

## PROJECT ECOINN DANUBE STARTS WITH KICK OFF EVENT AND PROJECT MEETING IN BRATISLAVA

The Kick-off event and first project meeting of the transnational project “Eco-innovatively connected Danube Region” (project acronym **Ecolnn Danube**) was held in Bratislava on 15 and 16 February 2017. The project officially started in December 2016 and will last until May 2019. It is co-financed from the Danube Transnational Programme under the Priority axis 'Innovative and socially responsible Danube region', with the objective to increase the cooperation of innovation actors in the field of eco-innovation with special emphasis on development and application of eco-technologies in the Danube Region. The project will focus mainly on the field of renewable energy and energy saving (efficiency).

At the Kick-off event entitled 'Innovative technologies for a green Europe' the importance of eco-innovation, as well as research and development in the field of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency was presented to main stakeholders and to the general public. The Kick-off event started by welcome speech of Mr. Ján Turňa, director general of the Slovak Center of Scientific and Technical Information, the lead partner in the project. The speech was followed by a presentation introducing the project Ecolnn Danube including the partnership, project goals, implementation logic as well as the key elements of the project. After the project introduction a presentation related to renewable energy and its commercialization were introduced, along with internationally successful Slovak companies (Solved and Voltia) with their eco-innovative solutions. During the afternoon session Mr. Niko Finka from Joint Secretariat introduced the Danube Transnational Programme and the work package leaders gave presentations and an overview of the project implementation plan and also introduced the upcoming results to the general public. On the second day project partner meeting was held with the aim of obtaining overview of project activities, responsibilities and rules for implementation of the project.

Project consortium includes partners and associated partners from twelve countries within 16 organizations from Slovakia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Romania and Montenegro. Overall budget of the project is 2.126.924,97 € with the ERDF contribution of 1.587.447,2 € and IPA contribution of 22.0439 €.

It is foreseen that as a result of the project collaboration of researchers, innovators and companies in the respective field will be established, and a virtual platform for companies to present their eco problems and for eco-innovators to present their eco-innovative ideas and solutions will be created. Furthermore, in scope of the project practical trainings called Green innovation forum will be organized, with a pitching and matchmaking event for green business ideas, i. e. a physical platform for investors, start-ups, entrepreneurs, researchers and developers to meet and network. Summer schools for students and early stage innovations from the Danube region will create an opportunity for stakeholders to gain unique skills on how to put ideas into practice. In the end it is expected that the project will increase awareness of environmental challenges and eco solutions importance in the field of renewable energy and energy saving (efficiency).

*Project [Ecolnn Danube](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/ecolnn-danube) was approved in the 1st call of the Danube Transnational Programme and is implemented by 13 project partners and 3 associated strategic partners from 12 European Countries. The lead partner of the project is the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information. General objective of the Ecolnn Danube project is to enhance the cooperation of innovation actors in the field of ecoinnovations with special emphasis on development and application of ecotechnologies in the Danube Region. The project is focus mainly on field of renewable energy and energy saving (efficiency).*