

# EuroVelo

The European cycle route network

# Development Guide

European Cyclists' Federation  
September 2024



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[EuroVelo.com](https://www.eurovelo.com)





# Executive summary

This EuroVelo Development Guide intends to provide **recommendations and guidelines for stakeholders involved in the development of EuroVelo**, the European cycle route network. As of 2024, EuroVelo comprises 17 long-distance cycle routes that cross and connect the continent. It is the largest cycle route network in the world, spanning over 90,000 km when completed.

The basis for the principles outlined in this guide is the **EuroVelo Strategy 2030**, aiming for “*a fully developed and high-quality European cycle route network, which is well-connected to national, regional and local cycle route networks and other sustainable modes of transport, driving further increases in everyday cycling and cycling tourism, in line with ECF’s vision to improve and increase cycling across Europe*”.

According to the Strategy, stakeholders involved in the development of EuroVelo should pay high attention to:

- The quality of routes, which should cater to the needs of the largest possible group of potential users;
- The integration of the routes into existing or planned cycle networks, also providing easy access to main public transport hubs.

In order to help stakeholders achieve these goals, the EuroVelo Development Guide provides **general and specific principles for the development of EuroVelo routes**. General principles correspond to the needs and priorities of cyclists that the UNECE Group of Experts on cycling infrastructure identified in its [Guide for designating cycle route networks](#) published in 2024: **safety, security, directness, continuity, attractiveness and comfort** (see Chapter 3 for explanations).

Specific principles correspond to development needs that are particular to EuroVelo routes and their characteristics (i.e. long-distance, cross-border cycle routes connecting areas with various speeds of cycling development, linking cities and countryside and sometimes continuing across rivers and seas):

- The **‘backbone principle’**: EuroVelo is intended as a “backbone” of national and local cycle networks to ensure continuity and connectivity between countries. It should be complemented by national cycle routes, including nationally relevant corridors, to satisfy national needs.
- The **‘directness principle’**: When defining the itinerary of a EuroVelo route, the most direct connection between major attractions, service centres or access points (big cities, major ferry terminals, border crossings, UNESCO sites, national parks, etc.) should be prioritised.
- The **‘single-track principle’**: A EuroVelo route should define a single itinerary and follow a single track. The itinerary should be as much as possible the same in both directions.
- The **‘no local loops principle’**: EuroVelo routes should not include loops or detours. When attractions or services cannot be accessed with a direct, logical itinerary, it is recommended to provide a signed connecting cycle route or local loop, not officially included in the EuroVelo itinerary.
- The **‘continuity principle’**: In order to complete the EuroVelo network by 2030, continuity solutions should be found in under-developed sections of the network even if quality improvements are expected in the future. In relevant cases, public transport alternatives should be clearly communicated as being a part of the route. Cross-border continuity should be ensured, hence the importance of communicating early on with neighbouring countries on the chosen itinerary.
- Minimising the **impact on nature and biodiversity**: Biodiversity should be kept in mind when defining the itinerary of and developing EuroVelo routes.

These principles count exceptions and special cases, which are described in Chapter 5 of this guide.

In Chapter 6, this guide also provides **recommendations on governance** and the importance of setting up a good coordination between all actors involved in the development of EuroVelo routes at national level, presents the **key elements of a good legislation** for cycling and gives inspiration on available **sources of funding**.

Finally, Chapter 7 lists some good practices on EuroVelo and long-distance cycle routes development from across Europe.



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why this guide?

EuroVelo is the European cycle route network – as of 2024, 17 long-distance cycle routes that cross and connect the continent. It is the largest cycle route network in the world, spanning over 90,000 km when completed. The development of EuroVelo should lead to safe and continuous cycle routes, serving as the backbone for national and regional cycle networks where they exist. It can be used by long-distance cycle tourists, as well as by local people making daily journeys. EuroVelo is developed and coordinated on the transnational level by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) in cooperation with a network of National EuroVelo Coordination Centres (NECCs). It is an initiative that fosters sustainable transport and tourism policies.

EuroVelo was created by visionaries in 1997 with the intention to connect Europe with long-distance cycle routes. Today, the network is still to be developed in certain countries, along some sections, and reaching harmonised high-quality conditions is sometimes a challenge. EuroVelo has evolved over time and new routes joined the network on demand, following a detailed process coordinated by ECF and presented in the [EuroVelo New Routes, Route Extensions and Itinerary Changes](#) manual.

The **EuroVelo Strategy 2030** aims for quality over quantity through “*a fully developed and high-quality European cycle route network, which is well-connected to national, regional and local cycle route networks and other sustainable modes of transport, driving further increases in everyday cycling and cycling tourism, in line with ECF's vision to improve and increase cycling across Europe*”.

In line with the Strategy, an ambition of EuroVelo is to lead to the development of cycle routes catering to the needs of the largest group of cyclists possible. With 67% of EuroVelo ready to cycle in 2024 and 39% with EuroVelo signs, this guide intends to provide **general recommendations on EuroVelo route development for stakeholders involved in its implementation**, with references to more detailed publications where relevant, and best practice from across the network.

EuroVelo can also serve as an inspiration and useful case study for the development of long-distance cycle routes and networks in general, making this manual useful for a larger audience, going beyond NECCs coordinating the national development of EuroVelo.

## 1.2 How to use this guide?

This guide is primarily intended to support the development of a high-quality EuroVelo network by National EuroVelo Coordination Centres (NECCs), cycle route managers, and any stakeholders involved in developing and implementing EuroVelo routes, from the designation and planning of the routes' itinerary to its implementation, maintenance, and quality improvement.

This guide can also be applied to the development of long-distance cycle routes and networks in general.

The recommendations presented in this document can be used by relevant stakeholders in various situations:

- As a reference for EuroVelo coordination at national level;
- As inspiration for national cycle route network management;
- As a background for the planning of new routes or the redefinition of existing routes, facilitating the choices to be made;
- As an annex to action plans or implementation plans for the conception or quality improvement of EuroVelo routes, backing up the suggested actions;
- As a reference when asking for funding.

With these recommendations, we hope that relevant stakeholders all over Europe will have clear and common guidelines allowing them to ensure the coherence and quality of the EuroVelo network.

### 1.3 Connection with other EuroVelo publications

This guide is focusing on EuroVelo development in general and replaces the 2011 “EuroVelo - Guidance on the route development process”.

For more detailed information on certain aspects, it should be complemented by the recommendations of other relevant EuroVelo publications, in particular:

- [Quality criteria for long-distance cycle routes](#), presenting the requirements of the [European Certification Standard \(ECS\)](#) methodology (2021)
- [Transnational guidance document on rest areas \(2023\)](#)
- [EuroVelo transnational signing manual \(2023\)](#)
- [EuroVelo brand guide \(2023\)](#)
- [New routes, major extensions and itinerary changes manual \(2023\)](#)

See Chapter 10 for a full list of resources.





## 2. Definitions

1. **EuroVelo** is a network of long-distance cycle routes that cross and connect Europe. The routes can be used by cycle tourists, as well as by local people making daily journeys. EuroVelo is an initiative of the European Cyclists' Federation developed by national and regional partners.
2. A **Cycle route** connects at least two points through a combination of various infrastructure types (for example cycle tracks, cycle lanes, cycle streets or roads with low volumes of motorised traffic) and is equipped, where appropriate, with wayfinding solutions (road direction, confirmation and identification signs as well as road markings). A cycle route can serve commuting, recreation, tourism, or mix different purposes. Depending on its geographical scope and role in the network, a cycle route can be international, national, regional or local.
3. A **Cycle route network** is a combination of interconnected cycle routes to respond to the needs of cyclists in a specific geographical area. A cycle network can serve commuting, recreation, tourism, or mix different purposes. It can be international (such as EuroVelo), national, regional or local.
4. The **European Certification Standard (ECS)** is a unique and comprehensive methodology designed by ECF to assess the quality of cycle routes. It can be used to survey and assess the quality of national/regional routes, and to certify EuroVelo routes if the criteria are met. It can help set up national standards where they do not exist and harmonise the different regulations in the European states.
5. **National EuroVelo Coordination Centres (NECCs)** are the network of organisations and consortiums that ensure the implementation, operation and quality assurance of EuroVelo at a national level. They decide on the EuroVelo itineraries in their territory. In addition, they are responsible for communicating EuroVelo nationally, providing accurate and up-to-date information on the sections of EuroVelo routes that pass through their country, and ensuring the integration of EuroVelo routes into new publications. National EuroVelo Coordination Centres oversee the sustainable long-term management and development of EuroVelo at a national level, involving relevant national stakeholders and advocating for recognition in all relevant policy areas.



### 3. General principles for the development of EuroVelo routes

This chapter lists general principles that should be applied when developing quality EuroVelo and cycle route networks.

6 principles have been defined by the UNECE group of experts on cycling infrastructure in the Guide for designation of cycle route networks (2024) that ECF contributed to:

- **Safety:** the cycle route should be safe both in terms of interaction with motorised traffic (external interaction), with other cyclists (internal interaction), pedestrians or users of other mobility devices and between the cyclist and the infrastructure.
- **Security:** the cycle route should offer a good degree of personal security by providing frequent access points, lighting and passive surveillance as far as possible.
- **Directness:** the cycle route should allow for a direct and short connection between two places unless the route is designed for cycling leisure or tourism purposes, in which case directness should be considered from the angle of the attractiveness objective; the latter also applies when a route follows a geographical corridor (along a river valley or crossing a mountain for example).
- **Continuity:** the cycle route should be uninterrupted, well connected and signposted.
- **Attractiveness:** the cycle route crosses through recommended points of interests and scenic environment.
- **Comfort:** the cycle route allows easy use (no steep slopes where possible; good surface quality; clear signage, access to facilities, connectivity to public transport, rest areas and equipment along the route) and comfortable flow of traffic.

Those principles impact the three main components of a high-quality EuroVelo route:

- The **infrastructure**, i.e. what the route is physically made of. EuroVelo and other long-distance cycle routes are made of many sections using various infrastructure types, segregated or not from motorised traffic. Various types of infrastructure should be used to ensure continuous, safe, attractive and comfortable riding, inclusive of various user groups and types of cycles, over long distances. Connections with other modes of transport, multimodal hubs, are also important to ensure and communicate with users.
- The **services** accessible to cyclists, including cycle-friendly accommodation, food, rest areas and drinking water taps, bike repair services and bookable offers.
- The **promotion**, including the visibility and consistent branding of the route in line with the [EuroVelo Brand Guide](#) both online and on the ground, up-to-date information on route conditions and services for users to plan their trip, communication campaigns and events, etc

In addition, the maintenance of the route is a critical component of route development to ensure a good quality over time. The development of EuroVelo should consider how to ensure **efficient monitoring and maintenance** works, to avoid deterioration and keep the route in good condition during the cycling season, or in all seasons where climate conditions allow.

General principles should be interpreted and translated into **quality parameters considering the users' needs** to guarantee the high-quality development of EuroVelo routes. The [European Certification Standard \(ECS\)](#) methodology provides minimum quality parameters to fulfil to ensure that the 6 above-mentioned principles are respected.



## 4. Usage of EuroVelo routes

Users' needs should be the main focus when developing a EuroVelo route and cycle routes in general. Different types of users can be defined depending on the purpose of the trip and/or the cyclist's skills and background. When the quality of a EuroVelo route increases, it becomes more inclusive of a large scope of trip purposes and potential users, including less experienced ones. An ambition of EuroVelo routes is to cater to the needs of the largest possible group of potential users.

Even if EuroVelo routes enable cyclists to cross borders and cycle over thousands of kilometres on the same route, they also count a significant share of local trips and should answer local needs too. EuroVelo routes should be considered as backbones for other cycle routes where possible, meaning that while being interesting and attractive cycle routes in their own right, they also allow access to national or regional cycle networks which may fulfil the wishes of cycle tourists looking for more "niche" experiences, such as mountain biking or adventure cycling.

Indeed, aiming to cater for the needs of the largest possible group of cyclists, EuroVelo routes cannot at the same time answer the specific needs of all types of cyclists and should be complemented by other cycle route networks from national to local levels.

### 4.1 Different purposes for cycling trips on EuroVelo

Not everyone uses EuroVelo route for the same reasons. Different categories of cycling trips purposes have been identified:

1. Local usage:
  - a. Mobility: using their bicycle to get to work, school, for shopping, etc.
  - b. Leisure (including sports) close to their place of residence
2. Touristic usage:
  - a. Leisure / one-day trip (including sports) with the bicycle around their stationary vacation
  - b. Multiple days trip with their bicycle, including overnight stays on the way
  - c. Mobility: using their bicycle for shopping, access a touristic attraction, etc., while on holidays

The proportion of each category would probably vary a lot depending on the local context (urban or rural areas for example), which have an impact on the volume of users. Depending on the local context, one type of purpose could be prioritised over the other, but continuity should be guaranteed to meet the needs of multi-day cyclists.

### 4.2 Main user groups categories

User groups can be defined considering the user fitness, skill and equipment for all categories of cycling trip purposes. Motivation is also an important factor, as some cyclists enjoy being challenged in a scenic environment, while others wish to have a gentle ride with friends. Same users can also belong to different categories, depending on the type of trip they undertake (e.g. parents cycling on their own could be "regular cyclists", and become "demanding cyclists" when cycling together with their children). The ECS methodology, focusing on long-distance cycle routes, classifies cyclists into three main user groups that can also be applied to local usage as described above. Different user groups will have different needs on a cycle route.



- Regular cyclists** – They are experienced in everyday cycling and cycle holidays. Their bicycle and equipment are adapted to remedy certain deficiencies of the route (for example, somewhat uneven surface). Fitness level, cycling skills, physical and psychological condition allow them to deal with up to moderate traffic, situations that are complex (for example, large crossings), require fast reaction or increased physical effort (for example, steep slopes).

  - ✓ *Related persona:* Alice is 30 years old and leads an active lifestyle. She likes to connect with others, cares about her ecological footprint and seeks green alternatives when traveling. She enjoys travelling alone or with friends and discovering new places. She needs to feel safe enough on the route, but she is used to some traffic as a daily cyclist in her hometown. She is fit, not scared by a few hills, happy to camp in nature and to cook on her portable stove when crossing remote areas.
- Occasional cyclists** – They have basic expertise in cycling and an average physical condition, with lower tolerance for bad surfaces, traffic, complex situations or steep slopes, but no special needs.

  - ✓ *Related persona:* Hans and Barbara are pensioners, having cycled quite a lot, but not feeling confident in heavy traffic and not able to carry their bicycles anymore. Hans needs to be careful about his knees (no steep uphill), they are used to some level of comfort with regards to accommodation and like to eat a good lunch at a restaurant. They are ready to spend a bit more money to feel good during their cycle trip.
- Demanding cyclists** – Families with children, people using hand cycles, tandems, bikes with trailers, cargo bikes, etc. They have the lowest tolerance for motorised traffic, require high quality surfaces and gentle slopes. The variety of cycles included in this group makes cycling more inclusive in terms of both demographics and needs covered, but it also means that they are often unable to deal with obstacles, chicanes, high kerbs or sharp curves.

  - ✓ *Related persona:* Oskar and Katrina enjoy going on cycle holidays with their children, Lisa and Matthias, 8 and 10 years old. They always travel with a lot of equipment and they attach trailers to the back of their bicycles, making them very long and not so easy to handle. They are concerned with the safety of their kids, so they look for cycle routes with high levels of safety and totally separated from motorised traffic. Children not being able to cycle long distances yet, they need frequent accommodation and places to take a rest, if possible, with a playground or other activities for Lisa and Matthias.



*Example of regular cyclists (EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route in Ireland – © Jimmy O'Brien)*



*Example of occasional cyclists (EuroVelo 15 - Rhine Cycle Route in The Netherlands – © ECF, Demarrage LTMA, P. Gawandtka)*

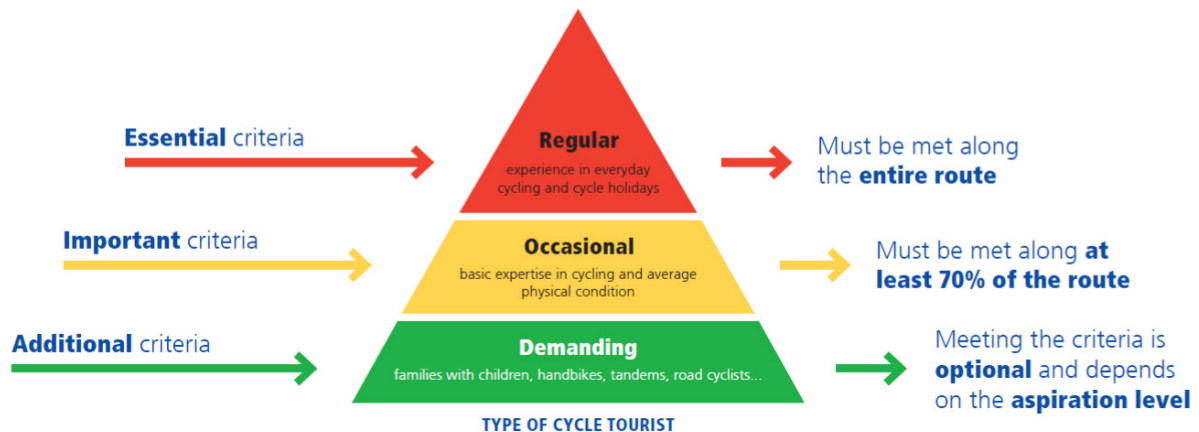


*Example of demanding cyclists - Photo by Mark Stosberg on Unsplash*

Note that making the route suitable for demanding cyclists attracts the widest range of users, but it also requires meeting the highest quality requirements, which is not always feasible at early stages of development or in remote areas. Regular and occasional cyclists can be trailblazers, creating momentum for further development of the route. Indeed, EuroVelo has the ambition to develop routes that would cater to the largest possible group

of cyclists, even if the quality standards required to meet ECS' additional criteria may not correspond to the preferences of some groups of cycle tourists. Their specific needs could be catered for on other cycle routes that EuroVelo routes connect to.

The EuroVelo network is still a work in progress, and we recommend prioritising answering the basic needs as soon as possible and aim for the highest quality where and when it is possible. See *Chapter 9, Prioritisation Strategies* for further information on the topic.



3 user groups considered in the ECS methodology (inside the pyramid), level of quality criteria corresponding to their needs (on the left) and share of these criteria to be met for the route to be eligible for EuroVelo Certification (on the right). The top of the pyramid corresponds to a small group of cyclists with fewer needs, while the needs of the largest possible group of cyclists are met by fulfilling the additional criteria (bottom of the pyramid).

See the [ECS manual on Quality criteria for long-distance cycle routes](#) - and its extended version, the *Handbook for EuroVelo Route Inspectors*, available on request - for the full details of the quality criteria for route infrastructure, services and promotion catering for the three user groups outlined in this chapter.

### 4.3 Monitoring the usage of EuroVelo with qualitative and quantitative data

Monitoring usage studies provide more information about the purposes of cycling trips on a cycle route and the needs of users when quantitative methodologies are involved, or the volume of cycling counts if quantitative data is collected.

[Vélo & Territoires](#), the French National EuroVelo Coordination Centre, has developed the **ÉVA-VÉLO methodology and recommendation for automatic bicycle counting activities** in the framework of the [AtlanticOnBike](#) project. Published in 2020, the methodology is based on Vélo & Territoires' longstanding experience in this field, which started in 2006 with the transnational evaluation of the EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea route. ECF has accompanied this process throughout the years, validated the methodology, and recommends its use throughout Europe.

Below you can find guidance documents and several templates which Vélo & Territoires has kindly provided:

- [ÉVA-VÉLO method guide](#)
- [Support documents and templates for ÉVA-VÉLO](#)
- [Bicycle Counting: guide to clean up the data](#)
- [Data sheet: how to choose the location for bicycle counters?](#)
- [Technical sheet: what are the constraints for installing an automatic cyclist computer?](#)
- [Methodological guide for the segmentation of cycle routes](#)



## 5. Specific principles to define or modify EuroVelo routes

### 5.1 Process for new EuroVelo routes, route extensions and itinerary changes

ECF, as transnational coordinator of EuroVelo, decides on new EuroVelo routes or major changes to EuroVelo routes with a transparent process detailed in the [EuroVelo new routes, major extensions and itinerary changes manual](#) (2022).

NECCs or local stakeholders, in coordination with the NECC if it exists, or with ECF if not, are encouraged to define or modify EuroVelo routes in the following cases:

- The EuroVelo route section's development status is "under development" or "at the planning stage" (i.e. it is not developed as a cycle route yet).
- The EuroVelo route section would benefit from improvements.

If the following conditions are met, which are considered a minor change, the change can be made without going through the formal process defined in the above-mentioned manual:

- The lateral distance between the new and former itineraries does not exceed 50 km anywhere.
- No international border crossing point is affected (unless all relevant NECC/Cs agree to the change).
- The theme of the route is not affected.

In case of a minor change, NECCs should provide the updated GPX tracks and the reason for the change to ECF. If deemed relevant, ECF will bring the topic to the EuroVelo Council for approval before implementing the new itinerary on EuroVelo.com.

### 5.2 EuroVelo routes as backbones of cycle networks

EuroVelo was inspired by national cycle networks and follows most of the time pre-existing cycle routes and long-distance corridors. It is intended as a **backbone of national and local cycle networks to ensure continuity and connectivity between countries**, and to benefit from funding available for developing the main cycle routes of a country. It should be **complemented by national cycle routes**, including nationally relevant corridors, to satisfy national needs. Note that while EuroVelo routes act as backbones of cycle networks, they should remain interesting and attractive cycle routes in their own right.

When EuroVelo routes are not prioritised in developments nor fitting national needs, their itinerary should be reassessed by national stakeholders (NECCs especially), in coordination with neighbouring countries and ECF to ensure transnational consistency. In that case, general and specific principles introduced in this manual should be taken into consideration when defining or modifying the route.

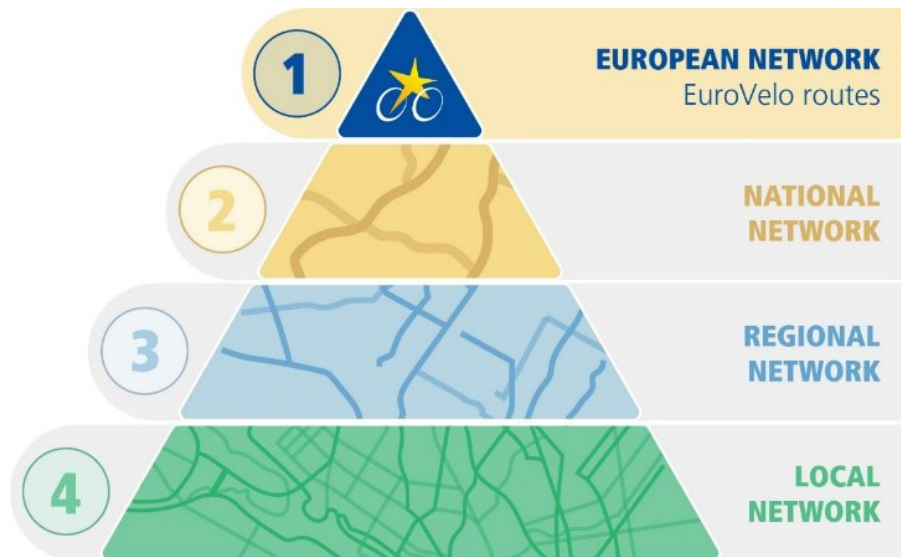


Illustration of EuroVelo routes as backbones of national, regional and local cycle networks

### Example: Hungarian cycle route network



EuroVelo routes (in red) as a backbone of the Hungarian national network (in purple)

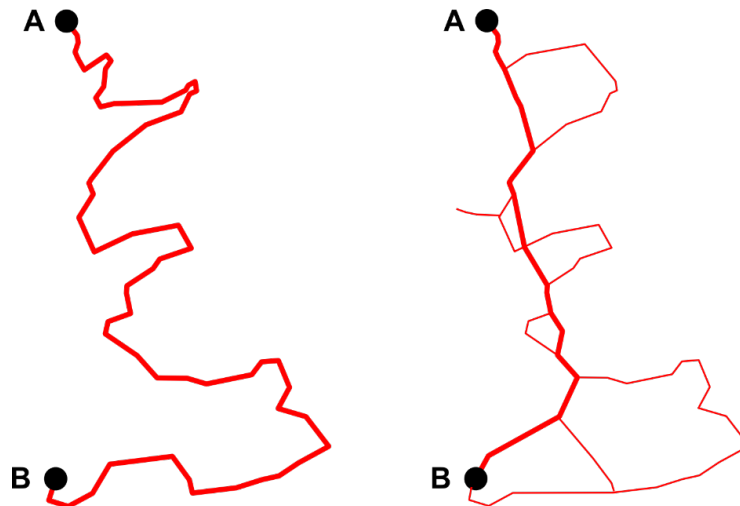
On this map from the [Centre for Development of Active and Ecotourism](#), it is visible that EuroVelo routes in Hungary form a backbone of the national cycle network. EuroVelo corridors are well balanced within the country, and they connect main cities, such as Budapest and Szeged, with touristic areas, e.g. Balaton Lake and Tisza Lake.

<b>Related good practices</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Rapid implementation of regional cycle networks with EuroVelo as a backbone in West Pomerania and the Małopolska Region	Poland	25-28
National cycle route scheme 2023	France	28-31
EuroVelo 19 – Meuse Cycle Route as a backbone of regional network	Belgium	31-32

## 5.3 Directness principle of EuroVelo routes

EuroVelo defines major corridors but the specific definition of the itinerary of the route is the responsibility of national and/or local stakeholders. General principles as mentioned in Chapter 3, *General principles to follow when developing a EuroVelo route*, should be considered. The directness principle states that the **most direct connection between major attractions, service centres or access points** (big cities, major ferry terminals,

border crossings, UNESCO sites, national parks, etc.) should be prioritised. Seeing EuroVelo as a backbone for denser local and regional networks, consistency requires that sites or towns that are not transnationally relevant would be connected to the EuroVelo corridor by other cycle routes (national, regional or any relevant cycle route). This strategy has the advantage of giving flexibility to cyclists: those on a long-distance trip may wish to make fewer stops, while those on a leisure or short trip may want to visit more attractions.



*Illustration of a bad practice on the left – trying to include everything in a single route, which leads to a complex route with many detours, and a good practice on the right – backbone route with side routes.*

However, the following **exceptions to the “directness principle”** are acceptable:

- In **cases where the most direct itinerary would make it impossible to meet the quality requirements** related to safety, comfort, attractiveness or access to services along the route. For example, in a hilly area a less steep detour may be preferable to the most direct route. In a scarcely populated area, making the route lead through small towns might be important, to ensure access to food and accommodation. Or it can be better to follow low-traffic roads over a longer distance, making the route less direct but avoiding high-traffic roads on the most direct route.
- In **cases where the itinerary is implied by the theme of route**. For instance, river routes may follow the meandering sections of rivers, and coastal routes may follow complicated coastlines.

In general, it is advised that the route would cross the city centres of important cities, even if this creates a detour. Indeed, city centres are:

- A natural starting point for cycling tourists who may stop for a few days and visit the city.
- Main access points for the start or end of the trip, as they provide connections with major train stations.
- An opportunity to use existing quality cycling infrastructure that exists or, if not, to promote the creation of quality infrastructure that could also benefit inhabitants.
- Generally part of national and local cycle route networks, which EuroVelo routes, as a backbone of local networks, should follow.

Let us note that EuroVelo crosses and connects Europe by bicycle, including mountain chains or scarcely populated areas. In those contexts, it can be complicated for EuroVelo routes to meet even the basic needs of cyclists. In these cases, the itinerary should be designed in a way that optimises the territory's conditions where possible, even if this means not respecting the directness principle (e.g. circling a mountain to avoid extra climbs or making a detour to visit a town offering services).

Where these issues cannot be avoided, communication to cyclists about the route should be adapted so that travellers know what to expect and can prepare themselves or decide to skip sections that do not meet their needs. In particular, suggested daily sections should reflect the route's conditions by being shorter in mountainous regions and longer in areas with a lack of services.

<i>Related good practices</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Page</i>
“Canal de Nantes à Brest”, a direct route across a hilly region	France	32

## 5.4 The ‘single-track principle’

A EuroVelo route should ideally define a single itinerary and follow a single track. This principle is key for EuroVelo to be easy to understand at a European level and followed by users on the ground. This should not prevent users to adapt their trip to their needs and interests if connections of the main EuroVelo route with other cycle routes are easy to access and understand.

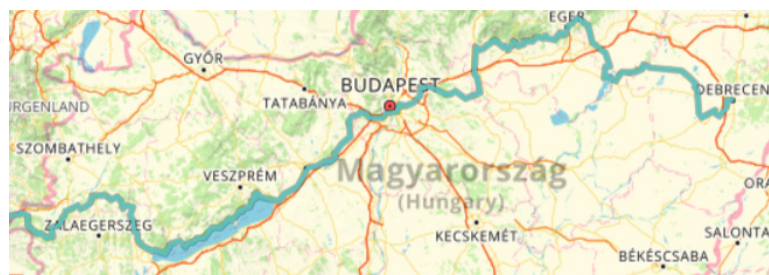
Additionally, **the itinerary should be as much as possible the same in both directions**. Minor deviations are acceptable, for example in case of one-way streets without contraflow cycling, or if using different ramps to access unidirectional cycle lanes on a bridge. But in general, priority should be given to itineraries that can be cycled in both directions and it is encouraged to introduce contraflow cycling in one-way streets. This helps to avoid unclear signposting and cyclists getting confused or taking the wrong way.

In order to adapt the specific principle of the single track to local situations, a few acceptable exceptions exist:

- **Routes following major rivers or going along important lakes** may have **variants on both sides of the river or lake**, or may **fork at the rivermouth** if both variants are equally well developed and safe for cyclists. It is generally recommended, however, to focus on ensuring a single continuous route meeting at least ECS essential criteria, especially in early development stages. The single-track approach is also preferable to dedicate sufficient financial resources to building and maintaining the infrastructure.
- **Sections that are not accessible 24/7 or the whole cycling season**, for example crossing areas only open to public during selected hours, such as industrial zones or protected parks, requiring the use of seasonal ferries, periodically flooded or with high risk of wildfires in the summer, **should have a signed alternative**. It is best to avoid sections that are not accessible 24/7 and the whole year round on official EuroVelo itineraries.
- If other reasons are likely to justify an exception to the single-track principle, route operators or NECCs are invited to contact the EuroVelo Team to explain the situation and discuss solutions.

In all cases, if and where the route splits, it is necessary to provide clear information, at the decision point, on the alternative routes and the advantages or limitations of each option, with signage. The information should also be included in printed and online communication materials.

### Example 1: EuroVelo 14 – Waters of Central Europe in Hungary



*EuroVelo 14 in Hungary*

In Hungary, a single itinerary was chosen when developing EuroVelo 14 – Waters of Central Europe, following Balaton Lake on one side only. A national cycle route allows cycling on the other side of the lake. Choosing a single itinerary for EuroVelo routes is a good way to concentrate efforts and achieve better levels of development more quickly.

## Example 2: Alternative to EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route in case of floods in Hessen, Germany



Signs informing cyclists of the alternative route to follow in case of floods

Along [EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route](#) in [Hessen State](#), an alternative route has been signed in case of floods. A panel informs cyclists that the route along the bank of the Rhine will be of poor condition for 3 km, and an alternative route can be followed (only in German – it would be good to add an English version for international cyclists).

<i>Related good practices</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Pages</i>
Good communication of an acceptable exception to the “single track principle” with the signage of EuroVelo 6 - Atlantic-Black Sea developed on both sides of the Danube River	Austria	32-34
Good communication of an acceptable exception to the “single track principle” with ferry connections as integral part of EuroVelo 4 – Central Europe Route and EuroVelo 12 – North Sea Cycle Route and alternative route	Belgium	34-35

### 5.5 The ‘no local loops principle’

Most EuroVelo routes follow an itinerary from A to B. Along their itinerary, EuroVelo routes should **not include loops or sections going somewhere and back to the same place**. When attractions or services cannot be accessed with a direct, logical itinerary, it is recommended to provide a signed connecting cycle route (same way to go to the attraction and return to the main itinerary) or local loops (different way to go to the attraction and return). These should not be officially included in the EuroVelo itinerary. This principle is very much connected to the directness and single-track principles.

Exceptionally, some EuroVelo routes follow a **round trip justified by their theme** (e.g. EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route; EuroVelo 12 – North Sea Cycle Route) and some **round trips of islands** can be included in EuroVelo as such (e.g. Cyprus on EuroVelo 8 – Mediterranean Route, Bornholm on EuroVelo 10) but this should remain an exception (when in line with the theme of the route, for instance). When islands are part of EuroVelo routes, continuity should always be ensured by providing a bridge (allowing safe cycling) or a ferry (allowing bicycle transportation) connecting the mainland route to the island.

## Example: EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route around Bornholm Island in Denmark



*Island of Bornholm, part of EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route, connected to the mainland route with ferries.*

The Island of Bornholm (Denmark) was added to EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route in 2019 and illustrates the exception to the “no local loops principle” when it comes to islands. The cycle route following the island’s coastline is 105 km long and would take about two days to cycle for an average cyclist. As can be seen in the image above, this island is well connected by ferries to EuroVelo 10 on the mainland, from one harbour only.

### 5.6 Continuity principle and potential for quality improvement

Continuity is one of the most important aspects of a cycle route – both within the country and across borders, in the case of long-distance cycle routes. Although it is not always possible to develop all sections of a longer route at the same time, ensuring a continuous, rideable route for cyclists should be kept as a guiding principle. And when it comes to route sections leading to country borders, communication with the neighbouring countries should be put in place as early as possible in order to avoid developing routes that don’t connect across the border.

When defining a cycle route itinerary, one should not only take into account the current state of the route, but also the potential and feasibility of improvements. For example, it might be possible to build a new cycle track on a disused railway or expand the range of services in a settlement, but not to remove a mountain.

**In order to complete the EuroVelo network by 2030 as stated in its strategy, continuity solutions should be found in under-developed sections of the network even if quality improvements are expected in a few years.** The continuity of the network is crucial for its recognition and credibility to the users.

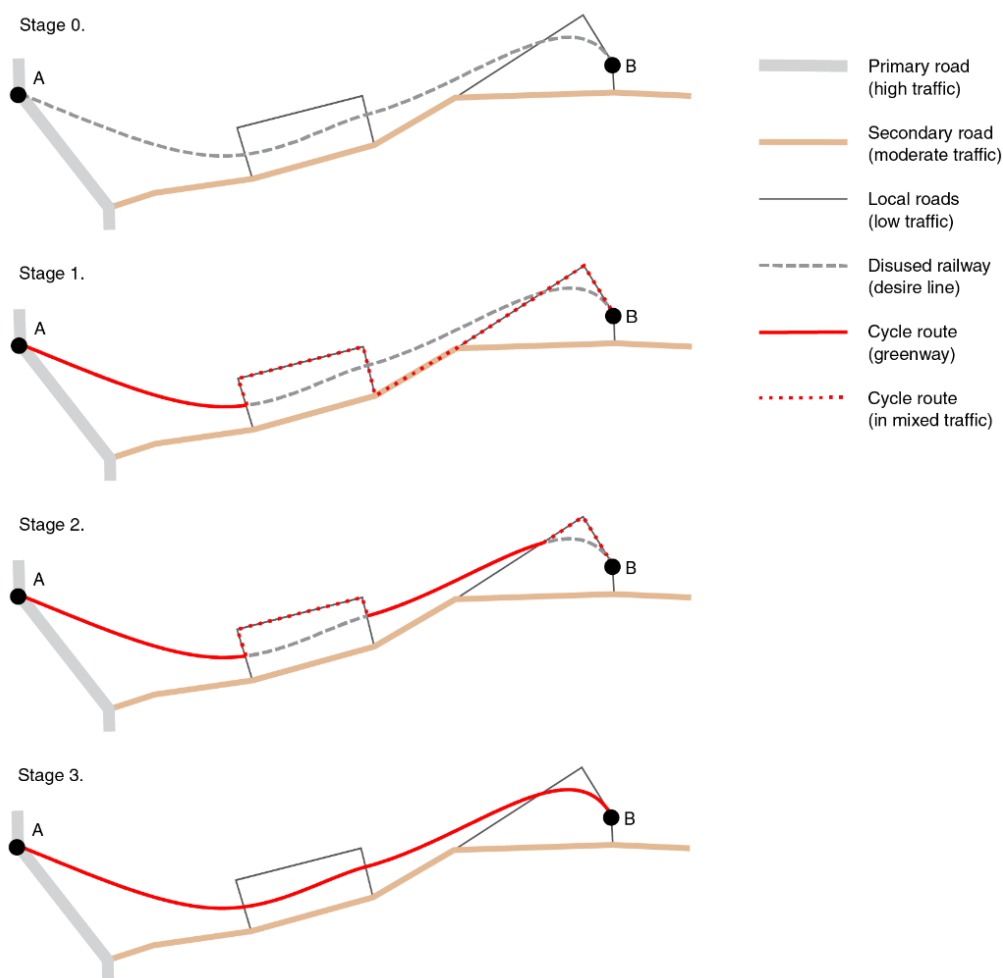
Recommendations for ensuring continuity are:

- Identify continuity solutions satisfying the basic needs of EuroVelo users (essential ECS criteria), prioritising continuous signage and information about the conditions to expect.
- List the critical issues and needs for improvements, using ECS or another route assessment methodology.
- Plan for improvements with an action plan and update the route over time.



It is not likely that the whole route will be built at once. It is generally necessary to have a strategy for which routes to prioritise with funding available right away. Typically, route development combines some of these three main approaches to prioritisation:

- **Sections with the highest potential** – connections that can serve the most cycle trips, often combining different functions. For example, sections that connect city centres with their suburbs and surrounding area and can be used for commuting, recreation and tourism.
- **Low-hanging fruit** – turn a disused railroad line, a levee along a river or a towing path along a canal into a high-quality greenway. Make use of existing forest or agriculture management roads. Single land ownership (often state) saves the need to negotiate with individual landowners. The route will be flat, separated from the road network, and attractive.
- **Sections that currently provide the worst conditions for cycling** (heavy traffic, not rideable surface, extreme gradients etc.) ECS provides a methodology to assess which sections of the route need an intervention most urgently (those with “critical issues”). This way, a part of the target users can already start using the full route after the first investments.



*Developing a route in stages – starting with sections with the worst conditions for cycling*

A good choice of the initial sections maximises the number of users that can start using the route after the first investments. Involvement of all relevant stakeholders (e.g. landowners, residents, etc.) and political planning to anticipate where funds can be gathered are also important initial steps (see Chapter 6 for more details on Organisation and legal framework for EuroVelo development). This in turn creates a momentum for further upgrading the route or extending the network. Celebrating progress, for example by public relations and communications opportunities when opening subsequent stages, can be an important element to gather



political support. On the other hand, poorly chosen first investments (not connected to other sections, difficult to reach...), which do not attract cyclists, can discourage further development efforts.

<i><b>Related good practices</b></i>	<i><b>Country</b></i>	<i><b>Pages</b></i>
Infrastructure developments of EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route with the CICLOSEND_SUR project	Spain (Andalucia)	35-36

## 5.7 Specific case of continuity with public transport links

Public transport links are **sections of the route that are currently not rideable by bicycle** (or will never be, such as water bodies) **but can be crossed with public transport carrying a bicycle**. This includes for example:

- Ferries across rivers, lakes or seas.
- Bridges or tunnels with cycling forbidden or too dangerous, but with a regular bus or train service carrying cyclists and their vehicle to the other side.
- Sections still under development that do not provide safe cycling conditions for all user groups, but which can be skipped by taking a train or a bus allowing for bicycle transportation.

In these cases, **route continuity should be ensured, and public transport alternatives should be clearly communicated as being a part of the route**. Communication should include information on the timetables, bicycle transportation capacity, accessibility of the station by bicycle, etc.

In particular, many EuroVelo routes include **oversea public transport links**. In order to provide clear information for cyclists wishing to cycle the full route, and to encourage traveling by sustainable means, it is important that details on transnational ferry connections are made readily available on national websites.

Let us note that in cases where the public transport link is a contingency (i.e. there is a route, tunnel or bridge for cars, but it does not cater to bicycles), the public transport connection should remain a temporary solution and efforts should be made towards developing a suitable bicycle connection.

<i><b>Related good practices</b></i>	<i><b>Country</b></i>	<i><b>Pages</b></i>
Ferries along EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route	Norway	36-37
Communication of ferry connections along EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route	Ireland	38

## 5.8 Attractiveness: the impact on nature and biodiversity

Biodiversity is the diversity of life on earth. It is indispensable for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and for maintaining human health. It also enhances recreational activity, creative inspiration and cultural heritage. In Europe, biodiversity is disappearing at an alarming rate. It is important to adopt a systemic approach to maintain and restore nature, and the increasing usage of the bicycle instead of other means of transportation and leisure can play a major role. But it is very important to **keep biodiversity in mind when defining the itinerary and developing EuroVelo routes**, and to strike a balance between tourism activities and nature protection.

In particular, if the cycle route crosses Natura 2000 sites (approx. 18% of EU area, so covering a wide extent of the territory, especially in some countries such as Croatia) or other protected areas, experts should be consulted to design the infrastructure in a way that does not limit species' movements and the area's ecosystem. The construction of cycle infrastructure has the advantage of being flexible, so it should be adapted to the needs of the environment. Care should also be taken to choose materials that have the least impact



possible on soil and water pollution, and the most fragile zones should be kept under strict protection, not in the cycle route's vicinity.

The surface of a cycle route can have an important impact on the environment. Research has shown<sup>1</sup> that what is most impactful for the environment is not so much the surface material itself, but the foundations of the cycle infrastructure – how many layers of material had to be added under the ground. As a result, greenways built on disused railway or other existing infrastructure tend to be less impactful on the environment, even though sometimes biodiversity may have developed over the disused period. It is always better for biodiversity preservation to re-use existing routes, potentially including rural roads with very low motorised traffic, than to build new cycle infrastructure.

In terms of water pollution and water flow, asphalt generally seems better for the environment than stabilised gravel surfaces, because polluting agents are kept inside the material and there is less erosion. Additionally, asphalt needs less frequent maintenance than stabilised gravel surfaces, which means less pollution caused by machinery and works.

Note that efficient synergies can be found between nature protection and cycle route implementation and promotion. If done with care, bringing cyclists to natural spaces can become an additional argument to protect these areas which then take extra touristic and economic value, and may facilitate the obtention of specific funds related to nature protection for the construction of cycle infrastructure.

Given the much lower environmental impact of cycling than motorised transport, no environmentally sensitive area should be easier or more comfortable to access by cars than by bicycles. If there is an existing road across the protected area, that is too busy to be safely and comfortably shared by cyclists, and construction of a cycle track raises environmental impact concerns, repurposing the road should be considered. This could for example include:

- redirecting (through) car traffic to another road, bypassing the sensitive area,
- introducing a traffic filter preventing driving across the area while allowing necessary access to locations along the road,
- changing the road into one-way and using the remaining space for cycle lanes/tracks.
- Giving priority to cycling and walking over cars

On the other hand, if the area is not accessible by cars at all and construction of a high-quality cycle track could be detrimental to the nature in the area, it might be worth reassessing the itinerary of the EuroVelo route. Perhaps the main long-distance route should be only passing by the less protected outskirts of the area, and access to the most sensitive parts can be provided by local cycle routes or on foot only.

<b><i>Related good practices</i></b>	<b><i>Country</i></b>	<b><i>Pages</i></b>
Camino del Río Tinto	Spain (Andalucia)	38-39
EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail partnership with the European Green Belt	several	39-41

<sup>1</sup> Recommendations shared in this paragraph were taken from the presentation of Geneviève Laferrère (mobility expert at France Nature Environnement) on the results of the comparative study carried out jointly with AF3V in 2021 between stabilised and asphalt surfacing and their impact on the climate and biodiversity: <https://www.af3v.org/enrobe-le-faux-proces/>



## 6. Organisation and legal framework for EuroVelo development

Developing a long-distance cycle route requires proper organisation and know-how. A **good coordination between all actors involved** is necessary to guarantee the full benefits of investments in cycling infrastructure, services development, etc. Different decision-makers need to coordinate and work together, including infrastructure planners, funding authorities, public transport operators (rail, ferry etc), land managers (waterways, forests etc), tourism experts, etc. **Proper legal framework** is also essential to allow for quick cycle infrastructure developments and for the creation of a cycling culture inside the country.

In this chapter, we look at governance and coordination needs for EuroVelo development; we highlight how much this depends on the national context; we provide general recommendations that should be applicable in most territories; we illustrate the importance of the legal framework; and we finish with a list of available funding sources.

### 6.1 Overview of the general EuroVelo Governance

Looking at the full 90,000+km EuroVelo network, its development is coordinated by three main categories of stakeholders assuming different roles and responsibilities:

- **ECF coordinates the implementation and operation of EuroVelo**, provides a framework for quality assurance and communicates the route at **European and transnational level**. ECF is in regular contact with national partners and overviews the overall development of EuroVelo in line with the EuroVelo Strategy approved by NECCs. ECF manages new EuroVelo route applications and relays decisions from the EuroVelo Council and ECF board.
- **NECCs coordinate the implementation and operation of EuroVelo developments**, provide quality assurance and communicate the routes at **national level**. They collaborate with various national stakeholders and are responsible for creating a structure for decision-making and to foster developments at national level. **Most decisions about the itinerary of EuroVelo routes are taken by NECCs.**
- **Regional and local authorities or stakeholders** are involved in developing and maintaining EuroVelo routes in cooperation with the relevant NECCs. Sometimes, in the frame of European projects, regional and local authorities work directly with ECF on EuroVelo developments, but NECCs should also be kept in the loop. If there is no NECC in a country, regional authorities or project partners can take over their role on a temporary basis, upon agreement with ECF.

### 6.2 Recommendations on national coordination of EuroVelo developments

The national coordination of EuroVelo developments is very dependent on the national context, culture and cycling-related history. As a result, generalisations are difficult to make and what works well in one country will not necessarily be applicable in the same way in another. Nevertheless, there are some general principles that each country should strive to respect: **creating a centralised body to gather information** about EuroVelo routes from all regional and local stakeholders and **putting a clear structure in place** for decision-making, communication and knowledge sharing between regions.

Now we look more concretely at the recommendations for EuroVelo development. Firstly, the development of EuroVelo routes should always be done keeping the **network's perspective** in mind. This means that the routes should not be developed independently from each other, but considered together, while paying attention to how well-balanced they are across the country, if their intersections are clear, if they connect all major towns

and mobility hubs, etc. There should also be a clear distinction between EuroVelo routes acting as backbones of the national cycle route network (see section 5.2 for more details) and cycle route networks at national and regional levels.

Having this broad perspective when developing cycle routes enables synergies and avoids wasting resources. But for this to be possible, tasks should be clearly assigned to responsible authorities depending on their competencies and scope of action.



*A very concrete example of how bad planning and coordination implies a waste of resources, with this high-quality cycle infrastructure ending suddenly on an administrative border. This situation has now been resolved.*

Hereafter is a list of organisational tools to help in the planning of different phases of EuroVelo development at regional, national and transnational levels.

Note that these phases are not necessarily separated from each other in time. For instance, communication of the route can start while improvements are still taking place, and route maintenance must already be planned during the preparation phase.

## Phase 1: Preparatory work – Preliminary to EuroVelo route and network developments

At national level:

- Lobbying for **legislation that provides at least a level playing field for cycling infrastructure development** (see section 6.3 on “Legal framework” for more details).
- Having a **national strategy on cycling adopted at Ministry level** mentioning EuroVelo, cycle route networks and cycling tourism, to guide the developments.
- Designating a **national cycle route network** if not existing, including EuroVelo as a backbone.

At all levels (national, regional and local):

- Ensuring sufficient **competencies at regional and national level** for the planning, implementation and management of the cycle routes.
- Securing enough **funding** for all phases of route development, including maintenance (see section 6.4 on Funding for more details).

## Phase 2: Implementation – Structuring developments including infrastructure, services and communication



At national level:

- Actively **involving service providers** by coordinating and promoting a national cycling friendly service scheme.
- Providing incentives to UNESCO sites and other cultural and natural sites to develop **cycling-friendly measures**, for instance by installing secure bicycle parking allowing cyclists with panniers to stop and visit the site, offering a free coffee to visitors arriving by bike, etc. Inspiration can be found in the [Changing Gear guide](#).
- Drafting a strategy for the development of **rest areas** along the cycle route and dedicating special funding for this activity. Inspiration can be found in the [Transnational Guidance Document on Rest Areas](#).

At route level (national or regional, depending on the scope of the route):

- Putting in place a **steering group**, with a clear leader organising meetings and following the overall developments of the route, and including decision makers from the relevant authorities along the route.
  - An example of this at transnational level are the EuroVelo Route Partnerships which have been put in place for some EuroVelo routes and gather partners from most countries along the route. Examples: [EuroVelo 8 – Mediterranean Route Partnership](#), [EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route Partnership](#), [EuroVelo 19 – Meuse Cycle Route Partnership](#).
  - Examples at national/regional level are the Itinerary Committees in France. For instance, [La Vélomaritime](#) leads on the developments of EuroVelo 4 – Central Europe Route in France and coordinates with all departments along the route. It is supported collectively by 14 local authorities and their tourist boards, who work together towards the common goal of promoting La Vélomaritime - EuroVelo 4 in France and abroad.
- **Identifying the most problematic sections of the route** that should be developed as a priority, i.e. those that are not meeting basic user needs (corresponding to the essential criteria in the [European Certification Standard](#) methodology) as well as the **sections with the highest potential** and “low-hanging fruits”, which can be implemented more easily or quickly (see section 5.6. on “Continuity principle and potential for quality improvement” for more details).
  - Various tools can be used for this in early development stages: route assessment using ECS (which can also be used to evaluate different potential routes); analysis of OpenStreetMap data including surface type and quality, route components, etc.; national traffic counts/models to spot sections with high traffic or potential alternatives with low traffic; road administration/tourism organisation databases, etc.
- Creating **working groups to follow developments** related to infrastructure, services, marketing and promotion.
- Ensuring smooth connections of the route to other cycle routes within the national/regional network.
- Ensuring transnational continuity.
- Organising training and study tours for inter-organisational teams.
- Publishing tendering / public procurement to find external capacities, if necessary.

### Phase 3: Assessment – Identification of critical deficiencies and route improvements

At route level (national or regional, depending on the scope of the route):

- Performing a **survey of the route conditions** on a regular basis, in line with the [ECS methodology](#) developed by ECF or another similar tool. It is advisable to look for national data schemes or other national recommendations on data structure to ensure the possibility for data sharing and conversion so that it can be used by all relevant stakeholders.
- Analysing the survey results to prepare a **Route Evaluation Report and Action Plan**, containing:
  - Target groups and the level of route conditions and services they will expect.
  - Evaluation and selection of the planned final itinerary, and any necessary interim sections, considering the needs of the target groups and practicalities of implementation.
  - Priorities and timings to reach the targeted level for each route element.
  - Estimates of costs and financial resources.



- Designation of responsible organisations (lead partner, partners for specific tasks) and the steps and format of cooperation.
- Organising workshops and conferences to inform and motivate stakeholders on the needs to implement the actions identified.
- Awareness raising for the acceptance of the action plan.

Note that phase 3 can in some cases support phase 2, providing a pre-assessment of the infrastructure to get an overview of the baseline quality.

#### Phase 4: Promotion – Communicating the good quality route to the public

- Making a clear and easy to find **website providing information about the route**, including downloadable GPX tracks, and linking to [www.EuroVelo.com](http://www.EuroVelo.com).
- **Involving the local population**, to communicate the benefits of the route and avoid conflicts (for example with shepherds, hunters, etc.).
- **Applying for EuroVelo Certification** when a 300+km section of EuroVelo route is sufficiently developed and meets the required ECS criteria, to confirm its quality and communicate it to users.

#### Phase 5: Maintenance – Keeping the route quality up

- Planning **regular maintenance**:
  - Replacing damaged or missing signs.
  - Dealing with surface and shoulder repairs.
  - Organising trash collection, etc.
- Creating a **GIS database** to gather survey data, including the location of signs, rest areas, etc. and keeping track of maintenance works.
  - Additionally, working towards common database structures between institutions in order to facilitate data sharing.
- Getting the route integrated into traffic management and other maintenance procedures, to ensure that in case of road works or other disruptions, a detour for the EuroVelo route will be prepared and signed and the route operators will be notified about any changes on the route.
- Keeping communication, especially the information on the website, up to date, including in case of road works or other disruptions, including floods or wildfires, causing a temporary change of itinerary or closing of the route.
- Putting in place a ranger system to monitor route conditions and carry out minor maintenance.

#### Phase 6: Monitoring – Verifying the popularity of the route

Establishing **yearly usage monitoring** to track the popularity of the route – using automatic counters, manual surveys, etc. (see section 4.3. “Monitoring the usage of EuroVelo with qualitative and quantitative data” for more details).

### 6.3 Legal framework

Clear legislation can greatly reduce the costs of building a cycle route, allow for a more attractive itinerary, and improve the experience of the final users. The key elements of good legislation are:

- A **road code** that is **in line with the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic**, does not discriminate cyclists, and is understandable for international cyclists.
- **Elimination of legal barriers for cycling infrastructure**. For example, is it possible to build cycle tracks on flood embankments, along railways or motorways?
- **Procedures for acquisition of land for cycle tracks**. Can the authorities buy a piece of agricultural or forest land and repurpose it for a cycle track?
- **Provisions that allow a variety of other cycle infrastructure forms**. Especially useful (and not always provided for) are contraflow cycling, cycle lanes, greenways and 2-1 roads.

- **Provisions for signage of long-distance cycle routes**, taking into account the integration of EuroVelo route information panels in accordance with the [EuroVelo Transnational Signing Manual](#). Usually, the cycle route signs need to be a part of the national sign and signals system.
- **Competencies for the regional and/or national authorities** to coordinate, invest in and manage long-distance cycle routes. Are cycle routes included for example in the statutes of regional or national road authorities? Is the planning of cycle routes a mandatory competency of the national and local authorities?

Deficiencies in the legal framework often lead to suboptimal itinerary choices and increased costs of investments and maintenance. For example, not being able to acquire agricultural land for a cycle track might lead to a cycle route following less attractive public roads, and not being able to allow contraflow cycling on a local street might require following a main and more dangerous road or to build a more expensive cycle track.



*Example of EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea in Hungary: Contraflow cycling on a residential road can provide safe and comfortable cycling experience without major construction works. EuroVelo signs should be integrated in the national cycle route signage system.*

<b>Related good practices</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Pages</b>
2011 road legislation changes in favour of cycling	Poland	41-42
2020 integration of new innovative methods for reorganising street space	Italy	42-43
Federal Act on cycle routes	Switzerland	43

## 6.4 Funding EuroVelo developments and maintenance

Different possibilities exist to fund EuroVelo developments and route maintenance, the main sources of funding come from public bodies, and incentives can be delivered by national and European co-funding. As programmes propose co-funding of activities, budget still need to be secured by project managers, depending on the co-funding rate. This section does not intend to provide an exhaustive list of funding sources available, but rather to open the possibilities and give external links where to look for relevant funds.

There are two main strategies to find or lobby for funds to apply to, when it comes to cycle routes:

- Using funding tools that are specific for cycling and applying to programmes focused on cycling and tourism.
- Including cycling into wider budget envelopes focusing on other topics that have synergies with cycling, such as environment and sustainability, reallocation of public space, sports and health, etc. Regional development funds for structural change is also often used for funding cycle infrastructure. See, as a reference, the [Regional and cohesion policy page](#) of the European Parliament.





At national level, it is difficult to provide detailed guidelines because funding models are very specific to the way the country is organised, whether it follows a national centralisation or, on the contrary, a federalist approach. Available sources of funding will be connected to the country's structure and to the division of competencies between the various levels of governance. The first step is to understand any division, and which body is responsible for which aspect of a cycle route (building the route, installing signs, making the touristic promotion, etc.) This will help to prepare targeted project applications depending on the funding source.

As an example, Vélo & Territoires has [a page summarising the available funds for cycling policies](#), from a French perspective. In some countries, like in Germany, federal funding databases may be available, with the advantage that information is kept up to date.

European Union (EU) funding can be used to fund a whole range of different types of cycling-related measures, from large scale infrastructure projects to knowledge sharing and promotional campaigns. Two main European funding sources exist: firstly, the EU Structural Funds as part of the regular EU budget, and secondly, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, aimed at addressing the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

EuroVelo route development projects are often part of Interreg interregional cooperation programmes funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). But they can also be integrated into other programmes, depending on the calls' themes and their connection with mobility and tourism. For instance, some EuroVelo projects were co-funded in the past through COSME (the programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)) and other regional programmes focusing on boosting economic growth. The most important thing is to keep an open mind, looking for ways to connect needed developments to the themes of open funding programme calls.

Note that at a European level, ECF is campaigning for more funding giving the priority to cycling, considering the level of investments made for other modes of transport. See this page for more details. ECF also compares national cycling strategies and national budgets per inhabitant to create a positive emulation.

Hereafter is a list of resources to make further research on available funding sources:

- [Integrated Cycling Planning Guide](#): A guide to help unlock EU funds for cycling
- [European funding](#) overview on the ECF website
- ECF guide on [unlocking cycle investments from EU Structural Funds](#)
- [Good practice examples of EU investments in cycle projects](#)
- [Kohesio](#): a search engine to find projects co-funded by the EU

<b><i>Related good practices</i></b>	<b><i>Country</i></b>	<b><i>Pages</i></b>
National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Investment 3 & 4)	Spain (Andalucia)	43-44



## 7. Good practices and inspiration

In this chapter are listed good practices related to one or several of the topics highlighted throughout this guide. Hereafter is a list of the topics considered and short descriptions:

- **EuroVelo routes as backbones of cycle networks:** examples of countries where a strong cycle route network has been developed, with EuroVelo routes clearly integrated as a backbone of the network. A map of the cycle route network, insights on its development and what its achievement led to are relevant to include.
- **“Directness principle” of EuroVelo routes:** examples of EuroVelo routes whose itinerary was chosen to be the most direct connection between major attractions, service centres or access points, connecting to lesser sites or towns via other cycle routes, instead of trying to include everything in a single route. A map of the cycle route highlighting the itinerary choice, a picture of signing indicating smaller cycle routes to reach attractions or services and insights on the route development are relevant to include.
- **“Single track principle” of EuroVelo routes:** examples of EuroVelo routes whose itinerary was chosen to follow a single track rather than forking into several alternatives, which are more difficult to communicate and maintain at a good quality level. Alternatively, examples of acceptable exceptions to this principle, which feature good communication to the users on the alternative routes. A map of the cycle route, a picture of signing providing information to cyclists and insights on the route development are relevant to include.
- **Ensuring the continuity of EuroVelo routes - Continuity strategy:** examples of countries, regions or itinerary committees that put a strategy in place to ensure continuity, sometimes with original solutions, even for under-developed sections of the network, where major improvements necessitate a lot of time. Insights on the development of the continuity strategy, solutions identified, challenges encountered and impacts on the route popularity are relevant to include.
- **Ensuring the continuity of EuroVelo routes - Public transport links:** examples of EuroVelo routes including public transport as part of the route (to cross rivers or seas) and integrated them well in communications and route management. A map of the route showing the public transport sections, insights on the organisation with these service providers and impacts of the communication are relevant to include.
- **Minimising the impact of EuroVelo routes on nature and biodiversity and finding synergies:** examples of EuroVelo routes in fragile or endangered areas, where the impact on nature and biodiversity has been assessed and taken into account in infrastructure works. Examples of synergies found between nature preservation and cycle tourism development. A description of the area’s specificity, a picture and an explanation of the solutions found are relevant to include.
- **Legal framework facilitating EuroVelo route developments:** examples of countries where the legislation was improved with regards to cycling and how this helped in the development of EuroVelo routes. Historical elements and an explanation of what the legislation change made possible and its impacts are relevant to include.

### 7.1 EuroVelo routes as backbones of cycle networks

#### Rapid implementation of regional cycle networks with EuroVelo as a backbone in West Pomerania and the Małopolska Region

*Country (and region)  
Organisation(s) in charge of  
the good practice*

Poland, West Pomerania and Małopolska regions

- Marshal's Office of the West Pomeranian Region
- Marshal's Office of the Małopolska Region

Year(s) of implementation

- 2014-present
- 2015-present

Costs

In West Pomerania, the total cost of developing 750 km of high-quality cycle routes, including 300 km of new cycle tracks, amounted to €59 million.

In the Małopolska Region, the approximate value of the completed part of the project (700 km of high-quality cycle routes, including 370 km of new cycle tracks) is €46 million. The estimated value of the entire project from 2014 (1,000 km) is €70 million.

Sources of funding

For West Pomerania:

- Regional Operational Programme for Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship 2014-2020 (ERDF)
- Interreg VA MV/BB/PL
- European Funds for Western Pomerania 2021-2027 (ERDF)

For the Małopolska Region:

- The Regional Operational Programme for the Małopolska Region for 2014-2020 (ERDF)
- European Funds for Malopolska 2021-2027 (ERDF)
- Interreg VA PL-Sk
- Regional budget

Picture(s)



More than 750,000 cyclists per year cross the Polish-German border on EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route along the coastline



VeloDunajec - one of the VeloMałopolska network routes - runs along



<p><i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>the river, which makes it flat despite passing through seven different mountain ranges</i></p> <p>West Pomerania is one of two Polish regions that have made the biggest progress so far in developing coherent regional cycle networks, building the 1,100-km regional cycle network from scratch. In Poland local communities used to be exclusively responsible for building bicycle routes. But as there was a lot of existing cycling infrastructure in the region, it was very fragmented and rarely formed a coherent system of routes. Due to this fact the Regional Government decided to take over this task from the local communities. The long-distance cycle routes in West Pomerania Region are now among the best in Poland. On top of that comes the cross-border cooperation that leads to the development of the international bicycle route system and the cross-border mobile app. Now the West Pomerania bicycle network consists of five long-distance routes, including EuroVelo 10 and 13.</p> <p>VeloMałopolska is a network of 8 cycling routes (including EuroVelo 4 and 11), designed to provide access to every region of Małopolska. In 2024, four of these routes are almost completely built. The VeloMałopolska routes pass through areas of natural and tourist value, including the Niepołomice Forest, Pieniny, Spisz, the foothills, and the Tatra Mountains, while also connecting the main urban centres in the region: Kraków, Oświęcim, Tarnów, and Nowy Sącz. The routes are accessible by rail. Local cycling trails connect to the main VeloMałopolska routes, and the network of Cyclist-Friendly Places (including accommodation and dining facilities) now boasts over 200 facilities.</p>
<p><i>Evidence of success (results achieved)</i></p>	<p>There is an increasing trend of more people cycling in those regions from year to year. The type of cyclist is also changing due to the increasing number of kilometres of safe, asphalt, and car-separated bike paths. More and more people are going on longer trips with their entire families, including small children and bike trailers. On the routes, you can also see people on tricycles or handbikes, which proves that good cycling infrastructure ensures accessibility for everyone. Safety is the key factor influencing the number of cyclists.</p> <p>There is also an increase in community initiatives linked to the existing cycle infrastructure. The initiative is well used by the local community to establish new workplaces such as hotels, campsites, and hospitality.</p>
<p><i>Challenges encountered</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of legal tools for land acquisition for independent cycle tracks.</li><li>• Lack of legal tools for bicycle route management.</li><li>• Lack of knowledge among infrastructure designers about high quality bicycle infrastructure standards.</li><li>• Problem with funding long-distance cycling routes – lack of a national fund.</li><li>• Lack of a national cycling policy coordinator for planning, building, managing, and promoting cycling routes.</li><li>• High diversity and local nature of cycling NGOs.</li><li>• Public awareness – "cycling" considered as a sport rather than an activity accessible to everyone, for recreation and bicycle tourism.</li><li>• Lack of specialisation in the field of building and designing bicycle infrastructure in academic studies.</li><li>• Absence of a National EuroVelo Coordination Centre in Poland, to manage and promote EuroVelo routes.</li></ul>
<p><i>Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)</i></p>	<p>Hereafter are some key lessons learned from the development process, which could be transferred to other territories:</p>



- **Focus efforts and resources on a few carefully selected routes.** Completing a continuous high-quality route creates stronger momentum for further development than many isolated sections.
- **Long-distance cycle routes are better built by the regional road administration than municipalities,** as many rural communes do not have capacity for proper tendering or quality assurance. Additionally, regional priorities differ from local ones: an important route connecting two cities can for example have a 3-km stretch passing through the peripheral area of a rural commune that is not really interested in the route. Moreover, tendering at a regional level allows for the benefits of economies of scale.
- **Legal tools are necessary for land acquisition for independent cycle tracks.** Such tools exist in Poland for road or rail construction but not for cycle routes. A better legal framework would not only speed up implementation but also allow some routes to be more attractive and built cheaper, because being able to acquire land further away from a public road could for example reduce the need to incorporate drainage or barriers in the design, elements which are often more expensive than the cycle track itself.
- At the planning stage, it is necessary to designate corridor routes for bicycle paths, considering access to public transport (railway), to ensure project funding and identify the entity responsible for its implementation.

*Website links*<https://rowery.wzp.pl/en><https://bike.visitmalopolska.pl>*Contact details of responsible organisation*

Marshal's Office  
of the Westpomeranian Region  
Office for Cycling Communication  
Department of Infrastructure and Transport  
+48 91 454 27 66  
[rowery@wzp.pl](mailto:rowery@wzp.pl)

**National cycle route scheme 2023**

<i>Country (and region)</i>	France
<i>Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice</i>	<a href="#">Vélo &amp; Territoires</a>
<i>Year(s) of implementation</i>	From 1998
<i>Costs</i>	One full-time position
<i>Sources of funding</i>	Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion (French national government)

Picture(s)



French national cycle route scheme map. Source: [www.velo-territoires.org](http://www.velo-territoires.org)



National cycle route scheme on the [Velodatamap](http://www.velodatamap.com)

Description

France has had a National Cycle Route Scheme (Schéma National des Véloroutes (SNV)) since 1998, which was approved by the Interministerial Committee for Regional Planning and Development (CIADT). Since then, Vélo & Territoires has been responsible for monitoring the SNV and coordinating its steering committee.



*Evidence of success  
(results achieved)*

Vélo & Territoires published an updated map of its national cycle route scheme in 2023, which highlights the national network and the connections between itineraries, and in particular between EuroVelo routes and national cycle routes. This map also indicates the connections with neighbouring countries, and how EuroVelo routes continue in those territories. The update of the national cycle route scheme followed the guidelines described in the “[Cahier des charges du Schéma National des Véloroutes](#)” detailing all characteristics expected from national cycle routes.

EuroVelo routes are more visible as backbones of the national cycle route scheme on the [Velodatamap](#) of Vélo & Territoires, a map portal allowing access and update of geographical data relating to French cycle routes.

While SNV’s first version included around 13,000 km of planned routes, the updated 2010 plan presented 19,500 km and the 2023 plan presented 26,115 km.

EuroVelo network in France has an achievement rate of 96%, with six routes having reached in 2023 98% or more of achievement. Out of the 59 national French routes, 33 of them have a part in common with at least one EuroVelo route. Moreover, 47 regional routes and 54 departmental routes share part of their route with a EuroVelo route. Those numbers show that the EuroVelo network really acts as a backbone for all other cycle routes networks in France.

*Challenges encountered*

One of the main challenges is getting routes’ updates from local authorities. Vélo & Territoires is a not-for-profit association administered by local authorities throughout France but doesn’t carry out any development on the field. This means that it relies on regular updates from local planners in order to efficiently monitor SNV’s progress.

Another challenge is to keep the SNV’s quality high: many local authorities would like their route to be registered to this national level, even though it barely reaches the criteria fixed by the steering committee. The latter must be particularly vigilant about the routes it decides to accept.

*Potential for learning or  
transfer (key lessons)*

Vélo & Territoires had several reflexions which we feel should be considered when setting up a national cycle scheme in 2024:

- Choose a national reference system for the routes’ geometry: this avoids having to reconcile geometries of very different quality from different reference systems depending on the choices made by each local authority. The obvious choice for 2024 is the OpenStreetMap database, which is of very high quality in terms of road infrastructure in Europe, and which has the advantage of being consistent with other countries (contrary to national institutes).
- Determine a data structure and exchange format for cycle route data: for instance, 10 years ago Vélo & Territoires [created a data standard](#) in partnership with the National Council of Geolocalised Information (Conseil National de l’Information Géolocalisée). Here too, if we had to do it again in 2024, we would recommend getting as close as possible to the OpenStreetMap data structure. An exchange format should be created separately from the data structure, which can have several data classes and relationships between them, whereas an exchange format could transform this

- highly structured data into a tabular format that is easy to produce and reuse for the greatest number of people.
- Distinguish between infrastructure and itinerary: a route, as a touristic product, can use the same infrastructure as another route (e.g. EuroVelo 4 and 5 in northern France, or EuroVelo 3 and 6 along the Loire). A network of cycle infrastructures could be created on a model similar to that for roads: a national road never shares a meter with a departmental road, and vice versa. On top of this infrastructure network, a network of touristic routes could be added, which could themselves have sections of shared infrastructure. Separating cycling facilities from the tourism product gives tourist organisations greater flexibility to modify, update, rename routes, while maintaining a certain durability in the referencing and numbering of infrastructures, which is important for the local authorities that develop them.

Website links

<https://www.velo-territoires.org/schemas-itineraires/schema-national/>

Contact details of responsible organisation

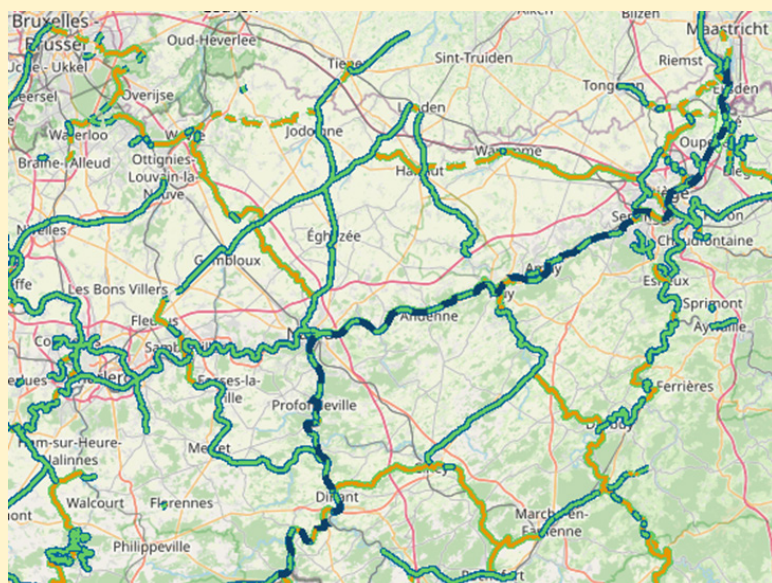
[sig@velo-territoires.org](mailto:sig@velo-territoires.org)

**EuroVelo 19 – Meuse Cycle Route as a backbone of regional network**

Country (and region)  
 Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice  
 Picture(s)

Belgium

[Pro Velo](#)



*EuroVelo 19 – Meuse Cycle Route as a backbone of regional network in Wallonia, Belgium. Source: [RAVeL interactive map](#)*

Description

[EuroVelo 19 – Meuse Cycle Route](#) in Belgium is a good example of the backbone approach to cycle route planning or “directness principle”. The main route primarily follows the banks of the Meuse and is therefore an easy ride, almost completely without climbing. Thanks to the historical towpaths along the river, the route is also often car-free. Along the way, EuroVelo 19 has a lot to offer: cities along the Meuse have fifteen centuries of rich history and travelers can experience spectacular nature. But there are also wonders to discover near the main route. In Wallonia, they are easy to reach with the regional [RAVeL](#) (Réseau Autonome de Voies Lentes - the Autonomous Network of Slow Roads) cycle network.



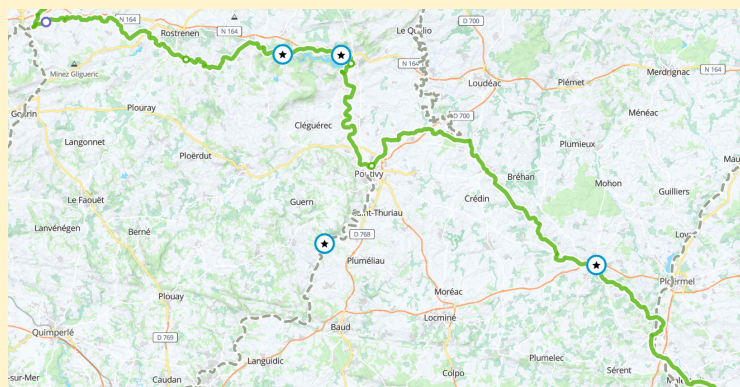
In Flanders, the route connects to the network of other long-distance [Iconic Cycle Routes](#). And in Flanders and the Netherlands, cyclists can follow the [cycle node network](#). As a result, EuroVelo 19 – Meuse Cycle Route constitutes a backbone with a rather direct itinerary, connecting to these regional networks.

## 7.2 Directness principle of EuroVelo routes

### “Canal de Nantes à Brest”, a direct route across a hilly region

Country (and region)  
 Organisation(s) in charge of  
 the good practice  
 Picture(s)

France, Brittany  
[La Vélodyssée](#)



Map of some sections of the “canal de Nantes à Brest”, which is part of EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route eastward from Carhaix.  
 Source: [France Vélo Tourisme website](#)

Description

EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in Brittany follows a disused railway and a canal eastward of Carhaix, the “Canal de Nantes à Brest”. This creates an easy route, suitable for most users, across a hilly region. This choice of route allows for an itinerary that is both direct and inclusive to connect the major cities of Nantes and Brest, while following the coastline would have been too challenging for the average cyclist. Local cycle routes to towns and cities are indicated, but not included in the itinerary of the official cycle route. This way, cyclists who do not plan to visit these towns do not have to cycle extra kilometers through each town centre.

Potential for learning or transfer

This is a good compromise example where safety, directness and opportunity has been chosen over prioritising the theme of the EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route for 300 km, when the rest of the 1,200 km of EuroVelo 1 in France mainly follows the Atlantic Coast otherwise. Other regions facing similar challenges could benefit from this example.

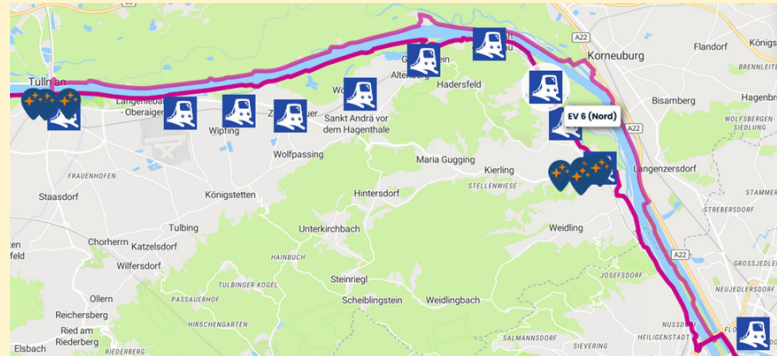
## 7.3 Exceptions to the single-track principle of EuroVelo routes

### Good communication of an acceptable exception to the “single track principle” with the signage of EuroVelo 6 - Atlantic-Black Sea developed on both sides of the Danube River

Country (and region)  
 Organisation(s) in charge of  
 the good practice  
 Costs  
 Sources of funding

Austria (Lower Austria)  
 Donau Niederösterreich Tourismus GmbH  
 € 500,- / sign  
 Municipalities and Province, Lower Austria

Picture(s)



*EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea splitting on both sides of the Danube River between Tulln and Vienna in Austria. Source: [EuroVelo.at](http://EuroVelo.at)*



*EuroVelo 6 splitting into two variants following the left and right banks of the Danube in Austria. A regional cycle route (n°83) provides a connection to the town of Stockerau.*

*More pictures of similar signs [on this link](#).*

*Description*

EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea in Austria is developed on both sides of the Danube and provides clear communication to the users. At splitting points, signs inform cyclists of the different options and which towns they can reach travelling on each bank of the river.

*Evidence of success (results achieved)*

900,000 cyclists travel along the 250 km of the Lower Austrian section of EuroVelo 6 every year. The signposting was completely renewed in 2023.

*Challenges encountered*

Coordination with the municipalities and regions is time-consuming but important. The municipalities need a clear contact person that can be relied upon to take care of cycle path issues. Communicating alternative routes is just as important as clear signposting.

*Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)*

When deciding on several alternative routes, communication is important: with the municipalities and regions, with the major sights and businesses and, above all, with the cyclists. Clear and unambiguous signposting is essential.

*Website links*

[www.donau.com](http://www.donau.com)

Contact details of responsible organisation

Karin Wagenonner, [karin.wagenonner@donau.com](mailto:karin.wagenonner@donau.com)

**Good communication of an acceptable exception to the “single track principle” with ferry connections as integral part of EuroVelo 4 – Central Europe Route and EuroVelo 12 – North Sea Cycle Route and alternative route**

Country (and region)  
 Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice  
 Year(s) of implementation  
 Costs  
 Sources of funding  
 Picture(s)

Belgium (Flanders, Nieuwpoort)  
 Westtoer  
 2020  
 €1,250,000 (signposting)  
 ERDF (Interreg V - project EUROCYCLO)



Sign for EuroVelo 4 and EuroVelo 12 in Belgium, providing information on the ferry, QR code to access the timetable, and an alternative route on land

Description

[EuroVelo 4 – Central Europe Route](#) and [EuroVelo 12 – North Sea Cycle Route](#) in Belgium have a ferry as an integral part of the route, but an alternative route is signed for the itinerary out of the ferry operation times. The sign in the image provides information for cyclists in 4 languages as well as a QR code to access up-to-date ferry times.

Evidence of success (results achieved)

No complaints from cyclists anymore

Challenges encountered

- Obtaining admission from the Ostende commune to install the signposting
- Relocation of a parking space in order to have a better view on the signposting

Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)

- Work with pictograms (ferry).
- Make signposts readable in several (here 4) languages.
- Keep signposting simple, logic, continuous and ‘granny-proof’.
- Try to minimise the number of poles. Re-use existing poles.
- Signpost in two directions.

Website links

- [www.visitwestvlaanderen.be](http://www.visitwestvlaanderen.be)
- [www.belgiancoast.co.uk](http://www.belgiancoast.co.uk)
- [www.eurovelo.com](http://www.eurovelo.com)

Contact details of responsible organisation

Westtoer, Koning Albert I-laan 120, 8200 Sint-Michiels (Belgium), +32 50 30 55 00, [info@westtoer.be](mailto:info@westtoer.be)

## 7.4 Ensuring the continuity of EuroVelo routes – Continuity Strategy

### Infrastructure developments of EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route with the CICLOSEND SUR project

Country (and region)  
 Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice  
 Year(s) of implementation  
 Costs  
 Sources of funding  
 Picture(s)

Spain (Andalucia)
<a href="#">Junta de Andalucia</a>
2022-2024
€2,5 millions
CICLOSEND_SUR project: investment of €7.8 million with FEDER co-funding of 75%

The image shows a project information sheet for the 'PROYECTO DE REACONDICIONAMIENTO DE LA VIA VERDE LITORAL COMO VIA CICLOPEATONAL EUROVELO1 TRAMOS ENTRE GIBRALEON Y AYAMONTE (HUELVA)'. It includes a map of the region, logos for Interreg España-Portugal and Junta de Andalucía, and technical details such as the estimated budget of 2,417,347.53 €, the project manager Luis Ramajo Rodríguez, and the author Pablo Olivares Plaza. The sheet also lists the date of redaction (May 2022) and the version (V.03 superfluida).



Más adelante, en el PK 15+390 pasa debajo de un puente de un ramal del cruce de de l carretera N-431 y continua en trinchera con abundante vegetación hasta el PK 16+370.



Aspect of the abandoned greenway *Vía Verde del Litoral*



<i>Description</i>	<p>The initial conditions of EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route in Andalucía obliged the regional administration to a huge effort to make it rideable. Most of the route is going on greenways that were not rideable when the original Action Plan was prepared in the frame of the <a href="#">AtlanticOnBike project</a>. The involved departments dedicated a lot of efforts to finding the necessary funds to improve the route components and surfaces, and these works suffered a large delay because of COVID.</p> <p>Despite these difficulties, Junta de Andalucía was able to go ahead with two projects: ECO-CICLE, that took place from 2018 to 2021 and allowed to target €9 million through 24 new projects on infrastructure improvements and support to cycle tourism services providers, and CICLOSEND_SUR. This project aimed to improve the territorial connection between regions of the Spanish-Portuguese southern border by promoting and creating cycle-pedestrian routes, treating the territory as a continuum, without borders, for the development of a responsible and respectful tourist activity with the environment, but also to facilitate sustainable local mobility.</p>
<i>Evidence of success (results achieved)</i>	<p>In order to improve the undeveloped parts of EuroVelo 1 in the province of Huelva, CICLOSEND_SUR identified a Cross-Border Network of non-motorised itineraries as an ecotourism resource and proposed an Action Plan for its expansion and improvement by 2030. Within the framework of CICLOSEND_SUR, the whole refurbishment of the Vía Verde del Litoral was projected in 2022 and budgeted for execution in 2023 and 2024. This project is very important as it means the recovery of the first Spanish greenway developed and abandoned because of a lack of maintenance.</p>
<i>Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)</i>	<p>This good practice shows how greenways, even when they are abandoned and in a bad state, can constitute good candidates for cycle routes, and can be improved in a relatively short time when funding is secured.</p>
<i>Website links</i>	<p><a href="https://ciclosendsur.eu/">https://ciclosendsur.eu/</a></p>

## 7.5 Ensuring the continuity of EuroVelo routes – Public transport links

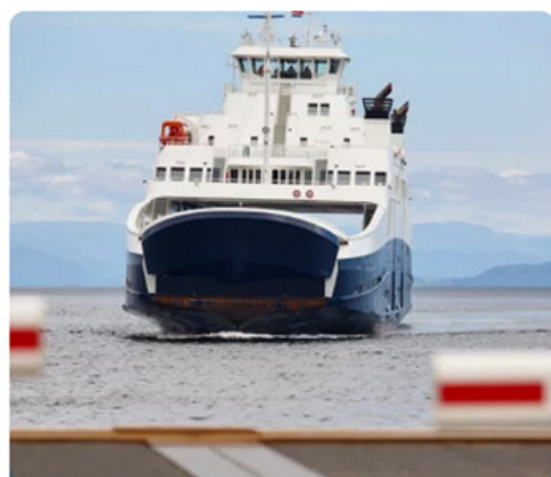
### Ferries along EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route

<i>Country (and region)</i>	Norway
<i>Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice</i>	<a href="#">Statens Vegvesen</a>

Picture(s)



*itinerary of EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in Norway and its island-hopping experience in the North*



### Public Transport

With nearly 30 ferry crossing requirements you will rely heavily on public transport. Norway's ferry system is very efficient and modern and timetables usually work like clockwork. If you only want to experience certain sections of the route it's very easy to use Norway's vast array of cruiseliners and local express boats to take you

[Read more](#)

*information on public transport, and ferries in particular, is provided on the [cyclenorway.com](http://cyclenorway.com) website*

Description


EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in Norway includes no fewer than 30 ferries that are integral parts of the route, since the itinerary hops from one island to the next. On [cyclenorway.com](http://cyclenorway.com), the national website dedicated to cyclists, clear information is given regarding ferries and the fact that they allow bicycle transportation.

**Communication of ferry connections along EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route**

<i>Country (and region)</i>	Ireland
<i>Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice</i>	<a href="#">EuroVelo Ireland</a>
<i>Year(s) of implementation</i>	2023
<i>Costs</i>	Staff costs necessary for doing research, compiling the information and keying it into the website
<i>Sources of funding</i>	Sport Ireland budget
<i>Description</i>	The website of EuroVelo Ireland provides clear information on reaching Ireland by public transport, including explanations of available options and links to the websites of ferry companies: <a href="https://euroveloireland.ie/transport#arriving-by-sea">https://euroveloireland.ie/transport#arriving-by-sea</a>
<i>Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)</i>	The same information could be provided on other national websites to explain the options to arrive in a country - even where the most obvious option is overland by bicycle. Some people may wish to cycle EuroVelo in just one country and would like to travel there by public transport.
<i>Website links</i>	<a href="https://euroveloireland.ie/transport#arriving-by-sea">https://euroveloireland.ie/transport#arriving-by-sea</a>
<i>Contact details of responsible organisation</i>	Doug Corrie at Cycling Ireland <a href="mailto:doug.corrie@cyclingireland.ie">doug.corrie@cyclingireland.ie</a>  <a href="mailto:info@euroveloireland.ie">info@euroveloireland.ie</a> 353 86 8571008

**7.6 Minimising the impact of EuroVelo on nature and biodiversity and finding synergies**

**Camino del Río Tinto**

<i>Country (and region)</i>	Spain (Andalucia, Huelva)
<i>Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice</i>	<a href="#">Diputación Provincial de Huelva</a>
<i>Year(s) of implementation</i>	2018-2022
<i>Costs</i>	€10m is required for the most complex sections of the route, whilst a forecast estimates €500,000 for another section. The complexity of parts of the route requires technical analysis as the layout runs in parallel to a railroad track requiring additional costly infrastructure.
<i>Picture(s)</i>	 <p><i>The unique landscape of the Via Verde Naturel del Rio Tinto, necessitating above average levels of funding to design a bicycle route that does not further damage the area</i></p>



*Description*

The objective of this practice is to transform the Río Tinto Natural Pathway into a cyclable route of 102 km. The route will run through a unique landscape, alongside rivers and crossing 14 municipalities (Nerva, Minas de Río Tinto, El Campillo, Zalamea la Real, Berrocal, Paterna del Campo, Niebla, La Palma del Condado, Villarrasa, San Juan del Puerto, Trigueros, Moguer, Palos de la Frontera y Huelva), from the source of the river in "La Peña del Hierro" to the remarkable endpoint "Muelle de la Rio Tinto Company Limited".

The first 5.5 km part of the route was completed as a pilot project, using an investment of close to 400,000 euros provided by Diputación de Huelva (County Council of Huelva). The works were planned in 3 stages, comprising railway dismantling, ground improvement, the restoration of two bridges, signposting and ancillary items to provide useful safety and tourist information for bike users.

*Evidence of success (results achieved)*

To develop this cycle route through the Rio Tinto riverside is a real challenge due to the technical conditions. The uniqueness of this landscape related to ancient mining has become a well-known, but at the same time it comes with challenging technical solutions involving bridges or tunnel restorations and heritage facilities remaining alongside the track. The process has started with a 5.5 km long recovering pilot project funded by a 400,000 euros investment from the Diputación de Huelva.

*Challenges encountered*

The technical challenge is strongly connected with funding difficulty, forcing the project to open to public bodies at different levels. The uniqueness of the landscape, related to abandoned mining industry, is an added value for tourism, and an aid in recovery of the area after degradation.

*Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)*

Technical complexity is a severe condition, necessitating gathering enough funds for the infrastructure. Works should comprise ground improvement for degraded areas due to ancient mining activities. The relevance of heritage items potentially impacted by such an activity close to the railway has to be an aggregated intervention, requiring above average levels of funding. To ensure successful development, different public bodies are involved from local to national level in an itinerary supported by a provincial bicycle plan (under development). This is a good example of an intervention in degraded areas due to mining activity which took place through centuries and that today after their disappearance, suffers depopulation and underemployment, despite the rich historical heritage linked to those heavy industry activities. This practice can be exported to extensive areas all over Europe with similar conditions as a consequence of decay of mining industry.

**EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail partnership with the [European Green Belt](#)**

*Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice*

[European Green Belt Association](#)

*Year(s) of implementation*

The special value of the border areas of the European Green Belt was already recognised during the Cold War. Cooperation between conservationists intensified immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain, and several projects have been implemented since then. The idea of a "European Green Belt" was first articulated in 2002, and the European Green Belt Initiative was formally established in 2003. Finally, at the 8th Pan-European Green Belt Conference in the Czech Republic in 2014, the



Costs  
Sources of funding

European Green Belt Association e.V. was founded as a governance structure. (Find a timeline [here](#).)

Costs are difficult to quantify because of the complex partner structure.

The activities along the European Green Belt are funded through:

- Membership fee of European Green Belt Association members
- Donations
- EU-funding for projects along the European Green Belt ([BESTbelt project](#), Interreg projects like [ReCo](#) and [D2C](#))
- National sources
- Foundations

Picture(s)



Left: Spatial reference area of the European Green Belt (©OpenStreetMap, data available under the [Open Database License](#))

Right: EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail

Description

Until the early 1990s, the Iron Curtain divided Europe into East and West, from the Barents Sea in northern Russia to the Black Sea. During this time, nature along the former border strip was largely undisturbed by human activity. Today, the 12,500-km long European Green Belt forms the backbone of a pan-European ecological network that crosses almost all the continent's biogeographical regions. The European Green Belt Initiative aims to protect, conserve, reconnect and restore the natural and cultural heritage of this area. In 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ECF and the European Green Belt Association for joint efforts to protect and sustainably use the existing potential of the European Green Belt in the development and promotion of EuroVelo 13. This is an example of the possibility of finding synergies between associations and objectives. The EuroVelo 13 as well as the European Green Belt are ways to cherish Europe's nature, but also explore the history of Europe and the development of peace and cooperation across borders.

Evidence of success  
(results achieved)

The European Green Belt, as a unique pan-European nature conservation initiative, is attracting growing interest, as evidenced by a continuous cooperation of GOs and NGOs from almost all European Green Belt countries, project funds, increasing media coverage, as well as mentions in various documents. The European Green Belt Community meets



*Challenges encountered*

regularly to share success stories and develop joint activities for future cooperation.

In addition, several activities of the Programme of Work of the European Green Belt Association are successfully implemented, like the annual [European Green Belt Days](#) celebrating the cultural and natural diversity along the European Green Belt each year from 18-24 September. Six [municipalities have been awarded](#) since 2015 for the practical implementation of conservation activities on the ground.

- The spatial dimension leads to a high diversity of circumstances that are sometimes difficult to manage or require a high logistical effort.
- High diversity and number of partners in the initiative are challenging to manage, e.g. defining strategic goals, ensuring active participation.
- It is difficult to secure funding for the essential overarching cooperation at pan-European level.
- The current Russian war against Ukraine poses new challenges to the European Green Belt vision of peaceful cross-border cooperation to protect Europe's common natural and cultural heritage.

*Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)*

The European Green Belt is an outstanding pan-European nature conservation initiative that helps securing peace and the growing together of nature and humankind along the former Iron Curtain.

The network of partnerships in 24 countries bridges ecological, cultural and geographical borders to ensure a safe and sustainable future for the European Green Belt.

The natural and cultural peculiarities and treasures along the European Green Belt have great potential for sustainable tourism and related regional development, like long distance hiking or cycling routes, that can also be combined with awareness raising for nature protection, cultural heritage and peace building.

*Website links*

<https://www.europeangreenbelt.org/>

*Contact details of responsible organisation*

Chair of the European Green Belt Association e.V.  
EuroNatur Foundation  
Westendstraße 3  
78315 Radolfzell  
Germany  
Tel: + 49 - 7732 - 92720  
Fax: + 49 - 7732 – 927222  
[association@europeangreenbelt.org](mailto:association@europeangreenbelt.org)

## 7.7 Legal framework facilitating EuroVelo route development

### 2011 road legislation changes in favour of cycling

*Country (and region)*  
*Description*

Poland  
In 2011, Poland introduced road legislation changes in favour of cycling. In particular, the new Highway Code allowed cyclists to ride two or more abreast (unless they obstruct other traffic), overtake slowly-moving cars on the right, carry children in bicycle trailers and ride in the middle of the lane at junctions and roundabouts. Cycle lanes were introduced to the law

*Evidence of success  
(results achieved)*

and defined as being always one way, while a redefinition of the rules regulating cycle tracks and advanced stop lines for cyclists at crossings was also introduced, clearing previous ambiguity and confusion. Finally, all traffic changing direction must yield to cyclists riding straight on cycle tracks, cycle lanes or any other part of the road.

*Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)*

In the Polish case, the question of timing is good evidence of success: these law changes were introduced before the major rise in bicycle traffic, at least in major cities, and most importantly, before most of the cycling infrastructure was built in Poland. This is of particular importance because it is crucial that infrastructure is built upon a good legal framework which is favourable for cycling.

The results demonstrated how such changes can make a big difference in a “less cycling country,” while also exposing certain weaknesses of the Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic.

Key learning from the Polish experience with road law changes were:

- “Less cycling countries” can be a good research field to understand issues that may be overlooked in advanced cycling countries.
- Road law changes can be an effective solution to boost cycling, but the design of a good legal framework must happen before the building of cycling infrastructure. If people don’t feel safe or lose rights by using cycling infrastructure, the investment becomes counterproductive, deterring cycling.

The Vienna Conventions needs to be updated, taking into account new forms of infrastructure and practical experiences with applying the provisions of the Conventions.

*Website links*

More information on <https://ecf.com/news-and-events/news/lessons-learned-case-road-law-changes-poland>

**2020 integration of new innovative methods for reorganising street space**

*Country (and region)  
Picture(s)*

Italy



Figures from the [FIAB](#) guidelines for municipalities about changes in road law, available [here](#)



*Description* In 2020, Italy introduced new innovative methods for reorganising street space as part of its COVID-19 recovery strategy. Two specialised decrees reformed road laws to include five new methods for dedicating road space to cyclists, notably by allowing the development of low-cost and easily implemented cycling infrastructure, such as temporary pop-up cycle lanes. The final decisive push for the introduction of these road changes in 2020's decrees was done by local administrators, who were trained and influenced through years of advocacy campaigns by FIAB and its local organisations across Italy.

*Website links*

More information on <https://ecf.com/news-and-events/news/power-italys-new-road-law-reforms>

### **Federal Act on Cycle Routes**

*Country (and region)*

Switzerland

*Organisation*

[Federal Roads Office](#)

*Description*

Switzerland's Federal Act on Cycle Routes has been in force since 2023 and obliges the federal government and cantons to include cycle routes, their planification, implementation and maintenance, more prominently in their priorities. In particular, cantons must ensure the implementation of cycle route networks for daily commute and leisure, cycle routes must be interconnected and continuous, etc.

*Website links*

<https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/oc/2022/790/de>

### **National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Investment 3 & 4)**

*Country (and region)*

Romania

*Organisation(s) in charge of the good practice*

Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration through Velo National Coordination Center

*Year(s) of implementation*

The construction of cycling routes is ongoing until June 2026 (deadline).

*Costs*

1.500.000 (Investment 3) and 247.500.000 (Investment 4)

*Sources of funding*

Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan

*Description*

In Romania, the government decided to include substantial investments in cycling in its COVID-19 Recovery Plan. Specifically, the NRRP includes the following elements that will facilitate cycling planning, through respecting the assumed targets and milestones:

- Milestone 338 - The regulatory framework (Government Decisions) for the operationalisation of cycling routes;
- Milestone 339 - Establishment of the Velo National Coordination Centre;
- Milestone 340 - The in-depth study which shall establish the territorial distribution of the cycle tourism pathways based on key criteria;
- Milestone 341 - Development and publication of an integrated digital application for the provision of thematic information related to cycling tourism, named "eVelo National Platform" (a dedicated website & mobile app);
- Milestone 342 - Signature of the financing contracts for the construction of 2,404 km of cycling routes;
- Target 343 - At least 2,404 km of accessible cycling routes in locations defined based on the outcome of the study.

*Evidence of success (results achieved)*

- Milestone 338 – Adoption and publication of the Government Decision no. 441/2022;



- Milestone 339 – Creation of the Velo National Coordination Centre in 2022;
- Milestone 340 – Publication of the in-depth study;
- Milestone 341 – The eVelo National Platform (dedicated website & mobile app) is operational; the app is available for both Android and iOS systems.
- Milestone 342 – The financing contracts for the construction of 2,404 km of cycling routes were signed;
- Target 343 - The deadline for the cycling routes construction is June 2026.

#### *Challenges encountered*

From a Romanian legislative point of view, an extensive analysis of various documents must be undertaken because there are mentions of the topic of cycling in various regulations, but they are not correlated. Thus, normative acts that define the same topic in different ways get approved, generating chaos when they must be implemented. Another situation that deepens this gap is the faulty translation of terms and concepts from European directives, some terms being classified as synonyms in European legislation, while in Romanian legislation they mean different things (this also happens the other way around).

Another challenge is also to change the mindset of the population, the great majority being car oriented. One reason for this is the historical context of Romania's development.

#### *Potential for learning or transfer (key lessons)*

In order to learn and apply good practices in Romania, both constant communication between European countries and study visits by professionals to distribute technical know-how are necessary.

There is also a need to organise events and courses in schools to encourage children to adopt everyday cycling as a lifestyle, and to promote all events regarding this topic.

In addition, the organisation of trainings and workshops for the preparation of specialists is a bonus in the development of cycle infrastructure in Romania, the best example in this case being the EuroVelo Route Inspectors' training.

#### *Website links*

<https://centrulnationaldecoordonarevelo.ro/>

#### *Contact details of responsible organisation*

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## 8. Documents of reference for further reading

### EuroVelo manuals

- [EuroVelo Transnational Signing Manual](#) (2023): Presentation of general principles for signing long-distance cycle routes in general, and specific requirements for incorporating EuroVelo logos on route panels.
- [Transnational Guidance Document on Rest Areas](#) (2023): Recommendations and European standards for rest areas along long-distance cycle routes.
- [National EuroVelo Coordination Centre \(NECC\)](#) (2023): Description of the roles of NECCs and guidance on the application process to create a NECC.
- [EuroVelo Press Kit](#): (2023): Presentation of the latest EuroVelo facts and figures intended to journalists and marketers, with an overview of the network – how it is operated and coordinated and how its promotion and communication are organised.
- [EuroVelo Brand Guide](#) (2023): Description the EuroVelo brand and development of guidelines and templates which can be used by partners (National EuroVelo Coordination Centres, touristic organisations, editors, service providers, etc.) to better communicate about EuroVelo or EuroVelo routes.
- [Business Opportunities](#) (2023): Overview of how businesses can promote their products using EuroVelo’s communication tools, such as advertisements and bookable offers.
- [New routes, route extensions and itinerary changes](#) (2022): Explanation of the formal process by which new routes, or major changes to existing routes, can be made, and the basis for decision-making to ensure a consistency in the network as a whole.
- [Quality criteria for long-distance cycle routes](#) (2021): Overview, basic principles and criteria of the European Certification Standard (ECS) methodology.
- Handbook for EuroVelo route inspectors (2021): Detailed description of the European Certification Standard (ECS) methodology. Available on demand to the EuroVelo team.
- [EuroVelo – Combining cycling with public transport](#) (2017): General recommendations and guidance on the main measures that should be implemented by public transport operators, public authorities and other relevant stakeholders to encourage combined bike and public transport journeys.
- [Bikes and trains: 7 basic services that give cyclists a smile - A collection of good practice examples of integrating cycling with long-distance and international rail services](#) (2016).
- [Guidance on Usage Monitoring](#) (2014): Presentation of reliable and comparable information on the use of EuroVelo routes, which enables to estimate the social, economic and environmental impact of working on long-distance cycle routes. Definition of the necessary minimum usage monitoring activities and methods to apply.
- [EuroVelo – Guidance on the route development process](#) (2011): Definition of the elements and the minimum requirements of EuroVelo routes and explanation of the mandatory and optional actions for EuroVelo route development projects. Previous version of the current guide.
- [EuroVelo – European Cycle Route Network](#) (2009): Introduction to the EuroVelo initiative, its main principles and goals.

### Other documents

- [Guide for designating cycle route networks](#) (2024), Economic Commission for Europe, Inland Transport Committee, Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics, prepared by the Group of Experts on cycling infrastructure module.
- (FR) [Revêtement des voies vertes : Déjouer les idées reçues pour un choix écoresponsable](#) (2024), France Nature Environnement & AF3V, France.



- (FR) [SwissMobile manuals](#) (2024), Conférence Vélo Suisse, Office fédéral des routes OFROU : particularly relevant to the topics highlighted in this guide are the publications titled *Guide pratique – Planification des réseaux de voies cyclables*, *Manuel – Conception d’itinéraires cyclables* and *Guide pratique – Les groupes cibles de « La Suisse à vélo »*.
- (DE) [Praxishilfe Velowegnetzplanung](#) (2024), Bundesamt für Strassen ASTRA / Velokonferenz Schweiz.
- [Schéma directeur des aménagements cyclables](#) (2024), Cerema.
- [Cahier des charges pour le développement des véloroutes](#) (2023), Vélo & Territoires, France: Recommendations to transport organising authorities, project owners and managers of cycle routes for the construction, maintenance and user services.
- [Integrated Cycling Planning Guide](#) (2022), ECF: Investing in cycling from EU Structural Funds during the 2021–2027 multi-annual financial framework.
- (FR) [Développer le tourisme à vélo dans les territoires](#) (2021), Vélo & Territoires, France.
- [Greenway: visitor experience & interpretation toolkit](#) (2020), Fáilte Ireland, Republic of Ireland (2020): overview of best practice approach to greenway development, management, maintenance, and marketing.
- [National cycle network design principles](#), Sustrans, United Kingdom.
- Rural Cycleway Design Ireland - <https://www.tiipublications.ie/library/DN-GEO-03047-03.pdf> - includes both on-road and off-road design guidelines.



## 9. Credits

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