

# » Socio-Economic Assessment of the Danube Region: State of the Region, Challenges and Strategy Development

## About the Project

The aim of the project is to support Priority Area Coordinator 8 (PAC 8) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) with a socio-economic analysis that puts a particular focus on competitiveness, innovation and structural change. A special emphasis will be devoted to SMEs which can play a crucial role in achieving the objectives of the EUSDR by creating employment opportunities, promoting technological adaption and innovation. However, in order to fully exploit the potential of SMEs, regional innovation systems and the institutional framework should be tailored to their specific needs. In addition, intra-regional collaboration might support both the de-

velopment of appropriate policies as well as the economic potential of small, medium and large firms in the region. Hence, a further aim of the project is to assess current intra-regional, EU-wide and global cooperation programmes and network activities, and to assess the potential for further collaboration within and across the Danube region, taking into account varying institutional and integration relations within the EU (individual parts of the region are affected by their “EU integration status”, be it EU membership, candidate or potential candidate and Eastern Partnership status). The project consists of two parts each with clearly defined objectives and outputs.

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Project by the

Centre for European Economic Research GmbH  
(ZEW) Mannheim

**ZEW**

on behalf of the  
Ministry of Finance and Economics  
Baden-Wuerttemberg

in cooperation with

Institute for Applied Economic Research (IAW)  
Tübingen

**IAW** INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED  
ECONOMIC RESEARCH

The Vienna Institute for International Economic  
Studies (wiiw)

 **wiiw**



## Deliverables

**Part I: A detailed system of indicators based upon national and regional analysis of competitiveness, entrepreneurship and an assessment of existing cooperation within the regions.** The outcome is a report that reflects the main common and country-specific opportunities, needs and challenges based on the indicator analysis, benchmarking with successful regions and best practice guidelines. The report will also identify potentially relevant stakeholders for tackling these challenges (e.g. national, regional and local authorities, universities and research institutes, business organizations such as chambers of commerce, development agencies also concerned with the urban and rural sectors, innovation centres and other relevant actors in the field of innovation, economic development, environmental technology, business and vocational schools).

**Part II: Deriving a common vision on the future orientation of the EUSDR.** The second part of the study will provide a preliminary strategic contribution to the definition of a program strategy for the Danube Region, supporting the identification of thematic objectives, projects and investment priorities, in line with the proposed action plan.

The output of this part of the project is based on updated results of the first part and a renewed assessment of the development and competitiveness potential of the Danube Region.

During this stage of the project, the EUSDR and development of successful scenarios/benchmarking will be shaped on the basis of a discussion with national and transnational stakeholders that will continuously adjust and revise the preliminary recommendations of Part I.

## Project Team and Management Structure

The project will provide PAC 8 with a flexible pool of experts from different backgrounds who can provide policy relevant input for an evidence-based support for the preparation of the EU-Danube strategy. Our project has been assembled with this specific objective in mind. The project team comprises

- ▶ The project coordinator (ZEW) that will implement and monitor the activities of the project according to the work plan.
- ▶ The experts from the Institutes (ZEW, IAW, wiiw) that will be in charge of implementing the individual tasks of the work packages. The experts and researchers of the institutes will lead work packages and ensure that the work package objectives are fulfilled by providing guidelines and directives.
- ▶ The Scientific Advisory Board who is a counselling body providing advice and guidance for the development of the project to ensure high quality and excellence. It is composed of independent outstanding and well-known personalities experienced in the relevant fields and research areas. They will review reports and give feedback, and will be a scientific contact point for the entire project team.
- ▶ The Local Partners who are experts from individual Danube countries with specific knowledge and contacts to country-specific stakeholders. They enrich the project by contributing their expertise, in particular with respect to the regional institutional and business environment, and by undertaking direct tasks such as case studies and interviews with relevant stakeholders.

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