



# FACTBOOK

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@ freihand-zeichner.at

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# Preface

## Priority Area 10: Institutional Capacity and Cooperation

The Danube Region faces various challenges ranging from social exclusion to ecological hazards, from the need for better connectivity and mobility to the lack of administrative capacities that are highly interlinked and cause sectoral and geographical spill-overs. At the same time, the region offers the potential for innovation, creativity and cooperation to promote prosperity and quality of life to its citizens. The **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)** was established to enhance cooperation and to encourage stakeholders to unlock this potential.

Building on the experience of previous strategic project support, the **EUSDR Priority Area 10** "Institutional Capacity and Cooperation" aimed at promoting innovative project ideas that address key policy challenges in the Danube Region. Consequently, the **Danube Strategic Project Fund** was designed to support comprehensive initiatives that address cross-cutting issues in various thematic areas, closely connect partners within and outside the European Union as well as local, regional and national partners from public and private organisations, and to establish links

to the Adriatic-Ionian Region. In doing so, the **Danube Strategic Project Fund** offered a unique opportunity to facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach across a variety of topics, suggesting comprehensive solutions for potentially complex challenges.

With the support of all **EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators**, selected international experts on the needs and challenges in the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Region have evaluated and chosen the most promising ideas. As a result, the **Danube Strategic Project Fund** supported twelve innovative initiatives that strengthen cooperation and lay the foundation for future investments in the Danube Region. All twelve initiatives put great emphasis on youth participation and sustainable development, thus making an important contribution to creating a Danube Region which is ready to face future challenges.

*Claudia Singer, April 2019*

Claudia Singer is Coordinator of the Priority Area 10 "Institutional Capacity and Cooperation" of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.



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# Danube Strategic Project Fund

## Supporting macro-regional projects

The **Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF)** is a pilot initiative to fund strategic transnational projects in the Danube Region. It primarily focuses on innovative projects which respond to the actual needs of the area and are also targeted by the priority areas of the EUSDR.

The **DSPF** provided grants in the form of pre-financing to 12 projects, which are of strategic relevance to the Danube Region - from analysing railway connections to youth entrepreneurship. Some of these projects were designed to pave the way for larger projects to be implemented in the future.

All **DSPF** projects were developed by partnerships consisting of organisations from different Danube Region Countries. Some also included

partners from the Adriatic-Ionian Region to enhance cooperation between these two EU Macro-Regions.

Another core aspect of the **DSPF** is the strong representation of EU accession countries, such as Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, and neighbouring countries, such as Moldova and the Ukraine. 41 organisations from 16 European countries participated in the DSPF. Amongst them were universities, associations, SMEs, and public bodies.

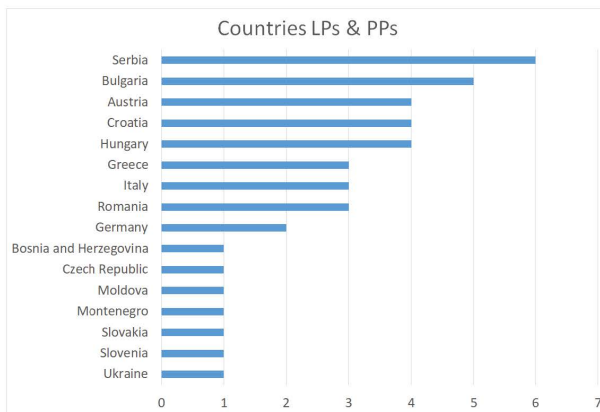


Figure 1: Country of origin of Lead Partners and Project Partners

The **DSPF** promotes the cooperation of Danube Region countries in particular with a focus on the training of young people. This target group was addressed in a number of ways, as the DSPF projects show.

## Who is behind the DSPF?

The **DSPF** was created to provide support to strategic transnational projects that are

aligned with the objectives of the EUSDR. It is co-financed by the European Union and the City of Vienna.

The Vienna-based Priority Area 10 coordination (PAC 10) of the EUSDR fosters institutional capacity & cooperation. With this purpose in mind, PAC 10 as managing authority developed the **DSPF** and assigned the function of implementing body to EuroVienna EU-consulting & -management Ltd., which acts as a service center for EU project development and management.

### **Empowering the Youth & Sustainable Development**

The **DSPF** projects aimed at paving the way for forward-looking territorial development based on empowerment and sustainability.

A particular focus was placed on encouraging young people to participate in shaping social and economic development through intercultural exchange and cooperation, including education and entrepreneurship.

The initiatives further strengthened transnational collaboration and coordination and set common standards to boost sustainable development in the areas of connectivity, prevention and management of ecological hazards and pollution and circular economy.

### **DSPF Networking Event**

A networking event took place in the Vienna City Hall (Austria) on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. More than 100 international participants contributed to lively discussions on the **DSPF** projects and their core topics.

Within the event, two workshops on a sustainable Danube Region and empowering the youth brought together the projects of the **DSPF**. In an inspiring lecture, Iva Taralezhkova (DSPF jury member) emphasized the importance of broad stakeholder involvement and participation for a prosperous development in the Danube Region.





## The **DSPF** projects:

- have strategic impacts
- support economic and social cooperation
- foster integration of Danube Region countries
- allow for cooperation between the Danube and the Adriatic-Ionian Region
- include neighbouring countries of the EU and EU accession countries
- promote the training of young people

## Technical details of the **DSPF** projects:

- Project implementation: 1<sup>st</sup> January - 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018
- 50 % - 90% funding rate
- **DSPF** contribution per project: 70 000 € - 100 000 €

Visit the **DSPF** blog to find out more!

[dspf-projects.tumblr.com](https://dspf-projects.tumblr.com)



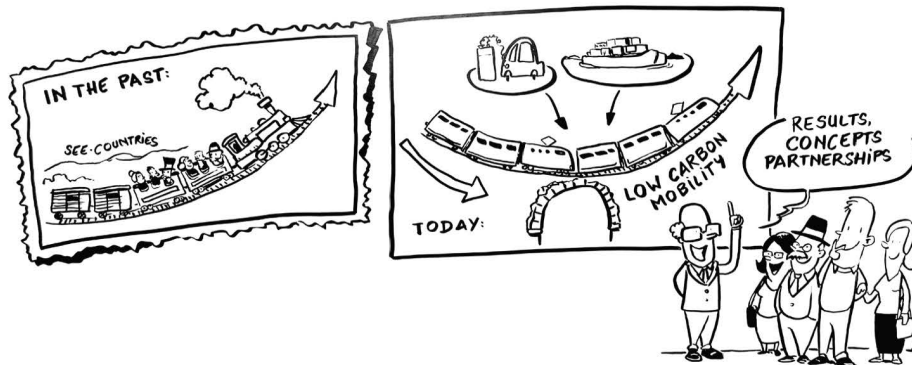
## The DSPF projects

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## Challenges in Improved Organizations in South-Eastern European Railways

Historically, in many South-Eastern European (SEE) countries, railways played an important role for both passenger and freight transport, while recently this has rapidly been decreasing. **initCOSEERAIL** aims at improving the railway infrastructure and services in the SEE region. Integrated with other sustainable means (local PT, cycling, walking, e-mobility and inland waterways), railways should become the main pillar of low carbon mobility.

The **DSPF** project serves as a starting point for a larger future project on this important topic. A pilot survey is conducted to collect information about the current situation, a project concept for the future project is established, a strong partnership is set up and dissemination activities are implemented to bring the topic to the experts in the region and to the public.





## Did you know?

A detailed analysis of the history of railway connections in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina reveals a constant decline of speed, quality and services.

Since 1985 the number of trains connecting Ljubljana with Belgrade per day dropped from over 25 to 3. In addition, the average speed of the fastest connection dropped as well from 72.6 km/h to 64.2 km/h.



### Lead Partner:

- Institute of Transportation, Vienna University of Technology, Vienna (AT)

### Project Partners:

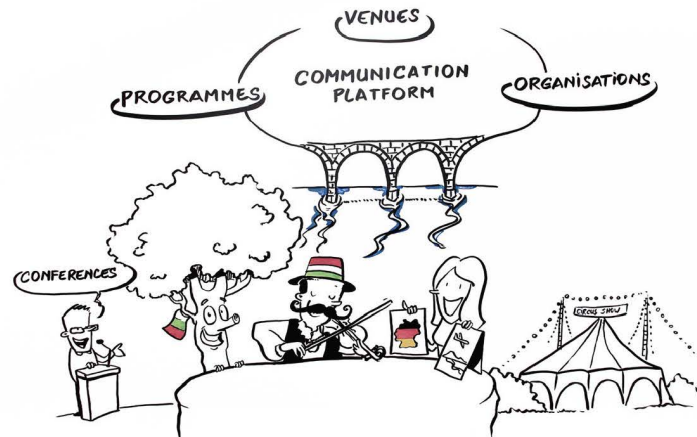
- Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences, University of Zagreb, Zagreb (HR)
- LIR Evolution, Banja Luka (BA)
- Fin Project srl, Rimini (IT)

# The Bridge

Fostering Cooperation among Danube Linked Art and Culture Initiatives for a Stronger Danube Identity

**The Bridge** encourages and fosters collaboration between relevant cultural and artistic stakeholders within the Danube and Ionian Regions by internationalising local events, creating common branding and involving youth education in cultural events.

The aim of the project is to develop an educational training for children based on an interactive artistic programme, to conduct a survey about river related events and to hold a conference for the stakeholders of the region. The project partners from Hungary and Bulgaria and the external partners KULTURANOVA from Novi Sad (RS) and Udruga PLANTAža from Osijek (HR) bring cultural and artistic cooperation to a higher level in the region.





## Did you know?

A team of young artists, Philosophers Peble, toured Budapest (Hungary), Ruse (Bulgaria), and Novi Sad (Serbia) to raise children's interest for arts and experiments, both connected to water and the Danube river.

These activities support the development of a Danube Region related mindset.



## Lead Partner:

- Kultúrkombinát Ltd., Budapest (HU)

## Project Partner:

- Club of Friends of Public Park Rusenski Lom, Ruse (BG)

# DANUBE HAZARD

Preparatory project for "Fighting hazardous substances pollution in the Danube River Basin"

**DANUBE HAZARD** tackles the problem of hazardous substances in the Danube river basin.

For this preparatory project, an international partnership of research, administration and management institutions is set up. Based on a survey of existing data, data gaps and a study of monitoring strategies **DANUBE HAZARD** develops an innovative concept for a future project.





## Did you know?

The river Danube is fed with water from numerous smaller rivers and streams. Although hazardous substances are widely recognized to harm people and the environment, its origins are still unknown.

With this in mind, the project developed the theoretical basis for the implementation of smart monitoring strategies of hazardous substances.



## Lead Partner:

- Institute for Water Quality, Resource and Waste Management, University of Technology, Vienna (AT)

## Project Partners:

- Department of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering, University of Technology and Economics, Budapest (HU)
- Romanian Waters National Administration, Bucharest (RO)
- Institute for Development of Water Resources "Jaroslav Černi", Belgrade (RS)

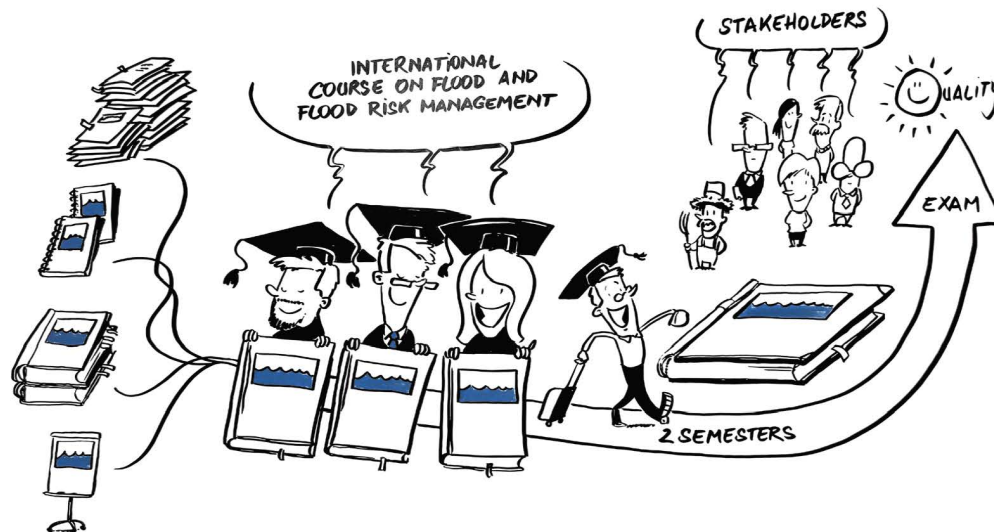
# InterFloodCourse

International Postgraduate Course on Flood Management



**InterFloodCourse** develops a curriculum and training material for an international postgraduate course on flood risk management.

The target of this project is to harmonize methodologies and to foster academic mobility of engineers in training. Operative flood management bodies are involved in the development of the course content, drawn up during an international conference.







## Did you know?

A joint flood management curriculum for civil engineers has been developed. Students from across the Danube Region spent 3 weeks each in Belgrade, Serbia and in Baja, Hungary.

The subjects covered by this course include flood forecasting and risk assessment techniques, as well as climate change and its relation to floods.



### Lead Partner:

- Faculty of Water Science Institute for Hydraulic Engineering and Water Management, National University of Public Service, Baja (HU)

### Project Partner:

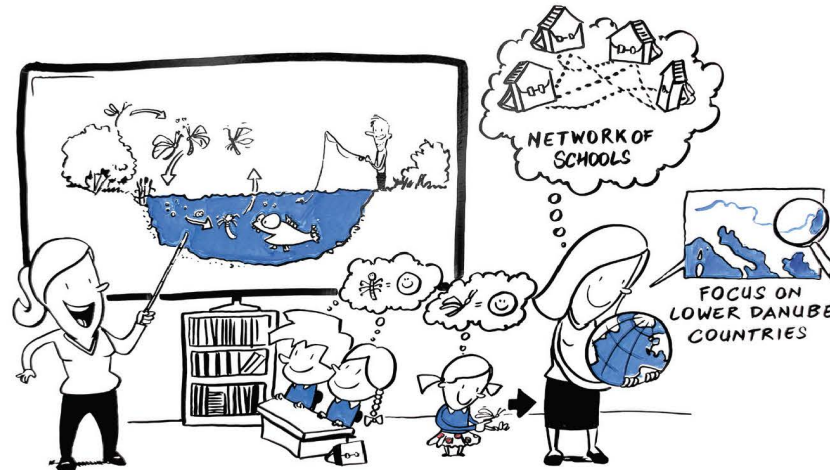
- Department of Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering, University of Belgrade, Belgrade (RS)

# ELEDAN

Developing an E-learning tool for Environmental Education for Primary and Secondary School in the Lower Danube Region

**ELEDAN** targets better environmental education in the Lower Danube Region. The project develops innovative E-learning tools for children (6-15 years) and training materials to be used by school teachers.

This way, **ELEDAN** raises awareness for the importance of the aquatic ecosystems and contributes to the future protection of biodiversity in the region.





## Did you know?

In order to address children aged between 6 and 15 years, a comic strip character called "Water Detective" ([water-detective.net](http://water-detective.net)) has been developed.

This cartoon teaches the importance and fragility of the Danube river in a fun and playful way.



## Lead Partner:

- Institute for Integral Development and Environment, Domžale (SI)

## Project Partners:

- Institute of Biology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest (RO)
- Institute for Multidisciplinary Research, University of Belgrade, Belgrade (RS)
- Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia (BG)

# CONSPIRO

## Breathing Together: Decreasing Air Pollution from Local Heating Systems

Air pollution from local sources (home heating and other residential combustion) massively exposes the population to harmful substances. Currently, there is a significant lack of data and corrective tools for pollution in small settlements.

The **CONSPIRO** project aims at tackling air pollution from local sources in villages and city districts. A concept to decrease air pollution is established based on a complex toolset of research, promotion and corrective activities. A methodology for measurements and data analysis is elaborated and the influence on human health is assessed.



## Did you know?

A pilot activity which measures the air pollution stemming from solid fuels combustions in small settlements in Germany, Czech Republic and Bulgaria aims at raising awareness on the responsibility of each individual household.

It proves that one household which irresponsibly uses wet wood for heating purposes, pollutes a wide area within a smaller settlement with up to 10 harmful substances, causing up to 18 diseases from asthma to cancer.



## Lead Partner:

- SCIENCE IN Ltd., Prague (CZ)

## Project Partners:

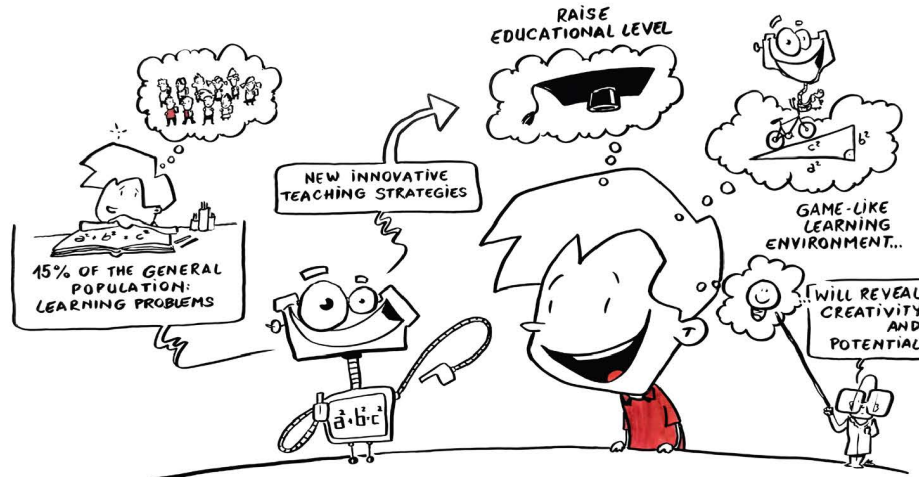
- Helmholtz Zentrum München - German Research Center for Environmental Health, Neuherberg (DE)
- National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia (BG)
- Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad (RS)

# RONNI

Increasing the wellbeing of the population by  
Robotic and ICT Technologies for Standard and Special Education

**RONNI** aims at the promotion of the application of Robotics, Information and Communication Technologies in education in order to overcome learning difficulties and raises the educational level of the young generation.

New innovative teaching strategies and methodologies transferable across the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Regions are proposed to support effective learning.





## Did you know?

Social robots can contribute to the autonomy of people with special education needs. Games using Virtual Reality technologies can improve the visual orientation and mobility skills of children while also furthering learning and conversation skills.

Robotics promise great opportunities for different kinds of applications in the classroom. **RONNI** has not only explored these potential uses, but has also made sure that teachers and schools pick the best fitting solutions for their individual needs.



## Lead Partner:

- Institute of Robotics, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia (BG)

## Project Partners:

- Eastern Macedonia and Thrace Institute of Technology, Kavala (GR)
- Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, University of Split, Split (HR)

The project **EEII** aims at strengthening competitiveness of enterprises by applying latest technologies, developed on the basis of knowledge and of competences of young researchers. **EEII** stimulates the interest of the youth in the Danube Region in studying STEM, guides young researchers to think and act as entrepreneurs and to focus research on how to help the industry to increase competitiveness. Selected best practices are made available in the Danube Region.

The Initiative is followed by the Early European Innovators Program (EEIP) - consisting of measures to improve connections between the business environment, young researchers and universities.





## Did you know?

Training targeted at young researchers improves their economic understanding on how to develop a product for the market.

One part of this training is dedicated to delivering an elevator pitch in front of experts related to the field of the product or service.



## Lead Partner:

- Steinbeis Transfer Management Ltd., Bucharest (RO)

## Project Partners:

- AREA Science Park, Trieste (IT)
- Common Regions, Košice (SK)
- Steinbeis Transfer Management, Uzhgorod (UA)

# Farm Circle

Young Farmers: Circles of Circular Economy

The starting point of the project **FarmCircle** is the unused potential that circular economy offers to young farmers in the rural Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Regions. Farmers are confronted with new business opportunities, along food and fodder production, within the bioeconomy.

For this purpose, **FarmCircle** elaborates training material for regional train-the-trainers sessions as a pilot course, and presents the findings to stakeholders in Croatia, Greece and Austria during round table talks. The **FarmCircle** training material can be found on [farmcircle.net](http://farmcircle.net).





GORIZIA

TRIESTE

ZAGREB

BELGRADE

## Did you know?

Collecting solid food waste from hotels, restaurants and holiday resorts in order to transform it into biofuel is one example for an application of the circular economy.

The project has developed related training material to improve the knowledge and share ideas amongst farmers in the Danube Region.



## Lead Partner:

- Energy Institute Hrvoje Požar, Zagreb (HR)

## Project Partners:

- Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, Chania (GR)
- Society for Sustainable Development Design, Zagreb (HR)
- Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry in Styria, Graz (AT)

# I-VET

Inclusive Vocational Education and Training

Career Guidance and Counselling to support access to relevant education and training pathways

**I-VET** aims at improving career guidance and counselling services for students with special education needs in Austria, Moldova, and Montenegro, thus ensuring equal access to vocational education and training and increasing employability in the mentioned countries.

The project facilitates the exchange of good practices and policies of inclusive education and training and inclusive access to employment.





## Did you know?

Supporting students with special education needs in order to improve their employability in the participating countries is an important concern.

**I-VET** allows employment service professionals working with these young people to share their experiences and tools and methods for optimal support, e.g. via inclusive vocational training courses.



### Lead Partner:

- KulturKontakt Austria, Vienna (AT)

### Project Partners:

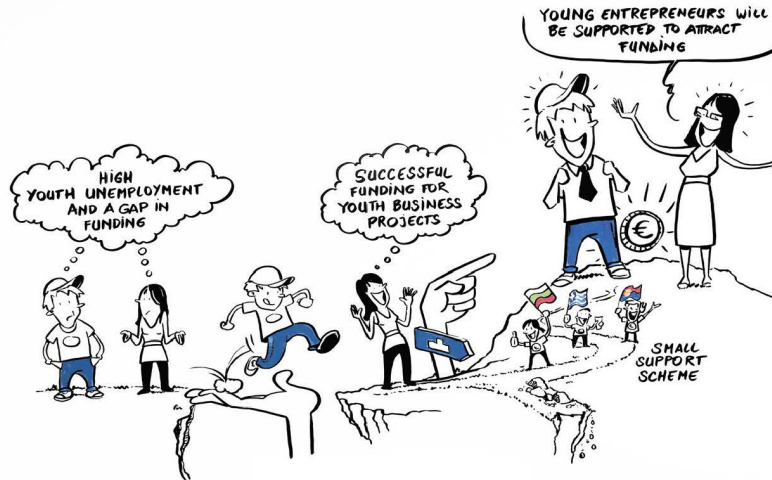
- Non-governmental Organization "Speranta" Center, Chisinau (MD)
- Association of Parents of Children and Youth with Disabilities "Staze", Podgorica (ME)

# DIY-ACCEL

## Piloting of Danube and Ionian Youth Entrepreneurship Acceleration

Both the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Regions experience a high youth unemployment rate. At the same time, there is a gap in funding at the national and the EU level, especially for youth entrepreneurship projects.

The overall objective of the **DIY-ACCEL** project is to tackle youth unemployment by enhancing youth entrepreneurship and to showcase the path to successful funding for youth business projects. The project pilots a small support scheme in three countries - Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece - to support innovative young entrepreneurs in developing their business ideas in order to attract funding.





## Did you know?

Innovative young entrepreneurs from Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece are supported to pitch their ideas to business accelerators.

The best business ideas from each country were awarded a support package to further develop and promote their ideas with the help of professionals.



## Lead Partner:

- Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises, Ruse (BG)

## Project Partners:

- Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia, Zaječar (RS)
- Institute for Bio-Economy and Agri-Technology, Center for Research and Technology Hellas, Volos (GR)

# SECCo 2

Youth for cross-border partnership and cohesion of EUSDR and EUSAIR

**SECCo2** aims at strengthening the cohesion of the two macro-regions EUSDR and EUSAIR with a special focus on next generations and youth. The project improves the conditions for networking of cross-border stakeholders within the two macro-regions.

In the course of the **DSPF** project, an online platform ([secco2.eu](http://secco2.eu)) is established, a tool-kit with e-learning materials for cross border cooperation is elaborated and a Youth Forum conference is organized.





## Did you know?

More than 40% of the population in the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Region live close to one or more state borders. Hence, cross-border cooperation is a crucial factor for economic, social and territorial development. The SECCo2 online platform provides a toolkit that offers funding information, a digital library, good practice examples and a project market to equip young project promoters to work on cross-border initiatives for the next generation.



### Lead Partner:

- Central European Service for Cross-border Initiatives, Budapest (HU)

### Project Partners:

- Association of European Border Regions, Gronau (DE)
- Institute of International Sociology, Gorizia (IT)
- Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives Balkans, Novi Sad (RS)

