

Output Factsheet

Output title:

Output 4.2: Transnational INSiGHTS workshops:

1st Study Visit, as a part of the 1st bilateral walkshop

Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The 1st transnational knowledge and experience exchange event was the 1st bilateral walkshop, containing a Study Visit. The event took place in Bulgaria, Plovdiv on 19-20 June 2017. The organiser and the host partner was RDA BSC SMEs, the participants were the representatives of REDASP (the “pair” partner of RDA BSC SMEs), CEEWEB (mentor of REDASP and RDA BSC SMEs), and local, regional and national stakeholders from Bulgaria. The walkshop was connected to the 3rd thematic pillar – promotion of green & healthy lifestyle through sustainable tourism services.

The aim of the Study Visit was to visit host partner’s pilot area in order to learn about the existing good practices, mainly focusing on the thematic pillar 3. It included both indoor and outdoor activities, like site visits and presentations on the product development training linked to the host partner’s region.

At the beginning of event partners visited Plovdiv old town. The guided tour started with the Forum of Philippopolis (agora), Plovdiv Odeon, the new excavations on the central square, the longest pedestrian street in Europe, the Roman stadium of Plovdiv, the oldest mosque on the Balkan Peninsula - Dzhumaya mosque, the Ancient Roman theatre, Klianty house, Lamartin’s house, Puldin restaurant and Dervish dancers, Museum of icons, the Orthodox Church of Elena and Konstantin, The Ethnographic museum, Ndeet tepe with panoramic view of the other three hills – protected areas and Matirsa river – Natura 2000.

The tour continued with a visit to the old house of winery Pulpudeva – where the owner presented his company and all of the participants tasted 5 types of wine. The participants visited the three reopened houses of different crafts of Plovdiv municipality and Regional Chamber of Crafts.

The study visit continued in the afternoon with visiting the city central garden, Bunardzhik hill – natural landmark, Kapana quarter with its renewed buildings, cafes, restaurants, and cultural events, fests, exhibitions for leisure time.

After that all participants took part in the training on product development and promotion delivered by Michael Meyer and Krisztina Campbell from CEEweb with presentation and discussions. It was mentioned, that the promotion of tourism products and services need to happen both externally and internally; tourism providers have to find a way to connect the past with the present and be innovative.

Contribution to the project and Programme objectives (max. 1500 characters)

The overall objective of the project, fully in line with the Programme Specific Objective (Foster sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources), 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, thus serve as foundation for a flourishing responsible green tourism sector.

The 3 specific objectives of INSiGHTS are:

- Establishing integrated sustainable tourism management schemes;
- Promoting coordinated and smart tourism products linked to greenways;
- Stimulating eco-conscious and healthy lifestyle through green tourism.

During this Study Visit participants visited existing tourism destinations in the piloting area of RDA BSC SMEs, listened to presentations on project development in general and in Bulgaria in connection to eco-conscious and healthy lifestyle and tasted local foods and wines. These activities are in line with the overall objective, and especially with the 3rd specific objective of INSiGHTS. Thanks to the Study Visit, partners got an overall impression about the region. This impression was the basis of the fruitful discussion during the the walkshop in Serbia, on 28-30 June 2017. Based on the knowledge gained on the walkshops the main project outputs will be elaborated in order to reach the objectives of INSiGHTS.

Transnational impact (max. 1500 characters)

Green tourism can offer a key break out opportunity for several less developed rural areas in the Danube-region with unique heritage assets but with considerably low innovative and adaptive capacity on behalf of the public and private sector. Therefore, transnational events, like this international Study Visit can be an ideal tool for laying the ground of a new green tourism policy framework, where partners and stakeholders can exchange expertise, good practices and creative ideas, they can also learn new methods and theories and build such a knowledge pool that otherwise would not be available. Partners can share their capacities and test different solutions out of a comprehensive “toolkit”. The knowledge gained thanks to this walkshop and the upcoming strategies and models based on this knowledge, (like the Strategies and the Comprehensive Model) can be adapted by other countries and regions in Europe.

Moreover, the approach used at INSiGHTS walkshops, including this bilateral Study Visit is a brand new tool. It will be published on the project website, thus other regions/ projects will be able to adapt and remake this smart methodology, and possibly not just in the field of tourism.

The knowledge and the experience of this walkshop, will also be transferred to local level staff members of PPs and to RSGs, thus ensuring institutional and stakeholder learning in several countries of Europe.

It is also a good way for RDA BSC SMEs to promote its region with participants sharing their experience back in their home countries, thus bringing new foreign visitors to the region.

Contribution to EUSDR actions and/or targets (max. 1500 characters)

For building synergies, capitalise on other similar projects and initiatives and disseminate the results beyond the partnership, PPs participate in at least 4 external thematic external events

incl. conferences, workshops or seminars organised by the EUSDR bodies and by other relevant networks and projects. They will present this brand new method (Walkshop, including Study Visit) and the main project outputs (Integrated Sustainable Tourism Strategies, Model on slow, green & healthy tourism development) that are based on the knowledge gained through the workshops, including this bilateral Study Visit.

The final output, the Transnational Policy recommendations (Output 4.3.) will be elaborated based on the knowledge gained in workshops for national level decision-makers all across the Danube region for meeting the standards and targets set by the EU and particularly the EUSDR policy frameworks. It will also include a review of the EU and national level funding schemes and concrete suggestions for exploiting these sources, as well as an outlook on future capitalisation on the project results in the frame of the PA3 of EUSDR.

Performed testing, if applicable (max. 1000 characters)

Not relevant

Integration and use of the output by the target group (max. 2000 characters)

The representatives of partners and various Bulgarian stakeholders - including local and regional economic development actors and organisations from public, private and NGO sectors - participated at the Study Visit being part of the international knowledge exchange and learning activity. The walkshop offered direct benefit for staff members of the PPs (Individual learning). They had the chance to learn interesting facts about Bulgaria and about product development in tourism, to taste local foods and to visit touristic sites, which stimulated their reflective thinking. This new method of walkshop can be implemented to their daily work, including creating new strategies, new marketing methods or new tourism products in order to promote their region. Moreover, they had an opportunity to meet local people and stakeholders. These newly built international relationships can be useful for their future work.

The knowledge gained during the walkshop can be shared with other staff members of the PPs and of the stakeholder organisations by reporting back to their departments and by briefing decision-makers (institutional learning). RSG members of Piloting Partners' regions will be also informed about the main findings of the walkshop because of the media coverage of the event (press releases, information on institutional websites, media presence etc.) and via regional RSG workshops organised by the Piloting Partners.

The walkshop contributes to a more comprehensive improvement of the institutional planning and management capacities also across different departments, and generates a large-scale commitment to further use, upgrade and/ or implement the outputs (guidelines, strategies, management/ product development/ awareness raising model).

Geographical coverage and transferability (max. 1500 characters)

The walkshop took place in Bulgaria in the municipality of Plovdiv. Participants were stakeholders from Bulgaria and project partners from Serbia and Hungary. At 2nd international knowledge exchange session, which was the 1st multilateral walkshop organised in Serbia on 28-30 June 2017, a summary was presented about this bilateral walkshop, so indirectly all project partners were involved in the event. The discussion among participants will have a positive impact not only on their home countries, but also on other European countries, because of the transferability of the knowledge gained at this event.

The knowledge gained thanks to this workshop and the upcoming strategies based on the knowledge (e.g. outputs like the Guidelines (Output and the Comprehensive Model) can also be adapted by other countries and regions in Europe.

Moreover, this brand new, innovative knowledge exchange tool (workshop, including the Study Visit) can be adapted not only in the field of tourism, but can also be easily transferred to different areas outside of the project area. It will be published on the project website, thus other regions/ projects will be able to adapt and remake this smart methodology, and possibly not just in the field of tourism.

Durability (max. 1500 characters)

All workshops, including this one in Bulgaria are durable, because will be of direct benefit of PPs' and Bulgarian stakeholders' participating staff members (individual learning). The knowledge gained will be shared with other staff members of the PP organisations by reporting back to their departments and by briefing decision-makers (institutional learning). RSG members of Piloting Partners will be also informed about the main findings at RSG WS. The information of this workshop will be available on the project website free of charge, the method and the context of this workshop can be used by other organisations and other projects.

The smart solutions within the Comprehensive Model (Output 4.1) that is based on the knowledge gained during the workshops will be fed into the regional strategies (Outputs 3.3) customized to specific territorial contexts, to be integrated into strategic development documents of the PP regions (in Act. 3.2). 8 PPs will implement a set of interrelated tools and methods within their pilot action in WP5, whilst some of them will feed follow up projects to be financed from mainstream ERDF funds or other (national/ regional/ local/ own) resources.

Synergies with other projects/ initiatives and / or alignment with current EU policies/ directives/ regulations, if applicable (max. 1500 characters)

Not relevant

Output integration in the current political/ economic/ social/ technological/ environmental/ legal/ regulatory framework (max. 2000 characters)

The output cannot be directly integrated in the current political/ economic/ social/ technological/ environmental/ legal/ regulatory framework, but there are three ways for its indirect integration.

Some of stakeholders participating in this workshop relate to local, regional and national and decision-makers of Bulgaria. They can implement the ideas and knowledge gained during this workshop into the new strategies and frameworks.

The Comprehensive Model (Output 4.1) that is one of the main outputs of the INSiGHTS project will be co-created via a set of innovative exchange sessions, including this workshop related to the 2nd and 3rd thematic pillar of the project (coordinated tourism supply development linked to greenways; promotion of healthy & eco-conscious lifestyle). The Comprehensive model will be tested and cross-checked by pairs of partners through pilot actions centred around the key thematic issues. Finally, for maximising the policy impact of the project, Transnational Policy Recommendations (Output 4.3) will be put on the table of

decision-makers. It will include a review of the EU and national level funding schemes and concrete suggestions for exploiting these sources.

This new method (workshop, including bilateral Study Visit) can also be used for the elaboration of new national and regional strategies and frameworks.