

**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**on the Preparatory Work**  
**of an Initiative for developing a pan-EU distributed research infrastructure dedicated  
to river-sea systems**

**The Danube International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Delta-Sea Systems**

**DANUBIUS – RI**

**Preamble**

DANUBIUS-RI represents a new world leading novel science infrastructure that will attract collaboration from across Europe and beyond. The pan-European Research Infrastructure will be state of the art, integrating in-situ and earth technologies and facilitating both multidisciplinary science and innovation that is led by societal-driven questions that encompass the river- sea interface.

The range of research programs to be carried out at the new facility is indicated in the DANUBIUS-RI White Book.

Since 2008, based on a recommendation by the Romanian Committee for Research Infrastructures, the project has been included in the Romanian National Roadmap. With the support of the Romanian Government, keeping informed the European Commission and ESFRI Environment Thematic Working Group, and with guidance and contributions from renowned experts and science managers, the concept has evolved to a strong scientific case fully described by the White Book v.7.2

DANUBIUS-RI has the strong support of the Government of Romania (stated as the most important RI project in environmental sciences, with provision of land and commitment of funding for the Hub at the Danube Delta, providing access to an unique European natural laboratory: Lower Danube – Danube Delta – Black Sea. Experts and Research Institutions so far in other EU Member States or Associated Countries to EU FP have expressed interest in joining DANUBIUS-RI.

In September 2013 The Danube International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Delta-Sea Systems (DANUBIUS-RI) Research Infrastructure was awarded the status of Flagship Project of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The DANUBIUS– RI project is open for participation worldwide.

Based on these developments, the signatories of this Memorandum of Understanding are willing to participate in the preparatory work of an application for inclusion of the DANUBIUS-RI project in the ESFRI Roadmap in 2016 as a pan-EU distributed research infrastructure dedicated to the integrated management of river-sea systems.

The present Memorandum of Understanding is of limited duration and constitutes no legal or financial commitment for the construction and operation of DANUBIUS-RI.

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding the Parties express their interest in participating in the planning, construction and operation of DANUBIUS-RI.

## **Article 1**

### **Definitions**

**Parties**, - legal persons, signatories of the present MoU

**Pan-European distributed RI** – a complex of local **facilities, resources and related services** used by the scientific community to conduct top-level research in their respective fields<sup>1</sup>

**ESFRI Roadmap** – A Document that identifies new Research Infrastructures (RI) of pan-European interest corresponding to the long term needs of the European research communities, covering all scientific areas, regardless of possible location<sup>2</sup>

**White book (scientific case)** – a document issued by a renowned scientific community, acknowledged by one, or several, financing agency, which described their needs for new equipment, infrastructures, the associated costs and time schedule, crucial to support/fulfil an outstanding frontier research agenda

**ERIC** – an EU regulation that sets specific legal form is designed to facilitate the joint establishment and operation of research infrastructures of European interest

**Preliminary work** – a set of activities described by this MoU having the main goal of an application for inclusion of the DANUBIUS-RI project in the ESFRI Roadmap in 2016 as a pan-European distributed research infrastructure dedicated to river-sea systems. Phase means the work done for:

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index\\_en.cfm?pg=what](http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index_en.cfm?pg=what)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index\\_en.cfm?pg=esfri-roadmap](http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index_en.cfm?pg=esfri-roadmap)

A. Submitting

- b. the roles of the Hub and Nodes;
- c. links with other research infrastructures and programmes;
- d. principles of governance of DANUBIUS-RI;
- e. actions required, including establishment of further committees or bodies, and their prioritisation;
- f. other issues identified or agreed by the Coordinator; and
- g. transition to a new structure following a successful application for access to the ESFRI Roadmap.

The IIC will report to the DANUBIUS-RI Coordinators and will work together with the Interim DANUBIUS-RI Management Team to prepare by mid- 2014 an interim report of their findings and the elements necessary for the decision by the participating countries to support DANUBIUS-RI as a candidate for the ESFRI Roadmap update.

During 2015 the IIC will establish studies of the following themes:

- the scientific goals and the overall layout of DANUBIUS-RI including its technical design and the overall cost for the construction and operation of the infrastructure.
- a legal framework and an organizational scheme for the construction and operation of DANUBIUS-RI, including the cost for the construction and operation of the distributed infrastructure.

Drawing on this work the IIC will establish, by the end of 2015, the main elements necessary for the legal and financial commitment by the participating countries to construct and operate DANUBIUS-RI, particularly for the Romania's application to the Structural Funds for construction of a major project DANUBIUS-RI Hub as well as for other application to Structural Funds in the case that other countries are willing to build up their own facilities that will be part of DANUBIUS-RI. Also by the end of 2015 the documents as specified in Article 2 will be completed.

B. During the preparatory phase, capitalizing on the expertise and achievements of IIC in the preliminary work of DANUBIUS-RI, all necessary activities will be co-ordinated by the DANUBIUS-RI Interim Council (IC- DANUBIUS-RI), consisting of one representative for each of the signatories of this MoU or funding agency committing to be part of DANUBIUS-RI. The representatives will be appointed by the before- mentioned signing bodies.

The IC-DANUBIUS-RI will supervise all work and aspects related to the project in the preparatory phase, led by Romania through a Project Coordinator. A number of Work Packages will be established, each led by an appropriate individual from Romania or another participating country.

By the end of 2020 DANUBIUS-RI will have its first operation as an ERIC.

#### **Article 4**

##### **DANUBIUS-RI - Hub and nodes**

DANUBIUS-RI has been designed as a pan-European distributed Research Infrastructure under a single Governance structure, a new Hub with new or existing Nodes that will meet the ESFRI criteria and EU ERIC Regulations.

The Hub of the DANUBIUS-RI will be located in Romania, with the National Institute of Biological Sciences (INSB) and the National Institute for Marine Geology and Geoecology (GeoEcoMar) as hosts.

#### **Article 5**

##### **International DANUBIUS-RI Management Team**

- A. An Interim DANUBIUS-RI Management Team has been established and is hosted by GEOECOMAR and INSB.
- B. An international DANUBIUS-RI project team will be established by the ISC-DANUBIUS-RI.

#### **Article 6**

##### **Cooperation between Parties and Participating Institutions**

The R&D work during the preliminary work is carried out by European and international collaborations.

Within the framework of this MoU activities that are to identified can include (but not limited to): exchange of personnel and equipment, workshops, the exchange of relevant data and information, etc. These activities and their funding will be specified in Appendices which will be appended to this MoU and will serve as a record of contributions during the preparatory phase.

#### **Article 7**

##### **Duration**

This MoU will become effective for each party upon signature. The preliminary work covered by this MoU should be completed by the end of 2018. It can be extended by mutual

consent or automatically with one year unless specific requests of withdrawal are received by the Coordinators with at least 6 months before expiration of the actual term.

### **Article 8**

#### **New Parties**

This MoU is open to European and international parties, upon unanimous agreement by the IC DANUBIUS-RI.

### **Article 9**

#### **Difficulties**

The parties in the framework of this MoU will do their utmost to settle amicably any differences and difficulties, which may arise out of this MoU or the co-operation itself.

### **Article 10**

#### **Changes, Languages**

Changes of this MoU have to be agreed upon in writing by all signatories.

This MoU is done in the English language only, in as many copies as there are parties, each of them equally valid.

For ....(country)...

**(Signature)**  
**Name, Function**

**Done in**  
**On**

Countries shall be listed in alphabetical order

E.g.

For Romania

Ministry of Education and  
Research

Done in Bucharest

**(Signature)**  
**Mihnea Cosmin COSTOIU** On ...  
Minister in charge for higher  
education and research

