

# OUR WAY

## Interreg Europe



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

- ✓ The European project "Our WAY" is a project focused on greenways, co-financed by the INTERREG Europe programme.
- ✓ "Our WAY" aims to contribute to the conservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage in Europe using greenways.
- ✓ The AEVV participates as an "advisory partner".

The project "Our WAY" aims to contribute to the conservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage in Europe using the greenways, through the improvement of political instruments related to cultural and natural quality territories concerned, including tools for their governance and development of specific measures for their promotion and preservation.

The project aims to improve coordination between the different key actors: to develop governance systems to manage the greenways; identify models and good practices for the protection and maintenance of greenways; identify financial instruments and funding for greenways and promote tourism products around greenways.

The interregional cooperation is essential in order to identify, exchange and transfer of practices among regions and what is more important to plan and prepare specific Action Plans to integrate lessons learned from the interregional cooperation in regional policies programmes.

Our Way will be the ideal tool to help the territories of the partners to strengthen their policies, improve their regional development and contribute to the preservation and promotion of natural and cultural heritage through greenways.

This project will benefit not only the members but also the members of the AEVV, which will be able to:

- ✓ Take advantage of good practices in relation to greenways in different regions of Europe and use its teachings to eventually implement in its territories.
- ✓ Integrate lessons learned from interregional cooperation into regional policy programmes.

- ✓ Contribute with his experiences and own best practices implemented in his territories.
- ✓ Participate in events that will be organized as part of the project .

The partnership is composed of 6 regions at different levels to develop, manage and promote the natural and cultural heritage in and around the greenways, and The European Association of Greenways, as advising partner, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in the project area.

Mercedes Muñoz (European Greenways Association)



## PROJECT TEAM MEETING IN SPAIN



In 4th July 2018, the Ourway team met in Caravaca de la Cruz, Murcia and visited the Greenway Vía del Noroeste in Caravaca de la Cruz (Spain). In the introduction to the Greenway of the Northwest of the Region the Manager explained the partners about the challenges and current situation of its development, sharing and exchanging information on the different approaches to overcome the under-exploitation of this valuable resource.

After the welcome statements begun the partner presentations:

1st Presentation. Murcia Region Institute of Tourism. Lead Partner of the Project. Spain

2nd Presentation. Northern and Western Regional Assembly. Ireland

3rd Presentation. Podkarpackie Region. Poland

4th Presentation. Departamental Council of Hérault. France

5th Presentation. Hajdú-Bihar County Government. Hungary

6th Presentation. Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Vratsa. Bulgaria

## 7th Presentation. European Greenways Association. Belgium

The session started with the review of project's objectives and listing the 6 policy instruments addressed.

During Phase 2 (Semester 6 to semester 9) will take place the implementation and monitoring period of the Actions Plans.

The importance of the creation of the Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) in each region is pointed in order to be able to exchange knowledge among regions.

The overall review ended indicating the main project's outputs (improvement of 6 policy instruments were 18 BPs were identified) and the way to maintain the durability of results through stakeholders thanks to the involvement of Managing authorities of the policy instrument since the beginning of the Project and the importance of cooperation with these authorities and relevant stakeholders.

The session closed with the intervention of Kristian Kamplade - Project representative from ITREM, who communicates a change in the leadership of the Project. Due to ITREM is a public organism integrated in the Autonomous Community of Murcia Region it has been decided that the leadership of the Project will be carry out directly by CARM as to be able to integrate in the project different departments and provide the strategic approach required so the project would be assumed by the Regional Ministry of Presidency. On the side of the partners, there was not opposition to that change.

## FIRST STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN MURCIA REGION (SPAIN)



In 20th September 2018, took place in Murcia (Spain) the first stakeholder group meeting of the Interreg Europe Project Our Way: Conservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage through the Greenways Region of Murcia".

In this meeting the lead partner explained to the regional partners all the goals the project seeks to achieve, the road map and procedures and the feedback and benefits they might obtain.

The main objective of the project is to contribute to the conservation, protection, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage in Europe, improving the political instruments related to the cultural and natural quality of the territories involved, including tools for their management and developing specific measures for its promotion and development.

Among the regional partners that attended the meeting were representatives of the DG of European Funds, DG of the Natural Environment, Consortium of the Greenways of the Region of Murcia, Universities or Associations (Environment, sports, tourism ... ).

All the participants showed great deal of interest and brought about interesting ideas based on their experience and developed their point of view on good practices concerning greenways in the Region of Murcia and also debated and shared issues about it.

## FIRST STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN HÉRAULT (FRANCE)



After a first meeting presenting the project in September, the regional stakeholders met in early November to work on the swot analysis, the regional questionnaire and the 3 best practices. About twenty participants are present in all activities, natural areas and biodiversity, cycling facilities, outdoor sports, tourism, regional natural park, local public bodies whose territory is traversed by greenways.

## FIRST STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN HAJDÚ-BIHAR (HUNGARY)



The first regional stakeholder working group (SWG) meeting was held at the office of Hajdú-Bihar County Government (Hungary) on 18th October 2018. Participating experts and relevant practitioners covered a wide range of themes concerned.

After the welcome of Melinda Tuska-Mátrai (Head of Unit of International Affairs), Judit Karácsonyi (international project manager) presented the OUR WAY project; its topic, the partnership, planned activities and expected outcomes. The general topic of the meeting was the national as well as the regional analysis of the current situation, the role and tasks of each organization and of course the presentation and cognition of good practices.

The introduction of the participants and their tasks, experiences in the field were followed by a fruitful discussion about the history and results of national greenways.

After the active and useful discussion, planned further project and particularly partner activities have been presented including the topic and date of the next project meeting and the following SWG meeting.

## FIRST STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN RZESZÓW (POLAND)



First meeting of the Regional Stakeholder Working Group under the project Preservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage through GreenWAYS implemented under the Interreg Europe Programme for 2014-2020 was held in Rzeszów (Poland) on 5th October 2018.

The meeting was attended by representatives of associations and unions involved in the development of eco-tourism in the Podkarpackie Region: the Bieszczady Foundation; Rowery.Rzeszów.pl - bicycle associations; The Beskid Tourist Association "Przełom Wisłoka" - Zagłębie Ambitnej Turystyki; The Association for Development and Promotion of Podkarpacie "PRO CARPATHIA"; Podkarpackie Regional Tourism Board; The Union of Tourists Communes of the Dynów Foothills; Rzeszów Regional Development Agency S.A .; Traditional Farm Foundation and representatives of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region in Rzeszów.

The stakeholders were informed about the aim of the OUR WAY project and the assumptions of the Group's works, as well about the green ways which were identified so far in the Podkarpackie Region.

The second part of the meeting was devoted to working groups session. The participants were split into 4 working groups which were supposed to prepare the SWOT analysis and identify the best practices in the following areas: coordination between key entities, identification of financial instruments and financing, promotion and development of products.

The most interesting outputs of the session:

The bicycle association - Rowery.Rzeszów.pl provided information about the pilot project of city bike rental in Rzeszów: Blinkee.city. The rental operates in the fourth generation

system, which means that bikes can be located and rented by a smart phone app-based system.

Mrs Kinga Aleksandrowicz-Kostępska from the Department of Promotion and Economic Cooperation of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region, who is the coordinator of the Green Velo project, informed about joint promotional activities. The tasks were carried out under the partnership agreement signed by the marshals of five provinces. The activities included among others: maps printing, extensive campaign on the websites of the largest daily newspapers in Poland, on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, as well as advertising campaign in the bicycle and lifestyle press.

Mr Bogusław Szweda from the Beskidy Tourist Association "Przełom Wisłoka" - Zagłębie Ambitnej Turystyki who has presented a project on cycling tourism as one of the forms of spending free time by children and adults. He also presented some good practices in the field of finance and financial management, that are applied in the field of activities of The Beskid Tourist Association "Przełom Wisłoka" - Zagłębie Ambitnej Turystyki. It includes cooperation of 5 communes in the area of spending funds for the creation of bicycle routes.

## COMMUNICATION AND FINANCE SEMINARS IN DUBLIN (IRELAND)



Representatives of more than 50 Interreg Europe projects from the third call came in Dublin on 13-15 November 2018 for a communication and a finance seminar.

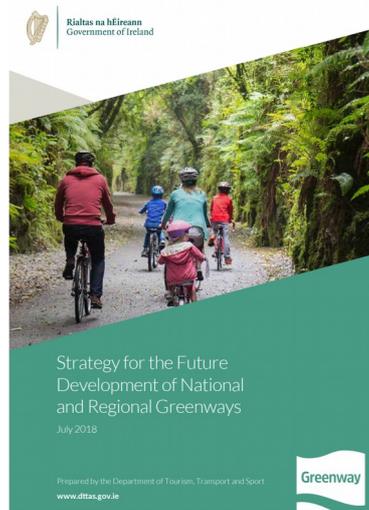
Communication seminar

The communication seminar was targeted at lead partners and communication managers of Interreg Europe projects. The aim of this seminar was to provide the necessary guidance on the Interreg Europe publicity requirements, as well as some helpful advice and tips for making project communication activities as effective and attractive as possible. The seminar featured a set of three practical workshops delivered by experienced communication professionals focusing on project pitch, media relations, and online presence.

#### Finance seminar

The finance seminar was targeted at Lead Partner finance managers and lead partner's first level controllers of Interreg Europe projects. The aim of this seminar was to provide information and updates on financial reporting and control procedures and requirements related to the management of Interreg Europe projects. It was also a good opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas on this matter with the joint secretariat and financial managers and first level controllers of other projects.

## FIRST STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN CARRICK-ON-SHANNON (IRELAND)



The Northern and Western Regional assembly held its first OUR WAY stakeholder meeting in Carrick-on-Shannon on the 14th November 2018. The meeting was well attended by staff from the local authorities in the region which are currently working on Greenways and Blueways in each county.

The launch of the OUR WAY project comes at a good time for the region as the government's Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports recently a launched a National

Strategy for the Development of Greenways along with a fund of €53m for Local Authorities to develop regional and National Greenways.

At the stakeholder meeting, Caitlín Conneely, Assistant Director at the Northern Western Regional Assembly presented the aims and objectives of the OUR WAY project and explained the important role stakeholders will play in developing the action plan and extending the greenway network within the region.

Patrick Devine, Project Officer on the OUR WAY project gave an overview of the current and planned greenways and presented details National Strategy for the Development of Greenways.

The group also had the opportunity to learn more about the Great Western Greenway which was presented by Pádraig Philbin from Mayo County Council. The Great Western Greenway is one of the most successful Greenways developments in Ireland and a model which other Local Authorities can learn from. The stakeholder group discussed the current opportunity to apply to the Department's fund of €53m for developing greenways and the options for securing land access to develop greenways. The group also mentioned that a number of the public consultation events were recently hosted by Local Authorities to discuss with members of the public route options and timeline for development.

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly looks forward to hosting the next partner meeting and Interregional learning workshop which take place in Ireland in March 2019.

#### Development of New Ways to Protect our Cultural and Natural Heritage . Bulgaria

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa presented the project "OUR WAY – Preservation and Promotion of Cultural and Natural Heritage through Greenways" under the Interreg Europe Program. The program is funded by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund at the Launching conference, held on 29.11.2018 in Vratsa.

During the conference was presented the project partners: Government of Murcia, Spain; Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Vratsa, Bulgaria; Murcia Region Institute of Tourism, Spain; Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Ireland; Podkarpackie Region, Poland; Department Council of Hérault, France; Hajdu-Bihar Country Government, Hungary and European Greenways Association, Belgium. Duration of the project: 54 months.

The aim of the project is to contribute to the preservation, protection, and development of the natural and cultural heritage through the so called "Greenways" and the improvement of the political tools related to the cultural and natural heritage of the territories that the project covers.

Main activities include: analysis of environmental policy studies, identification of best practices and establishment of a stakeholders working group, selection of good practices to be transferred/exchanged in the project regions, design of regional plans for action, implementation of the action plan in each region, exchange of results among partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries and others.

As a final result, six national policies have to be improved in connection to 18 good practices identified as well as six action plans to be elaborated, the implementation of which shall contribute to the utilization of the natural and cultural heritage of each of the regions included in the project.



LAUNCH CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT OUR WAY AND SECOND STAKEHOLDERS MEETING IN MURCIA REGION (SPAIN). 30th November 2018.



The greenways proposed as a resource for the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the Region of Murcia, while serving to promote the region as a sustainable tourism destination and allow employment generation and local development, are the objectives of the project 'Our Way: Preservation And Promotion Of Cultural And Natural Heritage Through Greenways', submitted to the call for grants launched by the Interreg Europe programme and selected for funding by the European Commission.

The Minister of the Presidency of the Region of Murcia, Pedro Rivera, explained that the project that is intended to be developed through this call, financed with ERDF funds and led by the Region of Murcia, "has a strategic interest for us, and involves the Tourism Institute, the General Directorate of the Natural Environment, the General Directorate of Local Administration and, because of its transversal nature, the General Directorate of the European Union, Foreign Action and Cooperation. "

The challenge is to make the greenways of the Region and our European partners (North and West Region, Ireland, Podkarpacie, Poland, Hérault, France, Hadju-Bihar, Hungary, Vratsa, Bulgaria and the European Association of Greenways) become a resource for local communities and a means to protect and promote the heritage present in the territory.

In this regard, the Interreg Europe Programme helps regional and local governments across Europe to ensure that investment, innovation and implementation efforts lead to an integrated and sustainable impact.

The project represents an investment of 967,000 euros, of which 810,000 are financed by ERDF funds and the rest by European partners, with the contribution of the Autonomous Community of nearly 40,000 euros.

The counselor noted that "the instruments we are going to develop to achieve the proposed goals are the creation of a Group of socio-economic agents interested in the protection and promotion of the cultural and natural heritage of the Region of Murcia, interregional workshops of experts in greenways and European cultural heritage for the identification and exchange of models and good practices that improve the governance, financing and promotion of greenways in Europe and the Region of Murcia, and the development of a plan for the management and promotion of the Greenways of the Region of Murcia "

In addition to the presentation of the project, the second meeting of the Regional Stakeholder Group was held the same day: a group of socio-economic agents interested in protecting and promoting greenways in the Region of Murcia and in Europe, which will contribute to the development of the project throughout its execution.

On November 14, the grant contract between the Region of Murcia, through the Ministry of the Presidency, and the Management Authority of the Interreg Europe Programme for the implementation of the project was signed, which will be developed throughout the next four years in collaboration with the rest of European regional institutions and the support of the European Association of Greenways.

## **Upcoming in Semester 2**

- Workshop in Ireland (March 2019)
- 7 Internal meetings - inside partners organisation (1 per partner)