Integrated Territorial Investments - ITI Danube Delta

Ana-Maria DUMITRACHE
(SERBANESCU)¹,
Oana OPRISAN²
Elena CONDREA^{3*}

¹ Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania,
a.mariadumitrache@yahoo.com

² University Ovidius from Constanta, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Constanta, Romania,
oana.oprisan@yahoo.com

³ University Ovidius from Constanta, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Constanta, Romania,
elenacondrea2003@yahoo.com

* Corresponding Author

Abstract: Integrated territorial investments are instruments used in the development of a territory that imply a strategy focused on territorial development into an integrated manner related to a selected territory, also representing a group of implemented actions that help achieving the objectives of the territorial strategy that is designated for integrated development, and governance mechanisms. For the management of integrated territorial investments. Basically, ITIs are sub-programs that include integrated multi-dimensional measures. The key to implementing ITI is the integrated approach. The integrated territorial approach also involves overcoming administrative limits and requires greater disposition of different levels of government to cooperate and coordinate actions to achieve common goals. ITIs are not operations or priorities in an operational program, but allow funding for the implementation of integrated territorial strategies across multiple axe of priority from a various number of operational programs. It should also be noted that in addition to investments that support an ITI-based development strategy through an ITI, additional actions targeted at the same area can be funded through the priority axes of an operational program or operational programs that do not participate in ITI funding - however, it is recommended that sectoral investments be linked and aligned with integrated territorial development strategies. Unfortunately, at the level of the national territory, the only area where an I.T.I. type financing was approved. is the Danube Delta. The uniqueness of The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve provides very specific functions: uncommon and sporadic population, the vulnerability of the economics and job specializations, unsatisfactory access to various services, etc. The World Bank, helped by the authorities supported the development and implementation of the integrated strategy within this area. The projects of the total operational programs are funded by The ITI Danube Delta Financial Instrument, allowing investments from the CF, ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF.

Keywords: *Integrated territorial investments; development strategies; financing, geographical area; tourism.*

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1. Introduction

The many challenges facing Europe - economic, social and environmental - indicate the need for a positive response delivered by an integrated and territorial approach. This approach is multidimensional, adapted to characteristics and results specific to the field situation, which may involve exceeding administrative restrictions and possibly requiring greater receptiveness on the part of different levels of government to cooperate and coordinate actions to achieve common goals. In addition, it corresponds to the new objective of territorial cohesion introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, which recognizes that economic and social cohesion cannot be achieved at European level without a stronger emphasis on the territorial impact of EU policies.

Integrated territorial investments are territorial development instruments that imply the existence of an integrated territorial development strategy related to a designated territory, a set of actions that can be implemented to achieve the objectives set by the integrated territorial development strategy, and governance mechanisms. for the management of integrated territorial investments. Basically, ITIs are sub-programs that include integrated multi-dimensional measures. The key to implementing ITI is the integrated approach. This implies leaving the sectoral perspective to solve the problems identified in the territory; thus, even if the proposed measures will be largely sectoral (ie they can be assimilated to one area), there is a global vision, an overall perspective that ensures the correlation of interventions and the achievement of strategic objectives. Also, the integrated territorial approach involves overcoming administrative boundaries and requires an increased availability of levels of government to cooperate and coordinate actions to achieve common goals.

2. Problem Statement

According to the ITI Guidance Sheet made at EC level based on the new cohesion policy according to Reg. published in OJ 347 / 20.12.2013 (Guidance Fiche for Desk Officers, Integrated Territorial Investment), ITI mechanism: allows the implementation of operational programs by the Member States at intersectoral level; makes it possible to finance from several priority axes of one or more operational programs, in order to ensure the implementation of an integrated cross-sectoral strategy for a selected territory (mandatory premise of the efficient use of ITI); the cross-sectoral coordinated approach on a specific territory, generates the necessary synergies to support the action plan to be implemented; flexibility in

choosing a governance mechanism for ITI management, according to the Member State (specific administrative mechanisms) and the ITI object [1].

For the 2014-2020 programming period, the ITI instrument will be applied in a diversified way in 19 EU Member States (11 old MS, 8 new MS), of which 14 MS have opted for sustainable urban development. Some considerations are presented below.

Depending on: the level of allocation of ESI funds for ITI: 4 EU MS, excluding Romania, with an allocation of more than 1 billion euros for ITI: France, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic; multi-fund type for ITI - 8 Member States: in 5 Member States - France (ITI Brittany only), Germany, the Netherlands, England, Greece - ERDF and ESF; Czech Republic - ERDF, CF and ESF; Spain - ERDF, ESF and EMFF; Romania - ERDF, ESF, FC, EAFRD, FEPAM; typology of the ITI approach: by specific geographical characteristics - 3 Member States - Portugal (coastal area-port area Lisbon and Porto), Spain (coastal area Mar Menor / Murcia, province of Cadiz / Andalusia, region of Extremadura, ITI Azul / Canary Islands) and Romania (Danube Delta) [2].

3. Research Questions/Aims of the research

Given that integrated territorial strategies play a key role in achieving the goal of a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe, set out in the Europe 2020 strategy, the ITI was introduced in the Regulation that lay down common provisions as the main instrument that implement such strategies. The integrated responses for the various territorial needs are formulated by a flexible mechanism that ITI provides, being able to link the cohesion policy with the Europe 2020 strategy by maintaining the thematic orientation.

The purpose of the study: ITI is a tool for implementing territorial strategies in an integrated manner. This is not an operation or a secondary priority in an operational program. Instead, ITI allows the implementation by the Member States of the cross-sectoral operational programs and the use of funding from multiple priority axes of more operational programs to ensure the implementation of an integrated strategy for a specific territory. In this case, by existing, the ITI gives Member States both efficiency in implementing integrated actions through simplified funding and flexibility in the development of operational programs.

Provisions on ITI indicates multiple possible benefits: ITI being an instrument of promoting the use of integrated funds has the latency to return better results for the same quantity of public investment; the actors from subregional level (local / urban stakeholders), are ensured by the ITI management delegation of their involvement in the development and

implementation of programs and taking responsibility for this; whereas an ITI will have its various sources of funding provided from the outset, the funding of integrated actions will be more secure; ITI is a tool destined for development following a field-based approach, which can help unleash the underutilized capability at the local, urban and regional levels.

4. Research Methods

The methodology of elaboration of the paper is in accordance with the international practice, regarding the planning and management of the zonal, county and regional territories, studied and validated in Romania as well, through research projects and spatial planning plans.

The analysis of the current situation of the area is performed through studies and processing of numerical and descriptive data, as well as through territorial analysis (resources, activities, land).

The current situation-trends investigation, dysfunctions found, includes a series of activities aimed at identifying the state of specific subzones and the relationships between them, at the zonal level, from a comparative perspective. The analysis identifies the general state of the environment, natural and built, the functional relations in the zonal territory, the major aspects in the territory, dysfunctions and / or disparities between localities, the development tendencies of the functional areas, to prepare the development proposals.

The data to be used in the analyzes and projections of the project are provided mainly by INS - "Locality file" from Tulcea and Constanța counties - List of companies and companies with activity in administrative units, Statistical Yearbooks and Population Census Results 1966 - 2002. Master Plan for DDBR developed by INCD-Danube Delta.

The work is carried out with the help of substantiation studies developed for the following fields: Natural heritage, Zoning of the territory, Economic activities - INCD Danube Delta - Tulcea; Cultural heritage - Tulcea History Museum; Tourist activities - INCD Tourism - Bucharest.

5. Findings

ITI is a tool for implementing integrated territorial strategies, which are considered essential in accomplishing the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. ITI are not operations or priorities in an operational program, but allow funding for the implementation of integrated territorial strategies in several axes, priorities of one or more operational programs [3]. Thus, ITI offers flexibility in developing operational programs and efficient implementation of integrated actions. It should also be noted that in

addition to investments that support through an ITI a development strategy based on the field situation, additional actions targeted at the same area can be financed through the priority axes of an operational program or operational programs that do not participate in ITI financing - however, it is recommended that sectoral investments be correlated and aligned with integrated territorial development strategies. Unfortunately, at the level of the national territory, the only area where an I.T.I. type financing was approved. is the Danube Delta.

The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is a unique territory with very specific functions: rare and isolated population, specialization and economic vulnerability, unsatisfactory access to services, etc. The development of the integrated strategy for this area was carried out with the help of the World Bank and the authorities.

Source: RAPORT 2.2 Strategia Integrată de Dezvoltare Durabilă a Deltei Dunării (2030) [7]

Figure no. 1 - The current operating structure of the Danube Delta region

The perspective for the Danube Delta (Danube Delta Biosphere zone): a “living delta” (an area favourable for living and working), with a balance between environment and community; with a sustainable and healthy local economy - based mainly on nature and cultural tourism; with an inclusive planning process (locals, authorities, business environment) [4].

The accepted vision shows a couple of strategic objectives:

(1) the environmental management representative are preserving the unique natural values being guided by science and supporting the local communities to offer protection for this unique world heritage;

(2) a healthy local economy can be developed through sustainable and efficient consumption and protection of the resources, by taking advantage of the comparative assets within the area and accepting the help of improved public services.

The degree of absorption of European funds attracted through the financial mechanism Integrated Territorial Investments - Danube Delta (ITI-DD) is about 23% and is explained by the delay in opening the financing sessions by up to a year and a half compared to those conducted at national level.

ADI is an association made up of public and private entities that aims to issue approvals for compliance of funding applications with the Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy (SIDD) of the Danube Delta, approved in 2016 by the Government. ADI ITI-DD also provides free advice to potential ITI-DD beneficiaries.

ITI-DD is the only territorial-integrated investment that is being implemented in Romania in the current programming period. This new financial mechanism at European level involves the allocation of funds from several operational programs to a geographically delimited area, with a specific specificity, for development and has an estimated total budget of 1.114 billion euros of European funds, to which is added national funding [6].

Source: RAPORT 2.2 Strategia Integrată de Dezvoltare Durabilă a Deltei Dunării (2030) [7]

Figure no. 2 - Map of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (RBDD)

The green and yellow colors on the map are highlighting the Study Area (also called the Danube Delta Region). It covers the DDBR and the Border Zones and includes the city of Tulcea, four cities (Babadag, Isaccea, Măcin, and Sulina) and thirty-two communes [5]. Four of these communes (Corbu, Istria, Mihai Viteazu and Săcele) belong to Constanța County from an administrative point of view, all four being adjacent to the bay of Razim-Sinoe Lake.

1. Heart of the Delta: Delta located between the arms of Chilia and Sfântu Gheorghe (canals)

2. South area, including lake / lagoon area, e.g. L. Razim, L. Sinoe and L. Babadag

3. The territory located along the Danube, upstream of the city of Tulcea

Integrated territorial investment of the Danube Delta: Total budget estimated according to the provisions of the Operational Programs: 1.114 billion euros from European funds, to which is added the national financing; POIM - 407.64 million euros; POR - 358.1 million euros; PNDR - 168 million euros (including national funding); POPAM - 37 million euros; POC - 60 million euros; POCU - 60 million euros; POCA - 16 million euros; POAT - 5 million euros.

Integrated financing provided from all operational programs, including investments from CF, ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF.

The Romanian Government has defined the ITI mechanism to include certain priority axes and measures from seven Operational Programs and from the National Rural Development Program (PNDR) [6]. Funded from five European funds, the ITI mechanism can cover eligible activities from seven OPs and PNDRs. The axes and special measures selected by the Romanian Government aim to reflect some of the particularities of the DD region. The Danube Delta strategy is aligned with national strategies and priorities. The POs also reflect the highest priorities for the country.

Thus, the connection between the Strategy and the POs is extensive and strong. However, some peculiarities result from the way in which the ITI mechanism is defined, in particular as regards its emphasis on large infrastructure investments. Thus, to some extent, the ITI 2020 proposal places more emphasis on infrastructure compared to the 2030 Strategy, which focuses more on the environment (balancing environmental protection and socio-economic development objectives) [6].

Local implementing entities - ADI ITI DD (Association), beneficiaries (local authorities) and private sector entities - will need to plan the detailed preparation and implementation of the ITI program during the

programming period (until 2020), taking into account, inter alia, the following factors: (i) critical dependency relationships between interventions / projects, such as the development of a hydrological model for waterways before extensive dredging; (ii) coordinating physical implementation, for example with regard to the construction of underground water pipes and the modernization of streets; (iii) the potential of procurement packages for economy and efficiency; (iv) prioritizing projects to ensure the implementation of the most important ones during the programming period (although they may not necessarily be the first); (v) construction season; (vi) availability of local funds; and (vii) capacity for preparation and implementation

A prioritization approach is proposed for all interventions under the 2030 Strategy, focusing on the expected impact, aiming at the two general objectives of the Strategy (the ITI mechanism finances only a part of this intervention) [4]. A direct prioritization approach is suggested, using five main criteria: 1) environmental development; 2) economic development; 3) geographical scope and number of beneficiaries; 4) predicament level and the sustainability of financial operations; 5) implementation status. The interventions were grouped by the World Bank study team into three groups (Major, Medium and “Minor”) by applying this approach for prioritization.

More important will be for the competent authorities and, in particular, local beneficiaries and other resources familiar with the Strategy and the Region to achieve this prioritization. The prioritization presented reflects all projects in support of the Strategy, of which those eligible for ITI funding, including those for which project sheets have been developed, are a subcategory. The time horizon is 2030 for the Strategy and 2020 for the ITI proposal.

Also, while the strategy emphasizes the need to focus on environmental and socio-economic interventions, the various operational programs for the period 2014-2020 focus largely on infrastructure investments [5].

6. Conclusions

ADI-ITI DD was established for the purpose of joint organization, regulation, financing, monitoring and coordination, within the area of competence of the ATU included in the Danube Delta, Action Plan, Mechanism for implementing ITI Danube Delta, Investment Plan for ITI Danube Delta, public investment projects of zonal or regional interest, aimed at ecological conservation and reconstruction in the area of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, modernization of infrastructure in the

area, development of public and private economic sector, tourism and urban and rural regeneration, improving the quality of life and supporting sustainable, intelligent economic development and growth, conducive to inclusion in the Danube Delta area. Thus, it provides the visibility of ITI programs and public and permanent information on their implementation, at local, regional and national level, including by participating in information and communication actions at EU level, cooperates with other ITIs set up in other Member States during the programming period. 2020-2030, in order to exchange experience and good practices, in order to improve the management and productiveness of the ITI implementation mechanism.

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