, and the structure could be improved and modified as needed. The Excel Database should be the basis of the M&E of the strategy implementation based on performance indicators.

Actions 8 & 9 & 10

Finally, the last three points of interaction in the PMS information flowchart show the data collection by the MPWDA from available databases/sources and computing the actual levels of impact indicators. MPWDA enters in the database the figures on achievement of impact indicators, and subsequently is taken over by IDA ITI DD and put in the Excel Database. IDA ITI DD also could be responsible about data collection/validation,

calculation of impact indicators and reporting figures in their own database. This would require an agreement between the MPWDA and IDA ITI DD and figuring out ways about how the ministry should validate the data and include the impact indicators in the Excel Database. In this way, the database could provide information about all indicators from the SIDDDD.

Step 2. Setting the performance objectives/ standards

Without setting the objective/standards, there is no point for choosing measures, deciding on actions etc. In the example of "reducing water losses in the distribution networks to 20 percent by 2025", the performance standard is given by the maximum level of 20 percent losses. A few aspects should be taken into considerations when setting the performance objectives. Objectives/standards must be accessible, achievable with reasonable effort under normal conditions, and at low costs compared to the importance of the additional information provided by the indicator. Also, objectives should be applicable and pertinent as to match the conditions in which they will be used, ensuring that standards are flexible enough to adjust to different variations and conditions. Standards must be clear, understandable (expressed in simple terms to avoid misinterpretation), measurable (convey accurate information), and legitimate (officially approved). Finally, standards must be fair and accepted by the entities involved as a fair basis for comparison regarding the achievement of the performance target.

Step 3. Establishing the performance indicators

As mentioned before, performance indicators are input output, efficiency, outcome and impact indicators. The SIDDDD enabled the entities involved to use output, outcome, and impact indicators, hence the Excel Database is structured accordingly. Unlike output indicators, outcome and impact indicators raise issues. First, they require special collection procedure, such as surveys, use of specialized staff, consultation of databases, reports, and official documents. Second, they are hard to measure because they are difficult to quantify, the information may not be available, and it can take even years to generate and validate the data.

In general, indicators can be affected by external, unpredictable factors, like economic crises, pandemics, natural disasters, or environmental accidents. It is difficult to link results and impact to project implementation. For example, in the DD strategy results are produced both by public and private sector beneficiaries, which can generate different impact and synergies. In addition, sometimes project implementation can reach different specific objectives, other than the desirable impact – e.g., indicators for environmental quality assessment may be affected by economic development or infrastructure/transport projects. Finally, often time, just like in SIDDDD, indicators have no baseline, which means that the progress cannot be measured.

The entities involved may consider to undertake a few actions to improve SIDDDD indicators. One action as such is adjusting the list of indicators by dropping off those causing the most troubles, and instead adding new indicators. At first, a small set of indicators should be used to increase quality of the PMS and expand the list over time, in addition to using benchmarks specific to the respective sector in the absence of a baseline. Certain criteria should be considered to select or complete the list of performance indicators. This is including a few elements, namely i) validity –accuracy in measuring the results (quantity, quality, time interval); ii) relevance - in connection to the activity/project/program assessed; iii) reliability –lasting over a longer period of time; iv) simplicity – information is available and easy to collect and analyze, v) and accessibility – data is collected and evaluated at acceptable costs.

While the Excel Database is the main tool for the M&E of SIDDDD progress achievements, the Indicator Sheet should be used for all performance indicators. The data in the Indicator Sheet should be constantly updated and the sheet structure modified and improved to be aligned with the Excel Database. The sheet should be filled in by IDA ITI DD staff. The Indicator Sheet helps create the so-called Catalog of Performance Indicators. In addition, by populating the sheet with information it can also help assess how indicators meet the selection criteria (described above) and how they can improve. Also, it is quite useful for the new staff to speed up the learning process on M&E. A model for the Indicator Sheet is available in **Annexure 1**, with instructions to

complete this in **Annexure 2**. **Annexure 3** presents the connection between the structure of the Excel Database and the Indicator Sheet.

Step. 4. Establishing the calculation method for the performance indicators

The calculation of performance indicators is a two-step process. First, it identifies the specific data necessary for the indicators and presenting, and second, it provides details about calculation formulas. IDA ITI DD specialists, with support from World Bank experts, have established the calculation formulas for all output and outcome indicators in the Excel Database.

Step. 5. Collection of necessary data for measurement

The measurement of performance indicators requires complex sources and methods for data collection. The main data sources are the own databases, database of third parties, studies, reports and any other open source information. There are a few methods used for data collection, including consultation of public databases, online studies, reports etc., receiving information from other entities based on institutional cooperation, opinion polls, field surveys conducted by ITI specialists or contractors. Data accuracy and relevance is important and must be ensured. After data is verified, it must be placed in a safe data storage. Data processing can be performed with support from IT products purchased from specialized stores/experts based on specifications, data application and programs (e.g., Microsoft Access), and spreadsheet programs (like Excel). For SIDDDD, the existing database in Excel can be a good starting point for further improvement and development. The Excel program has a few advantages. It can speed up design and implementation, incurs minimum costs, it is flexible and can structure the information based on needs, and accessible and familiar to IDA ITI DD staff.

Step 6. Setting the actual level of performance indicator

The actual level of each performance indicator at a given time is calculated based on the formula indicated at Step 4. The actual level of indicators can be taken from different databases available or from reports provided by various partners. IDA IITI DD could collect the data and calculate the performance level of impact indicators, with support from the MPWDA. To this end, the ministry should help verify the accuracy of data, the way the data responds to the analysis and information processing, and whether the right calculation formulas are applied.

Step 7. Comparing actual performance level with targeted level

This step is about reporting the actual level of indicators to targeted values (intermediate or final values) and to the reference base. This process is based on the following formulas:

- Achievement of target (Current value /Target value)%
- Physical progress [(Actual value- Baseline value) / Target value]%

Sometimes it is useful to compare actual values to those from previous years in order to identify trends and developments that may signal some issues. Before analyzing and processing, data must be checked to make sure the figures are real, accurate, and match the needs.

Step 8. Deciding whether adjustments are needed to achieve the strategic objectives

The IDA ITI DD staff can decide whether to make adjustments to achieve the strategic objective of the SIDDDD. This is the time to modify or drop off some performance indicators and adopt new indicators. The information analysis based on performance indicators can help make changes and undertake some steps. Changes can be made with regard to projects, measures and processes as to maximize the likelihoods of achieving the objectives of the strategy. This is the moment to drop off some of the objectives, usually those that have already been achieved, or replace some of them with new targets. IDA ITI DD should assess the output and outcome indicators to see if such changes are needed and, if so, provide reasoning to justify the modifications. IDA should develop adequate measures to adjust the indicators. All changes must be approved by the management of IDA ITI DD, and then forwarded to the MPWDA.

Step 9. Deciding on adjustments and implement the measures

The decision-making process must be flexible and should allow undertake corrections to ensure that the strategic objectives will be achieved. As SIDDDD was approved by a GD, most adjustments outlined in Step 8 must be endorsed by the government through a GD. However, this is a complicated process that would take quite a long time and involve too many stakeholders. To simplify things, perhaps the MPWDA should decide about the adjustments, except for those related to performance objectives and dropping off some objectives.

Step 10. Review and final changes to performance objectives

The decision to modify or develop new performance objectives depends on two factors, namely how successful it has previously been in achieving the performance objectives and the changes agreed with regard to the strategic objectives. IDA ITI DD should review the performance objectives. Performance objectives can be modified or changed only by a GD, by proposals from MPWDA based on analyses, forecasts and proposals from IDA ITI DD. If the new performance objectives are not approved by a GD or other strategic planning documents (like OPs), then changes should be endorsed by the MPWDA.

4. Conclusion

The development/improvement of the PMS for the SIDDDD would require buy in from both IDA ITI DD and MPWDA (taking into account their respective roles and responsibilities). A revised PMS should be underpinned by a clear methodology (as outlined here) and have access to appropriate resources to support implementation (be it human resources, IT systems, etc.) . This outlined methodology can help to expand and improve the foundational system established during the strategy review process. A well-structured, functional PMS can allow to adequately monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SIDDDD, using information from the Excel Database. Some recommended and short term next steps in the process could be:

- Performance indicators to be selected based on a proposed methodology and the Catalogue of Indicators will be developed;
- The database of IDA ITI DD to be completed with additional data to evaluate the implementation and performance of the SIDDDD based on output and outcome indicators; IDA staff to identify the data sources and ensure data collection using the PMS methodology.
- In addition to targets for performance indicators, new reasonable targets have been identified and proposed for the period up to 2023, these should be further refined; and
- The level of achievement of performance objectives should be measured by two methods used for calculating the indicators.

Annexure 1 - Indicator Sheet

Organization							
INDICATOR SHEET							
1	Name of indicator:						
2	Type of indicator:		Input	Output	Efficiency	Outcome	Impact
3	Indicator coding:		According IISDDD 2014	According to the review	According to the review	According to the review	According to the review
4	Strategic objective						
5	Pillar						
6	Sector						
7	Specific to SIDDDD or other strategic documents						
8	Definition of indicator						
9	Unit of measurement						
10	Source of data /information on how to collect and validate						
11	Frequency of data collection						
12	Calculation formula						
13	Reference base	year					
		value					
14	Target value	year					
		value					
15	Actual value	year					
		value					
16	Method of reporting for achieving the indicator						
17	Periodicity of reporting on indicator's actual value						
18	Person responsible for data collection, including contact details	name					
		e-mail					
		phone number					
19	Comments (proposals for keeping, replacing indicators, other comments)						

Annexure 2 - Instructions for completing the indicator sheet

No.	Item	Filling instructions
1	Name of indicator	Enter full name of indicator, as in the SIDDDD or in other planning documents. The indicators must be reviewed periodically, and should be accompanied by an updated list of indicators in use.
2	Type of indicator	Enter type of indicator
3	Indicator coding	As during the implementation of the SIDDDD some indicators may be dropped or new ones are used, when reviewing the indicators from # 1, the indicator code will also be revised.
4	Strategic objective	Use the exact name of objective in the SIDDDD. If during implementation of the strategy, (i) there are changes regarding the objective, (ii) objectives are dropped or (iii) new objectives are approved, this section should be completed based on the "Updated List of Strategy Objectives". Any changes to the objective will be recorded based on the name of the strategic objective (provide information on year of the review).
5	Pillar	Enter name of pillar as in the SIDDDD. Any changes in the name or structure of the pillars will be handled as explained at above (#4).
6	Sector	Enter name of sector as in the SIDDDD. Any changes to the name or structure of the sectors will be handled as mentioned above (#4).
7	Specific to SIDDDD or other strategic documents	During the implementation of the strategy, the list of indicators could be completed with additional relevant indicators, specific to other strategic plans. Mention if the indicator is from the SIDDDD or other strategic documents (OPs, local development strategies, sectoral strategies, strategic plans of public companies, etc.).
8	Indicator definition	Provide a simple definition of the indicator, referring to the expected results and its relevance to the objective.
9	Measurement unit	Enter the unit of measurement – e.g., value, percentage YES/NO can be used for output indicators where Yes = 1 and NO = 0
10	Source of data and information and how to collect and validate	Include all sources for data collection and validation (own databases, public authorities/institutions, public companies, statistical reports, opinion polls, field surveys, official relevant, credible documents).
11	Frequency of data collection	Mention the frequency of data collection (quarterly, annually etc.). This depends on the availability of data. Add period in which the data collection and validation was performed.
12	Calculation formula	Enter the calculation algorithm by which the value of the indicator is determined.
13	Reference base	It is the initial value of the indicator to determine the direction and magnitude of the change in the value of the indicator. Mention the year for which the reference value of the indicator has been set.

No.	Item	Filling instructions
14	Target value	Enter the target value, either final or intermediate that is assumed by the performance objective set by the strategy. If the performance objective / target value of the indicator is not set by the strategy, stakeholders can restore to some realistic values, which will be periodically reviewed based on the evolution of the indicator.
15	Actual value	The actual value is calculated according to the calculation formula, at frequencies as per section # 11 established.
16	The way of reporting on the indicator achievement	The actual value of the indicators will be calculated and introduced in the Database in Excel format.
17	Frequency of reporting on the actual value of the indicator	Usually, the reporting is done annually, within 30 days from the collection of data. When new relevant data to calculate the indicator is available and validated, the indicator is recalculated and recorded in the Excel database.
18	Person responsible for data collection (add contact details)	Enter full name of person responsible for collecting, validating the data, calculating the indicator and entering the actual values in the Excel database. Include e-mail address and phone number.
19	Comments (proposals for keeping/ replacing indicators, other comments)	The responsible person must provide reason for the proposed actions • keeping the indicator • modify the target • dropping the indicator • drop of some objectives (for example, objectives that are fully achieved and will be no longer in the next EU programming period) • proposal of other objectives • proposals for institutional arrangements to facilitate access to data and collaboration between organizations, etc. The responsible person should identify and explain the challenges encountered during this process and propose solutions to address the issued.

Annexure 3 - Simplified Structure of the Excel Database

Column headings should include the following:

- NUMBER
- PILLAR
- SECTOR
- RESPONSIBLE PERSON
- UPDATED INDICATOR CODE
- INDICATOR NAME
- TYPE (ACHIEVEMENT / RESULT)
- SOURCE (SIDDDD, OPs etc.)
- MEASUREMENT UNIT
- DEFINITION
- CALCULATION FORMULA
- REFERENCE VALUE FOR 2016
- TARGET VALUE FOR 2023
- DATA SOURCE
- CURRENT VALUE FOR 2019
- COMMENTS
- ACHIEVEMENT OF THE TARGET
- PHYSICAL PROGRESS

Annexure 4 - Monitoring and Evaluation Report – Proposed structure for the use of IDA ITI DD

M&E Report **Proposed structure for the use of IDA ITI DD**	
I. General information	• Reporting entity • Name of the strategic document • Reporting date
II. Actual performance indicators (will be generated automatically, using the EXCEL Dedicated Database The database structured and populated with information is realized by IDA ITI DD specialists, with the support of the World Bank expert)	• Indicator code (SIDDDD or revised) • Indicator name • Strategic objective • Pillar • Sector • Measurement unit • Reference value • Target value (intermediate and final) • Actual value • Comparison of actual performance level with: o the performance level of reference values o the performance level of target values
III. Analysis, explanations, comments regarding the actual and values and evolution of indicators	. a. I*ndicator & process of defining the actual value of indicators (positive aspects, problems, costs, etc., lessons learned).* . Indicate how the indicators meet the following criteria: • Validity - The indicator allows accuracy in measuring results (quantity, quality, period of time). • Relevance –Relevant to the measured process. • Reliability –To maintain over time, regardless influences by unpredictable external factors. • Simplicity - Information is available, ready to collect and analyze. • Accessibility – Collection and analysis of information/data is possible at acceptable costs. *b. Analysis and explanation of proposals related to*: • Modifying of dropping off certain performance indicators. • Adopting of new performance indicators. • Changing performance objectives. • Proposed interventions based on type of projects and activities to maximize the chances to achieve the objectives of the strategy. • Dropping off objectives of the strategy (those that have been achieved achieved) or changing objectives
IV. Conclusions	Briefly summarize the results / problems highlighted in points II and III
V. Recommendations	**R 5.** Enter recommendations on methodological, organizational, and institutional issues.

Annexure 5 - Catalogue of SIDDDD Indicators

Catalogue of SIDDDD indicators

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
1	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of Natura 2000 sites with active conservation objectives	22.73%	22.73%
2	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	The share of economically valuable fish species populations	-1.85%	96.30%
3	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	The surface of the supported habitats in order to obtain a better conservation stage	3.81%	3.81%
4	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Approved sets of measures / management plans / action plans	50%	50%
5	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of sites /areas / species /habitats (as appropriate) benefiting from approved management plans / action plans	55.56%	55.56%
6	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of Natura 2000 sites with administrator / operational custodian - 4.1A	0%	0%
7	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of sites / areas / species / habitats (as appropriate) benefiting from active conservation measures implemented	0%	0%
8	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of Natura 2000 sites with administrator / operational custodian - 4.1B	41.67%	41.67%
9	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Active measures implemented for species X (for action plans related to species whose area cannot be identified exhaustively)	6.67%	6.67%
10	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of new researchers in the supported entities		
11	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of researchers working in improved research infrastructures		
12	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Private investment combined with public support for innovation or R&D projects	0%	0%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
13	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Management Plan implemented	0%	0%
14	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Management Plans of other Natura 2000 sites in the ITI territory	0%	0%
15	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of sets of measures and actions of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (DDBR) based on widely accepted monitoring data and state-of-the-art hydrological, sedimentation and demographic models implemented	33.33%	33.33%
16	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	The surface of the supported habitats in order to obtain a better conservation stage	3.81%	3.81%
17	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of flood protection infrastructure objectives within the DDBR built / rehabilitated / upgraded	16.67%	37.50%
18	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of approved normative acts that support the conservation of the natural heritage of the Delta		
19	Pillar I	Biodiversity and ecosystem management	Number of permits issued by DDBR Authority for researchers involved in the internationally recognized diversified research program on DD's natural and cultural systems and resources	53.33%	53.33%
20	Pillar I	Energy efficiency	Number of renovated public buildings	23%	23%
21	Pillar I	Energy efficiency	Number of renovated residential buildings		
22	Pillar I	Energy efficiency	Final energy consumption in the residential sector		
23	Pillar I	Energy efficiency	The length of the rehabilitated / extended thermal network	0%	0%
24	Pillar I	Energy efficiency	Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public buildings	3.30%	3.30%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
25	Pillar I	Energy efficiency	Decrease in annual primary energy consumption in public lighting	0%	0%
26	Pillar I	Climate changes	Estimated annual decrease in greenhouse gas emissions	0%	0%
27	Pillar I	Climate changes	Number of interventions and investments for climate change adaptation measures	20%	20%
28	Pillar I	Climate changes	Number of households with a better classification of energy consumption due to the implementation of energy efficiency measures		
29	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Average response time to emergency firefighting or other situations	30.72%	100%
30	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Average time to respond to emergencies when receiving first aid	6.99%	97.90%
31	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Units equipped for emergencies		
32	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Funding application submitted for analysis and approval to the European Commission / Independent Evaluation Body	50%	50%
33	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Supporting documentation for the elaboration of the financing application (Feasibility Study, Institutional Analysis, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Environmental Impact Assessment, etc.)	0%	0%
34	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Number of inhabitants who benefit from flood protection measures as a result of making investments in infrastructure.	100%	100%
35	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Number of disaster response drills (annual)	57.14%	57.14%
36	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Hazardous waste inventory and existing information management system (yes or no)	0%	0%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
37	Pillar I	Disaster risk management	Number of intervention plans available	100%	100%
38	Pillar I	Emergency situations caused by pollution	Number of pollution incidents in the DD region (annually)		
39	Pillar I	Emergency situations caused by pollution	Number of emergency response drills (annually)	66.67%	66.67%
40	Pillar I	Emergency situations caused by pollution	Average time to stop pollution incidents (days)		
41	Pillar I	Emergency situations caused by pollution	Number of pollution prevention plans available		
42	Pillar II	Tourism	Tourist arrivals (annually)	13.76%	83.33%
43	Pillar II	Tourism	Occupancy rates for authorized / official accommodation	24%	100%
44	Pillar II	Tourism	Average length of stay (nights)	53.85%	100%
45	Pillar II	Tourism	Share of tourist accommodation structures open all year round (%)		
46	Pillar II	Tourism	Increasing the expected number of visits to cultural and natural heritage sites and supported attractions	15.31%	15.31%
47	Pillar II	Tourism	Restored cultural heritage objectives	12.50%	12.50%
48	Pillar II	Tourism	Public buildings built / modernized / extended	0%	0%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
49	Pillar II	Tourism	Open spaces created or rehabilitated in urban areas	0%	0%
50	Pillar II	Tourism	Public or commercial buildings constructed or renovated in urban areas	0%	0%
51	Pillar II	Tourism	People living in small and medium-sized cities where local development strategies have been implemented	0%	0%
52	Pillar II	Tourism	Number of modernized historical monuments	0%	0%
53	Pillar II	Tourism	Number of DDBR entry permits		
54	Pillar II	Tourism	Number of boats available for tourists at the main exit points and nodal points (monitored routes)		
55	Pillar II	Tourism	Number of traditional houses maintained / rehabilitated included in the tourist circuit	50%	50%
56	Pillar II	Tourism	The ratio between non-residents and residents owning land in DD	86.83%	115.17%
57	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Variation in production value	20.87%	20.87%
58	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Variation in production volume	28.57%	28.57%
59	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Jobs (ENI) created in the fisheries sector or complementary activities	13.48%	13.48%
60	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Jobs (ENI) maintained in the fisheries sector or complementary activities		

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
61	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Number of fisheries jobs by specific activities (newly created through projects)		
62	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	The size of predatory fish species populations		
63	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Caras population dynamics		
64	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Number of investments / projects in aquaculture / processing / fisherman safety	13.33%	13.33%
65	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Of which: Aquaculture	20%	20%
66	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Of which: Processing	0%	0%
67	Pillar II	Fishing and aquaculture	Of which: Fishermen's Safety	0%	0%
68	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Share of irrigation infrastructure rehabilitated through ITI projects out of total viable irrigation infrastructure (%)	14.29%	14.29%
69	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	The area of land granted to farmers in publicly available land		
70	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of farmers who have started a non-agricultural activity	100%	100%
71	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of initiatives / projects that capitalize on the cultural heritage of the area	100%	100%
72	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure	38.49%	38.49%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
73	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - agricultural road	25%	25%
74	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - forest road	10%	10%
75	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - water network	10%	10%
76	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of the modernized communal and village infrastructure - sewerage network	10%	10%
77	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - modernized local roads	9.45%	9.45%
78	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - modernized high schools and schools	80%	80%
79	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - kindergartens	16.67%	16.67%
80	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - after school	50%	50%
81	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - street lighting	16.67%	16.67%
82	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - markets	16.67%	16.67%
83	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - dispensary	100%	100%
84	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - sports facilities	16.67%	16.67%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
85	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - parks and playgrounds	16.67%	16.67%
86	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - bridges and footbridges	16.67%	16.67%
87	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	% of modernized communal and village infrastructure - networks for population safety	16.67%	16.67%
88	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No. of holdings receiving aid for investments in agricultural holdings	81.78%	81.78%
89	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Share of total public and private investments for food processing and marketing = Total project wave (euro) of total ITI agricultural investments	25%	25%
90	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Number of holdings receiving investment aid for food processing and marketing	16.67%	16.67%
91	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No. of projects receiving investment aid for irrigation	70.97%	70.97%
92	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Target area (ha) for irrigation through ITI projects	25%	25%
93	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No. of projects with investments in manure storage platforms	44.44%	44.44%
94	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No. of holdings receiving start-up aid / support for investments in non-agricultural activities	85.71%	85.71%
95	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No of projects benefiting from infrastructure investment aid	35.85%	35.85%
96	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Length of agricultural roads (m) = agricultural road	0.01%	0.01%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
97	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Forest road length (m) = forest road		
98	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Water network length (m)	0.01%	0.01%
99	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Sewer network length (m)	0%	0%
100	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Length of modernized local roads (m)	0.01%	0.01%
101	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No modernized high schools and colleges	100%	100%
102	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No modernized kindergartens	16.67%	16.67%
103	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No modernized after-schools	50%	50%
104	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Number of projects that benefit from aid for investments in the local cultural and natural heritage	38.46%	38.46%
105	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No modernized historical monuments	100%	100%
106	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Number of modernized cultural centers	41.67%	41.67%
107	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	No. of LAGs selected	100%	100%
108	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	The population targeted by the LAG	100%	100%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
109	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Number of farmers / associations with access to promotion networks	25%	25%
110	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Number of participants in education / training programs through PNDR	25%	25%
111	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	The surface of unproductive forested land (through PNDR projects 2014-2020 in the ITI territory on M.8 APIA)	53.07%	53.07%
112	Pillar II	Agriculture and rural development	Number of flood protection interventions (through ITI projects)	100%	100%
113	Pillar III	Transport	Travel time between Tulcea and Constanța		100%
114	Pillar III	Transport	Travel time between Tulcea and Brăila	4.69%	76.19%
115	Pillar III	Transport	Travel time between Tulcea and Galați	0%	76.47%
116	Pillar III	Transport	Volume of goods transported by inland waterways		
117	Pillar III	Transport	Total length of newly built roads connected to TEN-T	8.70%	8.70%
118	Pillar III	Transport	Length of reconstructed / modernized roads connected to TEN-T	1.50%	1.50%
119	Pillar III	Transport	Implemented operations for public and non-motorized transport	0%	0%
120	Pillar III	Transport	Passengers boarded and disembarked in airport transport	0.01%	0.01%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
121	Pillar III	Transport	Modernized airports	0%	0%
122	Pillar III	Transport	Ports located on modernized TEN-T	0%	0%
123	Pillar III	Transport	Total length of newly built TEN-T roads	0%	0%
124	Pillar III	Transport	Number of interventions on improved access to key services during the winter	100%	100%
125	Pillar III	Transport	Number of public and private boats made available to passengers	96.55%	103.57%
126	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	NGA broadband coverage / availability as a percentage of households	0%	96.17%
127	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	The degree of regular use of the Internet at national level	17.50%	92.50%
128	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	New households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps	20%	20%
129	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of uncovered localities that will be covered by the project implementation	14.29%	14.29%
130	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of broadband Internet access points	5.39%	5.39%
131	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of students in pre-university education, active users on the national learning platform, in total number of students in pre-university education (%)	0%	0%
132	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of pre-university teachers, active users on the national learning platform, out of the total number of pre-university teachers (%)	0%	0%
133	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of digitized cultural heritage elements, uploaded on the platform created by the project	100%	100%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
134	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of "Digitized Cultural Heritage Elements" and provided to Europeana.eu	100%	100%
135	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of rare documents already digitized and number of rare documents digitized by the project, uploaded on Europeana.eu	100%	100%
136	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of objects already digitized in library collections and number of objects in library collections digitized by project uploaded to Europeana.eu	100%	100%
137	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of objects already digitized, belonging to the national heritage, in museum collections and number of objects from the national heritage digitized by the project, which are uploaded on Europeana.eu	100%	100%
138	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of high school students using the internet via wireless campus, out of the total number of high school students (%)	65%	65%
139	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of teachers using the internet via wireless-campus, out of the total number of teachers (%)	66.67%	66.67%
140	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of gymnasium units that benefit from wireless equipment through the implementation of the project	66.64%	66.64%
141	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Percentage of citizens who regularly use the Internet from the total population	90%	90%
142	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Schools using OER, WEB 2.0 in education (number of schools)	100%	100%
143	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of inhabitants using e-government systems		
144	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of prehospital and hospital units using telemedicine systems	0%	0%
145	Pillar III	Information and communication technology	Number of newly established public information access points (PAPIs)		

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
146	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Share of rural population connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI-funded projects (%)	25%	25%
147	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Share of population in cities connected to centralized water supply networks through ITI-funded projects (%)	10%	10%
148	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Share of rural population connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI-funded projects (%)	10%	10%
149	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Share of population in cities connected to centralized sewerage networks through ITI-funded projects (%)	0%	0%
150	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in rural areas	70.25%	70.25%
151	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Share of wastewater treated according to required standards (%) in cities	0%	100%
152	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Number of inhabitants connected to a centralized drinking water system through ITI	25%	25%
153	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Number of inhabitants connected to a centralized sewerage system through ITI	10%	10%
154	Pillar IV	Water supply, sewerage and integrated water management	Number of wastewater treatment plants	10%	10%
155	Pillar IV	Waste management	The amount of biodegradable waste stored	0%	0%
156	Pillar IV	Waste management	Additional waste recycling capacity	100%	100%
157	Pillar IV	Waste management	Closed / rehabilitated non-compliant landfills	0%	0%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
158	Pillar IV	Waste management	Total amount of household waste collected and transported (tonnes / year)	99.38%	99.38%
159	Pillar IV	Waste management	Total amount of recyclable waste recovered from the total quantity collected (%)	58.21%	58.21%
160	Pillar IV	Waste management	Total quantity deviated from storage out of the total quantity collected (%)	0%	0%
161	Pillar IV	Waste management	Total quantity of household waste collected separately (dry fraction) (tonnes / year)	0%	0%
162	Pillar IV	Waste management	Total quantity of household waste collected separately (wet fraction) (tonnes / year)	0%	0%
163	Pillar IV	Waste management	Number of inhabitants and visitors participating in educational activities related to waste management (number of people)	0%	0%
164	Pillar IV	Health	Beneficiaries of medical infrastructure built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped (for community and outpatient medical services)	0%	0%
165	Pillar IV	Health	Built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped medical units (for community and outpatient medical services)	0%	0%
166	Pillar IV	Health	Emergency reception units (tertiary level)	50%	50%
167	Pillar IV	Health	Rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped County Hospital	0%	0%
168	Pillar IV	Health	Number of integrated primary socio-medical care centers built / rebuilt		
169	Pillar IV	Health	Number of emergency units	66.67%	66.67%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
170	Pillar IV	Education	People who get a job, including those who are self-employed	10%	10%
171	Pillar IV	Education	Persons who, upon termination of participation, acquire a qualification	10%	10%
172	Pillar IV	Education	Certified persons as a result of the support provided		
173	Pillar IV	Education	People who find a job as a result of the support received		
174	Pillar IV	Education	Inclusion rate in pre-school / primary / secondary / upper secondary education in rural areas	-7.32%	97.62%
175	Pillar IV	Education	Inclusion rate in pre-school / primary / secondary / upper secondary education for Roma citizens	20%	100%
176	Pillar IV	Education	School dropout rate (%)	-7.31%	100%
177	Pillar IV	Education	Employees who benefit from training programs	0%	0%
178	Pillar IV	Education	Supported businesses	0%	0%
179	Pillar IV	Education	People receiving support	13.47%	13.47%
180	Pillar IV	Education	Employees receiving support for participation in CVT (skills training / validation)		
181	Pillar IV	Education	The capacity of childcare or education infrastructures to receive support		
182	Pillar IV	Education	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support - preschool		

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
183	Pillar IV	Education	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support - vocational and technical education	0%	0%
184	Pillar IV	Education	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support - lifelong learning	0%	0%
185	Pillar IV	Education	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from support - preschool	0%	0%
186	Pillar IV	Education	The capacity of the education infrastructure that benefits from school support	0%	0%
187	Pillar IV	Education	Number of students receiving support for participation in education / vocational programs		
188	Pillar IV	Education	Number of people who benefit from support projects for training / exchange of good practices	79.50%	79.50%
189	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion from marginalized communities who acquire a qualification upon termination of participation, of which: Roma	0%	0%
190	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in marginalized communities who have a job, including those who are self-employed, on termination of membership	0%	0%
191	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Supported services at the level of marginalized communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion	0%	0%
192	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	People belonging to vulnerable groups receiving integrated services		
193	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	People at risk of poverty and social exclusion from marginalized communities who benefit from integrated services, of which: Roma	3.48%	3.48%
194	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Marginalized communities at risk of poverty or social exclusion (of which: in rural areas) receiving support, of which: those with a Roma minority population	0%	0%
195	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Beneficiaries (adults with disabilities) of day center infrastructure for people with disabilities, rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped	0%	0%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
196	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Beneficiaries (adults with disabilities) of deinstitutionalization infrastructure built / rehabilitated / modernized / extended / equipped	0%	0%
197	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of kindergartens and other educational services for children under age of 6 in disadvantaged communities	100%	100%
198	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of children integrated in nurseries / kindergartens in disadvantaged communities	100%	100%
199	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of children integrated in the preparatory class and who participated in preschool education	100%	100%
200	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of students at risk of dropping out of school at the beginning and end of the school year	7.97%	92.62%
201	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of children involved in different types of complementary educational measures (after school, summer kindergartens, school tutoring, etc.)	100%	100%
202	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of centers that have implemented complementary education measures in the ITI territory	100%	100%
203	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of school mediators employed full time in the school system	100%	100%
204	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of school mediators trained through specific programs		
205	Pillar IV	Inclusion and social protection	Number of persons who have benefited from regular property rights	0%	0%
206	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Local authorities and public institutions that have implemented standard mechanisms and procedures for substantiating long-term strategic decisions and planning	0%	0%
207	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Local authorities and public institutions in which unitary quality and performance management systems developed through the program have been implemented according to the Action Plan for prioritizing and staging the implementation of quality management	100%	100%

#	Pillar	Sector	Indicator	Physical progress (%) June 2020	Achievement of targets (%) June 2020
208	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Local authorities and public institutions in which measures to simplify procedures for citizens have been implemented in accordance with the Integrated Plan for the simplification of procedures for citizens developed at national level	0%	0%
209	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Local public administration staff who have been certified at the end of their training as a participant	100%	100%
210	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Public authorities and institutions supported to develop operational procedures on anti-corruption preventive measures and related indicators	100%	100%
211	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Staff from public authorities and institutions who have been certified to complete courses in the field of corruption prevention, transparency, ethics and integrity	100%	100%
212	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Number of projects implemented within the Danube Delta ITI	15.97%	15.97%
213	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Quarterly reports prepared by the ITI coordinating structure approved by the Ministry of European Funds	41.03%	41.03%
214	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Number of staff in the structure coordinating the ITI, whose salaries are co-financed by the OPTA - full-time equivalent annually	60.56%	60.56%
215	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Number of public authorities and institutions that have implemented unitary measures to reduce administrative burdens, to implement quality and performance management systems	50%	50%
216	Pillar V	Administrative capacity and program management	Number of revised normative acts aimed at improving the legal and institutional framework in the Danube Delta	0%	0%