**21st Meeting of the Thematic Steering Group for**

**Pillar 3 - Environmental Quality**

**under the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)**

**12November, 2024**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Venue: online**

**Chairs: Senad Oprašić – the Chair**

**Participants: Members of the EUSAIR Thematic Steering Group 3 (TSG 3), representatives of the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner, Representatives of the European Commission, Project partner Municipality of Izola (SI)**

Nine countries (SI, BiH, CRO, MNE, SR, ITA, N.MAC, AL, SM) out of ten were present on the meeting.

The Chair verified the attendance of the Members and confirmed that the quorum was established at the meeting in line with the RoP of TSG3.

Item 1: ***Adoption of the agenda***

The agenda was presented by the Chair Senad Oprašić. The updated agenda is as follows:

**9.00-9.15:** Registration to the online Meeting

**9:15-9:30:** Introduction and welcome

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Formal adoption of the Minutes of the 20th meeting of TSG-3, 8-9 April 2024, Zagreb, Croatia

**9:30-11:00:** 3.Recap of activities of TSG3 coordinators from the last meeting

**11:00-11.45:** 4.Presentation of Greek presidency programme and activities

**11:45-12:30:** Coffee/lunch break

**12:30-12:50:** 5.Presentation of the Marine Litter Prevention project: The region of the Western Balkan against plastic pollution of the Adriatic Sea

**12:50-13:30:** 6.Discussion about new flagship proposal with the working title:

Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention through River Base Management (RBM), ICZM and MSP

**13:30-13:50:** 7.Presentation of NAMIRS project results

**13:50-14:00:** 8. Activity plan of possible TSG 3 events for 2024/2025 - updating the TSG 3 Activity plan 2024

**14:00-14:20:** 9. Main findings of the Report on existing implementation formats and methodology for capacity building workshop for TSG 3

**14:20-14:40:** 10. AOB

**14:40-14:55:** 11. Conclusions and next steps

The Chair, Mr Senad Oprašić (BiH) of TSG 3 welcomed the participants and presented the draft of agenda. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola reminded the attendees that the meeting was being registered and presented the new Colleague working at The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola. The Chair presented some changes to the agenda to which Item 9 was added. They pointed out the presenter of Item 9 and stated that the Item 7 has been switched with item 5 due to technical reasons. Moreover, time slots of some presentations were also switched, namely, Item 7 was switched with item 5. The Chair of the meeting asked whether there were any proposals of changes. The representatives of San Marino provided information on a new colleague, a future TSG 3 member from San Marino.

Conclusions under Item 1:

**C. 1. The agenda was presented by Chair Senad Oprašić (BiH). The following amendments were made. Introduction of the new Item 9 - Main findings of the Report on existing implementation formats and methodology for capacity building workshop for TSG 3. The Item 7 has been switched with former Item 5, and former Item 6 became Item 7.**

Item 2: ***Formal adoption of the Minutes of the 20th meeting of TSG-3, 8-9 April 2024, Zagreb, Croatia***

The minutes of the 20th meeting of TSG 3 (April 8-9, 2023, Zagreb) were presented by Senad Oprašić.

He invited all the participants to give their comments, questions suggestions. There were none, therefore the minutes were adopted.

Conclusions under Item 2:

**C.2.The minutes of the 20th TSG3 meeting (Zagreb, Croatia, 8-9 April, 2024) were adopted.**

Item 3: ***Recap of activities of TSG3 coordinators from the last meeting***

***3.1. Recap of Technical Meeting of EUSAIR Pillar Coordinators, 9th October, Brussels, Belgium***

The Chair delivered a presentation from the Governing Board Meeting that took place in Brussels on October 10, 2024 by reporting on the activities of TSG 3 implemented during the period between the 22nd Governing Board Meeting and the 23rd Governing Board Meeting. The Chair displayed the presentation and informed the participants about the EUSAIR revision updates since GB approval of the input document, key conclusions from last TSG 3 meeting, the status of 2023 Progress Report, about the events organised/attended, updates on Flagships, plans for Autumn TSG 3 meeting (date, topics) as well as plans for other activities (with Presidency or other). He pointed out organizing the Pillar 3 session in Šibenik titled “Blue and green corridors: implementation of TSG 3 EUSAIR flagships, with Interreg IPA ADRION”. Moreover, the Chair highlighted the organization of the event “Biodiversity and Marine Protection in EUSAIR: A Contribution to EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030” held in Brussels. He also mentioned the consultation activities on the sea organized in the scope of the Mediterranean Coast and Macro-regional Strategies Week 2024 that took place in Izola. He invited the participants to comment. Italy responded by introducing their new colleague and conveying greeting of the new General Director. Italy had two specific remarks, the first one being the process of revision of the Action Plan. Italy pointed out that Italy received the last version of the Revision of Action Plan and that completely changed the content of the TSG 3 section, namely the section on the indicators. Italy sent feedback through their National coordinators to revert to the content of TSG 3 section with indicators as they were working hard on indicators together with Croatia and coordinators who participated in the meeting with the European Commission (Hereinafter referred to as the EC). Italy was not expecting to see the changes introduced during summer, changes they were not aware of and stated the agreement that was reached during those specific meetings held in the spring time was completely modified. Italy wondered how was that possible to refer to “no substantive changes” regarding TSG3 section. Italy asked whether the Chair was referring to the version that was circulated in September and requested for a clarification. Italy’s second remark was about the Conclusion C12 adopted during the agenda during the last TSG 3 Meeting. During the meeting Italy raised concern about the lack of funding for the participation in the TSG 3 activities. In the conclusion C12 it was decided that the coordinators would convey this remark and discuss the remark in the frame of the Governing Board. Italy asked for an update on the outcome of this discussion in order to know if there is a possibility to have specific funds allocated to the participation to the TSG 3 Meetings as it was the case in the past. Italy sometimes found it difficult to have funds ensured for the participation of one or two people at the TSG 3 Meetings. The Chair responded and asked the EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola to provide the answer to Italy’s request for clarification as well as to provide an update. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola pointed out that Pillar 3 Coordinators stated that there were “no substantive changes” regarding TSG3 section at the Governing Board Meeting and they did not have the exact formal information at the time. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola did not receive the information in advance and was not aware of the changes made by the EC. Similar to Italy, the EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola raised the question to the EC on what was to happen to the Revision of the Action Plan if some of the members consider the changes made substantial and whether that would result in the Revision of the Action plan being approved again at the TSG 3 Meeting. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola did not receive any of the information or the guidelines from the Governing Board, Presidency or the EC so they took note of the questions raised by Italy and would forward it to the EC after the ongoing TSG 3 Meeting. Regarding the first point, Italy asked the TSG3 Members whether they had the chance to go through the Revised Action Plan and see the changes that were made during summer. Italy formally submitted their comments that were sent to the EC and would appreciate if an update on the process of Adoption of the Revised Action Plan was provided. They asked to put into the report of the ongoing meeting the need to have a clearer picture of the process of adoption of the Action plan as Italy was not expecting such substantial changes in September. Italy believed that it was important to have a clear picture of the adoption process of the Action Plan. Regarding the second remark, Italy was wondering whether there were any possibilities about the additional funds, for instance, funds at disposal of the presidency as the conclusion was to discuss the item at the Governing Board and the Italian coordinators probably conveyed the message to the Governing Board. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola said that there was no new information on providing support to Italian TSG 3 Members. The discussion about the Action Plan can be postponed under the Item 10 AOB due to the presenters having their presentation scheduled at the specific time slots.

The Chair announced the next speaker on the agenda, Ms Eva Kos, who delivered a report from the 23rd Governing Board Meeting and may provide some information regarding the remark made by Italy.

***3.2. Recap of the Governing Board, 10th October, Brussels, Belgium***

The Chair gave floor to Ms Eva Kos who recapped on the last 22nd Governing Board Meeting in Brussels and delivered a presentation. She first outlined the agenda points namely, EUSAIR Hellenic Presidency programme, EUSIAR Action Plan revision status, EUSAIR Youth Council (hereinafter referred to as EYC) update, EUSAIR Governance Architecture Paper, EUSAIR Perspective on Cohesion Policy post 2027, Interreg IPA ADRION, Programme-state of play, Governance support Projects, Report from Technical Meeting of Pillar Coordinators and Report on the meeting of All Committee of Senior Officials.

Eva Kos started with Action Plan Revision up to October 2024 and highlighted that on April 17,2024, the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead partner summitted the input document that was approved by the Governing Board with all final agreements and indicators in Pillar 3. After that the mentioned approval, DG REGIO started the informal consultation within the EC (between DGs) and revised the texts by not making major changes in their opinion. For instance, they shortened some texts by transferring them to Annexes, they added new elements in Pillar 4, Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 – Energy sections. In addition, they aligned the document better with the western Balkan Growth Plan by defining the cross-cutting topic on enlargement. Regarding the decisions at the meeting, it was decided that the countries would send any comments by October 23, 2024. At the meeting, Italy announced that they would have some comments on Pillar 3 as Italy did not agree on the changes made on the titles of their topics. Moreover, Italy had some objections regarding Pillar 1. Regarding Pillar 3, the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner did not have any updates. Eva Kos mentioned that an additional meeting regarding Pillar 3 was going to be planned. The EC was planning to resolve all the pending issues by the end of November 2024 and that it would be up to the new Commissioner to decide the process of endorsement. One possibility was that the Action Plan was going to be endorsed separately to the communication by the end of the year. If the two documents were to be endorsed together, that would happen in early 2025. The EC expected that by the next Annual Forum both documents should be officially endorsed and communicated. By the Governing Board it was decided that the version of the Action Plan that was sent to the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner on September 30, 2024 by the EC is the version that would serve as the basis for the work of Pillar on Strategy implementation. Therefore, the Pillars would be able to finally start working on the content and not wait until May 2025 for the implementation of the new actions planned in the documents.

Regarding the Youth Council, the Youth Council, consisting of 20 members, was formally established by the end of September 2024. The first meeting and capacity building was to be organized in November 21-23, 2024 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The presentation of each Pillar would also take place at the first meeting in Dubrovnik and would be done by Pillar coordinators. Moreover, the workshop would be organized with Members of the Youth Council as a form of exchange on how the youth could contribute to the actions that are planned in the New Action Plan. It would be important that all Pillars are presented and active in exchange with Youth Council Members. Next, Eva Kos presented some main characteristics of the EUSAIR Youth Council.

As far as EUSAIR Governance Architecture Paper was concerned, Eva Kos, pointed out the goals, the timeline, changes made in spring of 2024. The document was to be approved with the Action plan endorsement; however, the last version was considered as final. Regarding post 2027 Cohesion Policy from the EUSAIR Perspective, the external experts were approached to participate in the survey. The main goal of the consultation was on the implementation formats, on how to better cooperate with Managing Authorities of EU funded Programmes, stakeholders and project developers as well as owners. Eva Kos described the process and said that the final report would be prepared by mid-January 2025.

When it comes to the EUSAIR Governance Point (hereinafter referred to as EGP), Eva Kos mentioned the two points as part of the Governing Board decision, one being the new EUSAIR logotype approved by the Governing Board. Consequently, the whole visual identity would be designed based on the new EUSAIR logo. The second Governing board decision was related to the Report on flagships, but would be later presented under the Item 9. Next, Eva Kos presented the state of play by the IPA ADRION Programme focusing on the allocated Interreg resources according to the specific objectives, pointing out that two of the flagship projects were approved for funding in the 1st Call for proposals.

The Chair asked for comments and Italy had a remark on the quality of the Action Plan. In addition, Italy had a remark about the involvement of the youth in the EUSAIR, the organization of the Youth Council and the link between the Youth Council and Members of TSGs. According to Italy, it was important for the Council to take into account the needs that the members of the TSGs. It was also important that the EUSAIR Youth Council would have the connection to other European Councils such as The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) as well as the activities that EUSAIR is preparing for Post 2027 to understand the next programming period and how Interreg could help implementing the EUSAIR Strategy. Italy added that it would also be important to find synergies among different programmes and that a transnational programme The Interreg Euro-MED Programme was important for Italy and countries represented in TSG 3.

Eva Kos thanked Italy for their remarks and explained that the EYC’s work and interaction with the existing councils and networks was foreseen. Working of the EYC with TSGs would be defined by the Rules of Procedure and would be supervised by the Youth Consultation Task Force that had been established by the Governing Board. The TSG 3 Members would be informed about the process of EYC working within the Strategy. Regarding the Governance Architecture Paper, Eva Kos stated that the document was finalized, but highlighted that it was a rolling document that could be revised and improved in the future. As far as Interreg IPA ADRION Programme was concerned, the representatives of the Programme were invited to the GB Meeting and had their contributions and were very active in starting the work with other managing authorities as well. In the future, the TSGS can invite some Lead partners of the projects that the TSG 3 find interesting in order to find synergies. She also replied to Italy’s remark on the cost of covering the participation of TSG Members at the events within the EUSAIR by explaining whose task was to provide travel costs for them. Italy suggested that it would be good to get information from the IPA ADRION Programme on all the projects covering environmental issues that could potentially implement Pillar 3 flagships.

***3.3 Recap of the event “Biodiversity and Marine Protection in EUSAIR: A contribution to EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030«, 14 March 2024, Brussels, Belgium***

The Chair, Senad Oprašić presented the recap of the event “Biodiversity and Marine Protection in EUSAIR: A contribution to EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030« that was held on 14 March 2024 in Brussels, Belgium. He asked the representative of the EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola to describe the event in further detail. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola

mentioned the presence of DG ENVIRONMENT, DG REGIO, the participating countries, the aim of the event, and that the proposals for the *Scenario for the Biodiversity and Marine Protection as a tentative contribution to implementing the Biodiversity Strategy 2023 in the EUSAIR and synergies with UN/MA* were shared with the attendees of the event. The Chair went through the conclusions that were made at the event and invited the participants to comment. Italy informed that the Interreg Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 Programme would finance strategic projects on biodiversity, climate change and adaptation with a considerable budget. Croatia commented that The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) would also be relevant to the work of TSG 3.

***3.4 Recap of the TSG 3 Pillar session at 9th EUSAIR FORUM: „Blue and green corridors: implementation of TSG 3 EUSAIR flagships, with Interreg IPA ADRION“, 15 May 2024, Šibenik, Croatia.***

The Chair provided a recap of the TSG 3 Pillar session at 9th EUSAIR FORUM: „Blue and green corridors: implementation of TSG 3 EUSAIR flagships, with Interreg IPA ADRION“, that took place on 15 May 2024, in Šibenik, Croatia. He named the three panellists, briefly described the content of presentations and presented the conclusions made at the Pillar 3 session. He invited the participants to provide comments. Italy reiterated the importance of supporting all the activities of The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) and Barcelona Convention in terms of flagships like, *Adriatic Sea Oil Spill Contingency Plan* with the acronym ASOSCOP. Flagships ASOSCOP together with NAMIRS should be supported of the project that REMPEC is implementing in the Adriatic Region. Italy would like to have some information about the synergies that had been promoted with RAMPAC’s project and their activities. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola reminded that further on the agenda there would be a presentation of Adriatic Sensitive Areas Protection Mechanism (ASAP) project by Anna Marconato explaining how REMPEC is involved in project activities.

***3.5. Recap of the event “Consultation within TSG 3: Construction Activities in the Sea and on the Seashore and Achieving good environmental status of the Sea”, within 9th Mediterranean Coast and Macro-regional Strategies Week, 19 September 2024, Izola, Slovenia***

The Chair presented the event “*Consultation within TSG 3: Construction Activities in the Sea and on the Seashore and Achieving good environmental status of the Sea”* that was held within 9th Mediterranean Coast and Macro-regional Strategies Week on 19 September 2024 in Izola, Slovenia. He presented the organizers of the event, the main purpose, how the consultation was divided, profiles of the participants and went through the conclusions of the Consultation.

The activities of TSG3 coordinators from the last meeting were presented, and the TSG3 members were informed of all the ongoing and completed activities since then.

Conclusions under Item 3:

**C.3. The TSG3 members were informed of all the ongoing and completed activities *of TSG3 coordinators* from the last meeting.**

Item 4: ***Presentation of Greek presidency programme and activities***

Ms Mathilde Konstantopouloueu, National Coordinator of Greece delivered a presentation starting with the introduction to the Hellenic Presidency. She continued with point out the key focus areas, the five core themes/priorities namely, EU Enlargement & Western Balkan Accession, Post-2027 Cohesion Policy &EUSAIR Alignment Green Transition & Climate Action, Blue Economy & Professional Skills Development, Environmental Protection & Quality Improvement. When it comes to Environmental protection and Quality Improvement, this priority deals with monitoring and surveillance of protected marine areas, therefore the mapping of protected areas is needed to elaborate and enhance monitoring techniques, digital analysis and other management tools to identify the needs of our sees, to view protected species, to diminish the risk of pollution using artificial intelligence systems and this was linked and directly related to the Greek Prime Minister’s announcement at the Ocean conference that took place in April 2024. Back then he announced the creation of two marine parks one Ionian Sea and the other in the Aegean Sea, and pointed out the monitoring and surveillance of the protected marine areas as the goal was the reduction of micro plastic waste, namely to reduce plastic waste by 50% by 2030 and to reduce microplastic waste by 30% by 2030. It is the commitment of Greek government as well as the context of the priorities for the presidency of the Strategy in 2024. Ms Konstantopouloueu also pointed out the blue corridors and that the Greek Presidency is on the same page regarding corridors and we definitely need to work together with putting the basis of the Action plan. Ms Konstantopouloueu invited Pillar 3 as the Pillar responsible for Environmental Quality to come forward and request the necessity or wish of a specific event dedicated to Pillar 3 or issues linked to the Pillar and ask the Hellenic Presidency for the event dedicated to the issues mentioned before. She offered to answer questions or give clarifications.

The Chair thanked Ms Konstantopouloueu and wished all the best to Hellenic Presidency in implementing their priorities. He also expressed gratitude for supporting Balkan countries in EU integration.

A lunch break was proposed by the Chair between 11.30 and 12.30. The meeting resumed at 12.30. The chair closed the first part of the meeting.

Conclusions under Item 4:

**C.4.: The TSG3 members were informed about the Greek Presidency programme and its associated activities.**

Item 5: ***Presentation of the Marine Litter Prevention project: The region of the Western Balkan against plastic pollution of the Adriatic Sea***

The Chair introduced Philipp Steinheim from “The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)” (English: German International Cooperation Society (GIZ)), (hereinafter referred to as GIZ) who delivered a presentation titled “*Presentation of the Marine Litter Prevention project: The region of the Western Balkan against plastic pollution of the Adriatic Sea*” and gave him floor. First, he provided Global and Regional context to the topic of Marine Litter, the countries included, he continued by presenting the approach: Seven Interventions Against Marine Litter. He highlighted the Regional Exchange, Waste Flow Diagram, Extended Producer Responsibility, Single use plastics - Ban and phase out, Support SME/Start-ups in plastic reduction and recycling, Low plastic Zone initiative with the HORECA sector and social media campaign. He continued by mentioning regional workshops and conferences, the Challenge of Data Collection, Extended Producer Responsibility, activities with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) focusing on recycling materials. Moreover, he mentioned building awareness through environmental education. He explained how Low plastic Zone Initiative works in its commitment to reducing plastic waste by eliminating single-use plastic products. He continued by mentioning the social media campaign – the Youth video competition, Green Generation. He concluded his presentation with the slogan “Keeping the Adriatic Sea plastic-free starts with us”.

The Chair thanked the presenter and added that he was also participating at the project activities. He proposed for the one of sub activities to be plastic flow diagram. He invited GIZ to participate with TSG 3 in their activities. The Chair opened the floor for questions. Italy had a question on the regional approach as it was wondering if the updated regional Action plan on marine litter that was adopted under Barcelona Convention was considered one of activities by GIZ as they are based in the Adriatic side. Mr Steinheim replied that Barcelona Convention is the background of GIZ work and they were trying to create an additional platform for exchange among economies of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro as that is their focus. He added that GIZ was having a very good cooperation with The MedWaves, the UNEP/MAP Regional Activity Centre for SCP from Barcelona, who partnered with GIZ on the Low plastic zone. The focus was on an exchange among the four mentioned countries, however in the future they hope to support an exchange among all six Balkan economies and beyond. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola offered GIZ technical support in terms of enhancing and spreading the idea of further exchange by GIZ, especially together with the Strategy focusing on eco-innovations & circular economy and also offered to share the link where the document is published for further discussion. Mr Steinheim thanked and expressed interest in further collaboration when it comes to the concept of circular economy.

Italy had a remark on not receiving the presentation Mr Steinheim had and asked to receive it, in order to have an internal consultation with the experts dealing with marine litter and plastics. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola explained that the presentation was not sent by Mr Steinheim’s in advance and that it will be uploaded on the Intranet in the folder “Documents after the meeting”. Finally, Mr Steinheim also recommended watching videos with the links that can be found in the presentations.

Conclusions under Item 5:

**C.5.:** **The TSG3 members were informed about the Marine Litter Prevention project: The region of the Western Balkan against plastic pollution of the Adriatic Sea.**

Item 6: ***Discussion*** ***about new flagship proposal with the working title:*** ***Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention through River Base Management (RBM), ICZM and MSP***

The Chair opened Item 6 and announced the title of the presentation “Climate change adaptation through ICZM in the Adriatic” as well as the presenter, Mr Ivan Sekovski, Programme officer from the

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (hereinafter referred to as PAP/RAC).

First, he presented the PAP/RAC centre in general by focusing on the recent activities PAP/RAC coordinated in the Adriatic when it comes to coastal zone management and marine spatial planning. In his presentation he included ICZM Protocol and Climate Change, a detailed presentation of Coastal plans and strategies PAP/RAC was working on and are related to climate change. Due to the fact that PAP/RAC wanted to focus more strongly on adaptation to climate change, the centre participated in the Adriadapt project, Interreg Italy-Croatia where the main goal was to make a repository/ a platform where all the data that can help local communities to develop their adaptation plans were stored. He continued with describing adaptation options (societal, green, grey) on the AdriAdapt platform. He mentioned developing eleven case studies on the AdriAdapt platform, climate projections made by partners studying the area of meteorology, guidelines and handbook that were written as well as developing Integrated Adaptation Planning Tool, a toll to follow in order to develop coastal adaptation plan based on the Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) process. Next, he pointed out Boka Kotorska Bay as an example of a highly participatory planning process and described climate conditions and projections in the area. He continued listing recommendations for the adaptation measures such as coastal afforestation and protection of coastal forests, measures for flood protection, measures for urban greening, water-sensitive urban designs and adaptation measures related to marine environment (i.e., solid blue crab holding cages, sea beds covered with *Posidonia oceanica*, eco-friendly buoys). He described Marine spatial planning process by pointing out submodules namely, eco-system-based approach, governance, land interaction, climate action). He listed some finished projects namely, CREATE project, Interreg Italy-Croatia, whose activities include thematic webinars organized in the scope of the project, CREATE A3 Adaptation Award. In conclusion, Mr Sekovski explained that one of PAP/RAC’s ongoing activities are nature-based solutions for adaptation in different coastal typologies in the Mediterranean. He added that PAP/RAC is one of the project partners in DesirMED - The Demonstration and mainstreaming of nature-based Solutions for climate Resilient transformation in the MEDiterranean focusing on nature-based solutions.

The Chair had two remarks on Mr Sekoski’s presentation, one being not mentioning the Climate Change Regional Activity Centre, established in Istanbul, Turkey. Regarding mechanism such as coordination mechanism the Chair suggested putting coordination and governing mechanism instead of just coordination mechanism to make it clearer. The presenter apologized for the unintentional mistake on the first slide regarding RACs. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola reminded that there was a discussion foreseen on the agenda on the flagship project dealing with the issues Mr Sekovski described and pointed out that Emilia Romagna region was very interested in dealing with coastal and river flooding and offered the EUSAIR to act as an intermediary by setting a new flagship and thus drawing political attention in finding a solution. The Chair agreed with the proposal of the EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola. Croatia thanked for the presentation delivered and asked for the links to the TSG 3 report. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola pointed out that the TSG 3 should act by proposing a new flagship on the issue discussed in order to put words into actions and spread the word into different levels such as regional, local with the help of capacity building in terms of planning.

Mr Sekovski added that the goals was to use case studies to demonstrate local authorities what can be achieved and replicated in their area and what can be exchanged among local authorities across the Adriatic region as well as across the Mediterranean region. Italy requested The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola for clarification about the flagship project promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention though river-based management that had already been agreed upon among TSG 3 members and wondered about the need for a new flagship covering the topic mentioned. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola replied that the aim is to better define the type of activities within the flagship project mentioned in collaboration with StEP and SP4EUSAIR projects as well as to define the direction of flagship development. Next, Italy asked for clarification on the future steps from the EUSAIR point of view, that are the TSG 3 is planning to take. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola explained the aim is to share best practices and knowledge produced by PAP/RAC and put it on the platform. Italy expressed the need for a local component to be involved and internal consultation among the Regions of Italy needed to take place as well in order to understand the activities could be feasible in Italy, if the reproduction of activities is even possible. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola agreed with Italy’s proposal and Italy suggested that the best way to proceed is to receive the document as a proposal and then have an internal discussion on the proposal during the next TSG 3 meeting.

Conclusions under Item 6:

**C.6.:** **The TSG3 members discussed a new flagship proposal with the working title "Promoting Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Prevention through River Basin Management (RBM), Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)." Additional documentation will be provided to the TSG3 members for consultation with the support of EUSAIR Facility Point Strategic Project and SP4EUSAIR Project.**

Item 7: ***Presentation of*** ***NAMIRS project results***

The Chair announced the next presenter, Ms Anna Marconato, from Central European Initiative, the executive secretariat CEI-ES who would explain the role of REMPEC in her presentation “From NAMIRS to ASAP Implementation of the ASOSCOP flagship”. She first introduced the intergovernmental organization she was working for. In her presentation she provided the geographical content of the Adriatic-Ionian Sea and the exposure to environmental risks. She spoke about a relation that Central European Initiative has with REMPEC pointing out that there should be no borders when it comes to policies related to prevention and response in case of disaster and accidents at sea since in the European legislation there are directives establishing common standards at the European level and EU civil protection mechanisms. She stated that Central European Initiative started cooperating with several actors to prevent the pollution in the Adriatic Sea mentioning, the “Agreement on the Sub-Regional Contingency Plan for prevention of, preparedness for and response to major marine pollution incidents in the Adriatic Sea”, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), and with the activities under Pillar 3 – Environmental Quality (in particular, flagship project F1 ASOSCOP, the mandate of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea – REMPEC is “to contribute to preventing and reducing pollution from ships and combating pollution in case of emergency”, a new Adriatic Contingency plan was drafted in 2023 (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Slovenia), The ADRIAEX was organized in Montenegro in March 2024. Ms Marconato explained how the North Adriatic Maritime Incident Response System (NAMIRS) project proposal was designed. She provided some main information about the NAMIRS that was considered as the first pilot project through which the experience was gained that could help with future implementation of ASOSCOP. She listed the deliverables of the project namely, Environmental Risk Assessment in Northern Adriatic (with identification of sensitive areas), mapping of existing resources, training classes (to first line responders on anti-pollution, oil-spill simulator, maritime English, on shore clean-up), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), full scale exercise at sea and Guidelines for the revision and update of the Adriatic Contingency Plan. She continued by presenting some main information about ASAP project (Adriatic Sensitive Areas Protection – mechanism), co-financed by the European Union through the Interreg IPA ADRION programme. She stated that the goal of the project is to extend what had been done within the scope of NAMIRS project to the whole Adriatic Sea Basin, transfer the experience gained in the North Adriatic to the whole basin. She pointed out the challenges (Identification of Adriatic sensitive areas, enhancing preparedness, joint coordination and effective transnational response) and expectations of achievements by implementing ASAP project. Ms Marconato described the approach of ASAP project and highlighted that the Central European Initiative will collaborate with REMPEC as well as with EUSAIR In order to implement the ASAP project.

The Chair pointed out that a workshop within the scope of ASAP project took place in Sarajevo, BiH and expressed hopes that the project will be beneficial to BiH and other countries.

The Chair opened the floor for questions. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola also thanked Ms Marconato and wanted to inform the TSG 3 Members that the results of NAMIRS project were published [on the Adriatic-Ionian webpage](https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu) in the “PILLAR 3: Environmental quality” section under the Key Documents to make it more accessible for them.

Italy requested Ms Marconato for a clarification in Work Package 3 regarding the establishment of a permanent coordination mechanism and wanted to know whether is it thought as sort of plan or protocol to be followed by the participating countries and whether she was referring to The RAMOGE Agreement. Ms Marconato confirmed the assumption made by Italy and explained that a Memorandum of Understanding was to be signed by the participating countries at the end of the project to guarantee the future of activities by example of The RAMOGE Agreement and RAMOGEPOL plan. Italy reminded that an institutional framework is needed to sign the memorandum of understanding and asked Ms Marconato whether they had the Barcelona Convention in mind. Ms Marconato replied that they were thinking of Adriatic Contingency Plan as a model of developing the second phase and that the activities would be linked to the plan.

Conclusion under Item 7:

**C.7.: The TSG3 members were informed about the NAMIRS project results and REMPEC's involvement in the ASOSCoP Flagship activities.**

Item 8: ***Activity plan of possible TSG 3 events for 2024/2025 - updating the TSG 3 Activity plan 2024***

The Chair invited the EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola representative to present the overview the updated the TSG 3 Activity plan 2024 highlighting the Written procedure for Annual report, Thematic Pillar 3 Event - Environmental Quality in the scope of the Interreg IPA ADRION Programme (2021-2027) that was earlier presented in detail by the Chair, 20th TSG 3 meeting, TSG 3 Panel session 9th EUSAIR Forum, Croatia, “Implementation of EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Common macroregional solutions for nature and fisheries in Adriatic Ionian Region”, TSG 3 Workshop within Mediterranean Coast and Macro-regional Strategies Week and the current online 21st TSG 3 meeting. The TSG 3 Members were kindly invited to submit the details of any meetings or events foreseen until the end of 2024 within two weeks from the day of the 21st TSG 3 Meeting. They were also reminded to consult their National Coordinators, Pillar Coordinators and TSG 3 members form their country when preparing contributions to the Activity Plan 2024. If the dates would not be known yet, the TSG 3 Members should indicate “TBC”. Italy requested for a clarification about the Activity plan for 2024 and asked whether feedback should be provided. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola replied that they would like to kindly invite the TSG 3 Members to send any updates on the events that are planned until the 2024 and whether they have any events scheduled for 2025. Italy asked whether the date of the next TSG 3 meeting was already known. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola replied that the next meeting was planned in March 2025 and the country that holds the EUSAIR Presidency also hosts the meeting therefore the next meeting would be organized in Greece if Greek members agree in March 2025. Should there be any other suggestions, the TSG 3 Members are welcome to share them.

San Marino had a proposal regarding the next TSG 3 Meeting about maintaining the hybrid forms of TSG 3 meeting s that would allow those not being able to come in person to attend the meetings online.

Italy reminded the participants that it had been agreed at the 20th TSG 3 Meeting in Zagreb that the meeting would be in hybrid form.

Conclusions under Item 8:

**C.8: The activity plan for TSG3 events held in 2024 was presented. TSG3 members were invited to submit their planned events for 2024 and 2025 under the TSG3 Pillar on Environmental Quality within the next two weeks.**

Item 9: ***Main findings of the Report on existing implementation formats and methodology for capacity building workshop for TSG 3***

The Chair announced the next speakers, Mr Mimica from the Lead partner of the SP4EUSAIR Project. Mr Mimica delivered presentation on Methodology for Capacity building workshops Pillar 3 – Environmental Quality within the scope of “Support to Development and Implementation of Strategic Implementation Formats – SP4EUSAIR”. Firstly, he gave a short overview on the Report on existing implementation formats and development path and key features. He highlighted that the Report has identified for each Pillar Implementation formats development path, current state and developed implementation formats, specific needs of the pillars, summarized list of implementation formats by pillars. Secondly, he provided main conclusions of the report and thirdly he outlined the identified needs for Pillar 3 namely, enhanced collaboration, effective project implementation, strategic development of new projects, enhanced cross-pillar collaboration as well as identifying suitable funding sources. He continued with some guidelines on how to proceed forward and he concluded with the main outlines of the methodology. Mr Mimica asked for the feedback of TSG 3 Members to see if they agree with the proposal of Methodology for Capacity building workshops Pillar 3. Italy asked for a clarification on the capacity building workshop with reference to improvement of the project development capacity and the ability to match the project with sources of funding. Italy asked if the workshop would be intended for TSG 3 members and added who the target group for the workshop would be. Mr Mimica explained that it the workshops will be designed according the wishes by the SP4EUSAIR with the help of TSG3 members in order to serve TSG 3 Members in the best was possible.

Italy wanted to verify whether the decision on which flagships should be developed is taken withing the TSG 3 and wondered whether capacity building sessions could be organized back-to-back with TSG 3 focusing on the reporting format. Italy suggested sharing the preliminary proposals for strategic projects with TSG 3 Members. Mr Mimica asked Italy for the clarification regarding the reporting. Italy said that the reference was being made to the flagship templates not the reporting. Mr Mimica said that the workshops would focus on strategic proposals that would be later submitted for funding and clarified that the strategic projects were developed in the past and if they were to be submitted for funding the projects should be further revised to reflect the current needs and challenges and to be better aligned with funding opportunities available. Croatia had a question regarding the capacity building regarding the task of TSG3 members that is further development of strategic projects as it was not the case during the previous period. Mr Mimica replied that SP4EUSAIR are the consultants who would do the analysis of the existing strategic projects and see what more has to be done for funding and then present their findings with the TSG 3 members to see if the findings are in line with the expectations. Croatia wanted to know whether the analyses would be received prior to the workshops. Mr Mimica confirmed. Italy had a comment regarding the phrase “future strategic implementation formats”. Mr Mimica said that it was a typographical error and clarified that the idea is to proceed with the existing implementation formats. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola asked Mr Mimica about the format and location of the workshops. He replied that the idea is to align the workshop with some other TSG3 events or to organize a separate session. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola specified that the TSG3 Members usually meet three times a year namely, in March, during the Annual forum (in May) and in November. Mr Mimica suggested organizing a workshop in January, probably online where the analysis would be presented and a discussion would be opened how to proceed with the activities. Italy said that they should get a clearer picture for time in 2025 as the TSG3 Meeting would be held in March 2025 the analysis would be needed prior to March 2025 and stresses that the time is needed for internal consultation and only then potentially adopt decision during a TSG 3 Meeting.

Mr Mimica asked whether the TSG 3 Members have considered investigating the interests of Lead partner organization while SP4EUSIAR would work on the analysis since the lead partners had already been assigned. Mr Mimica finds it important to involve the organizations of the Lead partners in the process the check whether they want to proceed with the Lead partners assigned. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola clarified that there has not been a lack of knowledge or ownership within the TSG 3. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola added the proposal to ask the Mr Mimica to send the agenda of the workshop in December. Italy repeated their question and wanted to understand when the project proposals by TSG 3 should be submitted and would not call the activity foreseen a capacity building workshop, but rather a presentation of products about which TSG3 members need to decide priorities. Mr Mimica stated that the SP4EUSAIR project is not able to change the name of the project activities foreseen and that the project activities are designed to support the work of TSG 3. The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola closed the discussion by proposing to Mr Mimica to send a written proposal with dates of the workshop, goals and GANTT chat to better understand the timeline and suggested an online meeting to be arranged dedicated to the topic in December or January. Mr Mimica agreed and said an e-correspondence would be prepared.

Conclusions under Item 9:

**C.9: The TSG3 members were informed about the main findings of the Report on existing implementation formats and methodology for a workshop for TSG 3. The Lead Partner of SP4EUSAIR will provide a written proposal with the dates, logistics and main contents.**

Item 10: ***AOB***

Upon the request by Italy the Chair gave floor to Italy and the revision of Action plan was discussed.

Italy specified that the intention of the intervention Italy made was just to inform the TSG 3 Members about the comment and contributions that Italy had sent when the EC circulated draft version of the Action plan in September 2024. Italy was not expecting such modifications in particular the indicators. The Italy confirmed the content in the version of the Action plan made in April 2024. Italy was expecting some news about the process from the EC and wanted the information about the timing and whether Italy’s comments would be taken into account. Italy also wondered if any of TSG 3 Members had any additional information about the process. The Chair replied that he has not any additional information about the revision as the owner of the Action plan is the EC and they decide to adopt it. Italy opposed by saying that investing time, work and inputs into the content of Action plan process in if the work, time and decisions of consultants and that the consultation process should be taken into account. The Chair asked for a suggestion on how to help in the situation regarding the Action plan consultation process.

Conclusions under Item 10:

**C.10:** **There are no specific conclusions for this item.**

Item 11: ***Conclusions and next steps***

The Chair asked the representative of The EUSAIR Facility Point project partner Municipality of Izola to show and read the conclusions and the next steps. The suggestions for improvement by Italy were taken into the account.

Conclusions under Item 11:

**C.11: The next TSG3 meeting will be in March/April 2025 in Greece.**

The Chair thanked everyone who actively participated in the meeting wishing everyone the best and looking forward to meet in person in Greece in March at the next TSG3 Meeting. The Chair concluded the meeting.