

INSiGHTS:

INTEGRATED SLOW, GREEN AND HEALTHY TOURISM STRATEGIES

**Collecting state-of-the-art good practices in slow, green and
healthy tourism in the Danube region and beyond**

February 2018



Author: CEEweb for Biodiversity

Document version 1.0



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
2. Collecting state-of-the-art good practices: rationale and methodology	7
3. Presentation of good practices	11
3.1 Thematic Pillar 1: Integrated Multi-Stakeholder Destination Management Frameworks	11
3.1.1 Schwäbisches Donautal Nature Tourism Master Plan	11
3.1.2 Sustainable vacation in Werfenweng	15
3.1.3 Center Rinka - multipurpose centre for sustainable development Solčavsko	19
3.1.4 Gijón – Biosphere World Urban Destination	23
3.1.5. UNESCO-Biosphere Reserve Swabian Alb	27
3.2 Thematic Pillar 2: Integrated Green Touristic Product Development and Marketing	31
3.2.1 Hiking Europe	31
3.2.2 ISTR A Bike&Outdoor Initiative	35
3.2.3 L'Avenc de Tavertet Hotel	39
3.2.4 Mecsek Greenway	43
3.2.5 Ingolstadt Slow Food Convivium	47
3.3 Thematic Pillar 3: Sensitization of visitors and host communities towards eco-conscious and healthy lifestyles linked to the tourism offer	51
3.3.1 Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism	51
3.3.2 Ecomode	55
3.3.3 Hostetín Eco-village	59
3.3.4 Eco-village in Gömör szőlős	63
3.3.5 SEEMORE project: Sustainable and Energy Efficient Mobility Options in Tourist Regions in Europe	67
4. Conclusion	71
5. References	75

1. Introduction

Tourism is a global industry that serves as a tool for employment creation and economic development for countries all around the world. At the same time, tourism is not a “smoke-free” industry and can cause considerable harm to the destinations. Tourism, when unmanaged, can cause serious environmental, social and economic issues (examples of this are the recent local reactions against mass tourism in European cities including Dubrovnik, Venice or Barcelona due to environmental issues, overcrowding and unfair distribution of profit). For this reason it is important to ensure that tourism is developed in a strategic, sustainable manner that maximises the positive outcomes that the industry can bring while reducing its negative impacts. This is of particular importance in unspoilt, ecologically rich areas such as the destinations involved in this project.

The area where the project is implemented offers exceptional potential for slow tourism, the fastest growing segment of the global tourism industry attracting both youth and aging population. At the same time, the rising tourism demand can endanger the rich and delicate nature and valuable local assets of these rural destinations. INSIGHTS focuses on the Danube region, commonly characterised

by impressive natural and cultural heritage, and provides guidelines on regional strategy building and related transnational policy recommendations in order to support these destinations to focus on more sustainable, eco-friendly forms of tourism. The project is supported by Interreg Danube Transnational Programme and co-financed by the European Union.

While there are a number of tourism strategies and programmes highlighting the need for sustainable tourism development in the Danube-region, specific strategies targeting sustainable tourism are relatively rare. INSIGHTS aims to change this situation by providing Guidelines on regional strategy building and related transnational policy recommendations.

The overall objective of the project is to foster sustainable utilisation of natural and cultural heritage of the involved areas in the Danube region in order to preserve and upgrade the intact local resources providing an outstanding potential to make these areas attractive destinations for healthy and slow tourism and thus serve as foundation for a flourishing responsible green tourism sector.



2. Collecting state-of-the-art good practices: rationale and methodology

In order to achieve the project's aim, there are three specific objectives, which are the three thematic pillars used as a framework for the collection of the good practices:

1. Establishing integrated sustainable tourism management schemes: Fostering an effective, knowledge-based operation and smart promotion of destinations whilst balancing protection and sustainable utilisation of natural and cultural resources, by improving the integrated planning and management capacities of local and regional public authorities, tourism management bodies and all relevant organisations and private actors within sustainable tourism via establishing multi-stakeholder governance and management schemes.



This thematic pillar focuses on how destinations can manage tourism in a responsible, sustainable way. By showcasing exceptional examples on destination management, it provides guidance on how to move towards tourism that is environmentally conscious, responsible with local values and economically sustainable. These multi-stakeholder destination management schemes can inspire the Danube region to develop tourism strategies that integrate local communities in tourism, preserve nature and promote slow, green and healthy lifestyles while ensuring the long-term viability of the industry.

The selected examples present a variety of destination management frameworks, tourism development incentives and visitor management schemes that strive for quality, sustainability and stakeholder integration. They include rural and urban destinations, an information centre promoting quality, green tourism and local traditions, and exceptional tourism strategies and operations in areas of exceptional natural beauty and fragile ecosystems.

2. Promoting coordinated and smart tourism products linked to greenways: Increasing, diversifying and coordinating the fragmented touristic supply based on natural, traditional and cultural assets into an integrated tourism network connected by greenways as sustainable slow travel chains (waterways, cycling and trekking trails).

The second thematic pillar emphasises the importance of integrating slow, green and healthy tourism products and services in the tourism strategy in order to move towards sustainable, responsible destinations that are in harmony with local environments and values. It focuses on practices that demonstrate environmental and cultural sensitivity and value local natural and cultural heritage, differentiating the destination and promoting its uniqueness.



3. Stimulating eco-conscious and healthy lifestyle through green tourism: Stimulating environmental-consciousness and healthy lifestyle amongst visitors, tourism service providers and local communities by delivering informal education on nature protection and traditional, ecological and natural products through visitor experience based on active involvement ("learning by doing"), as well as offering recreational programmes promoting active living linked to the overall tourism offer and thus contributing to an improved quality of life of all target groups facilitating the promotion of the integrated slow, green and healthy tourism offer via state-of-the-art ICT tools for reaching new target groups and improving the visibility of the touristic regions involved.

This final thematic pillar focuses on the sensitisation of visitors, hosts and industry members towards eco-conscious and healthy lifestyles through the use of tourism as an educational tool. This section emphasises on the importance of capacity building for local communities, online and offline promotion of destinations and good practices in tourism, and how to present and promote local produce and culture. It is vital to sensitize all tourism stakeholders on the principles of sustainable development in order to make tourism eco-friendly, long term focused, and integrated within the community.

The examples presented in this document can be used to guide the promotion of integrated, slow, green and healthy tourism products and services, not only in the Danube region but also in any region with rich natural heritage. They include initiatives promoting sustainable mobility options, community-based activities and projects promoting nature, culture and healthy lifestyles, and a tourism management scheme that supports the development of sustainable tourism.

Stimulating eco-conscious and healthy lifestyle through green tourism: Stimulating environmental-consciousness and healthy lifestyle amongst visitors, tourism service providers and local communities by delivering informal education on nature protection and traditional, ecological and natural products through visitor experience based on active involvement ("learning by doing"), as well as offering recreational programmes promoting active living linked to the overall tourism offer and thus contributing to an improved quality of life of all target groups facilitating the promotion of the integrated slow, green and healthy tourism offer via state-of-the-art ICT tools for reaching new target groups and improving the visibility of the touristic regions involved.

The purpose of this collection of good practices is to show exceptional examples of state-of-the-art good practices in slow, green and healthy tourism that can serve as a guide for the Danube region. While there was a strong focus on the Danube region during the selection process, the good practices selected are from all over the globe. The aim is to contribute to the sustainable development of slow, green and healthy tourism, and hence, it makes no sense to limit the search to a particular area, as the experiences from other areas of the world can serve as illustrations to the Danube region.

During 2017, CEEweb undertook research on state-of-the-art good practices in slow, green and healthy tourism. Following the standards agreed by the partners, a number of practices were pre-selected based on their potential to become an example to follow. These practices were then analysed and evaluated, and a total of 15 (5 per Thematic Pillar) outstanding examples were finally selected. The following chapter presents details of these 15 good practices. Information on the pre-selected good practices is available in Annex 1.



3. Presentation of good practices

3.1 Thematic Pillar 1: Integrated Multi-Stakeholder Destination Management Frameworks

3.1.1 Schwäbisches Donautal Nature Tourism Master Plan

Location

The Swabian Danube Valley is located in southern Germany, between Ulm and Donauwörth. The valley comprises a total of six districts in Bavaria (Neu-Ulm, Günzburg, Dillingen and Donau-Ries) and Baden-Württemberg (Alb-Donau-Kreis and Heidenheim). Tourism is a valuable economic activity for the region, which receives approx. 1,040,000 overnight stays and has great potential for day visits and short-breaks, with more than 30 million people living within a radius of 90 minutes' drive from the destination.

Aim and objectives

The Nature Tourism Master Plan was created to serve as a guide for the implementation of tourism in the region, providing a strategic framework for tourism development and supporting the effective marketing of the destination. The goal is that the Swabian Danube Valley becomes a top nature tourism destination in Germany.

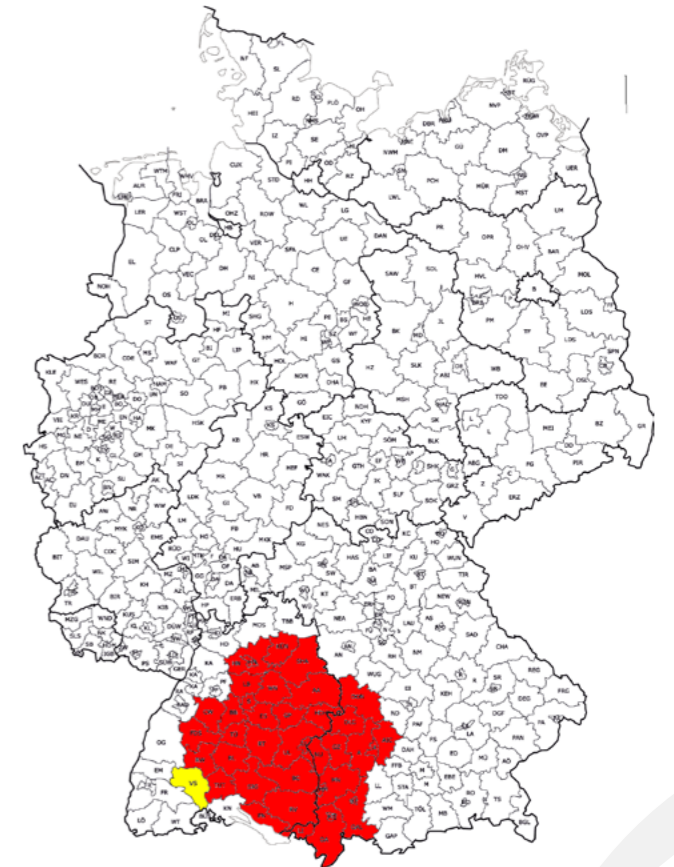
Based on the cooperation of the tourism authorities of the Bavarian Swabia and Swabian Alb, the plan describes the tourism strategy of the region up to the year 2025, and presents the potential that the region has for nature tourism and adventure related activities, including hiking, cycling and water-based activities.

Coordinating organization

A project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Bavarian State Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture and Forestry, the Nature Tourism Master Plan was elaborated by Kohl & Partner¹ for Donautal-Aktiv e.V.². For the development of this Master Plan,

¹ <https://www.kohl-int.com/en/consulting/1-0.html>

² <https://www.donautal-aktiv.de/>





Donautal-Aktiv worked in cooperation with the local authorities, including nature conservation bodies, local tourism service providers and tourists. Donautal-Aktiv held a number of workshops with local stakeholders in order to analyze the possibilities and limitations of the tourism industry in the area, and to generate project ideas. Through this Master Plan, the projects and ideas resulting from these workshops can now be aligned with determined quality standards and promoted through an established marketing strategy.

Prior to the development of the Nature Tourism Master Plan, Donautal Aktiv had a number of projects and proposals to develop into nature tourism products; however, the tourism industry in the region was weak and limited to short stays for business purposes. The accommodation on offer was limited and low quality, there were no defined quality standards, nor a marketing strategy for the products or the area. In addition to this, there was little appreciation of the outstanding natural and cultural resources that the region had, and hence, the potential for nature tourism was not yet acknowledged by public authorities and other tourism stakeholders.

Key elements of the initiative

A tourism industry that promotes the values of the region and takes care of the environment can bring long term socioeconomic benefits to the region, and this is what the Swabian Danube Nature Tourism Master Plan stands for. The Plan sets foundations for a more sustainable tourism sector. While there is still work needed in order to meet the Plan's long-term goal, the area offers exceptional natural heritage and a number of good facilities and infrastructure, including cycle and hiking trails, the Archaeological Park 'Vogelherd', caves, and a number of educational institutions that are ideal for nature tourism.

During the development of the Master Plan, the heterogeneous structure of the region and the weak attitude some stakeholders presented towards tourism was identified as a threat to the development of nature tourism. To address this issue, the Master Plan proposes stronger cooperation within the different districts, counties, and with the central Government, and

proposes a series of short, medium and long term actions to be taken. In order to choose these actions, Kohl & Partner undertook a series of in-depth project workshops with Donautal-Aktiv and the relevant stakeholders. As a result of this process, the Plan proposes a series of high-priority actions (development or improvement of various cycle and hiking paths, improvement of the available accommodation, including building hotels in Günzburg and Wertingen, and the construction of an observatory and information centre in Wertingen) and medium-priority actions (the construction of the first adventure centre for the Swabian Danube Valley, the construction of further information centres in all the districts involved, and the improvement of existing hiking trails).



In addition to these actions, a strong marketing strategy has been proposed that requires the cooperation of all the tourism organisations in the region. Implementation must be done in a coordinated manner, through a number of workshops held by Donautal-Aktiv and with the participation of representatives from the six districts, the supra-regional marketing organisations of Bavarian Swabia and Swabian Alb, and representatives from those municipalities with tourism departments.

Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

Nature tourism is an excellent way of developing sustainable, slow tourism, and the Swabian Danube Valley is promoting the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage as an instrument for tourism development. This destination has managed to promote its local assets, and is a great example of how tourism frameworks based on stakeholder cooperation can transform local tourism perceptions and make use of the potential for tourism to move from an unorganised, weak group of municipalities without a clear purpose when it comes to tourism into a strong, coordinated destination.

Results

Since the development of the Master Plan, the Swabian Danube Valley has successfully developed a number of nature tourism projects³ and coordinated marketing actions with the help of Donautal Aktiv. Currently, a number of tourism DMOs exist at different levels and supra-regional collaboration⁴ has improved greatly. In addition to this, the region has received support from the LEADER Programme⁵, which has contributed to the implementation of a number of local projects.

Further information:

<http://lag.xn--schwabisches-donautal-etz.de/projekte/masterplan-naturtourismus.html>

http://lag.xn--schwabisches-donautal-etz.de/images/Masterplan_Kurzzusammenfassung_FH.pdf

³ <http://lag.xn--schwabisches-donautal-etz.de/projekte.html>, <http://www.lag.xn--schwabisches-donautal-etz.de/>

⁴ <http://www.deutsche-donau.com/>

⁵ <http://lag.xn--schwabisches-donautal-etz.de/leader.html>



3.1.2 Sustainable vacation in Werfenweng

Location

The Municipality of Werfenweng is a small alpine destination located in the Tennengebirge range in the state of Salzburg, Austria. For the municipality, tourism has, with more than 200,000 overnight stays, a significant economic importance.

Aim and objectives

The Municipality of Werfenweng has aimed to position itself as a sustainable destination providing high-quality health and soft-adventure services while ensuring that visitors have green mobility options during their entire stay in the village and surrounding areas. The soft mobility initiative was launched with the complex goal of alleviating the growing environmental impacts of arrival transport, equalizing peak demand and peak season and developing a diversified tourism package that differentiates Werfenweng from other increasingly sought-after alpine destinations.



Coordinating organization/stakeholders

The foundations for the concept of the “Gentle Mobility Scheme” were laid in the ‘Sustainable mobility - car free project’ by Austria’s ministries for transport, tourism and the environment in 1997. With funding from the European Union, two pilot alpine resort communities, Werfenweng and Bad Hofgastein, participated in the initiative to implement environmentally friendly transport schemes and examine their impacts on the local economy, community and the environment. This initiative was later expanded into the Alps Mobility Project, the second phase of which saw the development of a network of 25 villages across the entire Alpine area dubbed ‘Alpine

Pearls⁶. These venues are connected by a long-distance hiking trail in the six countries of Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany and Slovenia.

As one of the Austrian partners of the STARTER project⁷, mainly funded by the European Union to promote energy efficient and sustainable mobility in pilot sites, the public authorities of Werfenweng took part in the establishment of a Local Travel Plan Network (LTPN), set up to engage stakeholders in the adoption of a common strategy to shift tourists from private cars to more sustainable mobility options. The LTPN consists of 49 members, which are all SAMO-members: accommodation facilities, 2 public authorities and 1 mobility management centre. The network identified existing problems regarding mobility with the involvement of local stakeholders and developed an organized approach for the implementation of soft measures encouraging behaviour change. Today, the Municipality and local businesses work in close cooperation to develop year-round sustainable tourism services with the ultimate aim of becoming less dependent on only winter sports.

Key elements of the practice

Within the frames of the soft mobility package, Werfenweng offers a wide range of environmentally friendly and inclusive transportation modes including electric, natural gas and hybrid vehicles, e-bikes and vehicles accessible to people with disabilities. Soft mobility (Sanfte Mobilität) works by encouraging visitors to give up their cars in exchange for well-organised transport options. Visitors who travel to Werfenweng by car, for example, are encouraged to hand over their keys to the local tourism office for the duration of their stay and, in exchange, they receive a Samo card. At its simplest, the card allows access to a free taxi service and it also grants free use of equipment for cross-country skiing and the other activities mentioned above, as well as a horse-drawn sleigh ride and even a lama trekking adventure. It is important to note that the Municipality has chosen not to put a ban on using cars, instead visitors are incentivized to use green alternatives through an advantageous package and well-maintained infrastructure.



6 <https://www.alpine-pearls.com/en/about-us/alpine-pearls/>

7 <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/en/projects/starter>

The user pays 8€ for the SAMO-Card (to cover administration costs) and can benefit from all above mentioned services. The annual total budget for all SAMO-services (costs of infrastructure, costs of electric vehicles, personnel expenditures) is raised by the organisations (accommodation enterprises) of the LTPN, respectively by the guests: a contribution of €0,70 per person and overnight-stay is paid into a common fund as well as the fee of 8€ per SAMO-Card. With this system, an annual total of €154.000 Euro is accumulated.

Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

Cornerstones of the operative work included the implementation of special services and offers for guests travelling car-free, baggage logistics for railway travellers, the creation of a new tourism product "Holidays from the car", the broad implementation of alternative mobility options in the region (including the promotion of electric vehicles) and the establishment of a regional mobility management centre with various tasks in the field of mobility advice and planning. The destination also promotes alternative use of energy, local products, and organizes special projects involving local residents in sustainable tourism development discussions. The direct participation of the tourism facilities in the discussions with the local authorities concerning the improvement of the mobility of tourists and the transport system serves as a good example of how integrated destination management can be realized through proper cooperation and knowledge-exchange. This novel approach also enabled stakeholders to develop a new tourism product which provides major benefits for all parties, including tourism facilities, the municipality and tourists.

Beyond the development of soft and green mobility services, the scheme also has direct relevance for Thematic Pillar 3 through shaping its visitors' attitudes on mobility and preconceptions about what a sustainable vacation can and should entail.

Results

Werfenweng has thus been successful in developing the most advanced project in the Alps for environmentally friendly travel or "soft mobility". From 1995 to 2013, the share of non-car arrival rose from 6% to 25%. The result of the cross-sector collaboration is illustrated by the fact that "80% of available guest beds are members of the soft mobility scheme". It has been recognized for these efforts with numerous awards, including "Tourism of Tomorrow" in 2011, Energy Globe in 2002, 2008 and 2012 and OECD's best practice award "Environmental Sustainable Mobility" in 2004. In 2016 it was named one of the Top 100 Sustainable Destinations by the non-profit organization Green Destinations.

In addition to the more tangible results, the "Gentle Mobility Package" also aims to shape its visitors' attitudes on mobility and serves as a model village to help other destinations start the transition to more sustainable tourism management.

Further information:

Touristinformation Werfenweng www.werfenweng.eu

Email: tourismusverband@werfenweng.eu

3.1.3 Center Rinka - multipurpose centre for sustainable development Solčavsko

Location

Solčavsko is a region situated in northern Slovenia, near the Slovenian-Austrian border. Solčava is a small Alpine village that gave the region its name. The region of Solčavsko comprises the village Solčava, the Podolševa hamlet and three Alpine valleys: Robanov and Matkov Kot valleys and the Logar Valley. The area, of extraordinary natural beauty, encompasses 103 square kilometres, but there are on average only five inhabitants per square kilometre. More than 80% of the area is under protection, there are two landscape parks (Robanov kot and Logarska dolina) and protected areas in the Natura 2000 network. The Center Rinka, a public institution for tourism management, is situated in the village of Solčava.

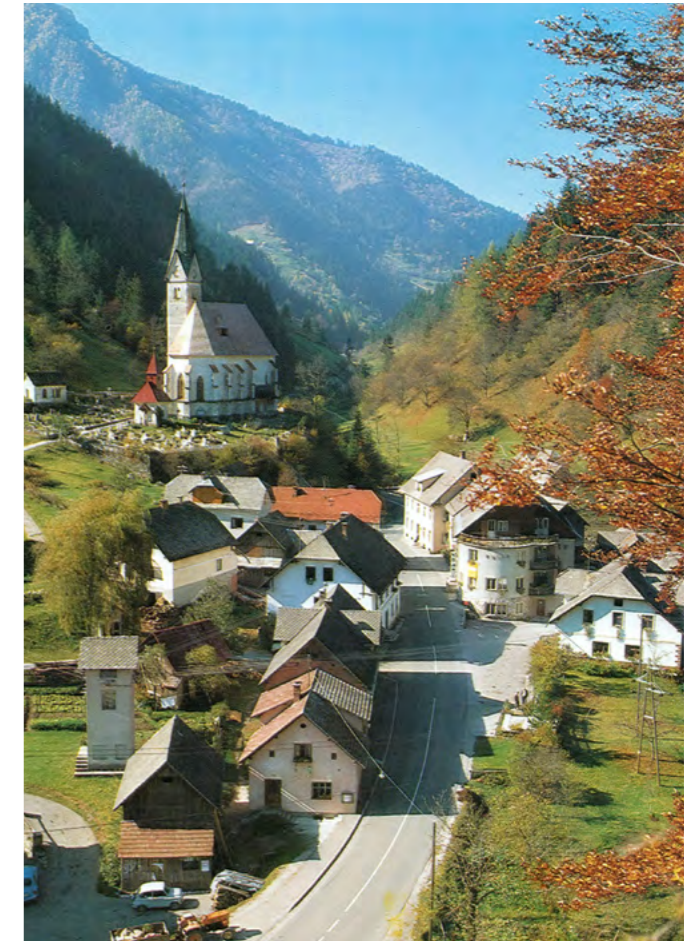
Aim and objectives

Solčavsko is highly focused on sustainability, and sustainable tourism plays an important part in the region's strategy. The Centre Rinka uses tourism as a tool for sustainable development, managing visitors and educating them on sustainable management of human and natural resources. The priority is to use visitor management for the enhancement of sustainable resource management and tourism development.

Coordinating organization

Centre Rinka was developed with the vision that tourist management is an important tool for the sustainable development of tourism in the natural environment. The multipurpose centre was built with the financial support of a Norway Grant in 2011. It promotes local products (such as wood, wool and food), local people and their skills and knowledge, and it also serves as a tool for the local community to learn about sustainable tourism management and other sustainability related issues.

The centre is composed of different sections. Firstly, the basement of the building acts as a tourist information point and an education centre. Here a number of lectures, workshops, seminars and other educational programmes aimed at a wide range of individuals from all ages take place, in addition to guest exhibitions and small cultural presentations. It is a space where both tourists and locals alike can learn, getting involved in any of the opportunities available. There are learning materials in many languages, and a variety of games and children's books to also educate the new generations. The second section presents a permanent exhibition, a Walk into the Lap of the



Alps, presenting the historical, cultural and natural assets of Solčavsko. Local products are also showcased, promoted and sold, with exhibition space for gastronomic and handicraft products. Finally, there is also an entrepreneurial incubator encouraging the development of new local businesses, and a café with a variety of local cakes, cheeses and other culinary products.

There is a variety of sustainable development projects taking place in the region which are also supported and promoted in Rinka. These include promoting the production of felt products made of wool of the Jezersko-Solčava sheep breed, the wooden products made of the Solčava mountain wood, the development of new tradition-based food products or development of products made of Logar Marble, the local stone.

Everything in Centre Rinka is related to the region and its people, and many societies and organisations actively participate in the implementation of activities and events in collaboration with the centre.

Key elements of the initiative

The inhabitants of Solčavsko live and have traditionally lived in harmony with nature, and the Center Rinka supports and promotes this lifestyle, inviting tourists to become part of it and enjoy an authentic local experience. In the Solčavsko area, tourism remains closely connected with traditional activities: agriculture, forestry and handicrafts. This is strongly promoted by public authorities, and the creation of business supporting these traditions is strongly encouraged through capacity building. Tourism is perceived as a tool to preserve local traditions and culture, and there is high awareness on importance of minimising the social and environmental impacts of tourism. The destination offers the tourist an authentic experience that puts the needs of the local community first and ensures a unique and enjoyable experience for visitors and locals alike.

Regarding the online promotion of the region, the website developed by the public authorities effectively presents in a simple and easy-to-navigate way vital information on the area and promotes a number of activities and local businesses. This allows a unified image for the region, with coordinated marketing and promotion.

Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

The local community, cultural heritage and nature conservation are at the core of tourism management in Solčavsko. There is strong cooperation between the authorities and local



stakeholders, who work together to ensure that tourism is developed in a way that is slow and sustainable, in harmony with the local lifestyle.

Education is integrated in the tourism offer in an excellent manner; tourists can easily learn and develop an understanding of the local culture and nature, in addition to other sustainability-related topics. At the same time, education on sustainable development issues is also promoted among locals. With workshops and activities for people of all ages, the capacity building potential of this initiative is an example to follow. The destination is also making sure that local entrepreneurs are equipped with the best tools and knowledge to make business in the best possible way for the economy whilst ensuring the sustainable use of the limited and unique local resources.

Results

Even before the creation of the Center Rinka, Solčavsko had already set an example on sustainable tourism management in areas of outstanding natural heritage. The destination received the title European Destination of Excellence for Tourism in Protected Areas back in 2009.

The region has managed to create and maintain a strong, unified image that promotes local values and traditions and contributes to the preservation of the environment. Ensuring access to capacity building programmes for hosts and visitors, the region has managed to consolidate a sustainable tourism industry that is extremely beneficial for the community, economy, tourists and the environment.

Further information:

<http://www.solcavsko.info/>

<http://www.solcavska-panoramska-cesta.si/en/>

<http://posebendan.si/>



3.1.4 Gijón – Biosphere World Urban Destination

Location

The Borough of Gijón is situated in the coast of Asturias, in northern Spain. The town of Gijón, which accounts for about 7.6% of the total surface of the Borough, concentrates 90% of the population. The remaining surface area is composed of 25 districts of the Borough. The rural districts that are closer to the town are mostly industrial, or residential, where there is a wide offer of leisure activities. Further away from the urban areas, there are districts devoted to agricultural activities.



Aim and objectives

Consolidating its position as a differentiated, sustainable tourist destination that sets an example in terms of innovation, quality and environmental conservation is Gijón's aim.

Coordinating organization

Gijón City Council is well aware of the need for sustainable tourism that brings long term socio-economic benefits to the coastal town. For this reason, a local public company, Divertia Gijón, was put in charge of tourism management and planning. This DMO has focused on the sustainable development of tourism in the area through a number of actions, policies and projects. After the successful implementation of the Gijón Tourism Action Plan 2012-2015, the Responsible Tourism Policy was developed to guide tourism management. The goals⁸ of this policy include:

- A vision of tourism not as a merely economic, closed and independent sector, but as a clearly across-the-board reality, understanding the city as an integral part its diverse economic, territorial, social and cultural aspects.
- Improving and leveraging the positive impact of the tourism activities carried out in the city and preventing and minimizing the negative impacts that may originate.
- Acquiring an obligation and commitment to the satisfaction of both tourists and citizens alike, involving both parties in decision-making in questions of tourism and facilitating, as far as possible, the balance between the integration of visitors and respect for and coexistence alongside the city's residents.

In order to ensure the sustainable development of tourism, the collaboration of local stakeholders is vital. In Gijón, local businesses must be aware of the need for sustainable tourism, and the local DMO provides the necessary tools, knowledge and support to ensure this is the case. Some of the actions encouraged and implemented by Divertia Gijón include having a set of environmental indicators and performing environmental polls within local businesses, developing responsible marketing campaigns, collaborating with businesses in order to ensure that staff and

⁸ <http://en.turismo.gijon.es/page/12556-sustainable-gijon>

customers are educated in sustainability issues and to ensure that visitors are well informed about the cultural offer available, encouraging responsible purchase policies, or working hand in hand with service providers to guarantee that Gijón is an accessible destination. Offering high quality services and customer satisfaction are also high priorities. In addition, the Council awards the certification “Gijón Responsible Tourism. Committed Companies” to recognise those enterprises that perform exceptional responsible practices. Some of the businesses that received these certifications are tourism information centres, hotels and cultural centres.



Key elements of the initiative

The wide range of cultural, gastronomic and sporting activities available in Gijón together with the stunning greenbelt that surrounds the city offer great tourism potential. This, in combination with the impressive implementation of sustainable tourism development has allowed the city to be the second destination in the world to be awarded the Biosphere World Urban Destination. Some of the strengths that have helped the city receive this award include:

High environmental commitment: the city is made up of a variety of green areas, including the outstanding Atlantic Botanic Gardens, home to around 30,000 plants. Gijón also implements a series of environmental plans and strategies. An example of this is the “Covenant of Mayors”⁹, through which the city commits to reduce 20% of its level of CO2 by 2020.

Culture and tradition: Respect for local values and traditions is very important in Gijón. The town also offers a wide range of cultural activities and museums, and an Ecological Crafts Market.

Sustainable mobility: accessible and low emissions public transport, environmentally certified tourist busses, 26 km of urban bike paths and 40 km of greenways are just a sample of what Gijón has to offer.

⁹ http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/about/signatories_en.html?city_id=3187



Social commitment: A range of programmes and projects to create employment, bring economic profit to the city, encourage social inclusion and support sustainable development have been developed in the last few years. An illustration of this is the “Integral Accessibility and Non-discrimination Plan”, aiming to make Gijón an accessible city for everybody.

Quality: Gijón is working to consolidate itself as a quality sustainable tourism destination that is responsible with the environment,

local values and the visitors. Innovation is an important part of this strategy. The destination was named the Best Quality Tourist destination by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism in 2012.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

Gijón sets an exceptional example on integrated tourism management. The destination goes the extra mile to provide quality tourism products and services that promote environmental consciousness among hosts and tourists alike. Working with local stakeholders, Gijón has been able to get the best from tourism minimising the worst. Planning and policy for responsible and sustainable tourism is taken very seriously, and this is reflected in the daily running of tourism activities in the city.

In addition to being relevant for TP1, the destination relates also to TP3, as it undertakes excellent marketing campaigns promoting local culture, gastronomy and nature while educating potential visitors on responsible tourism. Although these campaigns target mostly the Spanish market, there is a strong online presence that can be set as an example for destinations in the Danube region.

Results

Gijón has become a consolidated urban destination which has experienced consistent tourism growth. In 2016 the city received 1,533,322 visitors, and the number of foreign tourists was for the first time in the city’s history above 50,000. This involves a growth of more than 4% from 2015.

Further information:

<http://en.turismo.gijon.es/>



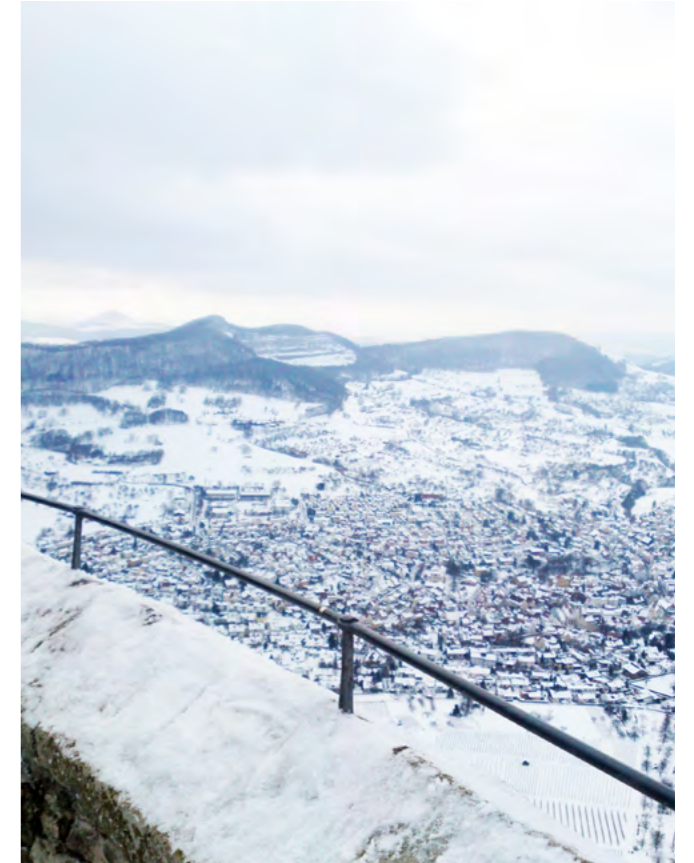
3.1.5. UNESCO-Biosphere Reserve Swabian Alb

Location

Situated in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, The Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve (BR) encompasses 29 municipalities and the former Münsingen military training area. The BR is divided into three zones, the Core Zone, which contains untouched natural resources, the Buffer Zone, dedicated to sustainable agricultural use, and the Development Zone, where sustainable development programmes can be undertaken in order to maintain a healthy local economy.

Aim and objectives

The Biosphere Reserve supports the sustainable development of the region through projects and activities developed in partnership with local stakeholders. The partnership's objectives are to closely collaborate, inform guests, develop a network with additional regional partners, and to contribute to sustainable regional development. When it comes to tourism, there is a strong focus on educating visitors on the natural and cultural heritage of the area, conservation, and sustainability, as well as promoting local gastronomy.



When it comes to tourism, there is a strong focus on educating visitors on the natural and cultural heritage of the area, conservation, and sustainability, as well as promoting local gastronomy.

Coordinating organization

After the conversion of the military training zone into a civil area, the regional authorities decided that the best solution for the conservation of this natural space was to become a Biosphere Reserve, which was established in 2006. In May 2009, the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve was recognized by UNESCO. This has contributed to the promotion of the region and attracted new visitors, generating additional revenue. As part of the regional sustainable development strategy, a number of grassroots projects are developed in a number of fields, including sustainable tourism, thanks to the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve Funding Programme¹⁰.

The BR runs a partner initiative in order to cooperate with local stakeholders to provide services that meet certain standards. Around 100 local businesses and initiatives are recognised partners of the BR, who promote the values of the BR, including environmentally friendly actions (partners must reduce their CO₂ emissions, avoid the use of polluting cleaning products, and undergo environmental and energy efficiency consultations or hold environmental certifications), commitment to nature conservation (use of locally or regionally produced products, educating other stakeholders in ecology and sustainability, promoting and fundraising for local projects),

¹⁰ <http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de/index.php/lebensraum-biosphaerengebiet/foerderung-projekte/foerderung-projekte>

regional economic cycles (maintaining long-term relationships with suppliers and customers and supporting the regional economy), service quality (partners attend regular training in order to ensure that they offer the best possible service), and providing information to guests (educating visitors is vital for the long-term conservation of the biosphere).

These partners offer a variety of services and activities, and include a range of restaurants, hotels, trained nature and landscape guides and informal education institutions. There are very strict standards to comply in order to become a partner¹¹, as these partners are ambassadors of the biosphere and examples to follow by tourists, locals and other companies.

Key elements of the initiative

The Swabian Alb has outstanding natural and cultural landscapes, an immense variety of historical sites, geological attractions, and unique flora and fauna. In addition to the Swabian Alb Biosphere Center¹², there is a network of 17 information centres available near important tourism attractions and in other frequented areas as well as in train stations. The functions of these centres are not only to provide tourism services and valuable information on the area, but to educate tourists in issues such as agriculture and forestry, renewable energy, geology, sustainable tourism, conservation or urban development. Some centres also offer lectures and workshops, as well as field trips.

The vision and values for the development of the region were planned in partnership with the local communities and other stakeholders. The result of this planning process was presented in a reference document, a framework for future reference. This process was developed in 6 different levels¹³:

- Steering Committee, the group meets twice a year and is the highest decision-making body.
- Steering Group, meets 6 times a year and has decision-making capacity
- Coordination Group, meets 24 times a year and is responsible for coordinating the whole process (3 members)
- Large stakeholder round, with 2 yearly meetings, the group is formed by up to 100 people who bring new ideas and provide feedback on current developments.



11 <http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de/index.php/lebensraum-biosphaerengebiet/partner/partner-werden/bewerbung>

12 <http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de/index.php/biosphaerenzentrum/willkommen-im-biosphaerenzentrum>

13 <http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de/index.php/lebensraum-biosphaerengebiet/rahmenkonzept/10-lebensraum-biosphaerengebiet/55-gremien>

- Several Working Groups that meet 4 times a year in order to develop and implement project ideas.
- BürgerInnen Forum, this group meets 5 times a year and is formed by all citizens of the biosphere. Here the community can participate in the planning process and provide valuable feedback.

While this process is not limited to tourism, it is a very good illustration on how the process of stakeholder coordination in sustainable tourism looks like.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

This is an outstanding example of how the sustainable management of tourism can benefit local communities, bring economic profit and provide an exceptional experience for tourists whilst caring for the environment and local cultural treats.

This destination has managed to integrate tourism development and nature conservation exceptionally. There is high stakeholder integration in the destination management process, with effective collaboration of the parties involved and evidence of bottom-up partnerships and tourism development incentives through project implementation and funding. Quality assurance is perceived with the environment in mind, and there is high environmental awareness of the community and service providers that is passed onto visitors. Sustainability is at the core of all activities performed, and informal education is present in the delivery of tourism at all levels, from accommodation to guided and individual tours.

Results

The Swabian Alb biosphere reserve has become an outstanding destination in the field of sustainability and conservation. The destination is the 2016/2017 winner of a national competition: "Sustainable Tourism Destination". This award recognises the reserve as the most sustainable holiday destination in Germany.

Further information:

http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de/images/downloads/2013-07-24-PESCH-Imagebroschre_BG-engl_Internet.pdf

<http://biosphaerengebiet-alb.de/>

3.2 Thematic Pillar 2: Integrated Green Touristic Product Development and Marketing

3.2.1 Hiking Europe

Location

The partnership gathers 8 members from 6 different EU countries: Spain (Catalonia), Italy (Emilia-Romagna), Croatia (Dubrovnik-Neretva), Ireland (Donegal), Austria and Germany. In total, this represents 1.170 km of hiking routes in 4 destinations, the management of which is supported by 8 members from the 6 aforementioned EU countries, encompassing tourist boards, development agencies and research institutes.

Aim and objectives

Hiking Europe's main objective is to promote a transnational network of rural touristic routes structured in several hiking itineraries across Europe. The project addresses the following objectives:

- To identify, valorise and internationally position local assets.
- To build a strategic consensus with all relevant stakeholders identified for the making up of a solid and competitive offer of services and products for tourists.
- To design and structure the transnational network of hiking routes.
- To develop a joint promotional and commercial strategy to exploit the European network of routes, including the design of integrated and personalized proposals and holiday packages
- To improve the professional skills of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and to promote its internationalization.
- To enhance the institutional framework devoted to support a more competitive industry.



Coordinating organization/stakeholders

Hiking Europe is a joint initiative of European tourism operators conceived as a joint response from 4 European regions. The project is co-financed by the COSME Programme of the European Union under the theme 'Diversifying the EU tourism offer and products - Promoting transnational thematic tourism products'. The partners involved in the initiative set out to strengthen transnational cooperation in sustainable tourism; encourage greater involvement in sustainable

tourism for small and micro enterprises, and local authorities; and to stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector.

The Catalan Tourist Board (Spain) is the lead partner and coordinating organization that holds together the partnership including the implementing public authorities of the other three destination regions, namely: Donegal County Council (Ireland), the Regional Development Agency of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County DUNEA LLC., Regione Emilia-Romagna and the other four supporting partners: New Insights for Tourism research institute, PIRINEU EMOCIÓ DMC Agency in the Pyrenean region, Naturefriends international movement, and the University of Girona. The project was launched on 1 April 2016 and runs for 18 months.

Key elements of the practice

The transnational tourism product is formed by hiking itineraries (1,170 km) located in 4 European regions (Catalonia, Donegal, Emilia-Romagna and Dubrovnik-Neretva). The primary aim of diversification allows the development of tourism at a territorial level, reducing high concentrations in very specific locations and spreading the benefits of this activity across the territory, promoting sustainability and local community participation. Hiking Europe fosters the



capitalisation on the cultural and natural heritage of rural regions, including mountain areas, with a particular focus on biodiversity and landscape characteristics. During the project, small and medium sized local businesses (accommodation, restaurants, shops, transport providers, experience companies etc.) located in the pilot areas were provided the opportunity to further

develop and market their services and products to international hikers through more theoretical seminars as well as practical training workshops. In the trainings local best practice case studies of successful DMCs were introduced and discussions were held on how to develop and market new sustainable hiking tourism packages.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

The Hiking Europe project addresses the issue of tourism diversification in European regions that have traditionally focused on mass tourism but are willing to commit to a more sustainable, responsible and high-quality alternative approach based in less explored areas, specifically in rural locations. This sentiment is very much in line with the objectives of the INSiGHTS project to develop and promote slow and green tourism products and services that provide a more authentic experience for the visitors while minimizing the negative impact of tourism on the destinations. The Hiking Europe initiative also serves as a good practice in terms of capacity building of small and medium sized enterprises by helping them develop skill sets of product development, communication and marketing and introducing them to a wider network of organizations with a similar profile.

Results

In the course of the project, two seminars were held as capacity building sessions for the partner organizations. One event presented the evaluation scoreboard of the destination regions, while the other international seminar brought together 252 participants from the public and private sector from 10 countries with international experts addressing three main topics of product development, cooperation and commercialization/distribution. Presentations on how providers can better market and communicate their authenticity and sustainability are available on the project website¹⁴

Further information:

<http://hikingeurope.net/>

Blanca Cros – Head of European Programmes at Catalan Tourist Board

Email: info@hikingeurope.net, bcros@gencat.cat

¹⁴ <http://hikingeurope.net/internacional-hiking-europe/>



3.2.2 ISTRA Bike&Outdoor Initiative

Location

The ISTRA Bike&Outdoor Initiative covers the entire region of Istria with a great number of cycling, hiking, thematic routes and accommodation along the coast as well as through the beautiful natural landscape of Central Istria and its quaint villages.



Aim and objectives

The initiative was launched to develop outdoor tourism in Istria and thus promote synergies between the subjects of tourism with the ultimate aim being to reposition and restructure Istria into a high-quality tourism region with a year-round tourism offer. The repositioning also involves the diversification of the offer and a shift from the dependence on the “sun and sea” products traditional for Istrian tourism.

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

The Istra Bike & Outdoor DMC Department, as part of the Istrian Tourism Development Agency, was established in 2012 to implement an integrated development and management of cycling tourism as well as other forms of active tourism. The Istra Bike & Outdoor DMC department is supported by Istria County, hotel companies Maistra d.d., Valamar Riviera d.d., Istraturist Umag d.d., Laguna Novigrad d.d., Plava laguna d.d., Arenaturist d.d., as well as Istria Tourist Board along with local tourist boards.

Key elements of the practice

Today's Istrian cyclo-tourism consists of many segments of which the most important are the numerous bike trails of all types, the specialized Istra Bike & Bed accommodation, quality bike rental & transport service providers and professional bike guides. Also, there are events of huge importance which, besides hosting numerous participants, do the targeted promotion of the specialized offer of Istria beyond its borders. Apart from this, of course, there is the education of the service providers, as well as the promotion of Istria and its bike offer abroad. With its multiple beneficial effects, the project agrees well with the rest of the tourism offer in Istria, including Bike&Bed accommodation, spa centres and gourmet segments of Istrian tourism, namely rural, wine and olive oil tourism.

The extensive network of cycling trails targets a wide spectrum of visitors including families, youth, seniors and adventure seekers. The network distinguishes between official and adventure trails and supports tourists in planning their stay by preparing detailed information on the website for each trail regarding the difficulty, length, elevation, surface type and the time required to complete it. The interactive map allows tourists to look for nearby accommodation well in advance and each trail is accompanied by a description of directions and recommended sights along the route. The easily understandable information provided on the website is also a result of the tremendous efforts devoted to developing a uniform signalization for cycling and hiking trails. In addition,

the spatial visualization of the trails has also been significantly improved through open-source cartography.

The network of cycling and hiking trails is also complemented by the Istra Bike&Bed scheme through which cyclists have access to specialized accommodation where they can safely store their bike and use tools and equipment if necessary.

The new DMC department is committed to the further development of Istra bike (www.istria-bike.com), Istra trails (www.istria-trails.com) and Istra climbing (www.istria-climbing.com/hr) projects and the continuous upgrade of the related websites with all the information regarding the trails, races and events as well as specialized types of services.



Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

The Istra Bike&Outdoor Initiative is an outstanding example of successful sustainable tourism product development and diversification. Effective market segmentation has been carried out to cater to the needs of a diverse range of visitors, further strengthened by a website which contains a wealth of information and engages visitors by transforming content into an interactive experience. All pilot regions can benefit from the management and promotion techniques employed by ISTR A Bike&Outdoor DMC, whether they wish to establish or revive a greenway, a network of routes or a certain promotional tool (website, app).



Results

The number of cycling trails since 2013 has tripled from 43 to 124 in 2017, covering 3.600 km of the Istrian peninsula. The region also offers around 120 Bike&Bed locations with 12.000 beds. The beneficial impacts of the development of the regional tourism offer go beyond the tangible, quantifiable results. The Istrian peninsula has now built up an image for its active tourism sector which is easily identifiable for tourists both when searching for a destination and during their stay. With the help of this unified tourism package, tailored to different needs, Istria has positioned itself as a hotspot for slow, healthy and green tourism.

Further information:

<http://www.istria-outdoor.com/en/>

http://www.istria-bike.com/en/home_page

<http://www.istria-trails.com/>

Martin Čotar info@istra.com



3.2.3 L'Avenc de Tavertet Hotel

Location

The L'Avenc de Tavertet Hotel is situated on the El Collsacabra plateau in Catalonia, Spain between the historic villages of Rupit and Tavertet. L'Avenc used to be a fortified masia ("farmhouse" in Catalan) which was restored and repurposed to serve as a fully functioning family home and rural hotel at the same time.



Aim and objectives

The two nearby villages of Rupit and Tavertet were already tourist destinations that lie very close to l'Avenc. Their objective was in fact to help create a more sustainable pattern by promoting a more fluid all-year-round influx and avoiding the 'only weekend' or 'holiday' tourism that was the tendency in the area. The ultimate goal of the Anglo-Catalan family, who restored the masia, was to establish an alternative to the traditional forms of tourism that contributes to an overall better sense of well-being through creating stronger ties with the natural environment and the local community.

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

The hotel is managed by the the Parris family who embarked on the quest to restore this abandoned site of cultural heritage in 1997. 95% of the project has been self-financed including the restoration process. The family received a minor source of financial contribution by winning the 'Best Initiative' prize of the provincial Diputació organization in 2004 and professional support from the European LEADER organization to develop sustainable objectives. Today a team of 7 local workers take care of the property and hotel management. The family running the local business makes sure that the team is constantly developing skills and knowledge through different educational programs. The family have invested a considerable amount of time and energy to create dialogue and synergy with local stakeholders through using the premises for music evenings and summer night's fair to give locals the sense of being part of the project.

Key elements of the practice

The family chose both traditional building materials, local workers, and disappearing skills when restoring the house, decided on the use of renewable energy for heating, hot water and electricity for the house and cottages, took an active interest in acquiring and using fair trade, local and organic products, and became engrossed in sustainable management of water and electricity.

The products they use must be ecologically certified, local and/or fair-trade. They avoid all tested-on-animals products and in the case of animal-derived products, they must all come with a guarantee of animal welfare. They decided not to have a restaurant so as to collaborate with the local restaurants and bars – which are the main tourist activity in the area.

As the low number of off-season stays has been identified as being the area's main challenge, they are committed to making the destination attractive to visitors all year round through offers and campaigns on their website.

The Parris family have invested in renewable energies such as solar tubes, solar panels, a wind turbine and a biomass boiler. They have built their new accommodation under bioclimatic criteria, and equipped their accommodation facilities with low consuming appliances. The area has more than 300 species of plants, bushes and trees such as the Mediterranean oak, hazelnut, and poplar as well as fern and herbs of all sorts that grow between the rocks and along the pathways.



To protect this land, its habitats and species, L'Avenc signed a 10-year land stewardship agreement in 2007 with Catalunya-La Pedrera Foundation to co-manage and protect 300 ha. The agreement, which is soon to be renewed, has had a beneficial impact on the local habitats. More birds and insects have appeared, and the quality of the pasture land and water has also improved through a transition to extensive organic farming. This change in land management also yields benefits for visitors in the form of "Parcs de les Olors" (Flavour Gardens) initiative, which is a magnificent garden with medicinal, aromatic and edible plants from the surrounding area.

In addition to advocating for and realizing a more responsible form of tourism, they promote and disseminate the local area's culture. In line with this objective, the family have created the Collsacabra Cultural Centre Association based in l'Avenc with the intention of opening the doors to their facilities for all those locals who intend to use them. Furthermore, they also contribute with the publication of the local magazine Els cingles del Collsacabra.

Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

It is a working example of how historical and cultural heritage can be preserved while utilizing it in a sustainable manner, thus promoting a responsible form of tourism and the importance of local culture, development and the inclusion of the local economy.

Results

The team's efforts towards sustainability have been rewarded with numerous awards:

- A subsidy for restoration and conservation of listed building (Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya 2000)
- A subsidy for their photovoltaic solar power system (Institut Català de l'Energia (ICAEN) 2001)
- Technical support and a subsidy for sustainable tourism, investment and enhanced quality (Fundació Privada Garrotxa Líder: Marca de Qualitat Territorial Garrotxa – Collsacabra, any 2003)
- Best business initiative (Diputació de Barcelona 2004)
- Agreement for the responsible stewardship of the land with Fundació Obra Social de Catalunya Caixa (2007-2017)
- Qualitat Turística SICTED Certificate (2008, 2009 i 2010). Quality in tourism certificate
- Various subsidies for the improvement of biodiversity and their renewable energy systems: pond building, biomass boiler, solar tubes for the swimming pool (2008). European Ecolabel (since 2010)
- Best Big Responsible Tourism Accommodation (2013)
- TripAdvisor Green Leader Platinum Award



Further information:

info@avenc.com

<http://www.avenc.com/en/>

<http://www.institutoturismoresponsable.com/events/sustainabletourismcharter2015/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/LAvenc-as-a-Responsible-Tourism-Model.pdf>

3.2.4 Mecsek Greenway

Location

The Mecsek greenway is situated along villages on the western and eastern flanks of the Mecsek hill in southern Hungary. The area covered by the greenway has a long-standing tradition of rural tourism that has benefited from the wonderful natural environment of the Danube-Drava National Park.



Aim and objectives

The concept for the greenway was developed with the intention of attracting only a small number of tourists at any one time to a destination that is environmentally friendly, sustainable and available in all seasons and at all times. Everyone involved is committed to developing the local community, to popularising traditional, seasonal local products that are free of chemicals and preservatives, and to the gathering and usage of plants and mushrooms of the forest, field and garden in an environmentally friendly way. They also wish to pass on this knowledge, to raise awareness of medicinal foods and healthy eating, as well as to promote a gentle, green and ecological form of sustainable tourism that supports, rather than exploits local communities.

Greenways are the most recent products of alternative tourism in Hungary. As a typical bottom-up initiative, this ecotourism product concept is based on the creation of sustainable society, healthy lifestyle, local community development, strengthening sustainable transport forms and also strengthening heritage tourism. This type of thematic route is created by the local community for responsible (eco)tourists. One of the most innovative and successful greenways of Hungary is the Mecsek Greenway, not just because of its innovative approaches and practice but also because this initiation became an EDEN destination, known as the “tastiest destination of Hungary” in 2015.

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

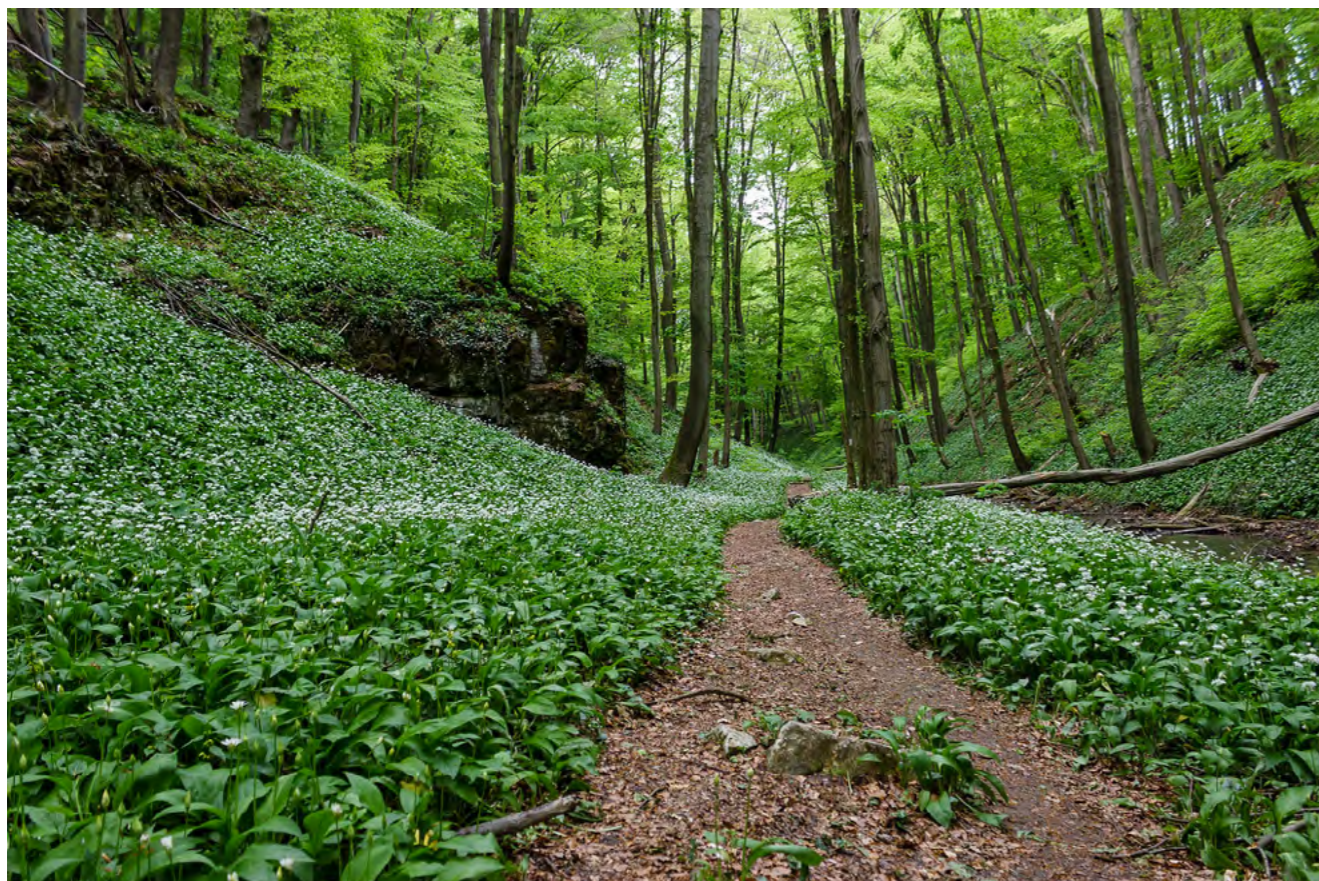
In 2012, an initiative to enhance the visibility of the region and its products and to promote responsible tourism and healthy, organic local products evolved into the Mecsek Greenway Association and the “brand” of the Mecsek Greenway. The Greenway was brought to life through a process similar to that of the start-up approach with the ultimate goal of providing subsistence, and community growth. The greenway gives local farmers, businesses, producers, and service providers the opportunity and means through which people gain access to local products and services and products can reach people on the pristine market roads revitalized by the Greenway. Products are exchanged within the local communities, which through reviving the local economy helps secure the livelihoods of its inhabitants. The establishment of a non-profit independent legal entity enables the Association to act as an advocate for its members, access sources of funding and create partnerships with similar organizations.



Photo by Cserlajos [CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5>), GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Key elements of the practice

Regional developments along the Greenway are not “festival-focused”. Quiet events are organised and qualified service providers with the “sunflower” National Certification Mark, eco-houses, services and restaurants, village/small producer guest tables, various themed routes (e.g. the Pécs–Mecsek Wine Route and the Honey Route) and accommodation with an ecotourism rating – together with the NGOs bringing them together – contribute to high standard tourism. Locally grown organic produce can be purchased in local markets and is regularly used in catering, for example at the “Eco-bait” buffet meals and wild plant dinners.



Each settlement along the greenway introduces the local attractions, monuments, customs and heritage; organizes events and festivals around its gastronomical and cultural heritage; and offers a plethora of high-quality local products including honey, cheese, meat, beer and handicrafts. Gastro-cultural events, services and experiences are offered in the region all year round. One of the main attractions in the area is wild garlic, and in several places there are activities focused on collecting this plant in spring. When exploring the Mecsek Greenway, visitors can learn about the region’s edible wild plants on field exercises, mushrooming courses, outings and hikes. Afterwards, they can prepare these during team-building events and cooking classes focusing on medicinal ingredients. Festivals celebrating local gastronomy (such as the Marrow or Bacon Festivals at Orfű, the Purslane Picnic in Cserkút, Foods of our Grandmothers, the “Butter Doughnuts” class excursion, “stone soup” in Kővágószőlős or the Roma Gastro Autumn and Roman banquets) as well as village open days and May Day celebrations all provide opportunities to cook together and demonstrate culinary skills in competitions.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

The success of the Mecsek Greenway rests on innovative tourism product development. The region’s tourism offer has been enhanced through a combination of measures including the integrated management of the greenway, the establishment of eco-lodges, the effective marketing of local products, and the provision of a multitude of services such as hiking, cycling and walking tours, spelunking, medical food camps and alternative (non-motorized) transport forms also available to people with disabilities. The integration of the listed components into one unified and well-marketed package is of high relevance for partners looking to implement similar pilot initiatives.

Results

The Mecsek Greenway won the EDEN destination award and was named the “tastiest destination of Hungary” in 2015. The project titled “A Pinch of Hungary” focused on the role and function of the local gastronomy as touristic motivation. The greenway has not only improved the local economy as part of a broader tourism development scheme, but also revived the community and strengthened social cohesion on which successful cooperation depends.

Further information:

<http://www.mecsekzoldut.hu/greenway/>

info@mecsekzoldut.hu





3.2.5 Ingolstadt Slow Food Convivium

Location

The Ingolstadt Slow Food Convivium encompasses the districts of Eichstätt, Pfaffenhofen, and Neuburg/Schrobenhausen, and the cities of Ingolstadt, Riedenburg and Dietfurt a.d. Altmühl. It is part of the wider Slow Food Germany movement as well as the global Slow Food network present in more than 100 countries worldwide.



Aim and objectives

Slow Food was founded as an 'eno-gastronomic' (wine and food) association in Italy in 1986. Its initial aim was to support and defend good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life. It then broadened its sights to embrace quality of life and, as a logical consequence, the very survival of the imperiled planet that we live on. Slow Food Ingolstadt embraces the same overall objectives and strives to support local restaurants in producing high-quality locally sourced food to attract both locals and tourists and to promote the value of embracing a slower lifestyle.

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

Slow Food Ingolstadt was founded on 11 May 2007 with the aim to provide an environment in which interested parties may discuss their views and ideas about Slow Food and bring them to life in their region. It is managed on a strictly voluntary basis by its own elected "board" and operates working groups to emphasize important issues raised within the convivium focusing on specific topics or specialties, such as host houses/taverns, producers, cooking, wine, beer, and regional food. The initiative connects quality food producers with co-producers through events and initiatives and educates consumers about the interconnectedness of gastronomy, agriculture, the environment and politics.

Key elements of the practice

According to the Slow Food basic rule of "good, clean, and fair" the Convivium Ingolstadt respects the following principles:

- Using fresh, seasonal products
- Using regional products (ideally proof of origin on the menu)
- Using sustainably produced products
- Preserving regional dishes and recipes ("Culinary Heritage", biodiversity)
- Food and drinks must stand out from industrially produced mass products
- Hand-crafted processing (no prefabricated convenience products)
- Avoiding artificial flavors, additives and flavor enhancers
- Hospitality (pleasant ambience, good service)

A test group is traveling around Ingolstadt and the surrounding counties. Potential restaurants are identified, visited, discussed, and evaluated. The tests are carried out on a strictly voluntary basis

and without expense budget. Taste is the main criterion during the tests as the taste experience must be above average.

If the criteria listed above are fulfilled, food is allowed to be more pricy as Slow Food needs time to grow and is produced in a more labour-intensive and sustainable way. The Convivium Ingolstadt asks for everyone's participation so as to reach a large community of people from local settlements as well as tourists. It is then possible to recommend local restaurants to them and



they will have a look if it can join the Slow Food Initiative.

Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

The Slow Food Convivium in Ingolstadt as part of the wider global movement is committed to protecting traditional and sustainable quality foods, defending the biodiversity of cultivated and wild varieties and places of historic, artistic or social value that form part of our food heritage, acknowledging the history and culture of each region. Their activities are highly relevant for Thematic Pillar 3, the sensitization of locals and tourists towards a slower, healthier and more sustainable lifestyle. Food Tourism has grown considerably and has become one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism, and the slow food movement contributes to the enriching of the tourism experience through agricultural and gastronomical diversity.

Results

Beyond the tangible results of regularly organizing among other events wine tastings, organic farmer's markets and herb tours, the Slow Food Convivium in Ingolstadt has been successful in giving producers and service providers committed to sustainable food production and consumption a common platform while also increasing the awareness of locals and tourists towards the importance of a slower, healthier and greener lifestyle.

Further information:

Michael Olma ingolstadt@slowfood.de

https://www.slowfood.de/slow_food_vor_ort/ingolstadt/

3.3 Thematic Pillar 3: Sensitization of visitors and host communities towards eco-conscious and healthy lifestyles linked to the tourism offer

3.3.1 Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism

Location

The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (GSST) is a tool developed at the national level and a certification programme that supports destinations and service providers in their sustainability endeavours and promotes them through the SLOVENIA GREEN umbrella brand. Destinations, tourism providers, parks and agencies across the country have joined the GSST and several others are in the process of assessment.¹⁵



Aim and objectives

The scheme aims to enhance the implementation of green tourism in Slovenia by introducing sustainable models to Slovenian tourism, both tourism service providers and destinations. It informs stakeholders about the significance of climate change and its impacts on tourism and encourages action to be taken towards adapting to climate change and mitigating it.



15 https://www.slovenia.info/uploads/dokumenti/zeleno-shema/sto_slovenia_green_zsst_brosura_jul2017_ang_web.pdf

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

In 2009, the Slovenian Tourist Board developed strategic focuses in the field of green tourism. In 2014, the public agency SPIRIT Slovenija, in cooperation with operators and experts in sustainable tourism, used strategic focuses to draft the “Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism”, which is based on European (ETIS) and global (GSTC) criteria and recommends the use of the GSTR tool for measuring performance in the field of introducing green operations.

The Green Scheme is a system that combines all sustainable development efforts under the umbrella brand SLOVENIA GREEN. It enables comparisons with other green destinations around the world, and adds national character, which makes it possible to more easily position green Slovenia on the global map. In 2015, the Slovenian Tourist Board started to implement the scheme at the level of destinations and accommodations. The GSST is operated by a manager, who actively manages and develops the scheme and establishes promotional channels, and an accredited partner (Association for Sustainable Tourism GoodPlace) who has a licence to make assessments using the Green Destinations Standard and is a Green Destinations partner.

In June 2016, the SLOVENIA GREEN Consortium was established with 18 contractual partners (destinations and service providers) and the Slovenian Tourist Board as a strategic partner. The consortium members face similar challenges concerning the development and marketing of sustainable tourism, which is why the association and platform is of great importance for strengthening cooperation and sharing good practices.

Key elements of the practice

The most important feature of the GSST is that it brings together all efforts directed towards the sustainable development of tourism in Slovenia. It does so by offering tools to destinations and service providers that enable them to evaluate and improve their sustainability endeavours, while also promoting them through the SLOVENIA GREEN brand.

The levels are closely connected. The destination motivates key interested parties (service providers) to operate sustainably and carry eco-labels, since a green destination can only be credible if it has a critical mass of certified service providers. To date, the national scheme includes 20 destinations with the Slovenia Green Destination label and 11 accommodation providers with the Slovenia Green Accommodation label. Joining the GSST for destinations and tourism providers is simple because it leads them step by step through a 7 step process with tools and integrated support. First, they need to assign a coordinator who helps the provider or destination create a profile and establish roles and responsibilities for the Green Team. They can only receive the label once they have collected and analyzed relevant data and compiled audit and final reports based on which the decision will be made by the Slovenian Tourist Board. Once awarded the label, providers and destinations need to submit progress reports on an annual basis and undergo re-evaluation every 2-3 years.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

The Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism is an outstanding example of tools for providing information and encouragement for the tourism industry to develop green business models, encouragement for destinations to set up sustainable development models based on sustainability

indicators, and raising the awareness of tourists, thus helping them to focus on a more sustainable lifestyle and a friendlier attitude towards their own environment.

Results

To date, the GSST includes 23 destinations with the Slovenia Green Destination label, 16 accommodation providers with the Slovenia Green Accommodation label, 3 parks with the Slovenia Green Park label, and 2 agencies with the Slovenia Green Travel Agency label. Slovenia Green Association boasts 10 new destinations and 5 new accommodations per year, the Slovenia Green Farm Stay, the Slovenia Green Attraction, and the Slovenia Green Event.

Further information:

<https://www.slovenia.info/en/business/green-scheme-of-slovenian-tourism>

https://www.slovenia.info/uploads/dokumenti/zelen-shema/sto_slovenia_green_zsst_brosura_jul2017_ang_web.pdf

Email: Nataša Hočevar natasa.hocevar@slovenia.info

Head of the Research, Development, Innovation, and EU Projects Department



3.3.2 Ecomode

Location

ECOMode is operated from Pula, Croatia as part of the Aktivist d.o.o. (Ltd.) company, which is a tour operator and travel agency based in the Istrian town. The ECOMode program covers the region of Istria and offers a distinctive ECOMode label to small tourist accommodation facilities and activities which are willing to communicate their sustainable practices to travellers.



Aim and objectives

ECOMode is an initiative of a group of people who are dedicated to making sustainable development happen at the local level, in this case in the region of Istria. The initiative has developed the ECOMode program for the Istrian tourism sector with the aim of encouraging small providers of tourist services to embrace sustainable principles and recognise that by doing so their businesses can benefit too. The ECOMode program is developed with the aim of lowering the environmental impact of tourism in the region of Istria. It also aims to promote and initiate social development and collaborative practices. In addition, the ECOMode program is also a contribution to the realisation of international sustainable development goals within the region of Istria.



Coordinating organization/stakeholders

We are focused on collaboration with local stakeholders to achieve the goal of sustainability. The ECOMode program is supported by the Istrian County Council (Istarska županija) and the official tourist website of Istria16. It is developed in collaboration with local environmental protection and tourism stakeholders with the aim to encourage and actively support the implementation of sustainable practices. To be eligible for the ECOMode basic label it is necessary to meet 50 mandatory criteria through 12 categories, while for the ECOMode+ label, along with the mandatory criteria, it is necessary to obtain 20 points from the additional criteria.

Key elements of the practice

The ECOMode program guarantees high visibility for all its users and quality assurance to all travellers. It is the very first sustainable tourism program offering a full service to its users:

- a high-quality labeling system tailored to the needs and possibilities of the Istrian region
- a central info point of all eco-friendly accommodation facilities, activities and products in Istria
- all-year-round support to our users through eco-advising, printed materials, exchange of best practices, collaboration, promotion etc.

Each accommodation facility needs to have a program manager who oversees the proper implementation of ECOMode criteria and provides feedback on a monthly basis. The guests

¹⁶ <http://www.istra.hr/en/home>

also participate in the monitoring by means of an online evaluation questionnaire. Among the annually reviewed criteria are the following: promoting local eco-certified food and beverages; water saving methods; eco-certified products for personal hygiene, washing and cleaning; implementing responsible waste management and energy efficient practices; eco-friendly transport; minimising noise and light pollution; and encouraging social involvement.



The ECOMode label is specifically designed for small accommodation facilities in the Istrian region such as holiday homes and owner-run tourist apartments. Due to its local dimension, the entire application and labeling process is supported and followed by the ECOMode team. The process of applying for the ECOMode label follows the structure of contacting the ECOMode office, carrying out an onsite evaluation and criteria implementation, the onsite final audit, and receiving the label. The ECOMode label is valid for the calendar year and is due for annual renewal. The entry fee for small accommodation facilities is 4.000,00 HRK (VAT included) per applicant for one location (with a total capacity of maximum 30 guests per application) while the renewal price is 2.000,00 HRK (VAT included).

With the ECOMode label comes a wide range of direct and indirect benefits such as being promoted on the ECOMode website, developing a personalized sustainability policy, access to all ECOMode educational activities and best practice examples, as well as a 10% discount on specific project development consultancy in sustainable tourism (for application for EU and national funds).



A similar process takes place for activity providers who wish to apply for the ECOMode certification. The activity provider has to prove compliance with at least three guidelines for their respective

sector including among others the involvement of local stakeholders, the use of “leave no trace” ethics, or the promotion of low carbon transport. The application process consists of listing all provided activities and a short essay in which activity providers must give at least three examples on how they address the ECOMode guidelines. After application evaluation, the ECOMode team conducts an on-site validation to verify the provided information.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

ECOMode has designed an outstanding incentive scheme for accommodation and activity providers which improves their visibility and helps distinguish small businesses on the tourism market. It also sensitizes tourists towards eco-friendly and healthy vacation experience through which they can also support local businesses, thus the local community.

Results

In addition to incentivizing small tourism providers to adopt sustainable practices and enhancing their visibility through granting them the ECOMode label, the scheme also supports local initiatives that among many objectives support the improvement of educational opportunities and the reduction of environmental pollution.

Further information:

Milena Radošević info@ecomodetravel.com

<https://www.ecomodetravel.com/>



3.3.3 Hostetín Eco-village

Location

Hostetín, a village of 240 inhabitants is located in the scenic natural and cultural landscape of the White Carpathians. The area forms part of the White Carpathian Protected Landscape Area, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1996.

Aim and objectives

The aim is to demonstrate that a responsible attitude towards nature, considerate management of resources, and informed interpretation of local heritage may economically stabilize the countryside and solve unemployment even in rather remote areas. It should serve as a living laboratory of sustainable development attitudes and measurements.

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

Through a long-term collaborative effort with the village of Hostetín, the Ecological Institute Veronica has demonstrated how local projects can incentivize environmentally friendly behaviour while also supporting regional economic and social development. This integrated system of projects was brought to life through strong collaboration between the village and the nonprofit sector. Centrum Veronica Hostetín is a part of ZO ČSOP Veronica (Basic Organization of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation), a civic association based in Brno, which has been operating in Hostetín and the Zlín region for more than 15 years.

Research and education are built upon cooperation with a range of experts, schools and institutions. Many allied organizations in the White Carpathians complement the offer of ecological projects with other practical examples and regional specifics. The cooperation with promoters of similar projects abroad is equally important - it expands local experience by international knowledge and latest trends.

Key elements of the practice

Educational modules of the Centre are developed mainly in the following expert areas:

- Sustainable regional development
- Climate protection, energy savings, and renewable energy resources; ecological building
- Nature and landscape protection
- Water in the landscape
- Extensive fruit growing

They are not limited to theory but mainly focused on practical transfer of experience, based on long-lasting monitoring of realized model projects:

- Passive House
- Biomass Heating Plant
- Solar Collectors

- Apple Juice Plant
- Fruit Drying Kiln
- Reed-Bed Sewage Treatment Plant
- Rural Landscape
- Energy Saving Public Lighting
- Sculptures in the Landscape

The eco-village organizes expert seminars, conferences, and workshops for representatives of public administration, NGOs, businesses and the public. Hostetín offers guided tours of the model projects; programmes and trips for all types of schools; lectures and counselling service for the general public; library and study room with projects documentation; and eco-accommodation in a passive house.



Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

The eco-village plays an important role as an educator in the region, enables visitors from the public and private sphere to learn about a more sustainable way of living and experience it through the participation in the running projects. This project goes far beyond sustainable tourism, it was founded as a response to population decline, unemployment and an uncertain future.

Results

The numerous projects implemented in Hostetín all contribute to protecting the environment and at the same time have increased employment in the village. Money spent on energy, food and services remain in the local community and help strengthen it. The benefits provided by some of the projects have been calculated using the multiplier effect. For every Czech crown that goes into the juicing plant, 63 hellers are generated in the region. For every Czech crown that goes into the heating plant, one crown and 30 hellers are generated. The seminar centre/passive house spends 67% of all costs in the region. The projects have also produced an ideal environment for “hands-on” education. Both experts and members of the general public visit Hostetín to gather inspiration.

Further information:

<https://hostetin.veronica.cz/en>

https://hostetin.veronica.cz/sites/default/files/model_projects_of_hostetin.pdf

Email: hostetin@veronica.cz



3.3.4 Eco-village in GömörSZölös

Location

GömörSZölös is situated in northern Hungary, only a kilometre away from the Slovak border. Situated in an idyllic, secluded area, the closest village, Kelemér, is two kilometres away and the closest town, Putnok, eleven. GömörSZölös, which has experienced a considerable demographic decline, as many young members of the local population migrated to urban areas during the last decades, has a population of less than 100 inhabitants. Farming and agriculture are the main economic activity in the village, but these activities cannot support the entire population. This is where sustainable, responsible and environmentally friendly tourism becomes vital for the village.

Aim and objectives

This eco-village project aims to serve the development of the citizens' knowledge and attitude towards sustainability and to contribute to the sustainable development of the village. Tourism is perceived as an important tool for socio-economic development and it is hence developed in a way that promotes nature friendly, healthy lifestyles.

Coordinating organization

The Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County Environmental Protection and Regional Development Nonprofit Ltd. are the organisers, together with the local Institute of Ecology, of all tourism initiatives in the area. In 1993 the Institute of ecology started a village development programme: "GömörSZölös - a sustainable village". After the rehabilitation of a number of traditional buildings, tourism became a priority. A number of educational programmes and activities were designed targeting potential visitors.

In collaboration with ÖKO-Pack Ltd. and with the help of volunteers and activists, the programmes were successfully implemented. Experts from the field of sustainability are regularly involved in the programmes, providing their skills and knowledge and attracting new visitors.

Key elements of the initiative

There is a wide variety of activities available promoting slow tourism. The village offers different packages, all of them focused on wellness and educating visitors. The town offers the opportunity to learn or practice traditional skills and a number of sustainability-related abilities and activities.

All the programmes include lectures and workshops where visitors can learn important lessons on ecology and sustainability, including sustainable agriculture and food



production (i.e. learning about permaculture or how to produce cheese and bread), gardening (extensive orchard maintenance), wool processing, renewable energies (how to build solar collectors) or household sustainability. Film screenings, conversations and discussions as well as experts' presentations are also important components of these educational programmes. The programmes also have a practical component; visitors can put into practice the skills learnt in the lectures and workshops and actually work, hands on, involving organic farming and other jobs in the bio-economy (fruit growing, fruit processing, composting, food processing, goat farming, wool processing, animal care, etc.).

The cultural offer of the village is also focused on sustainability. Gömörzölös maintains an ethnographic and outdoor farm and forestry collection, a training and demonstration center, Kankas Clastle Collection, a Church that has been reformed following its traditional architecture, and a number of small buildings that reflect the traditions and values of the village.

A number of excursions complete the educational offer of these programmes. There are a number of half-day and day excursions and tours to educate visitors in topics related to culture and natural science. Some of these include guided tours in the neighbouring villages and surroundings, historical and cultural walk through the village, mushroom tours, botanical tours to learn about the orchard, excursion to the Keleméri-Mohosok, visits to the Aggtelek National Park, visit to the cultural values of the settlements in the region, and a number of trekking trails.

A further opportunity for learning is offered through the design and operation of the buildings where tourists can accommodate, which are environmentally friendly and energy-saving. Local, homemade food cooked with ingredients from the local farm is provided.

Relevance for the INSiGHTS project

An exceptional example on how to promote sustainability, raise environmental awareness and encourage healthy lifestyles within visitors and local communities, the village of Gömörzölös



has used small-scale tourism as an opportunity to provide an additional source of living to the inhabitants of the village while contributing to the sustainable development of the region. Nature, culture, rural experiences and gastronomy are important components of tourism in the village, which uses every contact with guests to promote the environment, local values and healthy lifestyles.

Results

The sustainable village of Gömörzölös has been successfully running these educational programmes since the 1990s, managing to bring to the destination around 150 visitors per year. Many of them have even become returning guests over the years. Taking into consideration the size of the village, receiving this amount of guests constitutes an important source of income. This is an incredible example on how spreading education on sustainable development can have a long lasting positive effect.

Due to the work towards the sustainable development of the village, the local government of the small village, its social organizations, as well as some of its inhabitants, have received several domestic and international recognitions, including the Tourism for Tomorrow Award, the Károly Kós architectural prize, the British Airways Sustainable Village Award, For our Environment – 2003, Museum of the Year – 2003, BAZ-County Assembly Tourism Award – 2010 and the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary.

Further information:

<http://www.parasztwellness.hu/turizmus>



3.3.5 SEEMORE project: Sustainable and Energy Efficient Mobility Options in Tourist Regions in Europe

Location

SEEMORE is a Europe-wide project that was undertaken from 2012 to 2015 in 8 coastal tourist regions: Balearic Islands (Spain), Bohuslän (Sweden), Madeira (Portugal), Limassol (Cyprus), Malta (Malta), Pomerania (Poland), Forlì-Cesena (Italy) and Dobrich (Bulgaria). More information on individual destinations is available on the project's site¹⁷.

Aim and objectives

The aim of SEEMORE project is to offer tourists and visitors sustainable and comfortable alternatives to the private car. In order to achieve this, it is vital to improve the offer on sustainable transportation available in these destinations. In addition to striving to increase the awareness among visitors about sustainable mobility options in tourist regions, the project identified the following aims:

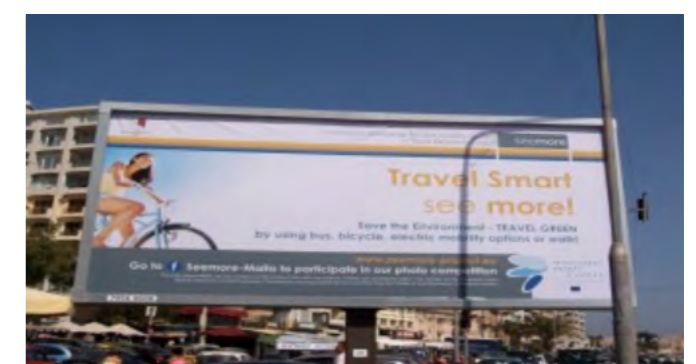
- To increase co-operation between the sectors of tourism and mobility, and create new and improved energy efficient mobility options for leisure travel.
- Shift travel behaviour of visitors towards more sustainable modes.
- Widely share and communicate the SEEMORE experiences and outcomes with other actors in Europe.

Coordinating organization/stakeholders

The project is co-funded by the EU programme Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE¹⁸), a programme launched by the European Commission in 2003 in order to reduce greenhouse emissions and shift to more sustainable energy consumption patterns. Private and public partners, including local authorities, tourism and transport consultancies and research institutions from a number of EU countries, collaborated to implement the project. Cooperation between tourism and mobility sectors was strongly encouraged. SEEMORE project provided support to the individual regions, which undertook different actions depending on their individual needs. At the same time, the regions acted in a coordinated manner, sharing experiences and learning from each

¹⁷ <http://www.seemore-project.eu/index.php?id=2589>

¹⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent>



other.

Case studies on previous good practices were used to inspire, support and improve regional actions, and regular meetings, seminars, conferences and other public events were held in order to share experiences among the involved parties and with other tourism destinations. Social networks, newsletters and the website of the project were also used as dissemination tools. Communication within project stakeholders, the public and the wider tourism industry is vital to spread the experiences of SEEMORE and get more and more destinations involved in similar practices.

Key elements of the initiative

When planning mobility solutions, public authorities tend to overlook tourists. This can cause serious issues (traffic congestions, pollution, increased travel times, accidents, etc.), as many destinations face peaks in the demand of transport during high tourism season. At the same time, these issues threaten the long term attractiveness and economic future of the destinations that do not strategically plan mobility with tourists in mind. In order to achieve the project's objectives, the project implementation considered different scopes, including encouraging stakeholder cooperation (tourism and mobility cooperation frameworks), local actions adapted to each destination to promote the sustainable mobility of visitors and sharing successful experiences with other regions to encourage replication.

The eight SEEMORE regions have implemented a range of 179 local actions. Examples include sustainable mobility tourist guides, communication campaigns and promotion of sustainable transport in hotels and tourism hotspots (videos, photo competitions, advertising on billboards), promoting cycling and walking in tourist areas through the establishment of bike and walking routes and the provision of public bikes, training programmes for industry members, improving and developing new public transport services, parking management, as well as other targeted awareness campaigns and specific cooperation schemes with hotels and other stakeholders of the tourism industry.

Relevance for the INSIGHTS project

SEEMORE project has successfully moved a number of destinations towards more sustainable practices, and sets an outstanding example for other destinations to follow. It also provides the knowledge and tools that destinations need in order to plan, coordinate and integrate mobility schemes and tourism. In order to achieve sustainability, tourism and mobility need to be planned together due to the strong interconnections between the two sectors.

The project also has a strong focus on education and awareness raising of different stakeholders including businesses, employees, tourists and the general public on environmental issues. The regions involved in the project have considerably increased their offer on sustainable



mobility for both tourists and locals, with improvements on public transport and encouraging alternative means of transport (cycling or walking). These measures towards more sustainable mobility favour not only the environment, but also the local population, tourists and the tourism industry as a whole, which becomes more competitive and attractive, having a positive income in the local economy.

It is also worth mentioning the marketing work developed by the project, with a number of online and offline advertising campaigns that have contributed to the success of the project. Social media has been widely used, and the offline campaigns also delivered exceptional results.

Results

SEEMORE has been successful in reaching its specific project objectives. Co-operation between tourism and mobility improved in every region, awareness was raised within all tourism stakeholders and a shift on tourists' perceptions was observed. Additionally, the experiences from SEEMORE were shared with other regions.

More specifically, the combined promotion and awareness actions of the SEEMORE project have reached 7,800,000 visitors, with 60% of surveyed tourists stating that they were aware of the sustainable mobility options that are promoted by the project. Representatives of 107 European tourism regions participated in small scale workshops sharing the experiences from SEEMORE, and the dissemination activities reached 1,300 practitioners. From 2012 to 2014 and within the SEEMORE regions, additional 1,500,000 public transport tickets were sold, reflecting a shift towards sustainable mobility.

It is believed that based on the results from this project, SEEMORE contributes to achieving EU 2020 objectives on CO2 reduction and savings in primary energy use. More and more regions are following the steps of SEEMORE and implementing similar actions, and it is calculated that by 2020 more than 65 regions will do so. This will lead to important reduction of CO2 emissions and to an important contribution to more sustainable tourism.

Further information:

<http://www.seemore-project.eu/>



4. Conclusion

There is a multitude of already existing good practices in the Danube region and at a European and global scale. These provide valuable insights into how sustainable tourism development can be implemented at various

tourism sector in forming a clearer overview of what tools are at their disposal for tourism development, the document also comes with its limitations. The delimitations describe the boundaries of the research that has been



scales and contexts. These good practices do not present one-size-fits-all solutions for destinations as the management, development and marketing tools are highly dependent on the national, regional and local context. They do however serve as a model and guide for partners as well as other stakeholders in formulating their vision and objectives, planning their framework and developing appropriate tools for implementation and monitoring.

While the publication showcases a wide range of case studies and aids piloting partners as well as other relevant stakeholders of the

undertaken to explain certain aspects which the publication was not meant to address. Due to the limited scope of the deliverable, the collection of case studies does not capture “poor practices” using concrete examples but rather identifies a set of challenges that face those involved in tourism development throughout the descriptions of case studies. The primary goal of this publication is thus to provide partners with a collection of examples set in similar spatial and socio-economic contexts. The project focuses on baseline cases against which the desirable transition can be measured with respect to all three pillars of sustainability

as well as the thematic pillars defined within this project.

Several case studies were submitted by piloting partners of the INSIGHTS project which also raises the issue of self-sourcing or self-reporting. This potential threat to the validity of the selection process was mitigated through careful consideration of the submitted examples according to the selection criteria and by verifying the data from other sources. An additional issue that may influence the results is presented by the measurability and quantifiability of the outcomes of the listed practices. Obtaining information about specific results or effects was for some of the cases difficult or not possible at all due to the shortage of data available on how the sustainable practices affected the local economy, community and the environment. In the cases where the available data was not sufficient partners are nonetheless presented with information on the processes and tools

that were employed during the destination management development, facilitating the implementation of their pilot actions.

The ultimate aim of this publication was to showcase a diverse set of successful practices in the field of sustainable tourism along the lines of the three thematic pillars. It was not only developed for the sake of presenting a collection of outstanding cases across the Danube and the wider European region, but also to provide INSIGHTS piloting partners with an additional source of practical information from similar ventures around Europe. For this very reason, each case study, included in the main body of the publication as well as the factsheets added in the Annex, was elaborated bearing in mind what the most valuable form of data compilation would be. The sections along which each example was structured were presented in detail to give partners a basis of comparison with their own areas/regions to pinpoint common properties or lack thereof as



a way to determine which cases or elements are of most relevance to their respective projects. Further information and contact details, where available, were also added so that INSIGHTS project partners have relatively easy access to additional details about the examples' own experience in destination management, product development or marketing strategies.

The good practices illustrated in Chapter 3 can nevertheless also be of importance to stakeholders outside the range of the INSIGHTS project, who wish to set up a new sustainable tourism organization, network or management model or aim to improve upon their current practices to facilitate the transition to a sustainable tourism sector.



5. References

Images:

Location of the Swabian Danube Valley within Germany*, author: Marco Zanoli (Sidonius) *derivative work: Quahadi , via Wikimedia Commons; A Road Bridge*, author: Dg-505, via Wikimedia Commons; Wildenstein Castle Hexenturm with view of the Danube valley*, author: Joachim Haller, via Wikimedia Commons; author: Dg-505, via Wikimedia Commons; Location of Gijón in Spain*, Wikipedia; San Lorenzo beach and Cimadevilla*, author: Labé via Wikimedia.org; Marina and Revillagigedo Palace*, author: Gabriel Villena, uploaded by Jacopo Werther) via Wikimedia Commons; Gijón*, author: Alter.ego via Wikimedia Commons; Soft mobility in Werfenweng*, author: Klimabündnis Österreich, via flickr.com; Electric car in Werfenweng*, author: Patrizia Tirel, via flickr.com; Solar collectors in Werfenweng*, author: usd2013Austria, via flickr.com; Solčava village*, author: Vladimir Tkalčić, via flickr.com; accommodation in Logarska Dolina*, author: ChrissyJ via flickr.com; Logarska Dolina*, autor: Vidar Karlsen via flickr.com; Hohenneuffen Castle, the Swabian Alb biosphere area*, author: Biosphärengebiet, via Wikimedia Commons; author: Biosphärengebiet via Wikimedia Commons; author: Blizzard via Wikimedia Commons; Waymarking sign in Ireland*, author: Joe King, via Wikimedia Commons;Footpath on the Puigmal mountain in Catalonia*, author: Santiago Puig Vilado, via Wikimedia Commons; Map of Istria*, author:Adam Božičković, via flickr.com; Oprtalj View*, author: Jered Gruber, via flickr.com; Cycle trail signage Istria*, author: Doug Corrie, via flickr.com; Cycle trail map board Ilstria*, author: Doug Corrie, via flickr.com; Hotel L'Avenc de Tavertet**, via avenc.com; Hotel L'Avenc de Tavertet*, author: Salut Vilaró, via Wikimedia Commons; L'Avenc de Tavertet*, author: CalidadRural, via flickr.com; Room in Hotel L'Avenc de Tavertet**, via avenc.com; Location of Mecsek in Hungary*, via Wikipedia; via flickr.com; Wild garlic lane*, author: herzoli, via flickr.com; Wild garlic and local honey*, author: Tara MacDonald, via flickr.com; Snail - the symbol of the Slow Food movement*, author: Laura Billings, via flickr.com; Food market*, author: Nishanthe Hewawitharana, via flickr.com; Slovenia Green logo**, via the Slovenian Tourist Board (slovenia.info); Hikers in sunset**, Matkov kot, via slovenia.info Medial Library; Map of the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism** via slovenia.info; ECOMode logo**, via ecomodetravel.com; Awarded Accommodation ECOMode label**, via ecomodetravel.com; Awarded Activity ECOMode label**, via ecomodetravel.com; Hostetín, Czech Republic*, author: 350.org, via flickr.com; Building of Centre Veronica Hostetín*, author: Pavouk, via Wikimedia Commons; View of Gömörszőlős*, author: Metsavend via Wikimedia Commons; Compost basket*, author: Elekes Andor via Wikimedia; 19th century farmhouse*, author: Hollófernyiges, via Wikimedia Commons.

*All images available through Creative Commons licenses.

**Permission to reproduce the images has been granted

INTEGRATED SLOW, GREEN AND HEALTHY TOURISM STRATEGIES - INSIGHTS

Collecting state-of-the-art good practices in slow, green and healthy tourism
in the Danube region and beyond

EDITED BY:

Krisztina Campbell, *CEEweb for Biodiversity*
Michael Meyer, *Ecological Tourism in Europe*
Inma Gonzalez Segura, *Ecological Tourism in Europe*

DESIGN BY:

Linda Szabó, *CEEweb for Biodiversity*

We thank the PROJECT PARTNERS, who have contributed to this publication:

Pons Danubii European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation - Slovakia
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna - Austria
Development centre of the Heart of Slovenia - Slovenia
Zala County Government- Hungary, Local Action Group "Central Istria" - Croatia
Regional Development Agency with Business Support Centre for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises - Bulgaria
Donautal-Aktiv e.V. Registered Association - Germany
CEEweb for Biodiversity - Hungary
Harghita County Council - Romania
Regional Economic Development Agency for Šumadija and Pomoravlje - Serbia
Plovdiv District Administration - Bulgaria
Komárom-Esztergom County - Hungary
Istrian Region - Administrative Department for Tourism - Croatia

PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY

European Union funds (ERDF, IPA).

www.interreg-danube.eu/insights



EUROPEAN UNION

This publication is financially supported by the Danube Transnational Programme,
the European Regional Development Fund, the European Union and Hungary
but does not necessarily reflect its position or opinion.