



Dear Reader!

Welcome to the EcoVeloTour project - Fostering enhanced ecotourism planning along the Eurovelo cycle route network in the Danube region

EcoVeloTour facilitates the development of sustainable tourism in the Danube region along EuroVelo routes via enhanced, conscious and ecologically sound framework of tourism destination management and extending cyclist tourism, unfolding neighbouring regions beyond the EuroVelo route. The framework incorporates the concept of ecosystem services applied in the cyclist tourism planning of a region aiming at ensuring the long-term sustainability of the regions.

We support cyclist ecotourism planning by creating novel guidelines, conduct a comprehensive market research in the region and put into practice the novel approach in pilot regions creating strategies with extensive stakeholder involvement. The project experience will enrich our final project results and support higher decision-maker level with policy recommendation.

The project will practice active reach out to the various target group members, pass on the knowledge via workshops, conferences, or even online in e-learning format. Moreover, a tourism supporting mobile application is foreseen.

1st Edition – March 2019

The project is running in 7 countries with 10 partners and 6 strategic partners.
The lead partner of the project is the City of Budapest, District 14 Zugló Municipality.



Associated strategic partners:

- Hungarian Cycling Alliance (HU)
- Marketing Association German Danube (DE)
- Ministry of Tourism (BG)
- Prešov Bicycle Group Boneshaker (SK)
- Ministry of Tourism (RO)
- Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic (SK)

About the project in brief

- Duration: 36 months (01-06-2018 - 31-05-2021)
- Overall budget in Euro: 2117177,58 (ERDF Contribution: 1575855,96; IPA Contribution: 223744,97)
- Call number: Call 2
- Priority: Environment and culture responsible Danube region
- Specific objective: Foster sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources

What happened so far, results



The Lead Partner hosted the kick-off meeting **5-6th July 2018**, where the partnership (frontpage picture) got introduced to each other. The partners introduced their organization, pilot areas and the current state of EuroVelo and ecotourism in their country. The Lead Partner and key stakeholders of the cyclist ecotourism from Hungary participated the event such as relevant ministries for cycling development and nature protection, as well as the Municipality of Budapest, that is developing a section of the newly approved EuroVelo 14 within Budapest in the valley of Creek Rákos, that is one pilot areas of project. At the end of the meeting, the partnership had a little bike tour to the Creek Rákos.

On the **3rd October** 99 participants from 12 countries attended the official launching event of the EcoVeloTour project including public entities (ministries and public institutes, tourism organizations, municipalities etc.), private stakeholders, academia, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the media etc. The project got introduced to the wider public and relevant key stakeholders were present as guests or speakers such as Government Commissioner for Active Hungary (HU) and the EUSDR PA3 Culture and Tourism leaders (BG and RO). The conference strived to build close cooperation at the beginning of the project with other Danube Transnational Programme and Central Europe INTERREG Programme projects in order to find synergies in their common activities. An unprecedented high number of projects appeared including The Amazon of Europe Bike Trail, CHESTNUT, DANUrB, INSIGHTS, TransDanubePearls projects and got introduced.



One of the keynote speakers, the Head of Marketing and Communication, European Travel Commission, Mr Miguel Gallego helped the audience to put the topic of EcoVeloTour project into a wider context in the global tourism. He introduced the new Horizon 2022 EU tourism strategy and drafted the future perspectives of European (cyclist) tourism at a global scale.

Mr. Balázs Kozák, external consultant at City of Budapest, District 14 Zugló Municipality introduced the project background, the partnership, project objectives and main expected results. Dr. Michael Meschik (The University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna – Institute for Transport Studies) and Dr. György Pataki (Corvinus University of Budapest) held key presentations to the understanding of the project about the cyclist tourism as well as about the connection of ecosystem services and the ecotourism.

The kick-off conference was a successful start for the project with the active participation of all EcoVeloTour project partners and Danube Region stakeholders.

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Interview with the project coordinator, Mr. Viktor Merker

Why have the Municipality of Zugló taken the lead this project as a municipality?

The main strategy of the Zugló Municipality to use EU sources for the development of local mobility. One of the main cyclist mobility projects is the so-called VEKOP project, which develops a new cycle route along the bank of the Rákos creek. The EcoVeloTour helps the ecotourist utilization of this project and gives us useful scientific and practical background to develop it.

What is the added value of this project in the Danube Region?

I think the main added value is the complexity, which starts from the marketing and strategical research and will end as a working brand with wide range of useful elements, as app, web and e-learning site, different types of smart cyclist stations for varies functions.

The consortium seems very diverse. Why have you chosen the current partnership?

Diverse functions require diverse partners, different points of view help us to realize good project

What could the local citizens in Zugló and in the wider region benefit from EcoVeloTour?

Citizens will have new touristic destination, new information and knowledge. They will have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and practice on ecologically respectful issues.

Why do like working on the EcoVeloTour project?

It is very interesting for me to meet different professions and different ways of thinking. The tension between business-like tourism planning, management and the eco-economy creates exciting results. It is a real challenge to create harmony between them.

Get to know the EcoVeloTour Lead Partner, Zugló Municipality

Municipality of the City of Budapest, District 14 Zugló Municipality (ZuM) is a relevant organisation to initiate and to lead the development of a concept of an integrated, sustainable ecotourism planning for the benefit of the district and of the whole Rákos Stream valley. ZuM has the most popular touristic attraction in Budapest, the Városliget and the Heroes' square. ZuM is committed to develop its green infrastructure and move from mass tourism towards cyclist ecotourism and to become the most bike-friendly district in the Hungarian capital. Changing the attitude of 125 000 inhabitants is a long-lasting and systematic process, which should be lead by the local municipality. The Mayor himself plays role as exemplary person using only bike or public transport.



As part of the Municipality's participative planning, local and regional target and stakeholder groups will be engaged in developing the strategy for ecotourism in the scope of the Rákos Stream valley. The coordination this way will be initiated by ZuM in order to maintain and develop the ecosystem services of the Stream Rákos valley, urban and suburban spine of the green infrastructure contributing to the well-being of the population and to exploit the unfolded ecotourism potential of the areas as a complementary destination along the EuroVelo cycle route network. Synergetic goal of ZuM activities to prepare the settings for the future possible restoration of the stream.

Upcoming EcoVeloTour events and happenings

- 9-11th April 2019 - Project meeting and 1st EcoVeloTour workshop on cyclist ecotourism planning in Kosice (SK)
- Spring 2019 – Publishing guidelines for novel ecotourism planning
- Spring 2019 – Publishing guidelines for sustainable mobility planning

Follow the project

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