Culture and Tourism
Mini Case Study Cross-border Italy-Austria Interreg IV Programme
Study Ciclovia Alpe Adria Radweg
Work Package 9

Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)

Contract: 2014CE16BAT034

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Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)

Work Package 9: Culture and Tourism

Case Study Cross-border Italy-Austria Interreg IV Programme.

Mini Case Study Ciclovia Alpe Adria Radweg

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Table of Contents

1. SYNTHESIS ............................................................................................................. 7

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ........................................................................... 9

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION ....................................................................................... 11
   3.1 Project overall objectives and purposes ......................................................... 12
   3.2 Project beneficiaries ...................................................................................... 13
   3.3 Project activities ............................................................................................ 13
   3.4 Main project outputs ..................................................................................... 16

4. POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT ......................................................... 19

5. IMPLEMENTATION .................................................................................................. 21
   5.1 The process of project design and planning ................................................... 21
   5.2 Management, monitoring and evaluation system of the project ....................... 22
   5.3 Governance arrangements of the project ....................................................... 23
   5.4 Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation ....................... 24
   5.5 Key implementation obstacles and problem-solving practices ....................... 25

6. KEY RESULTS ......................................................................................................... 27

7. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY .................................................... 31

8. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT ....................................................... 33

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................. 37
The European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) is undertaking an ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) during the period 2007-2013 in regions covered by the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness & Employment and European Territorial Cooperation objectives in the 28 member states.

The Consortium IRS-CSIL-CISET-BOP was selected to undertake the ex post evaluation on ‘Culture and Tourism’ (Work Package 9). An important element within the evaluation is a series of case study analyses of NUTS2 regions covering interventions co-financed by ERDF during the 2007-2013 programming period.

In addition to the full case studies (at a region’s programme level), the evaluation also includes two mini case studies (focused on individual projects) for each regional case study. As with the regional programme case studies, mini case studies are based on desk-based research and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the main participants involved in the chosen projects.

This report presents the results of a mini case study concerning the creation of the bike trail Alpe Adria Radweg from Salzburg in Austria to Grado in Italy and its integrated promotion.

The report begins with a brief synthesis of the project before moving on to a detailed description and the presentation of the results of the analysis undertaken. The report ends with a review of the main conclusions of the study, together with a series of lessons learnt for future policymaking.

The mini case study was based on documentary research and five semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were identified as part of the wider ROP evaluation exercise of which the mini case studies are part. They were selected as they are considered key actors in the design and delivery of the project. The table below presents the interviewed actors.

### Table 1.1. Interviewed actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the person</th>
<th>Institution, position and role in the project</th>
<th>Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Project responsible for SalzburgerLand Tourismus GmbH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the author
1. Synthesis

The project consists in the joint creation and promotion of a cross-border long distance bike route between Salzburg in Austria and Grado in Italy. The project is implemented in three regions part of the Interreg IV Italy-Austria programme: Friuli Venezia Giulia, Land Carinthia and Land Salzburg.

The project is financed within the priority 2 “Territory and sustainability” of the Interreg programme despite its tourist value¹.

The project overall funding amounts to 1,480,000 euro, of which 716,000 euro derive from ERDF resources, while the rest are financed with national, regional and the beneficiaries’ own resources. However, on the Italian side, the project attracted several other regional, provincial and local resources necessary for completing/improving the bike trails included in the bike route itinerary.

The project started in 2008 and should have finished in 2011. Several extensions have been required by the Italian partners for completing the infrastructural works necessary to ensuring a continuous and safe bike route from Salzburg to Grado. The project will close this year, even though some of the bike trails included in the bike route will be completed next year.

The project is directed by Friuli Venezia Giulia and foresees the involvement of regional and local actors in charge of bike infrastructures and tourism marketing in the three regions.

The project foresees both hard and soft interventions.

The monitoring system used by the system is inadequate. Therefore, it is not possible to unveil the tourist potential and the economic, environmental and social value of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route.

The project resulted into:

- the completion of a 410 km cross-border bike route from Salzburg to Grado, which is largely used (1,083,712 estimated bike rides on the entire trail in a year) by tourists and local population;
- the creation of specific e-services (interactive website including a digital map of the route, virtual tours, cultural and natural attractions along the bike route, etc) for cyclists using the Alpe-Adria-Radweg trail which seem to be used by cyclists (e.g. the website registered 87,000 visits in 2014);
- the cross-border and unitary promotion of the bike route (e.g. common signposting along the trail, common logo, brand and promotional merchandise, road book of bike route, etc);
- the creation of some new businesses along the trail (e.g. restaurant along the rail in Italy);
• the creation of new products and projects that draw on the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project.

In 2015, the project received the “Bike Route of the Year” award at the “Fiets en Wandelbeurs” trade fair in Amsterdam.

The project would have not been implemented in the absence of the Interreg funding. While infrastructural works would have been ultimately completed on both sides of the border, the long distance itinerary crossing Italy and Austria and its unitary promotion would have not been financed.
2. Background information

Country: Italy and Austria
Region: Land Salzburg, Land Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Region
Full project title: Ciclovia Alpe Adria Radweg
Duration of project: 2008 – ongoing
Key words: sustainable tourism, slow tourism, sustainable mobility, biking

Funding:
- Total budget\(^2\): 1,480,000 €
- ERDF contribution: 716,250 €
- National budget\(^3\): 127,500 €
- Regional and provincial budget: 510,417 €
- Provincial budget: 67,500 €
- Private contribution\(^4\): 58,333 €

ERDF Objective:
- Convergence
- Competitiveness
- Territorial cooperation

Motivation for selection

The project has been selected for the following reasons:

- Integration between sustainable tourism, culture and sustainable transport. The project shows the multifaceted nature of tourism. The management authorities pay particular attention to the promotion of the natural landscape and cultural heritage along the trail. Furthermore, the project also shows the shortages of the Interreg IT-AT monitoring system in capturing the multifaceted nature of tourism interventions.
- Integration between hard and soft interventions
- Creation of an innovative Italian-Austrian tourist destination integrating different natural and cultural resources on both sides of the border.
- Good performance in terms of outputs.

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\(^2\) The difference in the amounts between those indicated in the regional case study annex and the ones included here refer to the fact additional resources regional resources were allocated to the project on the Italian side

\(^3\) Only for Italian partners and deriving from the co-funding quota allocated by national authorities for Interreg projects

\(^4\) It refers to the own resources of two of the Austrian partners which are private operators (limited liability companies) in the tourism field
3. Project description

Despite its tourist value\(^5\), the project is financed within the priority 2 “**territory and sustainability**” of the Interreg IV Italy-Austria programme. In fact, it has been classified as a cross-border sustainable mobility intervention.

The project consists in the joint creation and promotion of a unitary and long distance cross-border itinerary (410 km) from the Austrian mountains (Salzburg) to the Adriatic sea (Grado), through:

- connecting the existing bike trails;
- improving/completing the cross-border stretches necessary for ensuring continuity of the route, especially on the Italian side;
- creating an integrated cartography of the cross-border itinerary;
- promoting the entire itinerary under a common brand and in an integrated manner.

The Alpe–Adria–Radweg bike route crosses three programme regions: land Salzburg (AT), land Carinthia (AT) and Friuli Venezia region (IT).

The Alpe–Adria–Radweg is a strategic bike route for both Italian and Austrian regional authorities due to its connections to the following bike routes: EuroVelo 7 from Norway to Malta\(^6\) and Drava bike route from Italy (Dobbiaco) to Slovenia (Maribor river) via Carinthia.

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\(^5\) Tourism is directly financed with the priority 1 of the programme

\(^6\) The European cycle route network is a project managed by the European Cyclists’ Federation (ECF) in cooperation with national and regional partners and financed by the European Commission. EuroVelo incorporates existing and planned national and regional cycle routes into a single European network. It currently consists of well over 45,000 km of bike paths. EuroVelo 7 crosses Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Italy and Malta. In fact, from **Salzburg EuroVelo 7 follows the Alpe-Adria Trail.**
Figure 3.1 Alpe Adria Radweg bike route: from Salzburg (AT) to Grado (IT)

3.1 Project overall objectives and purposes

The general objectives of the project are:

- Development of cross-border sustainable tourism, in particular in areas with low touristic flows, through incentivising bike tourism.
- Improvement of cross-border sustainable mobility in the project area, and in particular, of the cross-border connections between rural and urban areas.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- Creation of a long distance bike route from Salzburg (AT) to Grado (IT), and in particular:
  - Identification of the bike itinerary from Salzburg to Grado.
  - Improvement and interconnection of the existing bike infrastructure along the route.
  - Creation of new bike infrastructure if necessary to connect the three regions and ensure a unitary bike route.
- Creation of a digital and integrated cross-border map system of the bike itinerary.
- Definition and implementation of a common marketing plan of Alpe – Adria – Radweg in order to ensure the promotion of the entire route under a unitary brand and in an integrated manner.
The project objectives are coherent with wider regional/national strategies in Austria and Italy aimed at the development of bike tourism.

On the Austrian side, the 2010 national tourism strategy identifies the development of bike tourism as a key issue of the strategy. Case study and mini case study interviews confirm that bike tourism is a key point also at regional level in both Carinthia and Salzburg.

On the Italian side, the project is coherent with and contributes to the objectives of the 2006 Plan for the development of a regional network of bike trails in Friuli Venezia Giulia, which acknowledges the relevance of a regional network of bike trails for the development of both regional sustainable mobility and bike tourism.

The project objectives are also coherent with the 2010 Tourist Marketing Plan of Friuli Venezia Giulia, which identifies bike tourism as a key point of the tourism strategy in the region.

Furthermore, the project objectives are coherent with and contribute to the Interreg Italy –Austria overall strategy of developing sustainable and integrated cross-border tourism.

3.2 Project beneficiaries

The project beneficiaries are: Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Province of Udine, Amt der karten Landesregierung, Karten Werbung Marketing, Land Salzburg Landesbaudirektion and SalzburgerLand Tourismus Gesellschaft m.b.H.

Local communities in the project areas, domestic and foreign tourists and owners of businesses along the trail are the main end users of the project.

3.3 Project activities

The activities implemented within the project integrate hard interventions (infrastructural works for the finalisation/improvement of the bike trails foreseen by the Alpe-Adria-Radweg itinerary, including the realization of signing posts) with soft ones (creation of digital maps, marketing activities for the promotion of both the bike route and its surrounding natural and cultural resources; continuous exchanges of ideas and experiences between the project partners).

In detail, the main activities implemented within the project are:

- **Creation of a cross-border joint cartography of the entire bike route using also digital tools** (website and apps): creation of the digital map of the bike route, apps for its download on smart phones and digital systems for its GPS download.

- **Planning of the missing parts of the bike route**: identification of the state of art (realized, ongoing, financed, etc) of all bike trails included in the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route; graphical portrayal of the types of bike trails included in the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route (specific bike trail, reserved lanes; cycling streets, etc); identification of quality levels of each trail included in the bike route; identification of the critical stretches that need further improvement; integration of the signalling post table.
- **Realization of small infrastructural works to ensure continuity of the bike route from Austria to Italy:** based on the previous analysis and on an exchange of experience between the Italian and Austrian partners, this activity regards the realization/improvement of the following paths included in the itinerary:
  
  - Improvement of the existing bike trail between Werfen and Tenneck in Salzburg land.
  - Finalisation of the bike trail that connects Mallnitz-Pusarnitz to Villach and Coccau through the creation of a 3 kilometres bike trail between Arnoldstain and Coccau in Carinthia land.
  - Realization of the bike trail between Cervignano-Grado in Friuli Venezia Giulia.

While in Austria, almost all bike trails included in the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route had been already completed in 2008, when the project was financed, in Friuli Venezia only 70% of the identified itinerary had been finished or under construction at that moment. Therefore, regional (Friuli Venezia Giulia), provincial (Province of Udine) and local authorities (municipalities and mountain communities) have been carrying out other infrastructural works necessary for ensuring the continuity of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg route: bike trail Venzone-Gemona; bike trail Resiutta-Venzone; bike trail Resiutta-Moggio; bike trail Braulins – Osoppo –Buja. It’s worth underlining that these paths of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route are not financed with Interreg funds, but with regional and provincial resources as part of the provincial, as it will be discussed further on.

- **Marketing of the Alpe-Adria -Radweg bike route**

  Marketing activities are a relevant part of the project, as they regard the integrated cross-border promotion of both the bike route and the cultural and natural resources along it. Furthermore, this activity also includes the promotion of bike tourist services along the route (e.g. specific or adequate accommodation; etc) and the creation of specific cross-border tourist packages along the trail.

  In detail the marketing activities realized regard:

  - creation of the Alpe-Adria -Radweg website for the integrated promotion of the bike route and natural, cultural and tourist resources along the route;
  - realization of the logo, brand and promotional merchandise of the bike route;
  - creation of specific cross-border tourist offers;
  - creation of a bike club along the trail;
  - creation and publication of a road book of the route;
  - organization of promotional events (e.g. inauguration of the bike trail between Venzone and Gemona, etc);
  - promotion on the national and international journals, newspapers, etc.

The **activities carried out** are **coherent with those originally planned**. The only changes regard the construction of the bike trail from Cervignano to Grado, instead of that from Venzone to Gemona and the cancellation of the school contest, as it will be
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The table below presents the main quality features of bike trails and factors enhancing tourists to use it that are targeted by the project activities.

Table 3.1. Qualitative features of bike trails motivating tourists to select it targeted by the project interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality features of bike trails motivating tourists to use it</th>
<th>Targeted by the project activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long, continuous and safe trails (e.g. reduced elevation changes, using specific bike trails or cycling streets, etc)</td>
<td>✓ (see above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure (e.g. bike-friendly accommodation, connections to public transport)</td>
<td>Even though no specific activities were implemented, the project paid particular attention to this aspect through the selection of an itinerary using trails well connected to the public transport means and through the complementarity with other projects (cross-border MICOTRA train from Pontebba to Villach that is especially used by cyclists riding on the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear and reliable signage and interpretation</td>
<td>✓ (Partially) More specific activities should have been implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on local attractions</td>
<td>✓ (see above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS, mobile and digital services (e.g. routing, individual tour offers, GPS-download-data, etc)</td>
<td>✓ (see above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail control (e.g. the possibility for cyclists to inform on damages across the route)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-cyclists and bike rental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Furthermore, the 2012 Eurovelo study underlines the following obstacles to the development of bike tourism:

- the lack of systematic and integrated promotion of bike trails and surrounding cultural and natural resources;
- their weak integration with the infrastructural interventions.

As underlined above infrastructural and marketing interventions are strongly integrated in the project. However, it’s worth noting that most of the project financial resources are dedicated to infrastructural interventions.

Looking at the table above, one can conclude that overall the project activities seem adequate to reaching the foreseen objectives. Nevertheless, major attention needs to be paid to the signposting along the trail on the Italian side, the creation of specific services for cyclists and to cross-border marketing activities for maximising the sustainable tourism potential of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route.

Even though the small infrastructural works funded by Interreg are

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necessary and relevant for the project objectives, these may have been financed with regional funds. The Interreg funding should have been used to strengthen the cross-border marketing of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route and to develop common cross-border services along the trail. These types of interventions are, in fact, very difficult to fund at regional level due to the “territorial” nature of both regional and ERDF funds allocated to culture and tourism strategies.

3.4 Main project outputs

The main project outputs are:

- **Creation of the 410 km bike route Alpe-Adria-Radweg from Salzburg to Grado**, characterized by reduced elevation changes, bike–train interconnections and presence of numerous natural and cultural resources along the route. However, it has to be underlined that in Italy some parts of the itinerary used by the bike route will be completed by next year.

  **Figure 3.2. Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route**

  ![Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route](image)

  Source: Regional Data, Friuli Venezia Giulia Region

- **Three stretches of the bike route completed with Interreg funding:**
  - Werfen-Imlau-Tenneck in Salzburg;
  - Arnoldstein – Thörl Maglern in Carinthia;
  - Cervignano – Grado in Friuli Venezia Giulia.

- **Other stretches of the bike route on the Italian territory** (Venzone – Gemona, Palmanove – Cervignano, etc).

  **Interactive website of the bike route** in Italian, German and English ([http://www.alpe-adria-radweg.com/en/](http://www.alpe-adria-radweg.com/en/)), including a detailed description of each itinerary section (route, natural and cultural attractions, accommodation bike friendly, transport services in the area, etc), digital map, virtual tour guides, GPX tours guides, etc

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9 For example: the Alps, the glaciated peaks of the Hohe Tauern mountains, Gastein Waterfall, Hohenwerfen Castle in Salzburg, town center of Oberveitach, Falkenstein Castle, Bernitz Waterfall, the Reisseck and Kreuzeck lifts, Barbarossa Canyon and the Teurinia Roman Museum outside Spittal, Venzone – national heritage due to its historic architecture, Palmanova – so-called “star city” due to its form, Fusine lakes, the valley of Fella, medieval castles of Strassoldo, Acquilea – UNESCO heritage, etc.
- GPS systems for download on PC and other electronic devices.
- Bike route apps for smart phones.
- Cross-border tourist packages regarding the bike route sold by 7 tourist agencies.
- 2000 copies of the bike route brochure.
- 4 issues of the bike route road book; 20,000 copies sold.
- Bike club in Italy.
- 3 cross-border promotional events organized for the opening of the completed stretches of the bike route in collaboration with national and international cycling associations and other associations (BiciItalia, etc).
- Numerous articles on national (e.g. Repubblica viaggi, etc) and international journals/newspaper (e.g. National Geographic) and TV shows (e.g. presentation of the bike route on Sky).
4. Political and strategic context

Mini case study interviews and European studies confirm that bike tourism is a relevant tourist product in Austria. The 2012 Eurovelo study reveals that Austria is the second European destination for bike tourism and that in 2009 cycle tourism made up between 5.5-6% of the summer Austrian tourism full time equivalent employment. Furthermore, studies\textsuperscript{10} show that the Austrian bike tourism demand is not saturated yet. Austria is, in fact, classified among the countries with a high demand for bike tourism. In 2012, it is estimated that bike holidays represent 3% of the overall holidays in Austria and that around 12-20% people use cycling as the main mode of transport.

Bike tourism is, in fact, a key focus of the 2010 Austrian tourism strategy and of regional strategies of both Carinthia and Salzburg.

As to Italy, the same studies underline that bike tourism demand is still underdeveloped and specific to those areas that dispose of qualitative bike trails. Italy is, in fact, part of the countries with a low-medium demand for cycle tourism: 1% of cycle holidays of the overall holidays and less than 2-5% people using bikes as the main mode of transport. As confirmed by both studies and mini case study interviews this is mainly due to the lack of or inadequacy of bike infrastructure and weak focus of tourism strategies on the bike product.

Differently from the national picture, in Friuli Venezia Giulia bike tourism is a major focus of transport and tourism regional strategies (e.g. 2006 Plan for the Development of a regional network of bike trails; 2010 and 2014 Tourism Marketing Plan of Friuli Venezia Giulia region, 2007-2013 ROP), due to its relevance for maintaining/increasing traditional tourist markets, as Austria and Germany, and for attracting more Northern European tourists. Indeed the regional statistics on tourism in Friuli Venezia Giulia show that in 2013, Austrian and German tourists represent most of the foreign tourists in the region: 32% in the first case (+2.3% compared to 2012) and 23% in the latter (+2.8% compared to 2012). Dutch tourists account for only 4% of regional tourists. In addition, one has to consider that, according to the above mentioned studies, Germany is the first outbound European country for bike tourist and Netherlands is the country with the highest number of people using bikes as the main mode of transport.

The 2006 Plan for the Development of a regional network of bike trails is particularly relevant for the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project, as it recognizes the regional relevance of the Alpe-Adria long distance trail connecting Friuli Venezia Giulia (province of Udine) to Austria and Slovenia. As in Italy the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route uses entirely the Alpe-Adria trail, its recognition as a regional relevant bike infrastructure has allowed channelling different European, regional and local resources on the bike route itinerary. For instance:

- the Palmanova – Grado part of the bike route itinerary, opened in 2014, costs 4,300,000 euro of which 450,000 deriving from the Interreg funding for the

finalisation of a small part of this path (Cervignano-Grado) and 3,850,000 euro from regional and provincial funds for sustainable mobility.

- The bike trail used by Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route from Venzone to Gemona, completed this year, is entirely financed by the Mountain Community of Gemonese, Val Canale and Canal del Ferro.

- The finalisation costs of the Italian part of the bike route itinerary from Resiutta to Moggio amount to 1,800,000 euro deriving from regional funds.

- The costs for completing the trail from Moggio to Venzone costs around 2,500,000 euro, of which at the moment there are available 1,500,000 euro deriving from regional funds.
5. Implementation

5.1 The process of project design and planning

The idea of creating a long distance bike route from Austria to Italy came from Friuli Venezia Giulia (regional transport department) and the Province of Udine.

It builds on an existing project of the Province of Udine for the creation of the Alpe-Adria bike trail that could constitute a link with the Slovenian and Austrian bike trails.

In 2008, when the the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project was planned, some parts of the trail had already been completed with regional, provincial and European resources:

- Alpe Adria trail from Coccau to Tarvisio (Camporosso), financed with 1,597,426 euro deriving from the Interreg III A project Alpe Adria trail and provincial funds.
- Bike trail from Tarvisio to Pontebba financed with 2,860,265 euro deriving from provincial funds for sustainable mobility and the 2000-2006 Objective 2 Regional Programme of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

However, there was still a long way to go to the creation of a continuous long distance trail from Italy to Austria that could also ensure its inclusion in the Eurovelo route at European level. Mini case study interviews confirm that, while the completion of the infrastructural works to the Alpe –Adria trail had already been planned, their connection to the Austrian ones (e.g. cross-border bike infrastructure, common signposting, etc) and joint promotion (common maps, services, etc) could be dealt with only in the framework of an Interreg project due to its cross-border nature and funding.

As interviews confirm, the cross-border bike route would have not been created without the Interreg funding and all interventions would have been limited to the regional territory. This would have hampered the creation of a qualitative bike itinerary and its effectiveness in developing bike tourism in the three regions and in particular in Friuli Venezia Giulia.\(^\text{11}\)

The preliminary definition of a cross-border itinerary that could be continuous, safe, innovative and adapted to both professional cyclists and non professional ones (e.g. families, children, etc) represented the main issue of discussion during the project design phase. Several meetings were organized between the Italian and Austrian partners selection of the preliminary bike route and project design. The decision to start the journey in Salzburg and end it in Grado stemmed from the partners’ desire to create a bike route connecting different landscapes (from the mountains to the sea via the Carinthia lakes), main cultural sites (e.g. Salzburg, Tarvisio, etc) and sites with underused cultural and tourism potential (e.g. Venzone, Palmanova, etc). Particular attention was also paid to selecting an itinerary that could use existing bike trails interconnected to the public transport system so as to reduce as much as possible the infrastructural investments.

In this phase limited attention was paid to the definition of specific results and targets

\(^{11}\) See above the main quality features of bike trails according to the professional literature
to measure them, as it will be detailed in the next section.

The project was presented and financed in 2008.

5.2 Management, monitoring and evaluation system of the project

Management

The project management system foresees:

- A lead partner in charge of coordinating and monitoring all project responsibilities: Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. The lead partner is the only contact point of the Managing Authority and is in charge of all the project reporting.

- A Management Committee led by the lead partner and made of one representative of each of the project partners – the Management Committee ensures a general supervision of the project implementation and decides on actions to be taken in case of problems.

- A Technical Committee that supervises the operational implementation of the project activities. It is subdivided into two main working groups: one dedicated to the implementation of infrastructural interventions and another one focused on the tourist and promotional activities. It is made of one representative for each partner and it is led by each partner on rotation.

- The balanced division of responsibilities among the project partners and identification of a coordinator of each of the project activity.

- The use of public tenders for the implementation of some of the project activities (e.g. realisation of the digital map).

Monitoring and evaluation

The project monitoring and evaluation system is inadequate to capture the all the project effects. The project monitoring system is mainly designed for reporting achievements to the MA. Information is collected individually by each partner and transmitted to the lead partner that drafts a yearly report on the advancement of the project.

The project foresees the following expected results:

- Improvement in cross-border infrastructures through interventions for completing/improving the Alpe – Adria – Radweg bike trail.

- Improvement in cross-border sustainable mobility.

- Improvement in the usability of bike services: definition of common cross-border quality standards according to the ones used at European level and creation of joint websites.

- Tourism development in the project areas: improvement in the tourism services in the project area; increase in tourism presences in the area; improvement in the image of areas crossed by the bike route; development of sustainable tourism; contribution to the regional policies in the tourism sector (e.g.
development of sustainable tourism) as well as to European sustainable tourism policies.

- Institutional results: contribution to sustainable development of the project areas; contribution to the “openness” of Italian and Austrian territories towards a cross-border identity; development/strengthening of institutional partnerships.

However, the identified results are rather general and no specific indicators for their measurement are foreseen by the project. For instance, no systemic and continuous information is collected on: the number of users of the bike trails, the sold cross-border tourist packages, the tourist presences in the accommodation structures along the trail, etc. As to the number of users, it’s worth recalling that some limited information is available from the counting stations along the trail. However, in Austria, it’s difficult to state the exact number of users of the trail as these stations are installed at the crossroads with other bike trails (e.g. Drava bike route). Some more specific and reliable information is available on the Italian side, but the counting stations cover only part of the trail.

No survey of the users’ satisfaction is foreseen by the project. The project does not include a final evaluation.

5.3 Governance arrangements of the project

The main actors involved in the project are:

- Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (The regional department for territorial planning, energy, mobility and transport infrastructures) – project director; as specified previously, the main interest of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region in the project stems from its responsibility of developing a regional bike network able to develop bike tourism and sustainable mobility in the region.

- Province of Udine (The provincial Department for territorial planning and infrastructures) – project partner, involved in the implementation of the infrastructural works foreseen by the project; the main interest of the Province of Udine is related to the completion of the Alpe Adria Trail crossing the provincial territory, considered an asset for territorial development, especially in those areas with reduced tourist flows (e.g. Pontebba, Gemona, etc).

- Mountain Community of Gemonese, Val Canale and Canal del Ferro – involved in the project for the design and implantation of some parts of the Alpe-Adria_Radweg bike route crossing its territory; its main interest is related to the benefits for the local economy in the area of hosting a cross-border trail of international and regional relevance.

- Municipalities along the Italian paths of the Alpe-Adria_radweg bike route – involved in the design of the bike trails crossing their territories; their interest is mainly related to the cross-border relevance of the bike trails and potentiality for attracting new tourists in their territories.

- Amt der karten Landesregierung – project partner; it is in charge for bike infrastructure in Carinthia Land; the main interest in the project stems from the development of Carinthia bike infrastructure and its integration with wider bike networks.
• Karten Werbung Marketing – project partner; it is in charge of tourism strategies in Carinthia land; Carinthia is crossed by two bike routes (Drava and Alpe-Adria-Radweg) which are considered highly relevant for increasing tourism presences in the land and for incentivising the development of slow tourism in the Land.

• Land Salzburg Landesbaudirektion – project partner; in charge of the bike infrastructure of Salzburg land; for the Salzburg land, the Alpe-Adria-Radweg trail is extremely relevant due to its connections to other regional, cross-border and international trails.

• SalzburgerLand Tourismus Gesellschaft m.b.H – project partner; in charge of bike tourism in Salzburg land; the Alpe-Adria-Trail is extremely relevant due to its potentiality for developing cross-border tourist offers.

• Entrepreneurs in tourist and related fields – informed about the project and involved in some of the marketing activities (e.g. creation of the bike club in Italy; promotion of specific cross-border tourist offers, promotion of the bike friendly accommodation along the trail, etc); their interest derives from the economic benefits that the trail could bring them.

• Local (bike) associations – involved in the promotional events on both the Italian and Austrian side; their interest stems from their mission of developing bike tourism at regional, national and cross-border level. The project also involved one cultural association whose mission is to promote slow cultural tourism.

5.4 Innovative elements and novel approaches to implementation

The main innovative aspects consist in:

• **Technical innovations** – the use of dismissed train lines as bike trails included in the overall Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route; interconnection with public transport means, some of which created specifically for the project purpose (e.g. MICOTRA train and bus service allowing bikes on board between Udine and Grado).

• The creation of an **unique itinerary** in the area connecting the mountains to the sea and integrating different natural and cultural attractions (see above).

• An **interactive website** including a cross-border georeferenced map of the route, virtual tours, Gps downloads, the possibility to plan one’s own itinerary autonomously, etc; **specific apps for electronic devices**. Even though nowadays these are commonly used tools, in 2008 when the project was planned, they were new and seldom used in the marketing of bike routes.

As to the **novel approach** adopted, the project foresees an integration and joint work of actors in charge of both bike infrastructures and tourism promotion. While on the Austrian side, this integration occurred since the beginning of the project, in Italy it was developed during the project and is continuously strengthened.

This is a key factor behind developing bike tourism. Indeed, as underlined by the 2012 Eurovelo study, one of the main barriers to the development of bike tourism resides in the fact that bike routes are provided as transport or local recreational facilities. This
Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) – Work Package nine: Culture and Tourism

is due to the fact that their main promoters are public bodies in charge of transport, sport or countryside. Tourism bodies tend to focus on developing markets and, thus, resources are spread across different tourist markets, with cycling at the margin.

Furthermore, the project is characterized by a strong cooperation of the cross-border actors in charge of bike infrastructure and bike tourism, which resulted into the creation of a unitary itinerary using a common logo, brand and signposting as well as common tourist offers. Indeed, the promotion of the bike route on both sides regards the entire bike route and not the Italian or the Austrian stretches. In addition, the updated version of the Plan for the development of a regional network of bike routes in Friuli Venezia Giulia includes the Alpe-Adria-Radweg among the regional relevant infrastructure. Therefore, the entire bike route is considered strategic for Friuli Venezia Giulia and not just its Italian stretches.

It’s worth emphasising that the Alpe Adria Bike Tour received the "Bike Route of the Year" award on January 31st 2015 at the "Fiets en Wandelbeurs" trade fair.

5.5 Key implementation obstacles and problem-solving practices

The main obstacles faced during the implementation phase are:

- Language barriers – not all partners speak Italian/German which have made communication more difficult. At the beginning of the project, interpreters were employed for the meetings. However, this solution was soon abandoned due to its high costs. To overcome the language problem, the partnership used English for communicating. Furthermore, case studies interviews underline that in time there was also an increase in the partners’ trust in each other which contributed to overcome the communication barrier.

- Contestation of some parts of the Italian itinerary selected for the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route by municipalities. These contestations regarded mainly the Venzone-Gemona bike trail, originally included in the Interreg funding. After the change of the political representatives at local level, some municipalities, crossed by this trail, contested the agreements undertaken by previous local administrations. They asked for the design of a new itinerary that used dismissed train rails. This implied the redrafting of the project for this stretch of the bike route as well as the identification of new financial resources due to the higher costs of such an infrastructural work. In order to avoid negative impacts on the payment of the Interreg funds allocated to the project, the partnership decided to replace this trail with another trail included in the bike route (Cervignano – Grado). However, the Venzone-Gemona trail was completed and inaugurated this year.

- Lack of a tourist marketing body on the Italian side since the very beginning of the project – at the beginning, this represented an obstacle for the marketing of the bike route as Italian partners were focused more on the realization of the infrastructural works and paid less attention to marketing. However, the continuous exchanges of ideas between the Austrian and the Italian partners

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12 “Bike Route of the Year” is an initiative of “Fiets en Wandelbeurs”, and is awarded annually to organizers of successful international, and especially transnational bike tours. The Alpe Adria Bike Tour was nominated for this prize along with the Tour de Manche (France/England).
ultimately resulted in the involvement of the Friuli Venezia Giulia tourism marketing agency.

- High administrative burden of the Interreg programme – case studies interviews confirm that the partnership dedicated a lot of resources to handling the paperwork required by the Interreg programme. In addition, the lead partner also disposed of few human resources with specific competences in handling cross-border projects.

- Lack of financial resources to complete all infrastructural works on time – this problem regards mainly the Italian stretches, where only 70% of the route was already finished at the beginning of the project. In order to overcome this issue, the regional, provincial and local authorities channelled all available resources on the itinerary of the bike route.

- Implementation delays on the Italian side related to: the complexity of the Italian legislation for the realisation of infrastructural works; negotiations with some local municipalities and consequent redrafting of the project for some of the stretches foreseen by the bike route in Italy; lack of financial resources; insufficient regional staff for keeping up with the administrative paperwork.
6. Key results

At this point, it is difficult to capture the results of the project because:

- The project is still ongoing. Some of the Italian stretches are still to be completed/improved. Even though the end of the Interreg project is foreseen this year, some parts of the Italian itinerary will be finished next year.
- In Italy, the bike club has been launched at the beginning of this year and therefore effects are still not fully deployed.
- Evidence on the project results is extremely weak due to the inadequate monitoring system. The counting stations are limited compared to the length of the trail and no indicators have been collected on the number of businesses opened/improved along the trail, the number of tourist arrivals and overnights stay along the trail, etc. However, it has to be mentioned that even if such indicators were collected, it would be impossible to say that their increase/decrease is due to the project actions in the absence of a counterfactual evaluation.

Despite the weak hard evidence on the project results, some preliminary results can be reported based on mini case study interviews and quantitative data collection:

- **87,000 visits of the webpage** in 2014 (data for 2015 are not yet available).
- **818,000 webpage impressions** in 2014 (data for 2015 are not yet available).
- Overall **20,000 copies of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg book road have been sold** up till now.
- In 2014 the Alpe-Adria-Radweg tourist packages sold by 7 tourist agencies registered **500 passengers**; considering that the average stay amounts to 5 nights, this means **2,500 overnights stay along the Alpe-Adria–Radweg trail**. However, mini case studies interviews reveal that only around 10% of the bike users **book their journey by tour operators**. Therefore, one can estimate **around 25,000 overnights stay along the trail**.
- **26,432 rides between Ponte di Muro and Resiutta** (Italian stretch of the trail; 20 km length) from April to June 2015; it’s worth mentioning the average increase registered by both stations between April and June amounts to 396%. Overall, the regional authorities estimate around **77,000 rides** from April to September 2015 on this stretch. The number of rides registered by the two counting stations is far higher than the one envisaged by the original project of the Alpe-Adria trail, considering the 20 kilometres length of this stretch. In 2000, when the original project was designed, the expected number of rides on the entire Alpe-Adria trail (from the state border to Grado) amounted to 15,000 rides. Assuming on average 2,643\(^{13}\) on

\(^{13}\) This number is calculated considering the average number of cyclists registered by the two stations and the 20 kilometres length of the trail between the two counting stations. Furthermore, we assumed a constant number of rides over the year.
kilometre of bike trail for the whole year and considering the 211 km length of the Italian part of the bike route, the estimated bike ridings along the Italian part of the trail amount to 557,715 in a year.

- **260,000 cyclists in 2014 were registered by the bike counting station from Villach in Carinthia.** However, it has to be underlined that the counting station is installed at the crossroad between Drava and Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike routes and, therefore, it is not possible to say how much of these cyclists are using one or another trail. No data are available at the moment for the Alpe-Adria-Radweg itinerary in Salzburg.

- **Creation of a new business along the Italian trail**: refurbishment of the dismissed train station of Chiusaforte and its transformation into a restaurant. As testified by mini case study interviews, the new restaurant would not have been created in the absence of the using of the dismissed train trail for the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route. However, since no data are collected on the businesses created along the trail, we cannot say if this is the only business created or if there are others as well.

- **Creation of new projects and products that draw on the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project:**
  - the project MI.CO.TRA train from Udine (IT) to Villach (AT) financed by Interreg IV Italy-Austria. In 2009, the Italian railway society decided to cut the train connection between Udine and Vilach. As the bike-train/bus interconnection is one of the key concepts of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route, the cancellation of the train connection in this stretch represented a serious risk for the quality of the trail. The Alpe-Adria-Radweg lead partner promoted a project for a cross-border train from Udine to Villach jointly with FUC (the regional railway company) and OBB (the national Austrian railway company). The project was implemented within the Interreg IV Italy-Austria programme and resulted in the creation of the MI.CO.TRA train. This is the only train in Friuli Venezia Giulia that has a specific wagon for bikes. The train rides along the Alpe-Adria-Radweg path from Udine to Villach and stops in all the train stops along this stretch of the bike route. The train registers on average 4,510 passengers a month and most of them are cyclists, as testified by both regional case study and mini case study interviews. The relevance of the trail for the tourism in the cross-border area determined the regional authorities in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Carinthia to maintain the train even in the absence of the ERDF funding. All costs related to its functioning are covered by the two regional authorities. **Mini case study interviews confirm that the train would have not existed in the absence of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route project.** The train connection represents an added value for the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route as non professional cyclists can more easily use the trail.
  - Creation of a bus with a specific wagon for bikes between Udine and Grado. The bus service was created by SAF (the regional transport company in Friuli Venezia Giulia) in 2015. As in the MI.CO.TRA case, the service would have not existed in the absence of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg trail.
o **"The tour of Italy in 80 bookshops"** - the project was implemented between May and June 2015 by the cultural association “Letteratura rinnovabile” (Renewable Literature). The tour rolls throughout Friuli Venezia Giulia along the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route from Tarvisio to Udine to tell stories, read books out loud to rediscover authors and meet readers.

o Alpe-Adria-Radweg 2 – the partnership has decided to create a new project focused on strengthening the cross-border marketing of the bike route and on the creation of new cross-border services along the trail.

- **Strengthening of the cooperation between the Italian and the Austrian partners.** Mini case study interviews reveal that the partners did not work together before the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project and that the good cross-border collaboration during this project has enhanced trust among them and put the basis for future collaborations. It’s worth mentioning that the strengthened collaboration is not limited to public bodies, but it includes also private operators (e.g. Austrian marketing companies, tourist agencies on both sides of the border).
7. Sustainability and transferability

Sustainability

In both Italy and Austria the bike route is considered a public utility infrastructure. Regional and local authorities are in charge of the costs for its maintenance and improvement. Furthermore, no ticket is foreseen for the use of the bike route on both sides of the border. Therefore, we can conclude that the existence and quality of the bike route depends on public investments. In order to ensure continuous funding to the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route, in Italy, it is declared an infrastructure of regional relevance and it is included in the Plan for the creation of a regional network of bike trails in Friuli Venezia Giulia, as mentioned previously. This is extremely relevant if considering that more than 50% of the trail is located in Friuli Venezia Giulia region. However, the continuous cuts in the budget of both regional and public bodies, especially on the Italian side, might hamper the development and quality of the trail.

While the creation and maintenance of a bike route requires large public investments, it’s worth recalling that both previously mentioned studies emphasise the high economic, social and environmental value of bike tourism.\(^{14}\)

Even though the monitoring and evaluation system of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project does not provide any consistent evidence that could confirm it or not, it is possible to make some preliminary estimations of its economic value. Assuming that the average expenditure per overnight cyclists’ trip is 285.4\(^{15}\) euro and that in 2014 the estimated number of overnight cyclists using the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route is 2,500 persons, the revenue generated by the route amounts to 713,000 euro per year. However, it has to be underlined that such revenues might be much higher as several cyclists use it for daily trips.

Nevertheless, if one looks at the costs for the creation and maintenance of bike infrastructure, it is clear that it takes quite some time before its full costs can be covered by revenues.

Transferability

The main factors to be considered for a successful transfer of the project in other contexts consist in:

\(^{14}\) The 2012 EUROVELO study estimates that gross revenues from bike tourism in the EU MS amounts to 44 billion euro (estimations based on 2012 data) of which the most part are to be found at local level in the specific areas through which the routes pass. Furthermore, it estimates that gas emissions undergo a reduction between 50% and 80% per trip day. From a social point of view, bike tourism is a slow tourism that enhances an increased knowledge of the territories crossed, of their culture and habits. This constitutes a basis for an increased trust and tolerance towards other people, territories and cultures. For further details see the full study available on http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/it/document.html?reference=IPOL-TRAN_ET(2012)474569

\(^{15}\) The amount has been calculated based using a cost of 57,08 euro/trip, as indicated by the 2012 EUROVELO study, and a 5 days average length of the trip, as confirmed by mini case studies interviews. Furthermore, the project partners estimate that 2,500 persons made a overnight trip on Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route in 2014.
• Existence of a various and beautiful landscape and/or tourist attractions (e.g. cultural, historical, gastronomic, etc) along the bike route.

• Creation of a long distance, continuous and safe bike route.

• Exploitation of existing trails to reduce infrastructural costs.

• Use of dismissed train railways to reduce environmental impact.

• Interconnection between the bike route and the public transport connections (bus, train) along it; in case of cross-border itineraries, cross-border public transport connections are crucial.

• Joint promotion of the bike route and tourist attractions in the area; in case of cross-border itineraries, the unitary promotion of the entire bike route is crucial.

• Creation of bike friendly services (e-plan of the bike trip, virtual tours, accommodation, restaurants, etc) along the trail; in case of cross-border itineraries it is crucial that such services are unitary irrespectively of the states they cross.

• Integration of actors in charge of both bike infrastructure and tourism on both sides of the border (in case of a cross-border itinerary) or at local/regional/national level.

• Involvement of local actors and relevant stakeholders in the areas crossed by the bike route since the planning phase to prevent contestations and enhance its integration in wider local development projects/strategies, etc.
8. Conclusions and Lessons learnt

Conclusions

The project regards the joint creation and promotion of a long distance cross-border bike itinerary between Salzburg (AT) and Grado (IT) using, as much as possible, existing bike trails. The selected bike route itinerary crosses the Austrian mountains and lakes and stops to the Adriatic sea in Grado (Friuli Venezia Giulia). The bike route ranges along three cross-border regions: Salzburg, Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The project draws on a 2,000 project of the Province of Udine for the construction of the Alpe-Adria trail ranging from the border to the sea and connecting Italy to both Austria and Slovenia. Furthermore, the project is coherent and contributes to the regional strategies of all three regions crossed by the bike route, which consider bike tourism a key issue for the development of regional tourism. The project contributes also to the objectives of the Interreg programme, namely the creation of cross-border sustainable tourism and reducing the fragmented promotion and management of natural and cultural resources in the cross-border area.

The project is led by Friuli Venezia Giulia (regional department for infrastructures, energy and mobility). The project partnership foresees an integration of regional and local actors in charge of both bike tourism and bike infrastructure: the regional infrastructural departments of Land Salzburg, Land Carinthia and Friuli Venezia Giulia; the provincial department in charge of infrastructures of the Province of Udine; and two marketing tourism companies responsible for the marketing promotion of the two lands. During the implementation phase, the Tourism marketing agency of Friuli Venezia Giulia was also involved. In addition, on the Italian side the project foresees the involvement of local actors (municipalities, mountain communities) both as founders and implementers of part of the trails used by the bike route.

The project is characterized by a strong integration of hard (infrastructural works for creating/completing bike trails used by the cross-border route) and soft interventions (marketing promotion).

Infrastructural interventions absorbed most of the project budget due to the high costs of completing the cross-border bike trails. On the Italian side, infrastructural works are only limitedly covered by the Interreg funding. The infrastructural work funded by the Interreg project on the Italian side consists in a 2 kilometres stretch (Cervignano-Grado) part of the Palmanova-Grado bike itinerary (27 kilometres), included in the cross-border bike route. The Interreg funding amounts to 10% of the overall funding necessary for completing the Palmanova-Grado bike itinerary.

Regional and provincial funds have been used for covering the remaining costs. In addition, other relevant financial resources have been allocated over the years by regional, provincial and local authorities for financing infrastructural works necessary for completing all bike trails used by the cross-border bike route on the Italian side.

Even though they are highly relevant for the success of the project, infrastructural works funded by Interreg could have been financed with resources different from Interreg ones, especially on the Italian side. This would have allowed to concentrate most of the resources on cross-border marketing of the bike route and creation of cross-border services along the route, which cannot be covered by regional and/or
local resources. However, it’s worth mentioning that use of ERDF Innterreg resources for the infrastructural works prevented delays in the project implementation. In a context of continuous cuts to regional and local budgets, every financial resource represents “a breath of fresh air” as one of the interviewers noted.

The added value of the Interreg project consists not so much in the infrastructural works funded, but in having created the premises for the creation of a cross-border long distance bike route integrating and promoting in a unitary manner various natural and cultural resources along the trail. Furthermore, its added value resides also in allowing a know-how transfer from experienced actors in this field (Austrian) to less experienced ones (Italians).

The monitoring and evaluation system is inadequate to report outputs and results.

The mains outputs consist in the creation of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg long distance bike route from Salzburg to Grado, the creation of an interactive website in three languages integrating information necessary for planning a trip/holiday on the trail (digital map, virtual tour, tourist and cultural attractions, tourist services along the route, etc) and the publication of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg road book. However, some parts of the Italian bike trails integrated in the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route have still to be completed/improved. Even though these were not included in the Interreg project, their completion is essential for the success of the trail.

As to the results of the project, there is hardly any consistent evidence on them. However, some preliminary results consist in: large use of the bike route (e.g. around 1,083,71216 rides on the entire bike route estimated from April to September); creation of new services along the bike route; and strengthened collaboration among the project partners.

The bike route is not sustainable by itself, but needs public investments for maintenance and improvement works. However, as suggested by several studies on bike tourism, bike routes have a large economic, environmental and social value especially at local level and in areas not “tourist honey pot” sites.

The main success factors of the project are: sectorial integration of both actors and interventions; integration of the Alpe-Adria –Radweg trail in regional plans for bike tourism and bike infrastructure; integration of funds; integration between the bike route and the public transport system; promotion of a cross-border destination integrating a various and beautiful landscape with several cultural attractions in the area; unitary promotion of the bike route; joint design and implementation of the project; creation of management rules and continuous feedback among the partners; involvement of reputational actors (acknowledged as experts in the field); and know-how transfer among the project partners.

The main obstacles faced during the implementation phase consist in: contestation of the selected route of some local politicians on the Italian side; scarcity of funds to finish all the bike infrastructural works on time (on the Italian side); high administrative burden; and difficulty of communication due to language differences.

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16 We estimate the number of rides/kilometer/year based on the monthly data registered by the Italian counting stations and we assume that it is constant over the year and along the entire trail.
Lessons learnt

Key factors behind positive elements:

- The creation of a successful long distance cross-border bike route depends on: a continuous, safe and pleasant bike itinerary; its integration with bike friendly public transport means; creation of common specific e-services allowing cyclists to plan their own trip and common services along the trail; unitary cross-border of the route (same logo, brand, signposting, promotion, etc).

- The integration of actors in charge of bike infrastructure and bike tourism proved essential for promoting the bike route as a tourist attraction and not only as a sustainable mobility one.

- The involvement of regional actors in charge of transport policies (not only bike infrastructure) was crucial for creating bike friendly public transport means along the bike route.

- The involvement of local actors in the implementation phase resulted into channelling other resources on the missing or inadequate bike trails foreseen by the Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route in Italy.

- The adoption of a multidisciplinary and holistic approach was crucial for moving beyond the bike infrastructure and paying attention to the creation of e-services and to the promotion of the bike route.

- The continuous feedback, the creation of coordination and management rules laid and the involvement of reputational actors ensured a good collaboration among the partners and a continuous know how exchange; the good collaboration increased the partners’ trust among each other and constitutes the basis for future cross-border collaborations/projects.

- The Interreg project allowed to link bike trails, natural and cultural resources in a unitary framework (route) and to create common services and promotional activities; this would have not happened in the absence of the Interreg funding; furthermore, it also allowed actors across the two regions to work together and to learn from each others’ good practices in the bike tourism field.

- The integration of the originally planned Italian bike trail (Alpe Adria) within a wider and international bike route (Alpe-Adria-Radweg bike route) constituted a driver for attracting new resources for the missing parts, especially on the Italian side, and for creating a more innovative project compared to the original one.

Key factors behind negative elements:

- Limited involvement of municipalities in the selection of the bike route – on the Italian side, this resulted into contestations of the route by some local municipalities after the change in the political government party.

- Limited role of the ERDF in infrastructural works (especially on the Italian side) - on the Italian side the infrastructural works had already been planned before the creation of the project and several regional, provincial and local resources had been allocated over the years for their realisation.
• High administrative burden of both the Interreg programme and Italian legislation for public infrastructure – interviewers state that they allocated around 50% of their time to filling in paperwork required by the programme and other legislation in the field.

• Language differences may hamper communication between the partners and reduce collaboration. In this case, translation costs have to be added with an impact on the increase in the costs of Interreg interventions. However, the involvement of staff with English competences is a valid solution.

• The inadequate monitoring and evaluation system used by the project does not allow to report the effects of the project in the areas crossed by the bike route.

• The classification of the project as a transport infrastructure hampers reporting on the effects of the Interreg ERDF funds in the tourism field. The Interreg monitoring system is not able to catch the multifaceted nature of the Alpe-Adria-Radweg project.
References


http://www.alpe-adria-radweg.com/it/
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