

Fostering Innovation in the Danube Region through Knowledge Engineering and IPR Management

Output 3.3. Danube Region IPR Action Plan

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Introduction

The KnowING IPR project targets the topic of technology transfer, with specific focus towards managing intellectual property rights in SMEs as a factor of innovation and competitiveness. The project is funded under Danube Transnational Programme and is addressing Programme Specific Objective 1.1. Improve framework conditions for innovation. Apart from that, the Project supports PA 8 Competitiveness of enterprises of the Danube region of the Action Plan of the European Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

Structure of the IPR Action Plan

The IPR Action plan is structured as a developing document with the following structure: after the introduction the main objectives of the IPR Action Plan for the Danube Region are elaborated. After that a reconsideration on how the cycle of Continuous improvement process was adopted and elaborated and continuously used throughout the implementation of the KnowING IPR project. After that the process on how the IPR Action plan was developed is described and task list for IPR Action Plan is offered. The Task list is elaborated on the following parts: firstly, the tasks defined by the KnowING IPR project are defined, after that the tasks on national level and tasks on the level of the Danube region are described. At the end the modes of operating and reaching the tasks are described.

One of the most important tools for IPR Action plan for the Danube region is described, along with its tasks for implementation. Final chapter of the IPR Action Plan is dedicated to already detected short term, medium term and long-term actions that will have to be implemented (short term tasks) or are strongly recommended and subjected to future operation of the KnowING IPR initiative. Conclusions and Appendices follow.

Goals of the IPR Action plan for the Danube region

Tasks needed to be undertaken are somehow twofold. From the conceptual point of view, we have developed the below approach in defining two sets of tasks: one supporting the cognitive aspect and another set referring to practical ones.

Therefore, the cognitive upgrading of the conditions of R&D and IPR management in the situations under scrutiny includes the attainment of the following goals:

- To synthesize the experience collected during the research already done on these topics with visions about future activities till the end of the KnowING IPR project;
- To specify the identification of the actors directly involved in resolving tasks relevant for the KnowING IPR Project;
- To guide the descriptions and explanations of the dynamic relationships between the actors belonging to the R&D and IPR areas of action;
- To serve as a framework in the continuing studies on processes in the areas of knowledge management in technological innovations, IPR protection activities and the processes of mutual influence of the two action spheres;
- To offer a clear vision about the future content and the sustainability of the Project and its outputs.

The practical upgrading of the conditions of R&D and IPR management in the situations under scrutiny includes the attainment of the following goals:

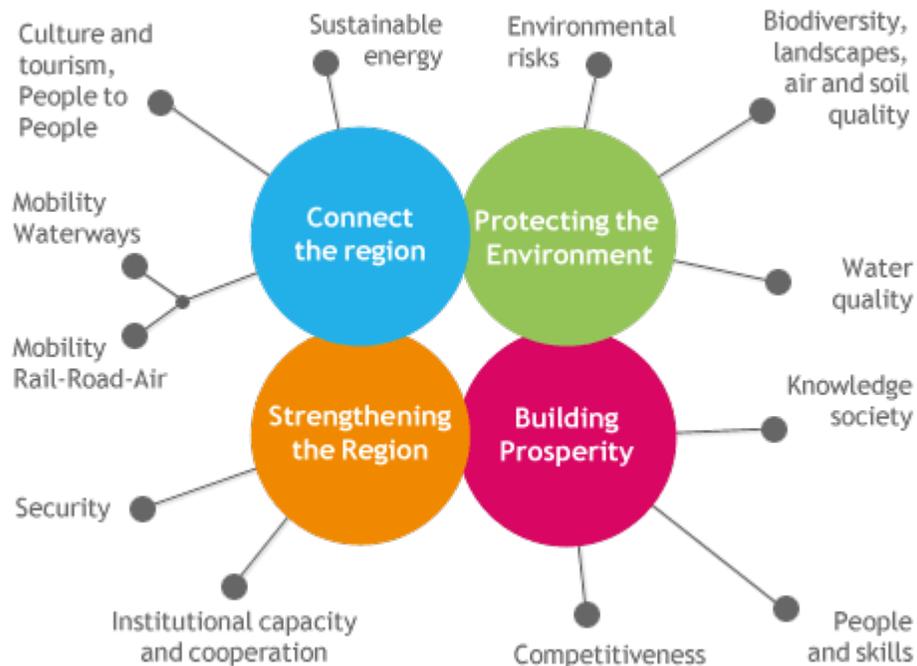
- Improvement of the organization of R&D systems in the KnowING IPR partner countries;
- Improvement of the organization of the IPR systems in the KnowING IPR partner countries;
- Improvement of the interaction of both systems in the respective country.

The task for building the IPR Action Plan for the Danube Region is closely connected with the aims and means of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and its specifications.

Role of IPR within the EUSDR

By addressing the issue of the intellectual property rights protection and management in companies we are addressing the Priority area no 8. of the EUSDR. The priority area 8 deals with competitiveness of enterprises. Enterprises that are more competitive can contribute towards development and economic prosperity in the Danube region. Apart from this, the KnowING IPR project also aims towards different stakeholders acknowledge the value of IPR as a policy tool to improve the framework condition for innovation in the region.

Figure 3: Specifications of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region



The tasks undertaken by the Priority area 8 are the following (Danube Region Strategy: Competitiveness, 2019):

- To foster cooperation and exchange of knowledge between SMEs, academia and the public sector in areas of competence in the Danube Region.
- To improve business support to strengthen the capacities of SMEs for cooperation and trade.
- To support enterprises through high performing training and qualification schemes.
- To prioritize the effective implementation of measures provided for under the Small Business Act for Europe.
- To improve the competitiveness of rural areas and in particular of the agricultural sector
- To eliminate cross border barriers and bottlenecks to people and business -Seamless Europe for a livable Danube Region.
- To improve framework conditions for SMEs in areas where competitive infrastructure is missing.

Task list for the IPR Action plan for the Danube Region

Tasks defined by KnowING IPR project

A number of tasks that will help in implementing the IPR Action plan is elaborated within the KnowING IPR project.

Within first phases of the project ne thorough needs assessment was done for all the countries of the Danube Region. Consulting the D.3.1.3 and Output 3.1 is needed in order to see the situations this document is addressing. Namely, the task list is not a tool for itself and must always be regarded as an interdependent with Output 3.1 Challenges map on IPR in the Region.

For the purposes of the initial stage the following tasks was elaborated and executed:

- Desktop research and creating country reports;

- Findings validated through interviews and consultations with national IPR experts and other stakeholders relevant to KnowING IPR project.
- Two workshops conducted in Budapest to assess the validity of the gathered information
- Preparation of the Preliminary IPR Action Plan and validation by conducting three Action Plan workshops (Germany, Serbia, and Slovakia)
- Further workshops and working meetings
- Development of trainings
- Development of KnowING HUB as institutional platform
- Development of KnowING HUB as web platform
- Dissemination of documentation, knowledge, and raising awareness
- Pilot implementation for automotive sector
- Pilot implementation for HEI & RI

Tasks on the national level

- Raise awareness activities that include organisation of dissemination workshops, where applicable.
- Establish and maintain the communication with national experts
- Including national experts into activities related to IPR wherever and whenever possible
- Seek potential partners working on similar initiatives or EU funded projects.
- Seek and maintain the connection to the companies (SMEs and enterprises) who work in the automotive sector.
- Keep them informed about activities and engage them to participate in other project related activities and also encourage them to get involved in piloting actions.
- Establish and maintain close cooperation with relevant public authorities

Tasks on the Danube Region level

- Seek for potentials to capitalise on the work of already existing initiatives supporting the question of IPR.
- Seek connections to R&D institutions (in the field of IPR) and also others to establish a network that will be able to develop new joint applications for projects on bilateral or EU level, related to IPR and IPR management.

Modes of operating

In order to assure the success of proposed activities the following three modes of operation will be used and exploited.

Peer consultation

All the actions will be done with awareness of all other project partners to ensure the highest levels of awareness within a consortium. Additionally, the peers will be requested to review the work done to ensure other point of view and be able to collect the first feedback about proposed activity or the execution of it.

Reporting to stakeholders

Prior to implement a proposed action the initial contact will be done with the local stakeholders. After a task is concluded the reports should be prepared and send to the stakeholders to report. All dissemination channels of the DTP and social media shall be used, along with the web platform of KnowING IPR.

We propose the National Patenting Offices and Automotive Clusters along with HEI and RI institutions to be among the receivers of the reports. Also, other stakeholders detected along the implementation can be informed about the progress of the tasks.

Dissemination to wider publics

Dissemination to wider publics will be done through internet, social media, and radio and TV according to the needs and demands in each of the country of the Danube Region.

Supporting tool for IPR Action Plan for the Danube region

A supporting tool for IPR Action Plan for the Danube region is going to be developed in a form of a KnowING HUB platform. The Hub will operate as web platform on one hand but also a institutional platform on the other – it will serve as a meeting point and ‘one stop shop’ for stakeholders interested in using IPR related data for their investigations but also for meeting potential partners and seeking for information on trainings and education.

Conclusions

The whole IPR Action plan is based on the principles of 'Continuous improvement process'. We have outlined the most urgent aspects to be addressed in the field of IPR in the Danube region – touching the need to upgrade the organisations (we offer the KnowING HUB as a response to this need), the need to develop human capital and the need to upgrade policies.

But mostly, before all, the need to raise awareness is the most important one and incorporated in all the activities proposed within this IPR Action plan. Among SMEs and policy makers we need to raise awareness about the potential of IPR as a means of development and also in seeking innovative solutions.

The IPR Action plan for the Danube region can operate as the main contributor towards the development of perspective where IPR is not visible as tool for protection of one's knowledge but also as potential for new developmental policies, educational programs and source of innovation.

For the future:

From the perspective of Organisations – the KnowING HUB, acting as an institutional and web platform should undertake and carry on the following: The KnowING IPR Hub can support the the higher education in most countries of the Danube region aiming at transmission of knowledge and skills for technological innovations and IPR by focusing on the exchange of information about best practices. The Hub can be particularly helpful in organizing Summer Schools or similar meetings of students, young researchers and managers on issues of fostering technological innovation and related issues of IPR. The Hub can organize comparative studies on the efficiency of the R&D and IPR in the Danube countries and to foster the dissemination of best practices. The Hub can be active in the preparation and submission of research projects in the framework of the new EU Program Horizon Europe.

From the perspective of development of human capital - The KnowING IPR Hub can organize by itself or support other institution in fostering internships of students in the framework of the Erasmus plus Program on topics of technological innovations and links to IPR. Other sources of financial support for internships of students might be the Program Innovation and Youth of the EU; The Hub can be active in fostering the networking between young inventors and managers in the area of technological innovations and IPR by using financial support from the EU funding for meetings, symposia, conferences; Provided there would be sources of funding the Hub may organize a scheme of internships for young researchers and managers linking R&D and IPR in their work; The Hub can check the options for organizing awards for young researchers and managers working on the mutual impacts of R&D and IPR activities.

Upgrading of policies - The KnowING IPR Hub can be active in the discussions on the funding of R&D and IPR by providing information about the situation and the prospects in countries from the Danube region. The Hub can take the initiative for fostering young researchers and IPR specialists for building pressure groups in favor of better funding of R&D and IPR activities. The Hub can organize an exchange of information about administrative hindrances of R&D and IPR activities in the countries of the Danube region. The Hub might initiate the intervention of the EU units in order to clear administrative barriers in front of R&D and IPR activities. The Hub can initiate or participate in initiatives for changing the legislation in any particular country of the Danube region concerning R&D and IPR. The Hub can prepare and submit to EU suggestions for organizational and legal changes in order to facilitate the improvement of the ecosystem of R&D and IPR in the countries from the Danube region. The Action Plan can contribute to strengthen the joint perception of the entire Danube Region as one Danube or even European market which is in the global competition with macro-regions and large national economies.

List of inputs

1. Country reports input (Reports on desktop studies and focus group discussions)
2. Danube IPR Challenges Map Output 3.1
3. D3.1.4. KnowING IPR Preliminary Action Plan for three Action Plan Workshops D3.2.1
Data Acquisition Module Functional Specification
4. D4.3.1 Document outlining elements and methodology for developing sustainability strategy, business plan and transnational action plan
5. D3.1.2. IPR Action Plan for the Danube Region
6. Assessment Workshops input.
7. Action Plan Workshops input
8. *EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR 2019),*
9. *WIPO (2017) Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs) Report 2017.*
Geneva: World Intellectual Property Organization.
10. Danube Region Strategy: Competitiveness (2019) Priority area 8, retrieved from:
<https://competitiveness.danube-region.eu/about-priority-area-8/>