	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Priority	*I. Strengthening the safety in the Danube Region within the country and across the borders*
Name of the programme	**4. Biodiversity along the Danube –** Conservation of natural heritage and ecological services
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the programme	Justification: Natural and semi-natural ecosystems represent outstanding value in our country and also at a European level. The entire Hungarian section of the Danube and many water bodies in its catchment area are part of the National Ecological Network. In terms of types, the river and its floodplain belong mostly in the category of **ecological corridor**, but certain sections, such as Szigetköz, Béda-Karapancsa and the Gemenc area are **core areas** in the most natural state and the surrounding areas that protect them from external damage are **buffer zones**. 21 percent of Hungary is a Natura 2000 site and the entire Hungarian section of the Danube - except for the Budapest stretch - is part of the chain of Natura 2000 sites (European Ecological Network), along with many other Hungarian water bodies. The side arms along the Hungarian Danube section have outstanding importance from both a nature protection and a water protection point of view. One way to conserve natural values is to protect genetic resources, including the local varieties adapted to local circumstances. Objective: Conserving the natural values and processes of riverside habitats also helps protect water stocks. At the same time, semi-natural environments also offer opportunities for developing water, eco and bicycle tourism. The conservation of aquatic and waterside ecosystems and natural values, along with the assertion of a sustainable growth perspective contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life and employment opportunities for local populations. An ecological network is essentially a system of spatial links between various natural and semi-natural habitats via ecological corridors whose conservation is a must in order to maintain the functionality of the ecosystem. The conservation of Natura 2000 sites is based on the provisions under the Birds and Habitats Directives, which are mandatory for the Member States. All in all, the objective of the project is to maintain, improve and/or conserve Danube-related natural values, ecological connections and systems for future generations, in keeping with the efforts of conservation experts.
The content of the programme, subprogrammes	**4.1. Establishment and development of cross-border nature conservation sites** 4.1.1. Establishment of the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve across the Hungarian-Croatian border 4.1.2. Danubeparks - Danube River Network of Conservation Sites - development and implementation of transnational strategies in order to conserve the natural heritage along the Danube. 4.1.3. Conservation of the natural values and drinking water stocks of Szigetköz-Csallóköz **4.2. Development of ecological networks in the Danube Region** 4.2.1. Identification of ecological target situation in terms of criteria for a complex utilisation of the Danube

	4.2.2. Improvement of projects related to Natura 2000 maintenance plans and improvement of communication regarding Natura 2000 sites 4.2.3. Building a network of Danube 'forest' schools **4.3. River side-arm rehabilitation interventions, rehabilitation of aquatic habitats** 4.3.1. Habitat reconstruction of Danube islands *Ongoing and prepared projects in Hungary that may serve as examples as to ensuring the continuity and coordination of riverside rehabilitation activities:* • Reconstruction of saved-side wet meadow habitats at Bagamér • Habitat reconstruction of the Kucsér marshland at Ásványráró • Preservation, presentation of, and research into, nature conservation sites and natural values 4.3.2. Rehabilitation of the Danube backwaters at Fadd, Bogyiszló, Tolna and Báta **4.4. Assessment of the services of the Danube ecosystem, development of a framework for the sustainable use of resources** **4.5. Hydro-ecological assessment of the Tisza water system** **4.6. Ensuring the longitudinal connectivity of the river for wildlife** - extension of the Sturgeon 2020 Programme in order to ensure longitudinal connectivity of the Danube for migratory fish, analysis of the longitudinal connectivity of Portile de Fier I and Portile de Fier II. **4.7. Conservation of genetic pool and gene bank co-operation along the Danube**
Potentially affected countries	Countries alongside the Danube and countries bordering on Hungary
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro) Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) Convention of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn) Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern) Country reports must be submitted to UNESCO every 5 years on MAB (Man and Biosphere) programme sites **43/92/EEC** Habitats Directive **79/409/EEC** Birds Directive **2000/60/EC Water Framework Directive (WFD):** European Union Member States must comply with the requirement of ensuring the good quality of their surface and groundwaters by 2015. Under the Framework Directive, 'good condition' means not only that the water is clean, but also that water-bound habitats are disturbed as little as possible and supplied with adequate quantities of water.

	COM(2006) 216 Action Plan on Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 - and beyond **Regulation (EC) No 1882/2003** Nature Conservation Directive and amendments, Natura 2000
Complementarity with the Danube strategy	I.A Conservation of the values of natural environment • Organisation of biosphere conservation • Establishment of cross-border water stock management II B Sustainable development of tourism III.A Educational and cultural co-operation • Enhancement of environment-consciousness
Parties affected by the programme (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	Target group: natural environment, (habitat, rare species, local varieties, other values, etc.), local population, farmers Beneficiaries, co-operating parties: non-governmental organisations, local governments, government agencies, geographically competent national park authorities, geographically competent nature, environmental and water conservation inspectorates, water management directorates, forestry companies and local enterprises
Vision/effects/results	Cross-border co-operation and communication with the affected residents and users of the site promote the conservation of natural environment along the Danube. Environmental consciousness, attitude development and environmental education result in a stronger relationship between landscape and man, help conserve natural values, promote related efforts, and - through the conservation of resources - are essential for future generations. The assessment of ecosystem services and the environmental-social-cultural-economic frameworks enable the conservation of the Danube as a living stream. The existence of natural values allows for establishing a diversified management structure and provides a favourable background for the propagation of soft forms of tourism.
Programme type	Cohesion Fund and European Regional Development Fund
Term of implementation	The term of implementation is 2-5 years or ongoing, depending on the individual project
The level of preparedness of the programme (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	The level of preparedness with regard to individual programme elements is indicated in the project sheets
Relationship with other programmes/projects	2 Conservation of our freshwater values in the Danube Region 11 Tourism from the Black Forest to the Black Sea

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.1. Establishment and development of cross-border nature conservation sites**
Potentially affected countries	All the countries along the Danube are affected
Territorial limitation	
Preliminaries, justification and objective of the subprogramme	Preliminaries: INTERREG IIIa, Life projects along the border, Tulcea Decision of 2007, Aggtelek-Domica site settlement study plan, co-operation between national parks (e.g. Fertő-Hanság National Park) Justification, objective: These sites are extremely important because of their three complementary functions, i.e. they help conserve natural values, ecosystems and biodiversity at the same time; they also promote sustainable economic growth and social development, and support environmental education, training and research. In other words, these sites serve as a model for a long-term 'Man and Biosphere' approach.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro) Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) Convention of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn) Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern) Country reports must be submitted to UNESCO every 5 years on MAB (Man and Biosphere) programme sites **43/92/EEC** Habitats Directive **79/409/EEC** Birds Directive UNESCO's Seville Strategy Act LIII of 1996 on Nature Conservation
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Europe's natural heritage can only be conserved, and the conservation and sustainable utilisation of ecosystem services can only be achieved through international co-operation using a bio-regional approach and ensuring the connectivity of various habitats and habitat types. The objective and manner of co-operation may vary depending on the ecological character and conservation status of the sites involved (e.g. Network of Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar Convention sites, network of Natura 2000 sites, Pan-European Ecological Network).
Parties affected by the subprogramme	Target group, beneficiaries, co-operating parties: local residents, non-governmental organisations, local governments, government agencies, geographically competent national park authorities, geographically competent nature, environmental and water conservation inspectorates, water management directorates, forestry companies and local enterprises, etc.
The content of the subprogramme	4.1.1. Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve project across the Hungarian-Croatian border 4.1.2. Danubeparks - Danube River Network of Conservation Sites - development and implementation of transnational strategies in order to

	conserve the natural heritage along the Danube. 4.1.3. Conservation of the natural values and drinking water stocks of Szigetköz-Csallóköz
Vision/effects/results	The establishment of cross-border nature conservation sites can enhance the conservation, protection and sparing use of natural values. This will improve co-operation between the countries involved at various levels, i.e. at the professional, residential, central and local government levels. Stronger co-operation also promotes the development of eco-tourism and enterprises.
Cost requirement of the subprogramme	The cost of individual subprogramme elements is indicated in the project sheets. The budget regarding the total cost of the subprogramme is under development.
Term of implementation	3 years and/or ongoing
The level of preparedness of the subprogramme	The Hungarian part of the Biosphere Reserve has been designated. The application document regarding the (Hungarian part) of the Biosphere Reserve was prepared and submitted at the end of September 2009 to UNESCO with the involvement of the Hungarian UNESCO Committee. Recently, both Slovenia and Austria have indicated their interest to join the initiative. This project was approved following the first call for applications under the DANUBEPARKS South East Europe Transnational Programme. Professional preparations for the project called Conservation of the natural values and drinking water stocks of Szigetköz-Csallóköz have been completed.

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.1. Establishment and development of cross-border nature conservation sites**
Project name	**4.1.1.** Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve across the Hungarian-Croatian border
Potentially affected countries	Hungary (Hungarian part), Croatia (Croatian part) Other affected countries in the Mura, Drava, and Danube Region may also be involved at a later stage. Austria and Slovenia have already indicated their intention to get involved.
Territorial limitation	The sites along the Mura, Drava and Danube traverse nature conservation sites (whose management is the responsibility of the Danube-Drava National Park Directorate and the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate) and also on non-conservation sites.
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	Preliminaries: Hungary was among the first countries in 1970 to join the UN UNESCO MAB (Man and Biosphere) initiative, one of the oldest and worldwide nature conservation initiatives of the developed countries. After thorough scientific and professional preparations, Hungary designated 5 Biosphere Reserves of international importance by the early 1980s, including the Biosphere Reserves of Aggtelek, Lake Fertő, Hortobágy, Kiskunság and Pilis. Justification: These sites are extremely important because of their three complementary functions, i.e. they help conserve natural values, ecosystems and biodiversity at the same time; they also promote sustainable economic growth and social development, and support environmental education, training and research. In other words, these sites serve as a model for a long-term 'Man and Biosphere' approach. The natural ecosystems and associations of flora (e.g. at sandy and pebbled strands, flood-plain and gallery forests) involving rare species in Europe (black storks, little terns, white-tailed eagles, Hungarian hawthorn) along the still freely winding parts of rivers represent special features and key natural values of the new reserve. The recently increasing growth in water, ecological and bicycle tourism along the Drava, Mura and Danube rivers is a very important opportunity for the people living in the region. The establishment of the Biosphere Reserve may offer an ideal opportunity in this context, and also enables a revival of traditional forms of flood-plain cultivation adapted to present conditions, environmentally conscious behaviour and education, and nature research opportunities. Objectives: The key objectives of the Reserve are to conserve the special aquatic and waterside ecosystems and natural values of the Mura-Drava-Danube border region of the three rivers and, along with the assertion of a sustainable growth perspective, to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of

	life and income generation/employment opportunities for local governments and residents.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	A country report must be submitted every 5 years to UNESCO on the conservation, management, maintenance and sustainable growth activities on MAB sites, and also on the country's implementation of UNESCO's Seville Strategy and Madrid Action Plan. National law mandates that the MAB site be announced in a ministerial decree and that the core areas of the Reserve be treated as special conservation sites (Act LIII of 1996 on Nature Conservation).
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Establishing the new reserve is a major event, since a favourable UNESCO decision and Croatia's involvement may create a cross-border Biosphere Reserve to promote co-operation between the two countries. During an inter-governmental meeting on 17th September 2009 in Barcs, the ministers of Croatia and Hungary signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding to confirm their intention to apply jointly. The long-term prospect of extending the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve into multilateral co-operation (Drava Declaration, Maribor, 23-25th September 2009) was raised during the meeting of Hungarian, Serbian and Croatian presidents in 2007 and the Drava Symposium in Maribor in September 2008, so the bilateral designation at present may signal the beginning of beautiful multilateral co-operation (involving Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Austria and Italy).
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	Target group, beneficiaries, co-operating parties: local residents, non-governmental organisations, local governments, government agencies, geographically competent national park authorities, geographically competent nature, environmental and water conservation inspectorates, water management directorates, forestry companies and local enterprises, etc.
Content of the project	The new Biosphere Reserve sites have been designated; the application document has been drafted and submitted to UNESCO. If the submission is approved by UNESCO (as expected in May 2010) the Reserve must be announced in a ministerial decree, the conservation status of the sites must be signposted, publications must be issued to inform people, a web site must be developed, etc., information forums must be held for the public, discussions must take place with the local governments, and international negotiations must continue with Croatia and any of the other countries that might be interested.
Vision/effects/results	The establishment of the Biosphere Reserve will make the conservation, protection and sparing utilisation of the natural values in the Mura-Drava-Duna region more effective. The award of the international MAB title means enhanced

	recognition and awareness, which the local residents can capitalise on through the development of eco-tourism and enterprises. Closer co-operation with the Danube-Drava National Park, which is responsible for managing the Reserve, may benefit the local governments and residents alike as the National Park may be able to participate in joint applications with greater success. The cross-border Biosphere Reserve will in all likelihood improve co-operation between Hungary and Croatia at various levels, i.e. at the professional, residential, central and local government levels.
Cost requirement of the project	The cost requirement cannot be identified until the application is approved by UNESCO. Signposting the MAB sites, the development of information/educational publications, the implementation of the provisions of the Seville Strategy, the organisation of residential information forums, discussions, etc. may involve costs at a later stage.
Term of implementation	UNESCO's decision-making body will meet in May 2010 to evaluate new entries and may, on that occasion, grant the MAB title to the Hungarian part of the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve across the Hungarian-Croatian border. Should this not be the case, the application may be resubmitted the following year (autumn 2010), already for the entire site (Croatia will submit its application during 2010). The MAB title is valid until withdrawn, UNESCO reviews the MAB status of the sites every 5 years based on the country reports submitted.
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	During an inter-governmental meeting on 17th September 2009 in Barcs, the ministers of Croatia and Hungary signed a joint Memorandum of Understanding to confirm their intention to apply jointly. Co-operation is ongoing with the Croatian counterpart organisations responsible for designation. The Hungarian part of the Reserve has been designated. The application document regarding the (Hungarian part) of the Biosphere Reserve was prepared and submitted at the end of September 2009 to UNESCO with the involvement of the Hungarian UNESCO Committee. Recently, both Slovenia and Austria have indicated their interest to join the initiative.

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.1 Establishment and development of cross-border nature conservation sites**
Project name	**4.1.2 Danubeparks** - Danube River Network of Conservation Sites - development and implementation of transnational strategies in order to conserve the natural heritage along the Danube.
-Potentially affected countries	Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia.
Territorial limitation	
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	INTERREG IIIa, Life projects along the border, Tulcea Decision of 2007
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	The South-East Europe Transnational Programme.
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Helping each-other by establishing the Network of Conservation Sites along the Danube.
Parties affected by the project	National Parks, national and regional environmental conservation authorities, non-governmental organisations.
Content of the project	Highlighting our common national heritage along the Danube to the public.
Vision/effects/results	
Cost requirement of the project	2 720 950 EUR /ERDF, IPA/
Term of implementation	03.2009-02.2012
The level of preparedness of the project	This project was approved following the first call for applications under the South East Europe Transnational Programme.

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.1. Establishment and development of cross-border nature conservation sites**
Project name	**4.1.3. Conservation of the natural values and drinking water stocks of Szigetköz-Csallóköz**
Potentially affected countries	Hungary - Slovakia
Territorial limitation	Hungary - Slovakia
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	*Preliminaries:* The Bős-Nagymaros project and its consequences, the diversion of the Danube, and the decision of the International Court of Justice have brought the environmental science issues of the Szigetköz-Csallóköz region and research to identify the values to the forefront. The Szigetköz Working Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has been dealing with this issue since 1993, with the involvement of researchers from many specialised institutions. Despite its modest resources, the working group has also been active in the international field in terms of organising joint conferences with Slovak institutions and issuing publications. Its most important international achievement was its contribution to the documentation of the international working group (upon the European Commission's request) as part of the Hague process. *Justification, objective:* One of the most severe problems regarding the Danube is the fact that the consequences of the Bős-Nagymaros case remain unresolved. Efforts to achieve settlement would be facilitated by an approach in which the political, legal and environmental building blocks would follow each-other in an orderly structure. A fundamental task in this regard is to make the assessment and dissemination of the issue from an environmental science perspective known to, and convincing for, the community of international scientists. The efforts of the working group to that end are impeded in a major way by the modest available resources. The objective of this project is to actually extend the scope of joint environmental research in the Szigetköz-Csallóköz region (primarily in a Hungarian-Slovak context), with a view to the new EU standards. This must be harmonised with the ongoing planning activities for the improvement of international waters, and with monitoring the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, as well as with monitoring for other purposes. Another objective is to make the results known to the international professional community. Due recognition of environmental issues in the complex Bős-Nagymaros case can only be expected following international groundwork and preparations. The project would contribute to the successful conclusion of talks regarding the implementation of the International Court decision and would facilitate decision-makers' work concerning the environmental rehabilitation in the region.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	In addition to fulfilling the obligations under national and international law in order to safeguard environmental values and drinking water stocks, Hungary and Slovakia must also comply with the decision of

	the International Court in the Bős-Nagymaros case.
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	The project is linked to Horizontal Criterion 4 of the pyramid of objectives, i.e. *promotion of research and development and innovation*. Of the strategic priorities indicated as I.A, it sets out *to improve the conditions for the conservation of drinking water quality and to prevent the propagation of cross-border pollution*. The proposal may also contribute to the effectives of other parts in the pyramid of objectives, such as *the establishment of joint catchment area management, the extension of joint regional planning, and the enhancement of environmental consciousness.*
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	*Co-operating parties:* The institutions doing research into the natural values in the Szigetköz and Csallóköz region. *Target group and beneficiaries:* The population affected by the conservation of natural values and water stocks in the Szigetköz and Csallóköz region.
Content of the project	- Establishing organised co-operation building on the current informal relations between the institutions and experts dealing with the environmental status of the Szigetköz-Csallóköz region. - A summary and reappraisal of measurement and assessment results, collecting and organising them in a database that meets the new EU requirements. - Identification and implementation of the opportunities offered by the development of international environmental law - primarily of the norms regarding environmental damages - principally in the methodology of measurements/planning and evaluation. - Organisation and implementation of a series of measurements producing an assessment of the environmental status. - Joint and integrated evaluation of the results: the drafting of research reports, organisation of conferences and informing the international professional community. - The drafting of specialised documents as required by the government and decision-makers. - Facilitation of the negotiations on implementing the decision of the International Court of Justice. - The development of information publications for those interested in the conservation of natural values and water stocks.
Vision/effects/results	Quotation from the document entitled *Developing an EU strategy for the Danube Region - Hungary's contribution*: *'The Danube Region (DR) is threatened not only by political but also by environmental and climate change risks, caused partly by natural phenomena (floods and droughts) and partly by human activities (the pollution of waters and air). ... Issues related to drinking water are also of primary importance, as they pose a direct threat to the lives of people in the region and the EU in general. This issues often have cross-border or even transnational implications, which may lead to disputes between states.* Hungary - a country lying at the bottom of the Carpathian Basin - is especially exposed to water-related risks and

	damages.' The project would successfully serve to eliminate the above threats and risks in the Szigetköz-Csallóköz region, to prevent further damage to natural values and water stocks, and to develop effective instruments for mitigating the damages.
Cost requirement of the project	500 million HUF
Term of implementation	– first year: co-operation in an organised form, establishing a uniform database meeting EU standards, arranging for a series of measurements to assess the environmental status (100 million HUF) – second year: series of measurements to assess the environmental status (300 million HUF) – third year: evaluation; drafting reports on the results, development of publications for target groups and beneficiaries, organising conferences and forums (100 million HUF)
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	The level of professional preparedness for the project can be regarded as complete. Environmental research is ongoing in the Szigetköz (and Csallóköz) region. The research projects of earlier years will make a significant contribution to the proposed assessment of environmental status and to the identification of environmental changes. At the same time, the project would also serve the development of environmental monitoring in the Szigetköz region. As indicated by preliminary enquiries, both the Hungarian special institutions not included in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences working group and the Slovak institutions and colleagues would be happy to join the project. If the decision is taken to implement the project as part of the Danube Strategy, work can start immediately using the above schedule.

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.2. Development of ecological networks in the Danube Region**
Preliminaries, justification and objective of the subprogramme	The Danube and its tributaries represent elements of special importance in the European ecological network. Longitudinal continuity and lateral zoning provide an excellent opportunity for the development and maintenance of wildlife ecosystems, and also for establishing and conserving the ecological connections indispensable from a structural and functional point of view. These ecological corridors also provide significant ecosystem services. At the same time, the environmental impact of certain social and economic activities, the adverse implications of climate change, and the ever-faster propagation of invasive species threaten the efforts of the countries along the Danube to conserve these common natural values. Justification: The entire Hungarian section of the Danube and many water bodies in its catchment area are part of the National Ecological Network. In terms of types, the river and its floodplain belong mostly in the category of **ecological corridor**, but certain sections, such as Szigetköz, Béda-Karapancsa and the Gemenc area are **core areas** in the most natural state and the surrounding areas that protect them from external damage are **buffer zones**. 21 percent of Hungary is a Natura 2000 site and the entire Hungarian section of the Danube - except for the Budapest stretch - is part of the chain of Natura 2000 sites (European Ecological Network), along with many other Hungarian water bodies. Objective: An ecological network is essentially a system of spatial links between various natural and semi-natural habitats via ecological corridors whose conservation is a must in order to maintain the functionality of the ecosystem. The conservation of Natura 2000 sites is based on the provisions under the Birds and Habitats Directives, which are mandatory for the Member States. All in all, a key objective of the project is to maintain, improve and/or conserve Danube-related natural values, ecological connections and systems for future generations.
The content of the subprogramme	4.2.1 Identification of ecological target situation in terms of criteria for a complex utilisation of the Danube 4.2.2 Programmes related to Natura 2000 maintenance plans, communicating Natura 2000 4.2.3 Building a network of Danube ‘forest’ schools
Potentially affected countries	All European Union Member States, as well as all non-Member States along the Danube, are affected by the exchange of experiences and methodology development.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	The nature conservation directives of the European Community, i.e. the Birds Directive published in 1979 (79/409/EEC) together with the Habitats Directive (Directive on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna, 92/43/EEC) serve today as the foundation for the EU’s nature conservation legislation (**Natura 2000 Network**). **2000/60/EC Water Framework Directive (WFD):** European Union Member States must comply with the requirement of ensuring the good quality of their surface and groundwaters by 2015. Under the Framework Directive, ‘good condition’ means not only that the water is clean, but also that water-bound habitats are disturbed as little as possible and supplied with adequate quantities of water. In terms of legislation, the National Ecological Network uses three categories of sites (i.e. core area, ecological corridor, buffer zone), which are clearly delineated in the

	Act on the National Spatial Plan (OTrT).
Complementarity with the Danube strategy	I.A Conservation of the values of natural environment • Organisation of biosphere conservation • Establishment of cross-border water stock management II B Development of landscape-compatible tourism • Establishing the environmental prerequisites for waterside tourism • Building a common tourism image based on landscape and cultural resources III.A Educational and cultural co-operation • Promoting the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge • Extension of educational and research networks • Activation of civil society relations • Enhancement of environment-consciousness
Parties affected by the subprogramme (target group, beneficiaries, co-operating parties)	Target group: local residents, citizens of the Member States. Beneficiaries, co-operating parties: non-governmental organisations, local governments, government agencies, geographically competent national park authorities, geographically competent nature, environmental and water conservation inspectorates, water management directorates, forestry companies and local enterprises
Vision/effects/results	Cross-border co-operation and communication with the affected residents and users of the site promote the conservation of natural environment along the Danube. Environmental consciousness, attitude development and environmental education result in a stronger relationship between landscape and man, help conserve natural values, promote related efforts, and - through the conservation of resources - are essential for future generations. The assessment of ecosystem services and the environmental-social-cultural-economic frameworks enable the conservation of the Danube as a living stream.
Cost requirement of the subprogramme	
Funding of the subprogramme	
Term of implementation	
The level of preparedness of the projects (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	
Relationship with other projects	

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.2. Development of ecological networks in the Danube Region**
Project name	**4.2.1. Identification of ecological target situation in terms of criteria for a complex utilisation of the Danube**
Potentially affected countries	Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia
Territorial limitation	The 1161 km long Danube section between Regensburg (2375 rkm) and the Tisza estuary (1214 rkm). (Nearly half of the navigable section)
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	The key tasks of ecological research into the Danube include the identification of environmental changes in the river as a consequence of global and local loads generated by social drivers, and raising public awareness of the actual processes, based on which the public can respond and act. The public increasingly recognises the ecological problems of strongly modified rivers, which can also be observed in an increased interest in rehabilitation opportunities. This recognition is reflected, among other things, in the recitals of the EU WFD, one of whose key goals is to improve the 'ecological status' of rivers. *Objective of the project*: 1) To improve the Danube ecological status assessment methodology, with regard to special river conditions and international inter-calibration requirements. 2) To identify the ecological target situation along the delimited Danube section, and assessment of the feasibility of the target beyond the general requirements of the WFD.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	The conservation of the biodiversity of the Danube and the rehabilitation and maintenance of its ecological status are mandated by international agreements and directives, as well as national legislation: Habitats Directive (Natura 2000), Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), Act LXXXI of 1995, EU WFD (2000/60/CE). By approving the National Spatial Concept in 2005, the National Assembly prioritised the sustainable development of the Danube and the conservation of its natural sites and cultural values.
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	All Member States are individually and jointly interested in placing the regional and local enforcement of hydro-ecological criteria on solid foundations, and in laying the foundations for harmonised utilisation that fulfils sustainability requirements. This also helps improve the ecological status/potential of the Danube, and also improves the effectiveness of conserving the functionality of the river's ecological system as a natural value.
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	*Target group:* local residents, non-governmental organisations, local governments, government agencies, geographically competent national park authorities, geographically competent nature, environmental and water management inspectorates, water management directorates, farmers, the shipping sector. *Beneficiaries:* members of the Hungarian Academy of Science (HAS) Consortium Danubiale: HAS MDI, Vienna University of Sciences, Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU).

	Co-operating parties: HAS Research Institute of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry (TAKI), University of West Hungary, university research teams working with the Danube, water management directorates along the Danube, Institute for Environmental Protection and Water Management (VITUKI), Hungarian Hydrology Society, ICPDR, Fluvius Vienna.
Content of the project	Project content is defined by two interrelated research tasks, i.e. the improvement of the assessment of the Danube's status, and the identification of the ecological target situation: 1) Along the flat Danube sections, a different ecological qualification system from the processes used to date will be developed, to assess also the lateral interactions and their dynamics in the river-floodplain. 2) Methodology guidelines and a feasibility analysis will be prepared in order to identify the ecological target situation, illustrated by case studies (e.g. in Hungary: Szigetköz, Gemenc). Changes in river ecosystems are primarily influenced by external factors. Consequently, the rehabilitation of the Danube ecological system and the conservation of its biodiversity can be ensured successfully through the rehabilitation of the natural processes that shape habitat patterns. A full rehabilitation of original natural conditions is usually restricted by the irreversibility of environmental changes, the long-term effects of river regulation, as well as the economic and cultural needs of society at large. The notion of ecological target situation does not refer to the rehabilitation historical landscape, the reintroduction of previously present species or the establishment of a stable state. Rather, it refers to the hydrological and hydromorphological processes driving the natural dynamics of river habitat sizes and structures and thus determining the functionality of the river-floodplain ecosystem.
Vision/effects/results	*Vision*: The ecological status of the Danube will improve and sustainable utilisation of the river will be realised. *Impact:* A cross-border exchange and scientific co-operation are established. *Outcome*: A Danube conservation strategy based on the modern concepts of river restoration ecology is in preparation. Practical guidelines integrating international experiences helps conserve the natural values of the Danube and establish its sustainable utilisation.
Cost requirement of the project	250 + 200 + 200 + 100 + 50 mln HUF = 800 million HUF
Term of implementation	Five years (2011-2015)
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	The Hungarian Danube Research Station of the HAS has a track record of over half a century in hydroecological research, its experience with the Danube and its international network contacts (International Association for Danube Research - IAD, ICPDR) guarantee high quality project implementation as outlined above. The Station is expected to be promoted to institute status in May 2010, and the resulting development will also significantly extend its current scope of activities. The President of HAS set up a Danube consortium in Vienna in 2006 (*Consortium Danubiale*) with the relevant institutions and professors of

	Vienna University of Sciences, Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, and the University of Karlsruhe (Germany) for a comprehensive assessment of the ecological functions of the Danube, and for laying the foundations for harmonious development in view of the river, riverside areas and natural values. The implementation of the planned project will mostly rely on the work of Consortium Danubiale institutions. Most of the other scientific and practical institutions in the countries indicated by the territorial limitation have a wealth of experience with which to ensure high quality international co-operation under the project and to address any professional issues that surface. The detailed plans for this multi-year effort were developed in 2010, and the conditions for starting the project can be met by the end of the year.

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.2. Ecological network development in the Danube Region**
Project name	**4.2.3. Building a network of Danube 'forest' schools**
Potentially affected countries	Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria
Territorial limitation	
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	The Danube connects countries and regions geographically and also in a cultural sense. The Danube occurs in the traditions of every nation as a major and outstanding element. The age-long traditions (customs and folk lore), the arts (music, literature, plastic arts) and the facilities (bridges, cities) symbolising development are the property and pride of all the nations "affected" by the Danube. Due to the European integration process and local communities in transformation and in search of their place, every Member State focuses on preserving and cherishing national and local identities. Local communities can't always pass on environmentally conscious identity and value conservation attitudes to the next generations in a changing environment, therefore, new educational tools are required to facilitate the formation of the local identity of the people living there and, at the same time, to allow access to the special environmental and cultural values of other Danube sections. One of the most successful tools in this context is the development of system encompassing the entire Danube region based on the model of the existing 'forest school' network and through its partial further development. The target group is the large numbers of people participating in school education and interested in hiking and ecotourism. The network would be linked to conservation and/or valuable natural sites. The system would be based on the 'schools' where regular training would take place. Outside the school period, these facilities are suitable for camping, as accommodation or can be used as cultural centres. The objective of the project is to present and conserve the environmental values and social traditions of the Danube strip by combining school education and ecotourism.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	EU Sustainable Growth Strategy
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Conservation of the European, and at the same time, national and special local cultural values, and natural values.
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	Local governments, organisations interested in environmental education, stakeholders of ecotourism
Content of the project	Building a network of Danube 'forest' schools in the following steps: - designate the Danube sections possessing environmental and

	cultural specificities - develop various levels of the training/programme (primary and secondary schools, ecotourism, folk traditions, etc.) - develop a common outline for training and educational programmes (common Danube heritage, identity) - identify the training elements aimed at introducing local specificities - identify the existing 'network' elements with a development potential (school points, potential co-operation partners and stakeholders) - develop network-building and grant opportunities - develop series of programmes using the network elements (schoolchildren from other countries can mutually participate in the programmes; build a chain of programmes called 'Blue Danube' (using the 'Blue Hiking Trail' as a model), etc.) - develop a pilot project and present best practices - establish a common organisation to operate the network
Vision/effects/results	The Danube becomes a symbol of the conservation of cultural and environmental values, and of environmental and cultural education.
Cost requirement of the project	1 000 000 EUR
Term of implementation	24 months
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	planned

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.3. River side-arm rehabilitation interventions, rehabilitation of aquatic habitats**
Potentially affected countries	Hungary and Slovakia
Territorial limitation	Danube strip
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	The objective of the subprogramme is to rehabilitate the side arms of the Danube. This strip along the Danube has been neglected, which has resulted in the loss of habitat for many indigenous wildlife species. The key objective is to re-establish the ecological balance of the riverbed.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro) Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) Convention of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn)

	Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern) **43/92/EEC** Habitats Directive **79/409/EEC** Birds Directive **COM(2006) 216** Action Plan on Halting the Loss of Biodiversity by 2010 - and beyond **Regulation (EC) No 1882/2003** Nature Conservation Directive and amendments, Natura 2000
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Maintaining/re-establishing the biological equilibrium along the whole river length is a common interest. It is an important requirement to make this area an integral part of the local community and biosphere by conserving the natural environment and natural values.
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	Target group, beneficiaries, co-operating parties: local residents, non-governmental organisations, local governments, government agencies, geographically competent national park authorities, geographically competent nature, environmental and water conservation inspectorates, water management directorates, forestry companies and local enterprises, etc.
Content of the project	The project includes the dredging of Danube side arms, the building of fishing platforms along the river bank, and the establishment of water sports opportunities. 4.3.1. Habitat reconstruction of Danube islands *Ongoing and prepared projects in Hungary that may serve as examples as to ensuring the continuity and coordination of riverside rehabilitation activities:* • Reconstruction of saved-side wet meadow habitats at Bagamér • Habitat reconstruction of the Kucsér marshland at Ásványráró • Preservation, presentation of, and research into, nature conservation sites and natural values 4.3.2. Rehabilitation of the Danube backwaters at Fadd, Bogyiszló, Tolna and Báta
Vision/effects/results	The project would significantly enhance scarce local opportunities and the tourism potential of the region, and thus would increase the number of visitors in the region. Increased bicycle tourism is expected to boost local enterprises (tourist accommodation, bike rental and repair facilities), which would generate new jobs.
Cost requirement of the project	The cost of the individual subprogramme elements is indicated in the project sheets. The budget regarding the total cost of the subprogramme is under development.
Term of implementation	3 years and/or ongoing
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.3. River side-arm rehabilitation interventions, rehabilitation of aquatic habitats**
Project name	**4.3.1. Habitat reconstruction of Danube islands**
Potentially affected countries	Hungary, Slovakia
Territorial limitation	The Danube at Tát, Budapest and Rácalmás
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	Preventing the further propagation of invasive species. In order to compensate for the losses of the paleopotamon habitat type, water levels representing this habitat would be established on the islands. Fast-draining floods leave floodplain meadows drier, so the water construction works are aimed at retaining floods for longer periods.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	The Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate is responsible for the conservation and asset management of the site.
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Reconstruction of habitats, control of invasive species
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	Wildlife of the Danube and its floodplain.
Content of the project	Habitat reconstruction interventions, i.e. replacement of invasive species with indigenous ones, conservation of water habitats, are planned for the islands at Tát, Háros and Rácalmás.
Vision/effects/results	More favourable conditions than in the past will be established on the Danube islands from the point of view of natural values, especially in terms of water budgets.
Cost requirement of the project	200 million HUF
Term of implementation	Appr. 2 years
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	There is an ongoing project under the European Territorial Co-operation Programme, based on the results of which this is the next major project in the pipeline. Planning discussions have only taken place to date with regard to the islands at Tát.

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of the subprogramme	**4.3. River side-arm rehabilitation interventions**
Project name	**4.3.2. Rehabilitation of the Danube backwaters at Fadd, Bogyiszló, Tolna and Báta**
Potentially affected countries	Hungary
Territorial limitation	Fadd, Bogyiszló, Tolna, Báta, Mohács
The preliminaries, justification and objective of the project	The regulation of the Danube left many backwater stretches behind, whose maintenance and water replenishment are justified with a view to wildlife conservation. The water management of the floodplain areas cut off from the Danube river is inappropriate. The objective of the project is to revitalise the areas cut off, which will also ensure the conservation of the water base.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	-
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	Conservation of natural heritage
Parties affected by the project (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	The local governments of Fadd, Bogyiszló and Báta (villages) and Tolna (town), as well as the associations holding fishing rights
Content of the project	The backwaters of Fadd, Bogyiszló, Tolna and Báta have filled up with mud, and there is no opportunity to wash them out with freshwater from time to time. Therefore, it is necessary to build structures, i.e. bottom weirs where the backwaters meet, and also to connect the backwaters. The project includes the removal of active, organic mud, which will help improve water quality and maintain natural wildlife.
Vision/effects/results	Improved water quality, conservation of wildlife, utilisation of backwaters for tourism
Cost requirement of the project	4 000 000 000 HUF
Term of implementation	2012-2013
The level of preparedness of the project (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	Feasibility studies have been prepared

	European Danube Region Strategy - EDRS
Name of the subprogramme	**4.4. Danube ecosystem services (obstacles and opportunities for development)**
Potentially affected countries	Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria
Territorial limitation	
Preliminaries, justification and objective of the subprogramme	Many high level European co-operation schemes and international organisations (ICPDR, Danube Committee) have been established concerning the Danube, with a view conservation, utilisation and development, and many NGOs also focus on establishing Danube-related objectives. The EU's strategic and development documents and directives, as well as the tasks and concepts of the above organisations are up-to-date and progressive within their own sets of objectives. They are complemented by local and regional development projects realised largely using EU grants. Nevertheless, conflicts between value conservation and development objectives are a recurring issue, since there are major attitude differences between the social-economic visions and implementation methods regarding the Danube and the Danube Valley. The take-off position of a large portion of the Danube-related concepts is that a river on a European scale can serve as a living 'axis' or 'corridor' enabling significant future development. Due to the direct and indirect impact, and the use and utilisation of natural resources, the concepts built on the Danube - as large-scale as they may be - can best be implemented not by one country, region or economic sector but by agreement between the stakeholders affected by the development of the Danube Valley. Establishing the professional foundations requires significant research and development, accompanied by major antecedents and also by ongoing projects. Relying on these professional foundations, it is necessary to carry out a survey identifying natural resources and the limitations to their utilisation. Using and improving the ecosystem service test method implemented first by UNEP in 2000, a detailed test method should also be developed for the Danube region. The objectives of the project are to assess the ecosystem services in the Danube region, and to identify the sustainable growth frameworks for the Member States, regions and communities affected by the conservation and development of the region.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	The EU's Sustainable Growth Strategy and development documents UN / UNEP Millennium Ecosystem Assessment - MEA
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	The Member States jointly define the ecosystem services of the Danube and the priorities for its sustainable use. This means the common environmental-professional foundations for cross-border development, based on which specific development project can be defined. This will allow for the concerted development of the Danube region based on common values and mutual interests, with a view to long-term

	interests.
Parties affected by the subprogramme (target group, beneficiaries, co-operating parties)	Member States, those preparing the development strategies and projects.
The content of the subprogramme	The assessment of the ecosystem services of the Danube includes a description of changes in the ecosystems as a result of human activities, the estimated the impact of changes, the quality of human life, and a scientifically well-founded action plan regarding the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems in order to satisfy human needs in the long run. The assessment will rely on earlier regional and national assessments as input material.
Vision/effects/results	The assessment of ecosystem services and the environmental-social-cultural-economic frameworks enable the conservation of the Danube as a living stream.
Cost requirement of the subprogramme	5 000 000 EUR
Term of implementation	36 months
The level of preparedness of the subprogramme (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	planned

	European Danube Region Strategy (EDRS)
Name of subprogramme	**4.5. Hydroecological state assessment of the Tisza watercourse system**
Preliminaries, justification and objective of the subprogramme	Justification: The Tisza and the Tisza strip have so far retained many ancient features of a typical European landscape and wildlife, and the biodiversity of this area represents outstanding value even by international standards. So in terms of their significance, the Tisza and the Tisza strip constitute a key region of Hungary and Europe. Notwithstanding, the extent of their research has fallen enormously short of the opportunities. Based on size and manageability, they could even serve as a yardstick for international hydroecological and water qualification systems, and yet belong in the hardly known category on the international scene, in the absence of medium and long-term assessments based on a clear concept. At the same time, the Tisza catchment area is the most endangered site in Hungary, where the conservation of values is increasingly jeopardised by floods and pollution. Objective: The above facts absolutely justify major efforts toward an ecological state assessment with a structural and also functional perspective; the ongoing monitoring, evaluation and projection of changes in state; and on that basis, scientifically elaborated and practically applied principles for an information system regarding the Tisza catchment area, which would also be applicable to other European watercourses, supporting regional land use and development concepts.
The content of the subprogramme, projects	1. TISHIS – Tisanian Hydroecological Information System • Main Watercourse and Tributaries project • Tisza Lake Project • Backwater-bed project 2. TISRA TOPE – Tisanian Risk Assessment on Toxicity and Perniciousness • Field assessments and laboratory analyses • Analytical development for biological samples • Test protocols and pilot tests 3. TISSCINET – Tisanian Science Network • Higher education institutions of the Tisza catchment area • Ecological research facilities of the Tisza catchment area • Water quality monitoring institutions of the Tisza catchment area
Potentially affected countries	Romania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Serbia
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	Act LIII of 1996 on Nature Conservation. The objectives of this Act are a) the general conservation of natural values and sites, landscapes and their natural systems and biodiversity, the promotion of their knowledge and sustainable use, and also the fulfilment of the public

	need for a healthy and aesthetic environment; b) Safeguarding the traditions of nature conservation, improvement of its achievements, special protection for, and the conservation, maintenance and development of, natural values and sites. Natura 2000, Government Decree 275/2004 (X.8.) on Nature Conservation Sites of European Community Importance. The objective of this Decree is to establish the provisions required for the conservation of habitat types and species of Community or of special importance in the network of Natura 2000 nature conservation sites subject to the Decree as specified in the Annex. 2000/60/EC Water Framework Directive (WFD): European Union Member States must comply with the requirement of ensuring the good quality of their surface and groundwaters by 2015. Under the Framework Directive, 'good condition' means not only that the water is clean, but also that water-bound habitats are disturbed as little as possible and supplied with adequate quantities of water.
Complementarity with the Danube strategy	I.A Conservation of the values of natural environment Biosphere conservation III.C. Co-operation in education and training Promoting the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge Enhancement of environment-consciousness III.D Co-operation and partnership Institutional co-operation at the local, regional and international levels
Parties affected by the subprogramme (target group, beneficiaries, co-operating parties)	Target group: the entire local population of the Tisza strip and visitors in the region for tourism or economic purposes Beneficiaries, co-operating parties: the geographically competent nature conservation, environmental protection and water management inspectorates, the geographically competent national park directorates, local governments, government agencies, forestry companies, non-governmental organisations, local enterprises
Vision/effects/results	Cross-border co-operation helps achieve good ecological status and the conservation of natural values along the Tisza. The presence of natural values enables diversified economic structures and management forms in line with the principle of smart utilisation, and also provides a favourable background for the development of ecotourism.
Cost requirement of the subprogramme	Not known at present.
Funding of the subprogramme	Cohesion Fund, KEOP, ERDF, EAFRD, ROP, ENPI CBC
Term of implementation	Development of a co-operation programme using the existing studies – 2011 Development of pilot projects using a uniform approach – 2012 Action Plan – for the period beyond 2013-14
The level of preparedness of the programme (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	The projects of the subprogramme are currently at the planning stage
Connection with other	2 Conservation of our freshwater values in the Danube catchment area

programmes	

	European Danube Region Strategy - EDRS
Name of the subprogramme	**4.6. Ensuring the longitudinal connectivity of rivers for wildlife**
Potentially affected countries	Romania, Serbia
Territorial limitation	The Romanian and Serbian river sections, but indirectly the Danube section from the Danube Delta to Szigetköz.
Preliminaries, justification and objective of the subprogramme	The construction of the Portile de Fier hydroelectric dams in the 1970s put an end to the longitudinal ecological connectivity of the Danube. This had a decisive influence on the propagation of migratory species, primarily the sturgeon family, and significantly deteriorated the ecological status of the river. The objective of the project is to examine whether it is possible to improve the operation of the two hydroelectric dams in question to meet ecological requirements, or whether the ecological situation can be improved by getting to know the habits of the migratory species concerned and then adapting water management practices accordingly.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	The EU's Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	The countries along the Danube have a joint task of keeping the freshwater and backwaters in such an ecological condition that they may retain their biodiversity in future. This is also key to the retention of water stocks to be used by future generations.
Parties affected by the subprogramme (target group, beneficiaries, cooperating parties)	The local population living along the Danube and using ecological services.
The content of the subprogramme	Analyses examining the longitudinal connectivity of the dams Portile de Fier I and Portile de Fier II to make sure they do not represent an ecological barrier to migratory species in the Danube.
Vision/effects/results	Improvement of the Danube's ecological status and of the ecological conditions for migratory species, long-term enhancement of the Danube's ecological service potential.
Cost requirement of the subprogramme	No precise cost estimate has been made, the required funds are estimated at 1-5 million EUR.
Term of implementation	The assessment can be carried out in four to five years.
The level of preparedness of the subprogramme (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	No detailed plans have yet been developed, but the ecological situation and the ecological needs of migratory species are partly known.

	European Danube Strategy - EDS
Name of the subprogramme	**4.7. Gene conservation and gene bank co-operation along the Danube**
Potentially affected countries	Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Slovenia, Serbia and Croatia
Territorial limitation	Pilot sites suitable for agricultural cultivation
Preliminaries, justification and objective of the subprogramme	The conservation of genetic diversity and halting its loss are a key issue for the future both in terms of the survival of life on Earth and of feeding humankind. The identification, conservation and sustainable utilisation of genetic resources have become an increasingly important worldwide responsibility over the past 15 years, as a consequence of the threat of genetic erosion, the fast-paced development of breeding methods, the fight against climate change, and the growing demand for food safety, nature conservation and environmental protection, and foodstuffs with high nutritional value. These days, genetic resources, including the local varieties adapted to local circumstances are increasingly important among the non.-renewable natural resources. The disappearance of a local variety also means that the genetic stock that defines its features is lost forever, irreplaceably and beyond reconstruction. The local species adapted to river floodplains and water habitats are especially endangered. The conservation of local varieties and the related traditional farming methods is indispensable for conserving cultural ecosystems and biodiversity, but also for preserving our cultural heritage. These species and farming methods may contribute to the complex utilisation of river floodplains and valleys.
Obligation (in terms of law, etc.)	Act LXXXI of 1995 on the Convention on Biological Diversity; Government Decree 58/2004 (XII. 26.) announcing the FAO International Treaty and plant genetic resources for nutritional and agricultural purposes; EU Regulation 870/2004 of 24 April 2004 establishing a Community programme on the conservation, characterisation, collection and utilisation of genetic resources in agriculture.
Common interests of the Danubian Member States	The field crops, fruit and vegetable species and varieties typical of the floodplain and valley of the Danube strip are adapted to the special ecological and farming conditions; they represent high genetic value and are of special importance as natural values. The conservation of these local varieties, ecotypes and populations in their original place and in gene bank collections is indispensable for the preservation of biodiversity. The diversity of genetic resources is essential from the point of view of plant breeding, for the seed industry, landscape and ecological management, and also for making products with special properties.
Parties affected by the subprogramme	The Tápiószele Agrobotanical Department of the Agricultural and Agro-environmental Management Directorate of the Central Agricultural Office; the institutions dealing with landscape type and conservation, and landscape farming, as well as NGOs and farming organisations.

The content of the subprogramme	The identification in ex situ collections of the typical field crops, fruit and vegetable species and varieties in the Danube floodplain, valley and temporarily inundated areas, finding, examining and storing them in their original place, and collecting, storing and reviving of the related traditional farming methods. This requires cross-border co-operation between the gene banks dealing with the conservation and retention of agricultural and nutritional plant genetic resources.
Vision/effects/results	Using floodplain farming and special field and garden cultures in the conservation of agricultural diversity in the Danube strip.
Cost requirement of the subprogramme	The Hungarian part of the subprogramme: appr. 200 million HUF Additional contributions are required of the partner countries
Term of implementation	Ongoing, the longest possible time-frame
The level of preparedness of the subprogramme (permits, plans, expected time of start, etc.)	Domestic field, fruit and vegetable gene banks store many local varieties characteristic of the Danube strip, and also have a wealth of know-how on the cultivation of these varieties.