



TiCCA4DANU Launches with Milestone General Assembly in Vienna and Earns Danube Strategy Flagship Status

Vienna, 27 June 2025 — The University of Vienna hosted the inaugural **General Assembly of the TiCCA4DANU project** on 26–27 June, marking a pivotal moment for this transformative initiative focused on **Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)** in the Danube Region. The event brought together a diverse partnership of research institutions, city and regional governments, and key stakeholders from across Europe.

The two-day gathering served as a dynamic starting point for collaboration, learning, and planning. Following an opening by **Project Coordinator Dr. Oliver Ziegler**, participants engaged in a round of introductions, paving the way for a shared understanding of the project's interdisciplinary scope.

A standout feature of the assembly was the series of **“pitching sessions” led by the four anchor City-Regions and their cross-border partners**, offering deep, first-hand insights into the urgent climate-related challenges they face. These presentations catalysed the core theme of the event: fostering **Transformative Innovation for Climate Change Adaptation**.

In a panel discussion that brought together renowned voices from research and business, participants explored how innovation can drive systems change. The discussion underscored the need for a **collaborative multi-level governance** approach paired with innovative financing mechanisms to address regional vulnerabilities and socio-economic complexities.

Local Green Deals at the Core

A central pillar of the event was the introduction of **Local Green Deals (LGDs)**—place-based, collaborative strategies that help cities implement the ambitions of the **European Green Deal**. LGDs were presented as vital tools for translating high-level sustainability goals into **local, actionable pathways** involving governments, businesses, citizens, and civil society.



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Project funded by



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI

This work has received funding from the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).



Niklas Mischkowski and Nina Mia Cikes from **ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability** introduced the LGD methodology, while **Adrienn Bokányi** showcased the practical benefits of implementing an LGD in **Szombathely, Hungary**, through compelling local examples.



Knowledge Exchange Through New Learning Formats

The project partners successfully tested innovative formats for mutual learning by bringing City-Regions into direct exchange with interdisciplinary research teams. Participants



explored regional innovation ecosystems, climate risks, and adaptation strategies—probing critical questions around **climate justice, societal change, and private sector involvement**.

In a highlight keynote, Prof. **Dominique Foray**, emeritus professor at **École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne** (EPFL) and renowned architect of the **Entrepreneurial Discovery Process** of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), guided participants through the framework of **Transformative Innovation Policies (TIPs)**. His address emphasised TIPs as dynamic, experimental policy processes—where governments act as orchestrators of system transformation, particularly in climate adaptation.

A Flagship for the Danube Region

A defining moment of the Assembly was the formal recognition of TiCCA4DANU as a **“Danube Strategy Flagship”** under the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**. The prestigious designation, presented by **Dr. Jaroslava Szudi**, representative of **Priority Area 7**, confirms the project’s strategic importance at the macro-regional level and strengthens its capacity to influence regional policy and practice.

“This award reinforces our ambition to build a robust and collaborative partner network across the Danube region,” said Dr. Ziegler. “It affirms that the project’s outcomes should reach well beyond the initial pilot City-Regions.”

A Vision for Shared Learning and Transformation

As **Tanja Senekovič** from the **Regional Development Agency Podravje–Maribor (Slovenia)** noted:

“The project is not only about learning from renowned research experts, but also from fellow City-Regions—developing a collaborative, joint learning process that benefits us all.”

The General Assembly marked not just a beginning, but a bold step forward in realising **transformative, place-based climate adaptation** in the Danube Region—powered by science, local action, and collective ambition.

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