

**Methodological note on
programme specific result indicators
3 October 2014 (third draft by Metis)**

**Danube Transnational
Programme 2014-2020**



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1 Introduction

The result indicator identification is one of the cornerstones of the programming for the period 2014-2020 in order to strengthen the **result-orientation of the programming** (according ETC Reg. Art. 8).

Result indicators are a core element of the programmes intervention logic, have specific features and shall meet certain quality criteria.

- The result indicators should relate to the specific objectives selected by the programme authorities; they are the measurable dimension of the change sought in a specific policy area. Therefore, the European Commission (EC) does not propose common result indicators (in contrast to common output indicators). The EC will, however, analyse result indicators selected by the programme authorities in the course of programme approval and implementation (Q & A on ETC Programmes and results orientation, September 2013).
- Only one (if possible) and no more than two result indicators should be used for each specific objective (Draft Guidelines for the content of the cooperation programme, Version 5, 8.5.2014).
- For programme-specific result indicators baselines shall use the latest available data and targets shall be set for 2023. Targets may be expressed in quantitative or qualitative terms (ETC Reg. Art. 16).
- A change of the result indicator baseline value must be measurable by reproducible methods and timely collection of data (Questions and Answers on ETC Programmes and results orientation, September 2013).
- There is no sanction for not achieving result indicator targets. However, evaluation should be undertaken to explain why (Q & A on ETC Programmes and results orientation, September 2013).
- Since result indicators need to capture the desired change, they should be closely linked to the policy interventions supported. They should capture the essence of a result expected in a specific policy field. However, result indicators may measure in practice only some of the relevant dimensions of the results to be achieved. Result indicators should not relate only to programme beneficiaries (as this is the case with output indicators), but to the whole target population in a specific policy field (Q & A on ETC Programmes and results orientation, September 2013).
- Changes in the value of result indicators have to be reported in the Annual Implementation Reports ("where appropriate", acc. to Article 50 CPR); but evaluation of the impact of the programme is an external evaluation task related to the "enhanced reporting needs" in 2017 and 2019 (please see the draft multi annual work plan for monitoring and evaluation of result indicators at the end of this document). Hence the definition of the result Indicators should also take in account their "evaluability".
- The provisions to collect, analyse and evaluate the result indicators have to be described in the mandatory evaluation plan. An evaluation plan shall be drawn up by the managing authority and submitted to the monitoring committee no later than a year after the adoption of the programme (art. 114.1, CPR).
- The change in the result indicator value is a result of the cooperation programme as well as other external factors related (= gross effect). The evaluation should assess the programmes contribution to the change observed (= effect of the programme = net effect). Netting out of the programme effect on the change of

the result indicator baseline value should be done by impact evaluation (DG Regio Guidance document on Monitoring and Evaluation, March 2014).

Considering these specificities, it is crucial to define a sound and practical method to measure cooperation effects by means of result indicators related to specific policy objectives.

The aim of this paper is to suggest to PC, MA and JTS a feasible but methodologically correct path to identify the most suitable result indicators for the programme.

2 Methodological approach

2.1 Setting the frame

The cooperation programme intends to develop strategic frameworks, shared perspectives and concrete pilot action in specific policy areas where transnational cooperation is expected to make a difference.

Given problems require the efforts of many different actors working together to mitigate or even resolve common challenges. Better cooperation of key actors extends the reach to tackle challenges. The cooperation programme is one influencing factor - amongst others - to promote cooperation of actors in specific policy fields.

Therefore, it is proposed to focus result indicators on the (evolving) intensity of cooperation of key actors/key institutions in the programme area in order to improve the framework conditions in specific policy fields.

Since the cooperation programme cannot directly generate major physical impact in economic, social or territorial terms, the focus should be set on the specific observation variable "cooperation" which is within the scope of the programme and can be directly influenced.

Target is an increasing intensity of cooperation and – as additional aspect to be considered in internal analysis – a more balanced involvement of partner countries to contribute to a higher degree of integration of the very heterogeneous Danube region.

The intensity or level of cooperation (or collaboration) as an indicator is often used in social sciences. Cooperation is generally treated as meaning the cooperative way that two or more actors / entities in the specific programme area work together towards a shared goal (specific objective).

The programme specific result indicator in its general form is defined as:

The intensity of cooperation of key actors/key institutions in the programme area to achieve the results defined in the cooperation programme.

The result indicator will be measured at the level of detailed results (specific level) and subsequently aggregated at the level of the specific objective (overall level).

The proposed set of ten programme specific result indicators is outlined the following table.

Table 1. Programme Specific Result indicators

IP	Result indicators corresponding to the specific objective
1b	R 1.1 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve the framework conditions for research and innovation R 1.2 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to increase competences for business and social innovation
6c	R 2.1 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources
6d	R 2.2 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to foster restoration and management of ecological corridors R 2.3 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve transnational water management and flood risk prevention R 2.4 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to improve preparedness for disaster risk management
7c	R 3.1 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to strengthen environmentally-friendly, safe and balanced transport systems
7e	R 3.2 Intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in order to contribute to energy security and energy efficiency
11 ERDF Reg.	R 4.1 Intensity of cooperation of institutional actors and other stakeholders in the programme area in order to tackle major societal challenges
11 ETC Reg. Art. 7	R 4.2 The status of management capacities of Priority Area Coordinators (PAC) to effectively implement EUSDR goals, targets and key action
TA	Not applicable; however for internal purpose only the following internal result indicator will be defined: "Satisfaction rate of beneficiaries with the programme management" which should be monitored yearly. Target is improved satisfaction rate; baseline at 2014 is zero; source of data is a survey among applicants and beneficiaries.

Source: Metis

An exception to the general definition (intensity of cooperation) is the result indicator for the specific objective 4.2 Support the governance and implementation of the EUSDR: "The status of management capacities of Priority Area Coordinators (PAC) to effectively implement its goals, targets and key action". This indicator will be established through a survey among the NCs and PACs of the EUSDR. Target is the improved capacities of PACs (qualitative target).

For the Technical Assistance an internal result indicator will be defined which is not part of the programme document: Satisfaction rate of beneficiaries with the programme management. Target is improved satisfaction rate; source of data is a survey among applicants and beneficiaries

The generally used “cooperation” indicator is designed as a “survey based composite indicator” which reflects the intensity of cooperation of key actors in the programme area in the different fields of action addressed by a specific objective.

Around 500 respondents are expected (sample of the target group which is broader than the beneficiaries; see details below).

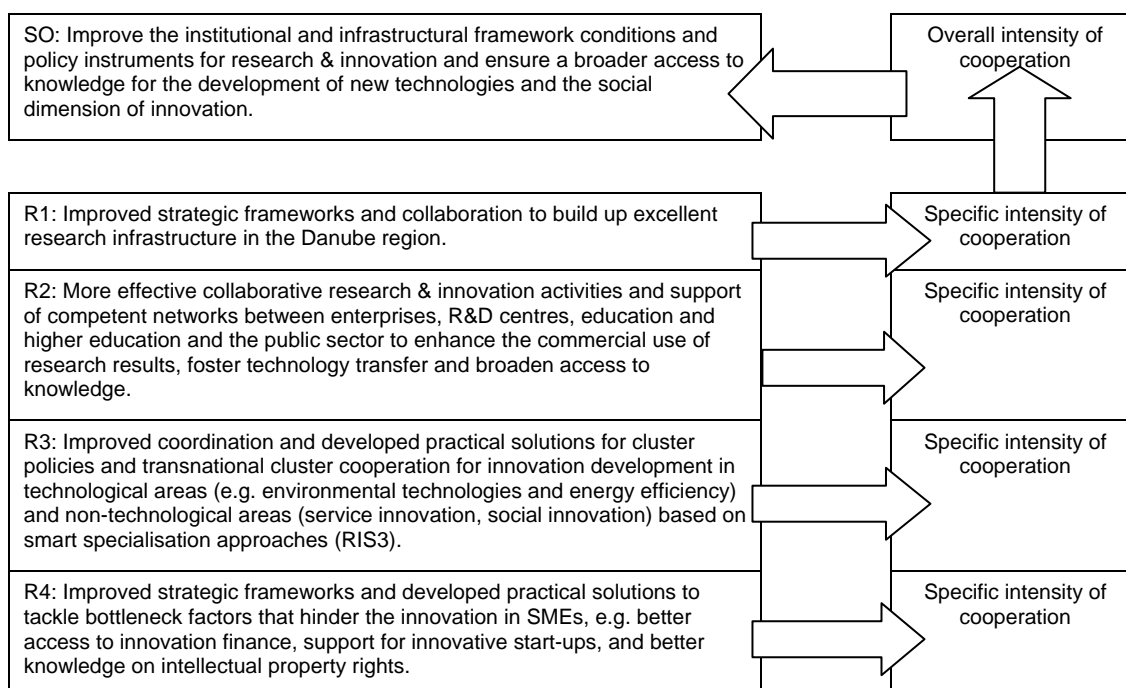
The total cooperation intensity is calculated from the partial values, which reflect the cooperation behaviour in selected areas of interest (linked to the results intended).

Thus a direct connection with the fields of action /intended results of the programme where changes are expected is given. The change in the various fields of action can be observed in a detailed way (as internal information), and simultaneously a synthetic single value (e.g. 2.4) for reporting can be provided.

For the understanding of change, it is important not only to observe a single value, but to reflect the changes in the various fields of action addressed by the programme. So much more plausible and robust findings may be obtained.

The following illustration demonstrates the model how to measure the overall intensity of cooperation based on the status quo and changes in the different fields of action (intended results as defined in the programme document).

Table 2. Model to measure the overall intensity of cooperation (example for illustration, not final design)



Source: Metis

2.2 Practical implementation

Primary data collection by a survey

The baseline of the result indicator will be established through a survey (preferably cost efficient online-survey) among key actors/key institutions in the programme area.

Surveyed key actors will not consist only of actual programme beneficiaries but will represent a sample of the entire population of potential beneficiaries (target group) in the programme area in a specific policy field (e.g. innovation, environment, transport, governance).

It is important to note that the established methodology for setting the baseline can be used throughout the programming period (an investment that pays off).

Also the ongoing observation of changes in the baseline values at certain cut off dates related to the "enhanced" reporting needs (collection of data in 2016, 2018, 2022; reporting of data in 2017, 2019, 2023) should be done on a similar survey base.

Due to the need to deliver a baseline in a swift way, the following approach is proposed for now:

Programme Committee Members nominate **4 institutions per Specific Objective** (including contact persons and telephone numbers to accelerate the process), which are competent enough to express an opinion on the situation in their country;

Table 3. Calculation of the number of key actors/key institutions to be questioned

PA	IP	SO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
			Neighbouring countries (Ukraine, Moldova)	Accession Countries (Serbia, Bosnia und Herzegovina, Montenegro)	Member State Area "2007/2013" (Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia)	Member State Area "2004" (Hungary, Czech Rep., Slovak Rep., Slovenia)	Member State Area "before 2000" (Austria, German Bundesländer Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg)										
PA1	1b	SO1.1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA1	1b	SO1.2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA2	6c	SO2.1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA2	6d	SO2.2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA2	6d	SO2.3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA2	6d	SO2.4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA3	7c	SO3.1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA3	7e	SO3.2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA4	11a	SO4.1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	56
PA4	11b	SO4.2	separate survey under PACs and NC														
PA5	TA	SO5.1	separate survey under beneficiaries														
Total			36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	504

Key actors/ institutions are defined as actors/institutions in the public and private sectors which are highly competent in a specific policy field and which can influence

the development and diffusion of policies, offer specific tools and services and can contribute to common orientations, frameworks and strategies. Key institutions should be interested to create, store and transfer knowledge and skills in a transnational cooperation context.

The institutions are contacted per email with invitations to attend an efficient online-survey containing a limited number of questions related to the “Expected results” of the Specific Objective.

Data on actors collected through the public consultation process can help to identify and to specify the target population more in detail (e.g. a list of respondents in various policy fields was collected). The various types of actors which are involved are basically policy makers, private sector, other public sectors, interest groups, higher education institutions, and intermediaries.

It is proposed to use an online questionnaire to collect data that included the observed variables as well other demographic and descriptive information about the collaborations to which respondents and their organizations belonged.

The questionnaire shall be limited to essential questions to assure a sufficient rate and quality of response. It is very likely that several actors have been already surveyed or consulted so there is a risk of overload and saturation. The questions should be directly connected to the fields of action addressed by the programme, this for clarity and transparency sake.

The survey can also be used to simultaneously communicate information about the programme to the target group (“multi-purpose tool”).

The same questionnaire could be used in the Application Forms and Reporting Templates of the projects to be filled in by the beneficiaries. In this way there is “live monitoring” of the contributions to the baseline and the SO as projects are implemented. The conclusions are then triangulated via the cross-cut evaluation.

To operationalize the level of collaboration in a specific field of action it is suggested to use closed-ended question within a matrix (see example below). Respondents from the programme area are asked to what extent they collaborate with each other partner in the programme area in a specific field of action. Answer options are on a 1 to 7 scale with 1 indicating “no interaction at all” and 7 indicating a fully developed cooperation level.

Each cooperation intensity level is explained by certain criteria. Lowest level of collaboration occurs when there is little communication and partnership quality. The highest level of cooperation occurs when there is frequent communication and decisions are made by consensus and outcomes are concrete and useful. The criteria clearly aim at more professionalization in cooperation.

It is also possible that some actors have no interaction with other groups, especially at baseline situation, and this possibility is reflected in the instrumentation by allowing respondents to choose “1” to indicate no collaboration whatsoever.

Analysis of data collected

The data collected by the survey shall be analyzed. Preliminary data shall be inspected and questions shall be turned in score to allow comparison and aggregation. Then basic statistical analysis shall be performed, such as calculation of the response rate and calculation of the response frequencies and percentages for each question. Also

characteristics of respondents should be analysed (what kinds of actor are collaborating in a specific field?).

More sophisticated analysis (e.g. compute cross-tabulations, correlation, linear regression) might be adopted to check the robustness of the data and findings.

Different data collected through the survey have to be aggregated in order to build a single result indicator value. The calculation of the result indicator is done as follows:

The Result indicator value is: Total score (number of responses multiplied by the scale value) divided by the total number of responses.

The indicator clearly reflects the development of cooperation. A shift towards higher scale categories will increase the value of the result indicator. It is ensured that the number of responses (which may change over the years) does not affect the result.

Table 4. Illustration how to establish the composite indicator value

Scale of cooperation	1 No	2 Poor	3 Fair	7 Fully developed
Related criteria, for instance (example)					
Quality of communication between actors	Non existing	Poor	Fair		Excellent
Competence of partnerships	Non existing	Poor	Fair		Excellent
Concreteness and usability of outcomes	Non existing	Poor	Fair		Excellent
Number of responses of key actors per fields of action where cooperation is expected, for instance (example) for the years 2014 / 2018 (based on a survey)					
Building up of excellent research infrastructure in the Danube region	10 / 6	15 / 13	5 / 8		1 / 3
Building up networks between enterprises, R&D centres, education and public sector in the Danube region	5 / 2	15 / 8	0 / 4		0 / 2
Strengthening Cluster cooperation in the Danube region	8 / 5	18 / 14	30 / 33		5 / 7
Calculation					
No of responses	23 / 13	48 / 35	35 / 45		6 / 12
Total score: number of responses multiplied by the scale value	23 / 13	96 / 70	105 / 135		42 / 84
Total score 2014 divided by no of responses	266 / 112 = 2,4 (baseline value 2014)				
Total score 2018 divided by no of responses	302 / 105 = 2,9 (value for 2018)				
Observed change in the whole population	+ 0,5				
Effect resulting from the cooperation programme	+ 0,4 (assessed by an external evaluator)				
Effect resulting from other influencing factors	+0,1 (assessed by an external evaluator)				

Time factor for baseline quantification

According to information by DG REGIO regarding the quantification of the baseline values for the result indicators it is not obligatory to deliver the full set when the programme document is submitted to the EC (a sample may be expected). However an CP can only be adopted without a baseline value for some result indicators if there is a commitment and an action plan to provide the data by a certain date – generally within a year at the most of the adoption of the programme (DG REGIO Desk officer).

Please note:

With respect to result indicators the ToR for the “Support to the elaboration of the Operational Programme DANUBE 2014-2020” (February 2014) state that the drafting team is expected to propose a set of programme-specific result indicators including a methodology on how to collect and calculate the value for the indicators.

Practical implementation and quantification of baseline values is not part of the assignment and will be contracted by ONEP separately.

Table 5. Indicative multi annual work plan for monitoring and evaluation of result indicators (draft; has to be specified in the evaluation plan!)

Tasks	Evaluation during programming period									target values
	2014	2015	2016 AIR (2014, 2015)	2017 Enhanced AIR	2018 AIR	2019 Enhanced AIR	2020 AIR	2021 AIR	2022 AIR	2023 AIR
			31.05.2016	31.06.2016	31.05.2016	31.06.2016	31.05.2016	31.05.2016	31.05.2016	31.05.2016
Monitoring	Ongoing monitoring and reporting of financial, output and target indicators									
Collection of result indicator values	survey (base-line)		survey		survey				survey	
Evaluation related to result indicators			Evaluation of net effects of the programme on the change observed	Reporting of evaluation findings	Evaluation of net effects of the programme on the change observed	Reporting of evaluation findings			Evaluation of net effects of the programme on the change observed	Reporting of evaluation findings

Source: Metis