



GUIDELINES FOR ESS-BASED ECOTOURISM STRATEGY

The project Fostering enhanced ecotourism planning along the Eurovelo cycle route network in the Danube region is financed by Danube Transnational Program 2014-2020

For further information about the Guidelines for ESS-based ecotourism strategy please visit the website: www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/ecovelotour/outputs



THE MAIN CONCEPT

The ecosystem services based worldview understands that nature contributes to human well-being and society can operate in a way which reduces or enhances nature's capacity to contribute to our well-being.

Recreation and tourism can be understood as activities and experiences through which cultural ecosystem services provide benefits to people. Ecotourism is specifically based on activities and experiences that inherently include an awareness of nature's contribution to human well-being and a willingness to do no harm to nature through recreation and tourism activities.

www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/ecovelotour
Danube Transnational Program 2014-2020

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HOW TO PLAN?

„Success of ecotourism projects depends on the cooperation, communication and involvement of different stakeholders“

(Diamantis, 2018)

Cycling can be an ecotourism activity in that case, if the community-based planning can be implemented, and the most important values considering the landscape and the culture for the stakeholders can be identified. These values can be the baseline for place identity, and the positioning of the destination, as well as for product development.

The ESS-based planning principles

Involving Stakeholders and community-based planning

- Review who the stakeholders of your project are.
- Hold a kick-off event with invitation to all stakeholders.
- Choose a way to bring into light their interests, ideas, opportunities.
- In case of densely populated areas also a survey may be needed to get to know the preferences of the community groups.
- Ask for professional help if necessary.
- Consult regularly.

Value-based positioning

- Select the most important unique values based on an ESS-map and competitor analysis.
- Identify segments and their needs.
- Target based on value-selection.
- Find the jointly understood vision.
- Identify experience promises assuring place attachment.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR?

Activating stakeholders education & building awareness among the stakeholder groups

Educational activities should aim to ensure a wide-spread and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders with a focus on the goals of the project. The key areas of education are to understand the designated area, the community, the stakeholders themselves and the key messages.

Regulation

Main goal of regulation is to promote services and also control impacts based upon the carrying capacity of the site and the infrastructure in order to maintain ESS in the long term.

To achieve a long-term protection and development of ESS international, national, local and on-site regulatory action should be implemented.

How to create tourism product packages?

The EcoVelo packages are complex, nature and culture - based service packages with the following characteristics:

- Low impact.
- Contains edutainment.
- Support the local community & conservation.
- Segmented, well defined slow experience with natural and cultural values.

The quality and resources of built environment

The greenway embedded the cycle way is a significant green infrastructure consisting of varying man-made as well as natural-like built or non-built elements. Building activities must be designed and carried out in an ecologically friendly way with a strong emphasis on sustainability issues.

Testing the programs for the sense of place

At creating community-based programs for the sense of place there is a strong need for a concrete itinerary and preparation of all the involved participants. During testing the programs the following issues should be highlighted:

- Testing that every involved participant knows their tasks.
- Test the program with different local segments & with „test-visitors“.
- Mystery shopping.

Marketing: communication (building public awareness) and labelling

Any communication plan should follow the general guides and recommendations of the www.interregeurope.eu website.

Check-list for marketing communication:

- Determine the desired outcome of communication.
- Select the appropriate communication channels.
- Communicate appropriately to the defined stakeholder groups.
- Determine the form of the communication.
- Deliver the message.

Participatory evaluation and monitoring

The model of an ideal evaluation and monitoring toolkit starts with a cross-sectoral framework, with a combination of top-down and bottom-up processes and tools. How to set a participatory monitoring framework?

- Define the indicators to monitor for the different groups.
- Work out a specific monitoring program.
- Control and collect the monitoring data.
- Regularly publish the monitoring data.
- Invite stakeholders to monitoring actions.
- Regulate management plans and visitors' program based on evaluation of data monitored.