



# ACTION PLAN HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY



European Union  
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Development Fund

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# OUR WAY PROJECT

“PreservatiOn and promotion of natUral and cultural heRitage through  
GreenWAYS”

## ACTION PLAN OF HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Debrecen  
February 2021



## CONTENT

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Part I – GENERAL INFORMATION.....	3
Part II – POLICY CONTEXT .....	4
<b>REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY 2014-2020</b> .....	4
<b>TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT OF HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY 2021-2027</b> .....	5
Part III – DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED .....	7
<b>ACTION 1    LAUNCHING “HIKE IN HAJDÚ-BIHAR” PROGRAMME</b> .....	7
1. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT .....	8
2. NATURE OF THE ACTION .....	9
3. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED .....	9
4. TIMEFRAME .....	9
5. COSTS.....	9
6. FUNDING SOURCES .....	10
7. MONITORING AND EXPECTED IMPACTS OF THE ACTION .....	10
<b>ACTION 2    LAUNCHING “TREASURES OF HORTOBÁGY” GREENWAY</b> .....	12
1. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT .....	13
2. NATURE OF THE ACTION .....	13
3. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED .....	14
4. TIMEFRAME .....	14
5. COSTS.....	14
6. FUNDING SOURCES .....	14
7. MONITORING AND EXPECTED IMPACTS OF THE ACTION .....	14
ABOUT THE PROJECT.....	15
PARTNERS.....	15
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	16



## Part I – GENERAL INFORMATION

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**Project:** PreservatiOn and promotion of natUral and cultural heRitage through GreenWAYS

Partner organisation concerned: HBCG – Hajdú-Bihar County Government

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): -

Country: Hungary

NUTS2 region: Észak-Alföld

NUTS3 county: Hajdú-Bihar

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## Part II – POLICY CONTEXT

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The Action Plan aims to impact:

Investment for Growth and Jobs programme

European Territorial Cooperation programme

**Other regional development policy instrument**

POLICY INSTRUMENT 1 (POLICY #1) ADDRESSED:

### **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME OF HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY 2014-2020**

*Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:*

The Regional Development Programme of Hajdú-Bihar County (RDP HBC) for 2014-2020 integrates the county's strategic goals both at sectorial and territorial levels. The Programme's objectives include 8 priorities. In OUR WAY project Priority 3 "Competitive Economy" has been addressed, focusing on Measure 3.5 Tourism based on county values. Several county assets have been named as a key factor for tourism development including natural and cultural assets and heritage but there's only a weak representation of "soft tourism" and "green tourism" as potential economic drivers. OUR WAY project helps to overcome this challenge driving economic change growth through sustainable green tourism.

Policy #1 was valid for the period 2014-2020. This policy served and serves as the underlying regional strategic document for the definition of the national territorial development operational programme (called as Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme/TSDOP for 2014-2020 and now as Competitive Economy Operational Programme for 2021-2027) that provides the necessary funding for the implementation of strategic directions and measures defined in Policy #1.

Policy #1's content is officially ended in 2020. In order to ensure the smooth continuation of the development directions started in 2014-2020, no new regional development programme is defined but the current one will be modified and amended for the period 2021-2027. The process has already started and expected to be completed in the upcoming months. This modification and amendment of the sessions related to economic development, SME support, rural business enhancement, cultural values with specific focus on natural and cultural heritage, slow tourism as well as local communities is carried out adopting the outcomes and lessons learned in OUR WAY project.

Based on the modified Policy#1, the new national territorial operational programme (Competitive Economy Operational Programme for 2021-2027) will be created also in the upcoming months, integrating priorities of Policy#1, and defining the specific measures and calls reflecting the improvements achieved through OUR WAY.

Making the necessary improvement at the edge of the two periods provides a great opportunity to build on and guarantee the appropriate inclusion of soft tourism and especially greenway



potential as a valuable environmental, social and economic asset for the county's communities in the following years.

Implementing the actions defined creates the link between opportunities and future development of different forms of sustainable soft tourism. RDP HBC involves tourism and hospitality in general but the utilization of environmental assets, natural values particularly in rural regions of the county is not specifically covered.

So it is very important to get this evidence through creating new ways of tourism tenderly utilizing natural values while linking communities in rural regions to ensure that the improved existing policy instrument provides an appropriate starting point for the upcoming regional development programme.

NAME OF POLICY INSTRUMENT 2 (POLICY #2) ADDRESSED:

## **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT OF HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY 2030**

*Further details on the policy context and the way the action plan should contribute to improve the policy instrument:*

The elaboration of this brand new policy has been just included in the updated Spatial Development Plan of Hajdú-Bihar County. The formulation started in the past month and expected to be completed by the end of next year. This is the **first tourism development strategic policy** for the county.

The development of such conceptual framework document was inspired by the interregional learning process in OUR WAY. It became clear through the implementation of Phase 1 that creating a regional policy instrument focusing on especially the soft and green ways of tourism is a must-have to encourage our municipalities and communities. This is a missing "leg".

This brings a great opportunity to **include soft tourism as an integral element of the tourism sector** of the county. Applying the lessons learnt in OURWAY helps identifying the relevant county potential and defining the environment, tools, roles and responsibilities to create actual economic and social asset. **Integrating greenway-related policy** for the first time in county level strategic planning is a new and unique step. It means a **significant chance for local communities, SMEs and entrepreneurs** working in agriculture, food, tourism and hospitality to practically enter into economy as more competitive, confident and ambitious actors.

Taking an organic part in the policy development process utilizing the results of the interregional learning process in the OUR WAY project provides the floor for the **joint collaborative creation of a well-based strategic policy** creating a supportive environment to utilize natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way, support rural small enterprises and entrepreneurs while lifting the county's economic performance, attractiveness and visibility to a higher level.



OUR WAY actions – restarting the development and implementation of the **first greenway** of the county as well as launching a new initiative to boost hiking in the county - are going to **contribute to the structural changes of both Regional Development Programme and Tourism Development Concept**. The activities planned for each action are expected to give adequate respond to relevant challenges identified of the two policy instruments concerned.





## Part III – DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED

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Actions have been defined to give proper solutions for the county to eliminate the imperfections identified on policy instruments.

The implementation of actions is expected to result in the structural change (type 3) of the policies addressed – in the improved representation of natural and cultural values as social and economic asset within the development agenda through creating new forms of soft tourism, linking communities by greenways, strengthening visibility and marketing, improving the structural background by enhanced knowledge and capacity.

### ACTION 1 LAUNCHING “HIKE IN HAJDÚ-BIHAR” PROGRAMME

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In Hajdú-Bihar County, there is a **significant aim to develop the potential** for sustainable, soft tourism and preservation and promotion of our natural, cultural heritage. Mapping and studying the potential the county has, it was clear to define **new and fresh initiations** to promote tourism on the existing hiking trails in the County.

Applying the lessons learnt during the **efficient interregional learning process**, Hajdú-Bihar County Government will promote the national Blue Circle trail's section within the county named “Alföld Blue Trail”. The national trail is 2550 km and the section which passes through Hajdú-Bihar County is 205 km. It is divided for 9 smaller sections (15-36 km) with its own stamp.

Hajdú-Bihar County Government (HBCG) **will prepare** the booklet “**Green pass of Hajdú-Bihar**” which is a downloadable document with the maps of the smaller sections on each side and place for stamps. HBCG will **launch the programme “Hike in Hajdú-Bihar”**. The participants have to complete the **205 km long** trail in 12 months, prove it with the **stamped booklet “Green pass of Hajdú-Bihar”**. The participants who sent back the fully stamped “Green pass of Hajdú-Bihar” will participate in a drawing lot. A **reward scheme** will be developed: one for adults and one for children. The reward will be articles of touring related to sustainable, soft tourism (e.g.: bicycle, backpack, tent, etc.).

Action 1 intends to **strengthen the recognition and utilization** of natural values and cultural heritage and to make those **as more significant social and economic factor** for the rural areas of the county.

Besides, Action 1 strongly supports a **stronger link** between tourism organizers, local communities as well as suppliers within the sector.

Proper information on the values provided by the trail will be gained; food and related suppliers as well as accommodation providers will be mapped creating a **network of actors**. The process will also **enhance the capacity** of staff and stakeholders making them competent to define future initiatives in the tourism sector.

Implementing these activities will provide appropriate evidence on the significance of soft tourism and linking tourism actors and communities in the county's competitiveness giving a feedback for





Policy #1 improvement and input for the future regional development strategy to be defined for 2021-2027; the implementation of the action makes it possible to widely recognize soft tourism as a key potential in the county and through this, its issue can be built in as a dedicated priority and measure of the policy.

## 1. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

The action has been generated on the basis of a good practice identified and presented in the OUR WAY project:

- 100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria (Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Vratsa, Bulgaria)

### **Good practice “100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria”**

***Lesson learnt from the Bulgarian partner Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Vratsa during the interregional exchange visit to Podkarpackie Region, 23-26 September 2019***

100 Tourist Sites of Bulgaria is a Bulgarian national movement established in 1966 to promote tourism among Bulgaria's most significant cultural, historic, and natural landmarks.

As part of this program, sites of cultural and historical significance have been selected, ranging from historic places and monuments to archaeological and architectural sanctuaries, museums, monasteries, as well as national parks, mountain peaks and other geological phenomena.

Each of the chosen landmarks has its own individual seal, which is stamped onto pages of an official passport-like booklet issued by the Bulgarian Tourist Union (BTU). A booklet can be purchased at any tourist union centre or on location at any of the sites and it costs a symbolic 1 lev. The booklet comes with a separate map which includes a list of the sites, their addresses and working hours. The maximum number of collectible stamps per booklet is 100 and, contrary to the movement's title, the exact number of official sites exceeds the number 100.

A reward scheme has been developed to encourage collection of as many stamps as possible. Depending on the number of stamps collected, participants may receive bronze, silver or gold badges. 25 stamps earn bronze, 50 stamps earn silver and 100 stamps (a complete booklet) earn gold. The National Organizational Committee of the BTU holds an annual lottery for the previous year's badge earners every August. Prizes include domestic and overseas excursions, bicycles, tents, sleeping bags, and other travel-related items.

*This practice is a great example on how to utilize our existing hiking trail for better visibility and to encourage both domestic and international visitors/hikers to use it.*



## 2. NATURE OF THE ACTION

- ✓ A1.1 Establishment of a web-based collection (Assets of Natural and Cultural Heritage) on landscape and cultural values along the county section of “Alföld Blue Trail”
- ✓ A1.2 Mapping suppliers (farmers, accommodation providers) along the county section of “Alföld Blue Trail”
- ✓ A1.3 Preparation of the booklet “Green pass of Hajdú-Bihar” based on the Assets of Natural and Cultural Heritage
- ✓ A1.4 Elaboration of the detailed content of “Hike in Hajdú-Bihar” programme
- ✓ A1.5 Formulation of the framework and content of the Reward Scheme
- ✓ A1.6 Establishment of Coordination Team managing the “Hike in Hajdú-Bihar” programme involving municipalities concerned, tour organisers, hiking associations

## 3. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- ✓ regional and local government actors
  - Municipalities of Hajdú-Bihar County
  - General Assembly of Hajdú-Bihar County Government
- ✓ chambers representing and supporting farmers, suppliers, restaurants and accommodation providers
  - Hajdú-Bihar County Directorate of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture
  - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hajdú-Bihar County
- ✓ entrepreneurs and enterprises in food and tourism sectors – target group of activities
  - enterprises/entrepreneurs in food, gastronomy and accommodation sectors
  - farmers’ associations
  - rural hospitality associations
- ✓ knowledge base to improve the quality of soft/green tourism
  - representatives of existing routes and initiatives (particularly the coordinators of national Blue Circle trails)
  - University of Debrecen
  - experts of county/municipality collection of values
  - hiking organizers, tour organizers

## 4. TIMEFRAME

- ✓ December 2020 – August 2021

## 5. COSTS

- ✓ Staff cost to design of the booklet “Green pass of Hajdú-Bihar”, organization of the drawing lot and cost of the rewards: 10.000 EUR



## 6. FUNDING SOURCES

- ✓ OUR WAY staff cost for Phase 2 to monitor the implementation
- ✓ Own institutional regional public funding
- ✓ Potential new region-related calls using governmental sources

## 7. MONITORING AND EXPECTED IMPACTS OF THE ACTION

Implementing the activities of Action 1 will give well-based evidence on the tourism potential of soft/green tourism in the county's current and future competitiveness. New and improved capacities and knowledge, enhanced relationship to link municipalities, farmers, suppliers and hospitality actors will be provided. It is expected to give a proper input for Policy #1 improvement and also for the future regional development programme to be defined for 2021-2027.

Hajdú-Bihar County Government (HBCG) will monitor the implementation of the action to see the progress and determine the impact of the collaboration.

Partners will continue the mutual learning process during the implementation phase of the action plan. "Exporting" and "importing" regions will be in continuous contact in order to successfully implement the defined actions and adapt the selected lesson learnt to other regions' context.

The following indicators are planned to be applied to measure the success of each activity within the action:

Activity	Indicator	Expected value
A1.1	Number of web-based collection of Assets of Natural and Cultural Heritage	1
A1.2	Number of suppliers identified along the county section of "Alföld Blue Trail"	20
A1.3	Number of booklet prepared ("Green pass of Hajdú-Bihar")	1
A1.4	Number of new programmes launched ("Hike in Hajdú-Bihar")	1
A1.5	Number of new schemes prepared (Reward Scheme)	1
A1.6	Number of members of the coordination team of the "Hike in Hajdú-Bihar" programme	12
A1.5	Number of workshops organized to have coordination team discussions	3
	Number of events disseminating the new programme "Hike in Hajdú-Bihar"	2

When the action is completed, a short evaluation report (max. 2 pages) will be compiled including the efforts done and the results achieved.



At the end of Phase 2, a final monitoring report (max. 3 pages) will be compiled including all actions completed, results achieved and impact on the policies addressed.



## ACTION 2 LAUNCHING “TREASURES OF HORTOBÁGY” GREENWAY

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The general background for this theme is the fact that **currently there is no defined greenway** in Hajdú-Bihar County - although former initiatives took place. This county initiation was called "Treasures of Hortobágy Greenway". Former steps were made and some **preliminary activities were done** in the theme of 'Gentle spatial development based on landscape values'. 11 settlements of the county were brought together to implement a short pilot in the area of Hortobágy (World Heritage Site, National Park, Biosphere Reserve, Ramsar Site - one of the most famous traditional landscapes in the country full of natural and cultural values and heritage) including landscape walks and community landscape value mapping activities.

As concerns actions related to actual greenway formulation, we keep the focus on this specific greenway but keeping the place to formulate and utilize new methods/processes/approaches being applicable in other relevant cases in other areas of the county.

We aim to have a **community landscape value register** and plan to **involve local communities** in the most appropriate way while **mapping further development directions**.

During the implementation of activities defined within Action 2, we **utilize the outcomes of Hajdú-Bihar County's semi-finished greenway** “Treasures of the Hortobágy Greenway”. The collection of natural values was performed for 11 settlements and a draft map of the trail was created. The map of the trail or its route is a significant problem as it passes through municipalities, private land/forests and also the area of Hortobágy National Park. The first step to revitalize this greenway is that minimum 3 settlements has to sign a letter of intent and an agreement with the Hungarian Greenway Methodology Association to be able to set up the greenway. Following this agreement, negotiations with the land owners are planned to start.

**This first greenway means a new potential** for the economy and communities of the county bringing new input for the attractiveness and visibility of the county through incorporating local natural and cultural assets into local soft and green tourism.

It is especially important in a time when the development of the first tourism development concept of the county has started; being at the very beginning of the process, utilizing and adapting the lessons learnt within the OUR WAY project can boost the creation of the strategic policy in a direction that strongly and efficiently puts soft tourism opportunities into the key focus themes of the Tourism Development Concept.

This document is planned to clearly reflect the significance and role of this greenway; not only the measures planned within this Action 2 but their expected impacts will be built in the Concept. There will be a section within the document called “Pillars of Tourism” defining the assets, values, opportunities and relevant strategic potential; the greenway is planned to be integrated as one of these pillars. Special attention will be paid to the options on the further development of the greenway.



The implementation of the action plan ensures a solid base for the **incorporation of greenways potential into tourism**: a comprehensive updated landscape value register amended by cultural assets in online version; committed local communities to show their unique offers; a coordination body composed of dedicated community leaders and stakeholders and a new framework that provides further potential for the future extension of the greenway.

## 1. RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

The action has been generated on the basis of a lesson learnt during the joint learning process of OUR WAY:

- North West Greenway

### *Lesson learnt from the Irish partner Northern and Western Regional Assembly during the interregional exchange visit to Westport, Ireland on 5-6 March 2019*

The North West Greenway is a number of cross-border greenway routes which is being developed by Donegal County Council in the Republic of Ireland and Derry and Strabane District Council in Northern Ireland. In 2015 Donegal County Council (DCC), in partnership with Derry City & Strabane District Council (DCSDC), Transport NI (TNI) and Sustrans NI, formally established the Active & Sustainable Travel Forum (ASTF). The partnership had a vision to develop a cross border network of greenways that link people with places locally, regionally and nationally – bringing social, economic and environmental well-being to all.

Building the action from the start and insert the practice adopted to county level focusing on the collaboration of municipalities as organic part of Policy #2 at the same time provides the realization of a new innovative approach in the rural areas of the county on one hand, while on the other hand it gives a chance for further implementation of greenways utilizing the available natural and cultural potential in different parts of the county.

*The practice requires expertise and practical background that will be ensured by the coordination body involving mayors, tourism experts and associations, nature conservation experts, farmers, producers and professionals of the stakeholder platform.*

## 2. NATURE OF THE ACTION

- ✓ A2.1 Elaboration of the online landscape value and cultural heritage register based on the earlier study 'Gentle spatial development based on landscape values'
- ✓ A2.2 Selection of municipalities to take part



- ✓ A2.3 Definition of the first section of "Treasures of Hortobágy Greenway"
- ✓ A2.4 Signing Letter of Intent by participating municipalities (min. 3 settlements)
- ✓ A2.5 Formulation of the coordination body including Hungarian Greenway Methodology Association and mayors of municipalities taking part
- ✓ A2.6 Communicating "Treasures of Hortobágy Greenway" through social media and information event

### 3. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

- ✓ regional and local government actors
  - Municipalities concerned by the route of "Treasures of Hortobágy Greenway" in Hajdú-Bihar County
  - General Assembly of Hajdú-Bihar County Government
- ✓ chambers representing and supporting farmers, suppliers
  - Hajdú-Bihar County Directorate of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture
  - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hajdú-Bihar County
- ✓ entrepreneurs and enterprises of gastronomy and food sectors – target group of activities
  - SMEs in agri-food sector
  - farmers' associations
- ✓ knowledge base to improve the quality of soft/green tourism
  - NGOs (active in nature conservation)
  - representatives of existing initiations, particularly greenways (e.g. Mecsek Greenway)
  - University of Debrecen
- ✓ tourism experts and bodies providing experience and supporting the development and dissemination of the "Treasures of Hortobágy Greenway".
  - tourism associations
  - associations of cultural heritage

### 4. TIMEFRAME

- ✓ December 2020 – April 2022

### 5. COSTS

- ✓ Meeting cost of the coordination platform: 3000 EUR for 6 meetings

### 6. FUNDING SOURCES

- ✓ regional public funding through own institutional funding

### 7. MONITORING AND EXPECTED IMPACTS OF THE ACTION

Implementing the activities of Action 2 will give serious chance **to incorporate greenways into the tourism policy of the county**: regularly updated online landscape value and cultural heritage





register, new network of soft tourism actors with farmers and suppliers, a new form for the visibility and marketing of natural and cultural county values are significant potentials to build in the Tourism Development Concept (Policy #2). This new tourism offer has the possibility to be extended in the future.

Hajdú-Bihar County Government (HBCG) will monitor the implementation of the action to see the progress and determine the impact of the collaboration.

The following indicators are planned to be applied to measure the success of activities within the action:

Activity	Indicator	Expected value
A2.1	Number of online landscape value and cultural heritage register created	1
	Number of values identified in the register	10
A2.4	Number of municipalities signing the Letter of Intent	3
A2.5	Number of stakeholders taking part in the coordination body	10
A2.6	Number of events disseminating the "Treasures of Hortobágy Greenway".	2

When the action is completed, a short evaluation report (max. 2 pages) will be compiled including the efforts done and the results achieved.

## **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

OUR WAY project aims to contribute to the conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage in Europe using Greenways by means of the improvement of policy instruments related to the cultural and natural quality of the territories involved, including tools for their governance and developing specific measures for their promotion and preservation.

## **PARTNERS**



- ❖ Government of Murcia, Spain
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Vratsa, Bulgaria
- ❖ Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Ireland
- ❖ Podkarpackie Region, Poland
- ❖ Department Council of Hérault, France;
- ❖ Hajdú-Bihar County Government, Hungary
- ❖ European Greenways Association, Belgium (Advisory partner)



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For further information about the OUR WAY project please visit:

<http://www.interregeurope.eu/ourway>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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On behalf of the owner of the Regional Development Programme of Hajdú-Bihar County (RDP HBC) for 2014-2020 as well as the planned Tourism Development Concept of Hajdú-Bihar County 2030 (targeted policy instruments of the OUR WAY project for Hungary) we acknowledge the content of the Action Plan.

Date: February 2021



Name: Zoltán PAJNA, President, General Assembly of Hajdú-Bihar County

Signature:

Stamp of the organisation (if available):