

## **DANUBE BLACK SEA GATEWAY REGION – COOPERATION PLATFORM**

### **Background**

With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union, the borders were opened to reunite the historical Danube region. New trade options emerged along the Danube River connecting Central Europe via the Black Sea to the Caspian basin and the Far East. Despite the high potential to become a gateway for global trade, other routes of transport compete with the Danube-Black Sea region. This is why the region, and with it all relevant stakeholders need to adequately prepare themselves for the new challenge!

The Working Community of the Danube Regions – represented by Lower Austria (at that time chairing the Working Community of the Danube Regions) – initiated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding supported by the stakeholders in the Black Sea region, setting a first step towards cooperation. Resultant a baseline study - carried out in cooperation between the signatories - highlighted the development and cooperation possibilities in the Danube-Black Sea region, supporting both (1) economic growth in the whole Danube region by fostering cooperation between the relevant stakeholders and (2) efficient infrastructural pre-conditions to upgrade environmentally friendly means of freight transport.

In the last financing period (South East Europe Programme 2007-2013) the project Danube Inland Harbour Development (DaHar), managed to develop a strategy for the Danube's inland waterway ports. The ports of Enns, Bratislava, Dunajvaros, Vukovar, Novi Sad, Lom, Giurgiu, Silistra and Galati worked on Master Plans and specific Action Plans for each port's individual development.

Now, combining the recommendations of the Danube-Black Sea Cooperation and the results of the DaHar project, leads to the present project idea for taking the next step in deepening the cooperation.

### **Project concept „Danube-Black Sea Gateway Region“**

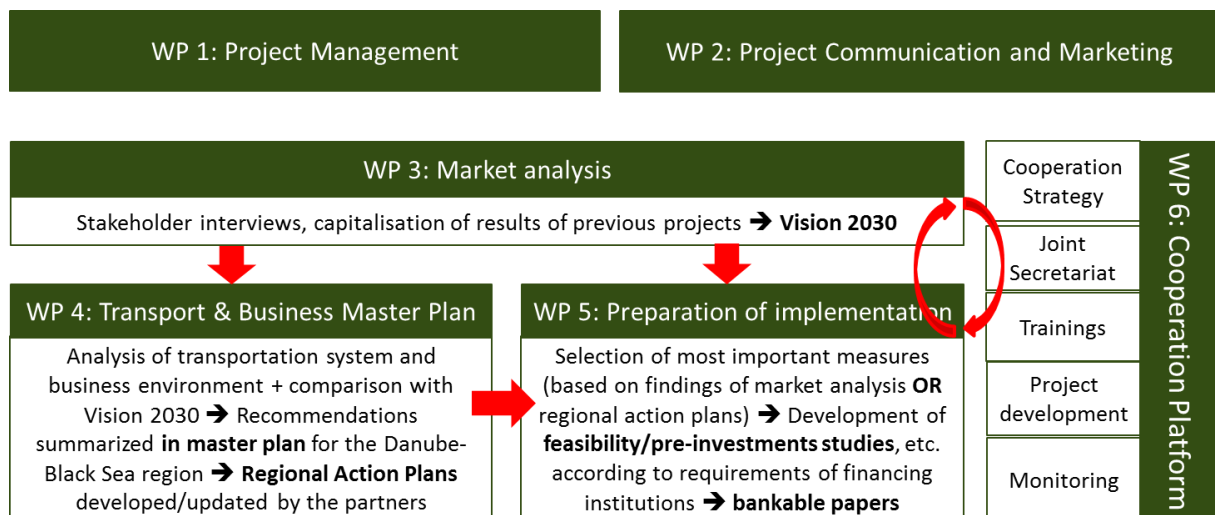
General Objective of the project is to position (and adequately prepare) the Danube-Black Sea region as the gateway for freight transport connections from Central Europe to the Black Sea, Caspian region and the Far East. This implies the specific goals of improving the sustainable transport system, strengthening the cooperation between relevant stakeholders in the region, increasing the awareness for the possibilities offered by the Danube-Black Sea gateway region as well as improving business environment and attracting businesses and freight to the Danube-Black Sea Gateway region. With that it should be possible to better exploit the existing development/business potentials of the Danube and the Western Black Sea ports as a gateway to the global market.

The **Market Analysis** will provide scenarios for future demand for freight transport and business development possibilities (companies' requirements for attractive location policy) and lead to a common Vision of the Danube-Black Sea gateway region in 2030. In order to reach this Vision 2030 a **Master Plan for the whole region** (consisting of transport and a business aspects) will highlight the most pressing investments and administrative steps needed to provide competitive service offers and include a roadmap for overcoming obstacles for companies and a coordinated vision for business location policy. This master plan will not focus just on one single region or port but it will take into

account the whole Danube-Black Sea region, strongly considering the influence of the Black Sea ports as gateways to the global market.

Parallel the **preparation of implementation** will be facilitated by developing feasibility and pre-investment studies for those activities which have already been identified as crucial in previous projects/strategies/master plans. The studies will be developed according to requirements of financing institutions and breaking them down to business plans.

All partners will develop together a **Cooperation strategy** that includes joint activities, e.g. marketing and lobbying. This will conclude in the establishment of a **Cooperation Platform** with a joint secretariat. This institution will take over the responsibility to push forward the ideas developed in the project and to provide access to the necessary funding options (incl. funding guidelines, workshops and trainings). Besides the project partners, other relevant stakeholders from the local, regional and national level will be included in the Cooperation Platform (with the goal to integrate the joint strategy in official plans and programmes and to improve business environment).



The project will combine **partners** from different countries, regions and background. There will be partners with an already clear strategy and action plans (e.g. DaHar ports) whilst others are in the stage of analysis and master plan development. Each partner can enter the project at their individual level, deepen their understanding, contribute to and profit from trainings and capacity building as well as interchange and discuss open topics in the larger group. The goal of the project is not only to strengthen each port's individual profile, but also to find a **common vision and cooperation strategy for the whole Danube-Black Sea gateway region**.

### Project structure – Project Partners

The country of **Lower Austria is the promotor of the project**. Relevant stakeholders are considered Danube and Black Sea ports, local/regional/national authorities and cities, representatives of railway companies and other service providers (for combined transport offers) and representatives of the economy (chamber of commerce, major players with Danube-affine production etc.).

The project's partnership will follow an **innovative approach** by building an umbrella for all relevant stakeholders. There will be one representative of each region nominated as Project financing

partner. The representative's task is to involve all other stakeholders in his region, get their feedback and report to the core group. This approach ensures that all stakeholders are involved and their voice heard.

### **Project funding**

The project will be submitted in the EU-Programme DANUBE TRANSNATIONAL in the first call envisaged in autumn 2015. The overall budget is estimated for approx. € 3 Mio, with a co-financing rate of 85%. The project duration will be 36 months.

### **Further steps**

For any question please don't hesitate to contact us!

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