
OUR WAY: PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE THROUGH GREENWAYS



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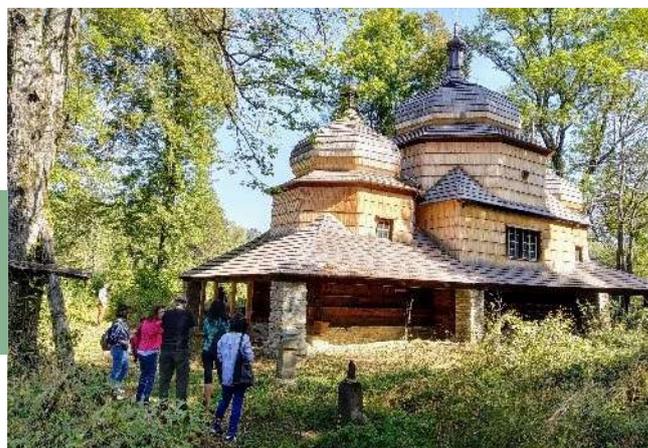
STUDY VISITS

STUDY VISIT IN THE PODKARPACKIE REGION OF THE PARTNERS FROM BULGARIA FROM 22-24 SEPTEMBER 2020

From 22nd to 24th September this year a study visit of the **partners and stakeholders of the OUR WAY project from Bulgaria** took place in the Podkarpackie Region. The meetings were also attended by representatives of public authorities and tourist associations from Podkarpackie, host stakeholders and staff of the OUR WAY project.

On the first day the delegation from Bulgaria was welcomed by **Danuta Cichoń** - Director of the Regional Economy Department of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region. The visit started with a trip through fragments of the Green Velo trail in the picturesque Dynowskie Foothills, together with a visit to the Greek Catholic Church of St. Dmitry in Piątkowa, and then to the National Museum of Przemyśl Region in Przemyśl. In the museum's facility, presentations were presented, among others: **Jan Jarosz** - Director of the Museum - Przemyśl - a good place for tourists - the offer of the Museum on the Green Velo route, **Magdalena Osełka** from the Regional Tourist Organization of the Świętokrzyskie Region - Good Practice on the Cooperation of Regions of Eastern Poland in the Promotion of the Green Velo Eastern Cycling Route - channels of promotion and arrangements between regions. Whereas **Mr. Sławomir Rudnicki** from the Przemyśl Association Bicycle Group - introduced the participants of the meeting to the topic of the Fortress Bicycle Route. **Mr. Bogusław Pyzocha** from the Bieszczadzka Foundation presented Ideas for new cooperation between various entities in the area of the Bieszczady Mountains Foundation. Then the participants went on a hike around Przemyśl along the Green Velo trail, visiting interesting cultural heritage places located in the city. Next, **Mr. Sławomir Rudnicki** showed the group around Fort VIII - Łętownia, telling its history in short.

Greek Catholic Church of St. Dmitry in Piątkowa



The second day of the visit took place in the Low Beskid (Dukla, Jaśliska, Puławy). In the Cross-Border Cultural Exchange Center in Dukla the guests were welcomed by the Mayor of Dukla - **Andrzej Bytnar** and the Mayor of Jaśliska Commune - **Adam Dańczak**. Then presented their presentations: **Mr. Bogusław Szweda** - member of the Regional Stakeholder Working Group - Main goals of the Ambitious Tourism Area. Good Practice in Using the Communes' Budgets to Create Bicycle Routes of the Ambitious Tourism Area, Promotion and Management of ZAT Routes, Agreement between Communes, **Mr. Wojciech Krukar...**

[Full text through this link](#)



Study visit in Poland



ONLINE STUDY VISIT IN IRELAND. 16th JULY 2020

Hosted by the **Northern and Western Regional Assembly (Ireland)**, the study visit counted with representatives from Mayo and Donegal County Councils to present the Great Western Greenway and North West greenway respectively. Development and promotion of Greenways through its marketing channels such as the Wild Atlantic Way brand was exposed by Fáilte Ireland.



Picture of the Online Study Visit

Great Western Greenway.

Greenway developed by **Mayo County Council** using funding from the council and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. It passes through a number of key towns bringing over 250,000 visitors every year.

Main features:

- Funding from Mayo County Council and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports (€28million)
- Pioneering Walking Cycling Facility
- National Demonstration Model NCN
- Unique partnership with local landowners Business
- Holiday Attraction 250,00 Visitors per year, 200 jobs
- It comprises of cycle friendly facilities, accommodation options, scenic views and a food trail known as the gourmet greenway.
- Promotion by the Mayo County Council at national and international level: marketing and promotion strategies.
- Collaboration with Failte Ireland, National Tourism Development Authority, for promotion through its marketing channels and by using the Wild Atlantic Way brand.
- Emergence of additional tourism products and services (“Gourmet Greenway”).
- Management and coordination of the GWG through community groups.

North West greenway (Development of the North West Greenway Network).

Cross-border greenway routes developed by Donegal County Council in the Republic of Ireland and Derry and Strabane District Council in Northern Ireland.



Main features:

- Establishment of the Active & Sustainable Travel Forum (ASTF), partnership between Donegal County Council, Derry City & Strabane District Council, Transport NI and Sustrans NI to develop a cross border network of greenways.
- Collaboration between key stakeholders and the formation of a forum with a shared vision.
- Funding from EU through INTERREG VA funding programme (€14.8 million) and match funding to construct 46.5 km of cross-border greenways.
- Forum's Plan forms the basis of a strategic and co-ordinated strategy for the development of a network of greenways.
- Link of the GW with Areas of Special Conservation (Natura 2000 Network).

Development and promotion of Greenways through its marketing channels such as the Wild Atlantic Way brand.

Development of a branded route to achieve greater visibility for the west coast of Ireland in target overseas tourist markets. **Wild Atlantic Way** destination brand developed as a unifying proposition for the **West Coast of Ireland**.

Main features:

- Over-arching brand which individual destinations and businesses can use to leverage much greater visibility and clarity of message in the international marketplace.
- Devised as a new 'experience' and 'destination' to present the west coast of Ireland as a compelling international tourism product.
- Core visitors markets largely experience the Wild Atlantic Way through self-drive trips (95% car travel): the Way is based around a core touring route proposition (existing road infrastructure) supported by a wide range of walking.
- Multi-region, covering 9 counties and a strong depth/range of experiences.

PARTNER ACTIVITIES

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa - BULGARIA

Communication activities during the 5th Semester implemented by CCI Vratsa

During the 5th semester in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa successfully held a face-to-face meeting with some members of the stakeholder working group to present the results from the study visit in Poland in the period from 22 to 24 September 2020, as well as how these results will be implemented in the **Action Plan of CCI Vratsa**. The meeting was part of the communication activity under the OUR WAY project.

The results and impressions from the study visit were presented by **Mrs. Daniela Borisova**, a representative of the Vratsa Balkan National Park, member of the Stakeholder working group.

The presentation contained comprehensive information about the places visited during the study visit, as well as a summary of all presentations given by the participants during the visit. For the audience, the information provided was extremely interesting and led to a fruitful discussion.

In the second part of the meeting was presented the draft version of the Action plan of CCI Vratsa. Ms. Olya Genova, a member of the stakeholder working group, presented to the audience the activities that are planned to be implemented in the Action Plan of CCI Vratsa. At present the Action Plan is on stage approval by the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg Programme. As a result of the discussion, partial changes will be made to the draft version of the Action plan, after which it will be finally submitted for approval.



CCI Vratsa partners during the meeting

Podkarpackie Region - POLAND

On 30 June this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform organized a **cross-sectional webinar** to explore the multiple benefits of cycling tourism and to learn about good practices from different EU regions on how best to support this form of leisure activities that brings so much added value to the regions. During the seminar, **Ms. Magdalena Osełka** from the Regional Tourist Organization of the Świętokrzyskie Region presented a presentation of "Good Practice". BP identified by the Podkarpackie Regional Stakeholders Working Group of the OUR WAY project concerning the cooperation of Eastern Poland Regions in the promotion of the Green Velo Eastern Bicycle Route. Two BP's identified during the implementation of the OUR WAY project are listed in the Interreg Europe BP Database. The OUR WAY project was also presented in the national service of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes and European Neighbourhood Instrument: <https://bit.ly/3m0UZps>

You can also watch the **webinar** here: <https://bit.ly/37jpGIB>



**PROMOTION OF OUR WAY PROJECT DURING THE OPEN-AIR EVENT OF THE PROJECT
"MOUNTAINS WITHOUT BORDERS"**

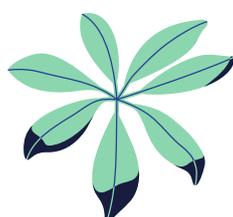
On September 5th this year in Majdan near Cisna there was an outdoor event promoting the project entitled **"Mountains without borders - integration of the route network into a cross-border tourist product"** co-financed by the European Union from the ERDF under the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020. During this event the OUR WAY project was actively promoted. There was an opportunity to get acquainted with the assumptions and current status of the project implementation. The project leaflets were also available in Polish and English.



Outdoor event in Poland

**Hajdú-Bihar
County Government - HUNGARY**

An internal meeting was held on 20th October 2020, attended by members of the Hajdú-Bihar County Government, members of the Department of Finance, Department of Development, Planning and Strategy; and Department of Development, Planning and Strategy: Unit of International affairs.





Hungarian partner internal meeting

In this internal meeting **the final Action Plan and its implementation possibilities** were discussed. As well as the COVID 19 impact and the expected delays.

In this semester we have also participated in the Study Visit Online organized by Ireland and Poland, as well as the 3rd Interregional Thematic Workshop in the axis of Promotion organized by the French partner on 17th July 2020. We will have in November an event: where we will present the OUR WAY Action Plan to the County's Assembly. Planned date for it is 27th November 2020.

Department D' Hérault - FRANCE

This period was marked by the **organization of the 3rd thematic workshop** online on July 17th. Indeed, this 3rd thematic workshop should have been held physically during the meeting organized at the end of March in Montpellier (FR) with the arrival of all the European partners of the project for 2 days during which the 4th committee was also to take place. of OURWAY piloting. But this meeting was canceled due to the COVID19 health crisis.

It therefore took place remotely and as initially planned it was organized by the French partner, "host country". For this, we had set up simultaneous online translation via the interprefy platform. This was appreciated by all the partners because many French stakeholders participated. Indeed, the theme of this 3rd thematic workshop was **"Promotion and product development for greenways"**, 3rd axis of work of the OURWAY project. To do this, we brought in 3 stakeholders from our territory, the Occitanie region, through the Regional Tourism Committee, the Hérault Tourisme development agency and the KIPK Conseils consulting firm, for testimonies.



3rd Thematic Interregional Workshop

Indeed, during this period the study commissioned by the Hérault department as part of OURWAY, and carried out by the KIPK firm, continued. Its purpose is "functional analysis and definition of sections produced for the Hérault greenways. **Cabinet KIPK** therefore testified to the methodology used, which interested all European partners. The Occitanie Region intervened on its "slow tourism" project, and the Hérault Tourisme development agency on the "Accueil Vélo" label. Study visits as "host" with our Bulgarian partner and as "traveler" with our Hungarian partner could not take place.

Región de Murcia - SPAIN

During the 5th semester, PP1 has participated in 2 virtual study visits: Poland Virtual Study visit (24th June 2020) and Ireland Virtual Study Visit (16th July 2020) as well as the 3rd Interregional Thematic Workshop, organised by Hérault Department (France), 17th July 2020 (on-line): "Tourism Promotion and product development".

PP1 Region of Murcia has met on several occasions with different stakeholders to advance in the design of the Action Plan, among them, experts in **tourism in the Region of Murcia**, as well as experts in greenways in our community.

Although it is still a **draft, the Action Plan** for the Region of Murcia, will follow two lines:

Action 1. Creation, design and promotion of the slogan "Join the Greenway" through the SICTED Quality Management.

Action 2. Improvement of visibility and services offered to final beneficiaries around the Greenways in the Region of Murcia through the website of the Consortium of Greenways.



Región de Murcia meeting

The activities to be implemented include the transformation of the **Consortium website** into a multi-language online store (Spanish and English), with 5 Sections (Home, About Us, Services, Blog and Contact), including a Catalogue of services / products, Shopping cart, Contact form, Integration with social media, Legal content pages and Content Manager: WordPress and the Incorporation of new content: Camino de la Cruz - Jubilee year 2024, connection with natural spaces (Natura 2000 spaces of the Northwest) and incorporation of experiential products and content such as "**forest bathing**" imported health therapy from the Japanese "Shirin Yoku" which consists of in spending time in the forest, with the goal of improving health and well-being.

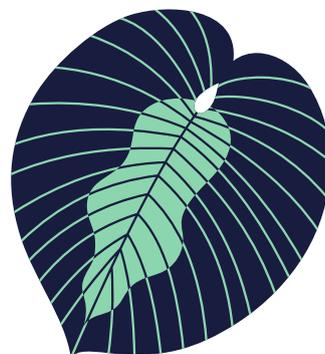
The next step is to celebrate the Stakeholder Group Meeting to inform them about the progress of the project, in particular the Action Plan development.

OUR WAY as a Case Study in a Regional Strategy in NWRA (Ireland)



The SFDNRG will provide the framework for the future development of Greenways and enable the best outcomes for state investment in this area. It should be acknowledged that presently there are no dedicated long-distance, or short distance, cycling/greenway routes which link Northern Ireland with the Republic. A Regional and intra-Regional cycleway network would support the **expansion of the Western and Northern Region** as an attractive destination for tourists, potentially linking and extending several existing Greenway Projects that are in operation, or in planning on an All Island basis, which includes the following **key projects**:

- The Great Western Greenway (Mayo County Council): 42km Westport – Achill. Stage: Operational, Constructed along disused Balfour Railway Line.
- SLNCR (Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway) Greenway.
- Collooney to Athenry Greenway (aka Quiet Man Greenway).
- Boyne Valley to Lakelands (Navan to Kingscourt).
- The Ulster Canal Greenway, (Monaghan County Council, Cavan County Council, Mid-Ulster Borough Council, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Omagh and Fermanagh District Council): 4.2km route open. Work in progress (Phase 2, Smithboro – Middletown, 22km, in progress – Planning Stage).
- North-West Greenway Network (Donegal County Council and Derry County Council): Derry – Buncrana. Stage: At Public Consultation stage (route options). Overall route, 32km via Tooban and Bridgend.
- Letterkenny to Burtonport Greenway, (primarily former rail-line).
- Donegal Town – Ballybofey (along former railline).
- Connemara Greenway: 6km of route open, overall route 72km from Galway City to Clifden. Oughterard – Clifden section: Planning Permission granted.
- Cavan and Leitrim Railway Greenway.
- Dublin – Galway National Greenway.
- Eurovelo Routes 1 and 2.



CASE STUDIES

OUR WAY: INTERREG



OUR WAY is an INTERREG project that aims to contribute to conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage in using Greenways as sustainable and smart transportation links in rural areas. The NWRA intends to improve coordination among the different key actors; to develop governance systems to manage Greenways; to identify models and good practices for the protection and maintenance of Greenways; to identify financial instruments and funding for Greenways and to promote Greenways and product development.

REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

RPO 5.18

The Regional Assembly shall collaborate with Local Authorities, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, DTAS, and other relevant stakeholders in developing an integrated network of Greenways across the region's catchments. To support, and enable the development of sustainable Greenway projects, the NWRA will encourage and promote:

- (a) The advancement and growth of Greenways through several Key National and Regional Greenway Projects, which are high capacity, and which can in the medium/long term be extended and interlinked across County Boundaries and with Local Greenways, and other cycling/walking infrastructure.
- (b) Prioritisation of Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to the region and are regularly used by overseas and domestic visitors, and locals, thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity.
- (c) The appropriate development of local businesses, and start-ups in the vicinity of Greenway Projects.
- (d) The development of Greenways in accordance with an agreed code of practice.
- (e) Collaborative development of Greenways and Blueways, including feasibility and route selection studies to minimise impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.

3rd Interregional Thematic Workshop of the OurWay Project Tourism Promotion and product development.

The 3rd "Tourism Promotion and product development "Seminar took place on 17th July 2020 organised by the Hérault Department and held online due to the pandemic.

Improving the promotion and marketing of the tourism product; enhancing services and meeting customer expectation, and measuring the economic impact of the itineraries are some of the key elements mentioned in the seminar.

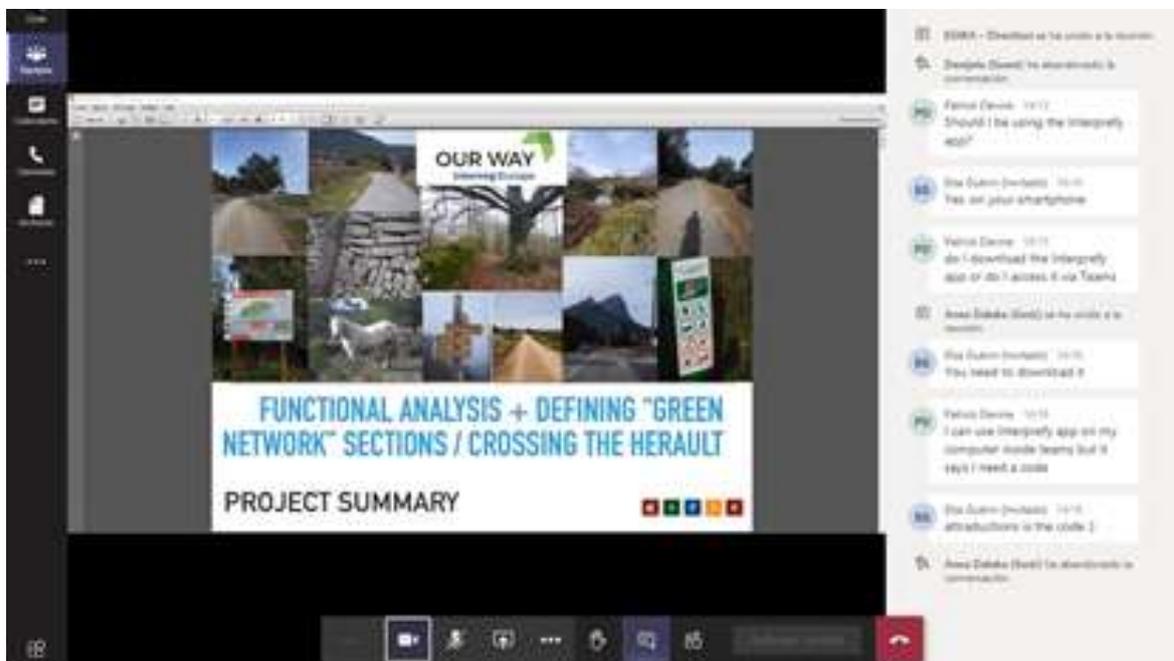


Below are included some **elements to be retained** from these presentations, previously included in other Best Practices proposed by partners, and presentations already made, but that are essential, and which it is recommended to take into account in the preparation and implementation of the Action Plans.

Orientation to the tourist product and marketing; if there is no tourist product or if there are no services nearby the greenways and other non-motorized itineraries that benefit from the arrival of visitors, there cannot be economic impact; the services in the environment have to be adapted to the clients, and for this purpose the network of "Accueil Velo" establishments is promoted; the scheme has a national scope which allows a greater diffusion.

- Customer expectations are essential: the **customer comes first**. To define the tourist product based on the functional analysis of the infrastructure by sections of the green network, enabling to define which is the best orientation to the client, and which actions are necessary to improve the itineraries by specific sections.

- To measure the **economic impact** of these itineraries and to know the characteristics of the users. Thus, it is essential to know:
 - Where you are, where you want to go, and the means you have to put in place to be able to do it and carry it out.
 - The return on investments in dedicated infrastructures; this is an essential information in order to be able to continue making improvements and more infrastructures.



- Promote **public-public** (regional/departmental and national), public-private **partnership**.
- To promote **private partnership**, with reference to two interesting examples: the first cluster set up around the professionals of the bicycle (cluster Vélo Vallée) and the association of **service providers around the Passa Pais greenway**
- Promote the continuity of itineraries to **generate long-distance itineraries** and attract itinerant tourism, with greater economic impact.
- Promote **intermodality** and in particular how to get there without a car. To encourage transfer - transport of luggage/persons to the start/end of the route
- To favor the improvement of the **quality of the infrastructure; and to position the itinerary as a destination**, with a well-directed marketing.

It would be highly desirable to be able to visit and learn about these good practices on site as was initially planned, and cancelled due to the COVID. L'Hérault's experience is very interesting and useful for the partners.

Also to mention a detail of organizational logistics: simultaneous translation French/English was spread through a mobile application; the pandemic is forcing us to improve in the use of new technologies! This is positive.

[You can read the full article through this link](#)

*Mercedes Muñoz
European Greenways ssociation,
Director Advisory Partner*



Note: Departement of L'Hérault counts with the Passa Pais greenway and a wide green network. The Department of L'Hérault was one of the partners in the ReverMED project; Green Network of the Mediterranean, inspired by the Lille Declaration (September 2000), (2003-2005) in the framework of INTERREG MEDOC IIIb. That counted also with the participation of the EGWA.

[Useful links to the methodologies and examples on Economic impact assessment.](#) (Common information for the on-line study visit organized by Ireland.)

*Mercedes Muñoz
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Director Advisory Partner*



Preservation and promotion of
cultural and natural heritage
through GreenWAYS
OUR WAY

References about Economic Impact Assessment

Cycle routes / greenways

Study visits Online – Additional information

27 July 2020