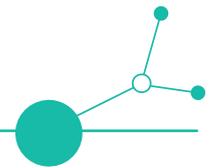


Output 3.1: Sustainability and Transferability Plan for the Integrated ICTr



03.1

European Cyclists' Federation

February 2026



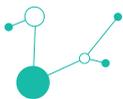


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1. Introduction

1.1. Context of EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail

For almost half a century, Europe was divided into East and West by the “Iron Curtain”, a border stretching from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. Where there once stood a wall, which represented separation, there is now a bike trail that connects and allows free crossing of borders. The EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail (ICT) is a European cycle route which invites people to retrace and experience this important part of the continent’s history. It is a long-distance cycling route that spans over 10.000 km and passes through 20 countries. Along the Iron Curtain Trail, cyclists can encounter a wide range of attractions, including border crossings, museums, monuments, and remnants of the Iron Curtain such as watchtowers and barbed wire fences. The trail leads through scenic countryside, national parks, and urban areas, from vineyards in the south of the Czech Republic and northern Austria to the mountainous borders of Bulgaria and Greece. From the bustling ports of the Baltic states to the raw beauty of Lapland, which gives cyclists a unique view of Europe’s past and present and thus represents an attractive cycling route for all tourists.

1.2. Context of ICTr-CE

In the area of the Iron Curtain Trail, the ICTr-CE project of the Interreg Central Europe programme (Innovative participatory sustainable business model for cycling along the Iron Curtain Trail) is being implemented, promoting the development of sustainable tourism along the cycling route. The project covers a 3,000-kilometer stretch of the route through Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. Throughout the duration of the project in the years 2024 and 2025, there are various training opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises active in the field of tourism (accommodations, restaurants, tour operators, attractions, bike rentals, transfers, and experiences), fostering co-creation, networking and the development of creative and innovative tourism offers. The aim of the project is to bring together service providers in the area under the umbrella brand EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail, to encourage and support their further development and increase their prominence on the global market.

By embracing the opportunities offered by the ICTr-CE project, tourism providers along the route can expand their reach and have the possibility of extending the tourist season, which ensures sustainable economic growth and vitality. This enables small and medium-sized enterprises along the Iron Curtain Trail to actively contribute to the European Union’s Green Transition initiative by promoting sustainable tourism practices, thereby reducing negative environmental impacts and highlighting their positive social and ecological contributions. National, regional and local tourism organisations and other business support organisations, such as chambers of commerce and tourism, are also involved in developing a common international tourism offer and supporting small businesses along the route. In this way, the project supports small and medium-sized enterprises, fosters local and international partnerships and strengthens the knowledge and digital skills of businesses. In the long term, the joint promotional efforts of businesses and support organisations along the Iron Curtain Trail will increase the visibility and attractiveness of the cycle route and the tourism offer along the route.

1.3. Introducing the Sustainability and Transferability Plan

The Sustainability and Transferability Plan (STP) has two overarching goals. The first one is to showcase the institutional and financial sustainability of the ICTr-CE project solutions. And the second one is to define the key aspects and solutions that can be transferred to other cycling routes and/or policies.



In the first part of the STP, there will be a focus on how to sustain the development of cycling tourism activities in the Iron Curtain Trail region through the project solutions. The ICTr Alliance and EuroVelo 13 Partnership, respectively output O1.3 and an annex of deliverable D1.5.1 of the project, have the aim to ensure a governance system for organisations to keep working together and enabling the development of EuroVelo 13 post-project. Although these deliverables have the same goals, they differ in content. The **ICTr Alliance** is a declaration stressing the broad support for establishing a sustainable governance framework for EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail, which enables project partners to continue collaborating in various ways after the end of the project. It is signed by all project partners and associated project partners of ICTr-CE. The **EuroVelo 13 Partnership** may be seen as an operational tool which would ensure the transnational coordination of the product and destination involving partners with national contributions, mainly regional authorities or regional tourism boards, with the support of National EuroVelo Coordination Centres ((NECC) the main governance body for EuroVelo coordination at a national level).

As the EuroVelo 13 Partnership is the deliverable that would more concretely ensure the sustainability of the ICTr-CE activities post-project, here, in O3.1, we will focus on it. The EuroVelo 13 Partnership will serve as an agreed-upon action plan for after the ICTr-CE project finishes in February 2026. The most relevant activities will be selected to be continued post-project. These are the activities that have the most beneficial impact on EuroVelo 13 and the surrounding regions, but that are also realistic to sustain. The EuroVelo 13 Partnership will be based on the experience of EuroVelo Route Partnerships developed in the past decade, enabling transnational development and promotion of EuroVelo routes. EuroVelo Route Partnerships are in place on 4 EuroVelo routes in 2025 (EuroVelo 15 - Rhine Cycle Route, EuroVelo 19 - Meuse Cycle Route, EuroVelo 8 - Mediterranean Route, EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route) and are all coordinated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) as Secretariat.

D1.5.1 and part one of O3.1 have many similarities in terms of their content. The main difference is that D1.5.1 solely describes the organisational framework of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership and its annex will serve as the partnership contract signed by the EuroVelo 13 Partnership members. While O3.1 is more descriptive and extensive. It describes the EuroVelo 13 Partnership, how we came to create it, agreed on the activities, its expected impact and how it contributes to sustaining ICTr-CE activities.

The second part of the STP will focus more on how the knowledge gathered and the developed innovative elements (the tools, the business model, the capacity building, ...) created during the ICTr-CE project can be useful in the future, be it for the further development of the deliverables or how the knowledge created may be used in other regions. Firstly, how to create an innovative participatory cooperation model, such as a EuroVelo Partnership, will be described. This will serve as a step-by-step guidance on how to create such a governance model and implement it. Other routes will be able to take inspiration from this and apply it to their local context as wished.

Then, how the ICTr-CE deliverables, other than the EuroVelo 13 Partnership, could be useful to other cycling routes will be described. Here, the most relevant deliverables with high potential for impact have been selected. Each deliverable has a summary box which includes their description, benefits, limitations, suggestions of ways to improve the deliverable, ideas of how to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes or national policies, and finally the types of cycling routes and/or regions the deliverable's knowledge could be applied to. The idea of these summary boxes is for the reader to be able to gather information on the deliverables in a quick and easy way to assess whether it is something of interest to them and that they want to further investigate. If this is the case, the reader can access the full document of the concerned deliverable as to get more in-depth information on it and evaluate how the knowledge created can be useful to other cycling routes and regions. Having individual boxes per deliverable allows readers to "to pick and choose" the most relevant information to them out of all the knowledge created during the ICTr-CE project. This format allows the STP to not be overwhelmed with information and to avoid repeating content that can already be found in the well written individual activity deliverables.



This section is rounded off with a short paragraph on the ICTr-CE deliverables, including their similarities in benefits and limitations and how simultaneously working on all these activities enabled the further development of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail. In the final section of this second part, readers will find a project proposal concept note. This may serve as a good basis for the development of new projects which use knowledge created in ICTr-CE. The concept note may be viewed as a potential action plan in addition to the one of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership. The main difference between these is that the EuroVelo 13 Partnership action plan is one for which actions have been taken to put into place, whereas the project proposal is a suggestion of an action plan that could additionally be taken on by the ICTr-CE partners or a new consortium.

The concept note includes a description of the aim of the potential project as well as the activities that they will take on. Part of these activities will be the continuations of certain ICTr-CE activities.

To summarise, the Sustainability and Transferability Plan enables three things; the continuation of a partnership along EuroVelo 13 through the EuroVelo 13 Partnership, the transferability and usability of the knowledge created during the ICTr-CE activities and the continuation of part of the ICTr-CE activities through new potential projects.



2. Sustainability of ICTr-CE project solutions

2.1. What is a EuroVelo Partnership?

During the last ten years, ECF has been developing and adapting to multiple routes the framework of EuroVelo Route Partnerships, formerly called Long-Term Management Agreements (LTMAs).

The concept is that partners representing neighbouring countries and regions join forces to develop the transnational attractiveness of the route, by coordinating their work and setting up a common budget to promote the concerned EuroVelo route together.

Relevant partners are usually institutional bodies and public organisations representing one specific region, or all the regions crossed by the route. The latter role can be endorsed, for example by [National EuroVelo Coordination Centres](#) (NECC), receiving funds to represent all regions and to pay the Route Partnership's fee. ECF has always been acting as Secretariat coordinating all activities for the whole Partnership for now, but coordination positions could be filled by other partner organisations.

A dedicated multiannual plan is usually proposed by the Secretariat and jointly discussed and validated by partners. Such plan guides the activities to be undertaken with the common budget. It usually focuses on activities to boost the promotion of the route (digital campaigns, social media, SEO work, content creation, etc).

2.1. Why launch a EuroVelo 13 Partnership now?

EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail is already promoted as part of the EuroVelo network but not in itself, with dedicated resources. The untapped potential of EuroVelo 13 can be activated through transnational cooperation and promotion. This has been confirmed with the current EU co-funded projects focusing on EuroVelo 13, allowing for impressive achievements and successful activities. The ICTr-CE project offers the perfect opportunity to prepare for the continuation of transnational collaboration after the project's end, covering the first preparatory costs and paving a way towards the EuroVelo 13 Partnership.

EU co-funded projects are an opportunity for partners to get to know each other, start collaborating and leading common activities with financial support of the EU. That is why EU co-funded projects have often been a starting point for EuroVelo Route Partnerships. Indeed, it paves the way for first activities, it allows to run some pilot actions, and it brings concrete and positive results. At the end of a successful EU co-funded project, there are often proposals and ideas to keep on working together on some key actions. The EuroVelo Route Partnerships offer the perfect framework to keep the momentum going by establishing a common budget thanks to each willing partner's resources and deciding on future targeted and collective activities.

A EuroVelo 13 Partnership is therefore an ideal way to answer ICTr-CE's mission to promote and develop the route and more specifically, sustaining the activities developed during the project once it ends.

2.2. Description of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

2.2.1 Steps taken to set up the Partnership

Ensuring the alignment between partners on the ambition and governance of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership is essential for its success. This is why its development was continuously presented to project partners during project meetings twice a year as well as additional meetings with external partners who would be directly involved in the Partnership.



ECF worked on defining the need to create a EuroVelo 13 Partnership. The process included internal discussions on its aim, the format, activities to be taken on, and so on, and regular meetings with Trail Angels as leaders of the ICTr Business Model, an activity to be included in the Partnership, and Westpannon as lead partner of the project.

In addition to these meetings ECF organised a workshop at the 5th's ICTr-CE project meeting in Koprivnica, Croatia. Partners were divided into the project's three pilot areas they are part of and were asked to do a SWOT analysis of their respective pilot areas and the EuroVelo 13 cycling route which goes through it. A SWOT analysis consists in analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of something as to have a better and more comprehensive understanding of it. In the case at hand, these SWOTs allowed all to understand the needs of the three sections of the cycling route, whether a EuroVelo 13 Partnership was part of their needs, and the actions that could be potentially taken on as part of the Partnership. An additional task administered during the workshop was to identify organisations that could have an interest in joining the Partnership.

After contacting the relevant Partners from the "Potential EuroVelo 13 Partners" contact list created after the workshop, two online meetings were held on 10/04/2025: one for the South and one for the Central Pilot Area entitled "EuroVelo 13 Partnership - opportunity to make Iron Curtain Trail grow". These meetings were held separately as to assess if the interest for a partnership and its actions were similar in Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary and in Austria, Czechia and Slovakia. No meetings were held with organisations from the North pilot area, as German participation was not deemed viable during the workshop in Koprivnica, and a continuous Partnership in the Central and South pilot areas was preferred. Due to similar interests from the Central and Southern countries, it was agreed that moving forward, meeting and discussions would be combined.

Based on the meetings' discussions and their knowledge on EuroVelo Partnerships, ECF prepared a generic presentation on Partnership Agreements on other EuroVelo routes as well as a 2-page document which gives the main information on the Partnership (Annex 1). These contained information on the potential EuroVelo 13 Partnership, what it entails, its benefits and why the concerned organisation should join the Partnership.

A recurrent worry expressed by partners was the funding of a EuroVelo 13 Partnership. This is why ECF developed three potential ambition levels for the partnership, ranging from least to most ambitious and thus least to most costly. The former would ensure only that the selected activities of ICTr-CE are maintained, while the latter would allow for better and more promotion of EuroVelo 13 and generate far more impact. These were presented during the online meeting "EuroVelo 13 Partnership: Defining the Ambition" (Annex 2). The difference in funding allocation and governance between the different countries potentially involved in the partnership was noted, with different countries allocating funding for tourism either at national, regional, or local levels, necessitating different levels of actors involved in different countries. This was especially noted for Austria and Hungary. All three presented options received interest from partners. As the middle ground between Option 1 and 3, and having received significant interest, it was decided to move forward on EuroVelo 13 Partnership discussions with Option 2. Partners agreed that there is a strong interest and belief in the partnership, but could not ensure a commitment quite yet. Not knowing which option would be selected yet also played a role in this.

Due to the positive interest from the involved countries, Poland's recent implementation of an NECC, and Germany's stronger NECC since 2024 and the involvement in the NECC of the Bundesamt für Logistik und Mobilität (BALM), it was decided to extend the invitation to join the Partnership to Germany and Poland.

All partners were asked to give their formal decision on whether they would join the EuroVelo 13 Partnership by mid-January. Copies of the bilateral Partnership contract between ECF as secretariat and the concerned partners were sent out (Annex 3).



2.2.2. Finding partners

As mentioned in the previous section, following the SWOT workshop, ECF created a shared contact list with organisations that could take an interest in joining the EuroVelo 13 Partnership. This included the organisations' name and some background information, who from the ICTr-CE partners is best placed to contact them, as well as the benefits of joining such a partnership could bring them. ECF partially completed the list based on the information gathered during the workshop but asked the project partners to complete it with any missing contacts and information. With this list, the relevant ICTr-CE partners contacted different organisations to present them the concept of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership, its relevance for them and invite them to join the Partnership.

The interested parties were invited to join a first online meeting organised by ECF in April 2025. During this meeting the EuroVelo 13 Partnership and its expectations were presented in more detail.

Along the way, the contact list was refined accordingly. Different organisations to contact were suggested, and more regional actors were involved within Austria and Hungary. The type of potential partners involved mainly included regional authorities or regional tourism boards, with the support of National EuroVelo Coordination Centres (the main governance body for EuroVelo coordination at a national level).

Although partners from EuroVelo 13 countries not covered by the ICTr-CE project were also invited to join the EuroVelo 13 Partnership, unfortunately none of them accepted the invitation.

After follow-up meetings and numerous exchanges, a list of partners that will join the EuroVelo 13 Partnership was determined. From then on, the more concrete focus and actions to be taken on during the EuroVelo 13 Partnership were discussed among partners. The EuroVelo 13 Partnership is hoped to be finalised and signed in March 2026.

2.2.3. Ambition and action plan

Naturally many of the Partnership discussions focused on the ambition and action plan of the EuroVelo 13 partnership.

Based on their experience with Partnerships, ECF pushed forward the importance of focusing on actions towards the online promotion of the route. ECF has well established EuroVelo channels that are ideal to communicate with (potential) cycling tourists or tourists looking into cycling on their holidays. An opportunity to easily promote EuroVelo 13 with high impact.

Ensuring some kind of continuation of the ICTr-CE activities was essential and pushed forward to the potential Partnership members. The Innovative Product Business Model developed in the frame of Work Package 1 (WP1), was the main ICTr-CE activity that was pushed to be sustained through the Partnership. This activity is the product of several ICTr-CE activities and is greatly linked to the ICTr-CE tools developed in the frame of the project.

3 priorities were the outcome of the discussions among potential EuroVelo 13 Partnership members.

Priority no. 1: Increase the international visibility and promotion of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail to potential users

Priority no. 2: Support the improvement of quality of offers on EuroVelo 13

Priority no. 3: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

The tasks for each of these priorities may be found in the preliminary table below. This multiannual action plan will be reviewed during the partnership's kick off meeting and adapted based on partners input before being adopted as the final action plan.



All in all, the potential Partners were quite aligned and agreed with ECF’s vision on the relevant tasks to include in the EuroVelo 13 Partnership. The specific activities (number of articles, social media posts, ...) within the tasks are to be defined from year to year, during an online meeting with all Partnership members.

EuroVelo 13 Partnership 2026-2029								
Ambition: Develop the international visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail as a flagship product in Europe and the regions involved								
	2026-2027		2027-2028		2028-2029		3 years	
	HR	EC	HR	EC	HR	EC	HR	EC
#1 Priority: Increase the international visibility and promotion of EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail to potential users								
<i>1.1 Create engaging content to generate more traffic on EuroVelo 13 webportal</i>	3,150 €		3,150 €		3,150 €		9,450 €	
<i>1.2 Create and advertise EuroVelo 13 content on social media channels to raise awareness and bring traffic to the webportal</i>	2,925 €		2,925 €		2,925 €		8,775 €	
<i>1.3 Improve the structure, analytics and effectiveness of EuroVelo.com to attract more visitors on EuroVelo 13 webportal (SEO)</i>	2,025 €	1,775 €	2,025 €	1,775 €	2,025 €	1,775 €	6,075 €	5,325 €
<i>1.4 Management and recertification process of EuroVelo 13 as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe</i>	1,800 €		1,800 €		1,800 €		5,400 €	
#2 Priority: Support the improvement of quality of offers on EuroVelo 13								
<i>2.1 Collect knowledge and support national partners to increase continuous cycling infrastructure and signage</i>	900 €		900 €		900 €		2,700 €	
<i>2.2 Manage the Booking Centres licensing</i>	3,150 €		3,150 €		3,150 €		9,450 €	
#3 Priority: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership								
<i>3.1 Coordinate the partnership, organise meetings, produce annual report</i>	3,600 €		3,600 €		3,600 €		10,800 €	
<i>3.2 Admin coordination of the partnership</i>	900 €		900 €		900 €		2,700 €	
SUB-TOTAL	18,450 €	1,775 €	18,450 €	1,775 €	18,450 €	1,775 €	55,350 €	5,325 €
TOTAL FOR 3 YEARS	20,225 €		20,225 €		20,225 €		60,675 €	
TOTAL PER YEAR							20,225 €	

2.2.4. Financing mechanism

The Partners will sign the EuroVelo 13 Partnership Agreement and commit to provide their agreed upon membership fee every year of the Partnership.

The Membership fees have been calculated per country based on a 500€ fixed fee and a variable fee based on the length of the route in the respective countries relative to the total route length intended to be covered by the Partnership. The estimated budget has been established considering a set ambition and action plan. To calculate the fees, the total budget was then divided proportionally based on route length among the countries involved in the Partnership. As not all intended partners ended up joining the Partnership, the final budget was adjusted downwards to account for this fact.

The main financing mechanism is based on project partners’ annual fees, but the business model of ICTr-CE booking centres and other innovation solutions (e.g Good Impact Programme) could provide additional financing contributions to the further development of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail in the future.

2.2.5. Continuation of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

The upcoming EuroVelo 13 Partnership will be set up for a 3-year period starting in March 2026. Before the end of the 3 year period, the Partnership will gather and discuss the continuation of the ongoing collaboration. It is hoped that members will be sufficiently satisfied with the Partnership and its work to desire renewing it in 2029. All already involved countries will be invited to join the Partnership as well as other EuroVelo 13 countries. It is hoped that one day, the EuroVelo 13 Partnership will cover the full EuroVelo 13 route, from Norway to Türkiye.



3. Further developing and transferring ICTr solutions

3.1. Description of key aspects to create an innovate participatory cooperation model ¹

Several of the already existing EuroVelo Partnerships are the result of the end of a project on the concerned EuroVelo route. The momentum brought by the project helps organisations discuss and align on the potential of the route and the benefits of furthering its development.

However, this is not the only way a EuroVelo Partnership can be created. Any organisation which has interest in creating a Partnership can put together a list of contacts and evaluate interest among them to collaborate on further developing a cycle route.

3.1.1. Defining the scope

Defining the scope of a Partnership is the first essential part. Questions such as the following should be answered:

- Which partners are interested to join forces? Are the partners already identified? Should more partners be found?
- Which route or part of a route is represented?
- Is there enough interest to launch the process? Who is coordinating the initial discussions?

The first step is to identify potential partners and financial resources. For one country, several partners can join, representing different regions. There can also be a unique representative partner for a country, acting as a coordinator for national actions and sharing the information with more local stakeholders (with potentially different financing resources). The latter is often the representative of a National EuroVelo Coordination Centre, already coordinating actions for EuroVelo routes in the country, but not always. Finding the best suited stakeholder is important as they will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of marketing and promotional activities for the EuroVelo route in their country. Recommended partners are institutional organisations such as regional public authorities, regional or national tourism boards, regional or national route committee (if existing), NECCs, representatives of Ministry of Tourism or Transport.

A Route Partnership does not necessarily have to represent a whole route. There can be only a part of the route being represented, keeping in mind that other partners can join later on. The limit is that the budget should be sufficient to cover coordination costs and some key actions. There can be a stronger focus on developing and promoting the area covered by the Partnership. The coverage of the Partnership does not have to be continuous.

The interest in launching the process should be evaluated based on the potential partners contacted. The coordination of this task can be lengthy and time consuming so it is important for an organisations which has the capacity to do so to take on this task. Especially knowing that an outcome of these discussions may be that no Partnership is put into place. There is therefore a certain risk to take.

¹ Inspired by

<https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/Deliverable%205.1%20EuroVelo%2010%20Partnership%20A%20proposal%20for%20a%20Multiannual%20Action%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf>



3.1.2. Detail the content of the Route Partnership

Organisational structure:

- Legal basis: model of the 'Partnership Agreement'
- Timeframe: usually 3 years and renewable
- Definition of ambition, priorities, actions

ECF has a well-established model for the contract of the Partnership Agreement that can be edited depending on the partners' needs. The agreement traditionally has a duration of three years, renewable.

A key point is to agree on a common ambition and priorities, which will guide the definition of the Partnership's budget for activities and its Multiannual Action Plan, translating the ambition into concrete activities with defined external and human resources costs.

Governance:

- Secretariat
- Decision body (takes decision)
- Operational body (implements actions and reports)
- Consultative body (provides feedback and contributes)

An important step is the identification of the different roles of the partners within the Partnership. The Secretariat coordinates the communication and the work, makes sure that the Multiannual Action Plan is followed, takes care of common activities and reports to the other partners, including financially. ECF traditionally acts as Secretariat. All partners usually make strategic decisions together, providing feedback on the Multiannual Action Plan, and contributing with information or by directly coordinating specific actions on a national or regional level. There can be a Steering Committee and a Marketing and Communications Committee with specific partner representatives affiliated to each committee. Preferred internal communication tools can also be decided by the partners (emails, Microsoft Teams/Google Drive/Slack, etc).

Financial model:

- Setting the amount of the annual fee and multiannual budget.

There are two main financing models: the membership fee can be customised, with a fixed fee per km of route in each region or country, or divided equally between countries or regions. The most common case is a base fee for all partners (e.g. 500€) + a fixed amount per km per country. There can be several organisations representing different regions of a country, dividing the partnership fee between them. In the case of a fee per km, it is considered that a partner benefits more of the concerned activities if they have a longer stretch of the concerned EuroVelo crossing their regions/countries.

There is no minimum budget per se but the Partnership must be viable with all coordination, communication and administrative costs being covered as a basis for its functioning. The budget is decided within the partnership agreement. Then, the selection of activities to be conducted can be adapted to the budget collected and to the preferences of partners.



3.1.3. Launch the Route Partnership

- Consult stakeholders to discuss the ambition and main priorities, and convince potential partners
- Establish the Partnership Agreement and final Multiannual Action Plan with detailed actions and dedicated budget
- Agree on a timeframe for launching the activities

Administrative process:

- Signature of the Agreement by all representative partners
- Invoicing
- Implementation of activities starts after payments are received



3.2. Evaluation of innovative elements of ICTr-CE deliverables and transferability potential

3.2.1. Creating tourism products and a business model around them

<p>Description of the deliverable and how it was developed and tested</p>	<p>The innovative ICTr tourism product and business model represents a sustainable and bookable cycling product for the long-distance cycling route EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail. The cycling product was developed with the goal of combining experience design with innovative digital tools in order to provide evidence-based documentation of climate-neutral cycling trips that generate regional impact. Based on this, a business model was created that offers as many SMEs as possible the opportunity to participate - also through the support of official booking centers and through European networking. The innovative ICTr tourism product and business model was tested with a focus on the pilot regions Central and South.</p>
<p>Positive impacts of the deliverable</p>	<p>This concept established a strong cross-border framework for developing cycle tourism along EuroVelo 13 by connecting SMEs, DMOs, tourism businesses, and local stakeholders. It promoted digitalisation, product innovation, and the creation of bookable travel packages while integrating a holistic set of environmental and social sustainability tools, including measurable indicators and carbon-footprint comparisons. The process helped partners understand the route’s market potential, verify its commercial viability, and recognise the importance of product and business development in tourism. It also increased awareness of the ICTr product, initiated cooperation with businesses along the route, and demonstrated how digital tools and experience design can support customer satisfaction and sustainability monitoring. Overall, the resulting business model is transferable to other cycling routes and provides a solid foundation for long-term cooperation, strengthening regional resilience and sustainable growth.</p>
<p>Limitations of the deliverable</p>	<p>The project’s pilot areas were developed independently, resulting in limited integration and challenges in forming a coherent, market-ready long-distance cycling product under the EuroVelo 13 framework. Although each pilot area functions as a distinct product, successful implementation depends on strong regional and cross-border cooperation, which varies significantly among countries and NECC partners. Large disparities exist in local conditions, stakeholder engagement, SME involvement, service availability, and cycling-tourism maturity. Differences in terrain, infrastructure quality, seasonal demand, and digital readiness further complicate the creation of a unified business model. Some regions, such as parts of Czechia and Slovakia, face limited services, difficult topography, or poorly maintained routes, while others offer extensive infrastructure. The model requires sustained funding, mature coordination structures, and reliable digital systems—elements not consistently present across regions. Overall, the results are promising but incomplete, and further resources and local adaptations are needed to ensure long-term applicability and broader dissemination.</p>



<p>Suggestions for further development of the deliverable</p>	<p>The model requires real-market testing and continuous annual refinement to ensure long-term viability. Strong, unified branding—positioning it as the most sustainable cycling product along EuroVelo 13—combined with targeted promotion will help validate the business model. Further development should focus on meeting individual tourist needs (e.g., paid brochures, digital maps) and enhancing shared digital tools. Strong partnerships, expert input in sustainable tourism and IT, and improved applications are essential for broader market uptake. Terrain challenges can be mitigated through e-bike use, particularly MTBs on variable surfaces. Increased marketing and destination promotion will help expand tourism offerings and boost interest in the ICTr product. The approach can also guide national cycling tourism strategies, support SME participation, and act as a reference for establishing Booking Centre structures along other long-distance routes.</p>
<p>How to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes and/or national policies</p>	<p>The project demonstrates how sustainability, digitalisation, and SME participation can be integrated into a coherent system for developing cycling tourism. Its business model offers a reference for creating Booking Centre structures along long-distance routes, while the pilot results can help national tourism bodies design support programmes for SMEs. In Slovakia, the experience should be used to train tourism operators who currently lack knowledge of cycling tourism requirements. Dissemination should occur through multiple channels, including the EuroVelo website, national tourism organisations, DMOs, fairs, conferences, and publications. Because the research applied a robust, multilingual methodology analysing over 200 variables, its findings are transferable to other cycling routes and national strategies. Standardised surveys, harmonised indicators, and need-gap comparisons allow policymakers to identify regional disparities, skill gaps, and priorities. Applying this framework enables greener, more competitive, socially responsible cycling products—anticipating future requirements such as compulsory carbon-footprint measurement for tourism products.</p>
<p>Types of cycling routes and/or regions the deliverable’s knowledge could be applied to</p>	<p>The model is widely transferable across EuroVelo routes—especially those with existing partnerships, such as EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route or EuroVelo 19 - Meuse Cycle Route. It is equally applicable to popular cycling routes with strong cooperation, including the Elbe Radweg and Drava Cycle Route. The adaptable methodology suits diverse tourism contexts, helping regions identify service gaps, SME needs, and development priorities. It can support other sections of EuroVelo 13, long-distance cycle routes (signposted or not), and even hiking trails. The model particularly benefits regions developing cycle tourism, rural areas needing coordinated structures, and routes seeking professionalisation and sustainability integration.</p>

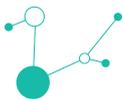


3.2.2. Developing the Environmental Footprint Calculator

<p>Description of the deliverable and how it was developed and tested</p>	<p>CROST with the contribution of project partners, compiled a collection of existing, relevant, and free-to-use online footprint calculators. These calculators were evaluated using two methods. First, heat index tables were created to provide qualitative and comparative information for each tool. In these tables, calculators were rated as high, medium, or low in each category, based on how comprehensively they collected input data. Next, the most relevant aspects for the ICTr project—such as travel between home and the destination, accommodation, mobility within the destination, and additional information—were used to identify which calculators were the best fit. The analysis showed that two tools, the Ecological Footprint calculated with the Sustainable Process Index and CARMACAL, met the project’s requirements. CROST then invited all partners to test and evaluate both calculators. Based on the joint assessment, CARMACAL was selected as the most suitable tool for the project. During the testing phase of the ICTr product, the device was used across all pilot projects. Each participant entered their individual data, and the CO₂ value for their route was calculated accordingly. In addition, CROST developed a custom online Excel tool capable of performing these calculations offline, enabling easy verification of the results.</p>
<p>Positive impacts of the deliverable</p>	<p>The integration of the CARMACAL Footprint Calculator with the Impact Measurement System (IMS) provides a clear, data-driven method for assessing the environmental impact of cycling tourism. It helps harmonise environmental aspects with IMS indicators, identify overlaps between CO₂-related impacts and IMS metrics, and deepen understanding of emissions from transport, accommodation, food, and mobility. This strengthens the credibility of sustainability claims and supports more transparent communication. The tool demonstrates that cycling tourism has a significantly lower carbon footprint than other forms of travel, offering valuable insights for marketing and regional development. By enabling easy comparison of trip options through a total impact score, it can increase public and institutional awareness of cycling’s eco-friendly potential and encourage wider use of footprint calculators. Although broader commercialisation of low-carbon travel will require societal and infrastructural change, this first measurable cycling tourism product represents an innovative step toward carbon-neutral tourism development.</p>
<p>Limitations of the deliverable</p>	<p>The tool’s main limitations include an uneven database, reliance on self-reported inputs, and lack of verification by sustainability experts, which can lead to inaccurate results. It offers limited options for tourism travel, such as the absence of e-vehicles, and requires ongoing maintenance, including regular updates of emission factors from tourism providers. Standardised tour calculations, rather than tailor-made options, make the process labor-intensive for agencies. Data gaps are particularly notable for accommodations along EuroVelo 13 and in cycling tourism, a relatively new area with limited impact knowledge. Usability challenges—complicated interface, low awareness, and a high entry threshold—can limit adoption, especially by smaller SMEs or booking centers. While the tool supports carbon-footprint assessment and contributes to environmentally friendly</p>

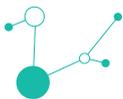


	<p>tourism, its effectiveness depends on improved data quality, stakeholder participation, and alignment with evolving sustainability standards and EU reporting obligations. It is currently most applicable to organised tours rather than individual travelers.</p>
<p>Suggestions for further development of the deliverable</p>	<p>To enhance sustainable tourism tools like CARMACAL, improvements should include expanding CO₂ calculation methods to incorporate additional parameters such as waste, water, and food sourcing. Incorporating electric vehicles and cycling-specific emission factors, along with broader local data coverage, would increase accuracy. User interface improvements—such as displaying maximal possible scoring in the main view—would allow users to compare tour impacts without downloading results. Promoting footprint calculators more effectively and engaging SMEs and regional stakeholders through training would improve data quality and credibility. Initiating sustainability certification for service providers could strengthen the data basis and quality of climate-friendly services. Simplifying the interface, increasing transparency of calculation methods, and expanding accommodation coverage would enhance usability, reliability, and overall effectiveness. While ICTr-CE partners only apply existing software, these targeted improvements could significantly boost adoption, accuracy, and the positive impact of sustainable mobility and eco-friendly travel initiatives.</p>
<p>How to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes and/or national policies</p>	<p>Carbon-footprint measurement is expected to become increasingly important, potentially mandatory, for all tourism products within the next decade. Policymakers can integrate carbon accounting into funding and certification criteria, define standardised indicators and data-governance rules, and require regular monitoring to support national green transition goals. Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) can promote tools like CARMACAL by encouraging local service providers to calculate and register their emissions. Transparent CO₂ communication, including publicly sharing data on websites or booking platforms, can enhance destination credibility and encourage responsible consumer choices. The methodology used for calculating carbon footprints in active tourism, such as along EuroVelo 13, is scalable to other routes and the broader EuroVelo network. With proper promotion to tour operators, DMOs, journalists, and professionals, footprint calculators can benchmark emissions, track reductions, and guide policymakers in incentivising low-carbon mobility, sustainable accommodation, and local sourcing practices.</p>
<p>Types of cycling routes and/or regions the deliverable’s knowledge could be applied to</p>	<p>Long-distance or multi-day cycling routes, where accommodation, meals, and luggage transport generate emissions, can have their carbon footprint measured using tools like CARMACAL. This applies to organized tours, “natural” eco-focused routes, and trails popular with environmentally conscious cyclists. The method is versatile, limited only by management expertise and data quality. This model is transferable to other EuroVelo routes with existing partnerships—e.g., EuroVelo 15 - Rhine Cycle Route or EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route—as well as popular tourist routes like the Elbe Radweg or Drava Cycle Route. Clear communication of sustainability data gives early-adopting trails a competitive edge in the cycling tourism market.</p>

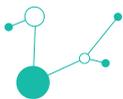


3.2.3. Developing the Impact Measurement System

<p>Description of the deliverable and how it was developed and tested</p>	<p>The Impact Measurement System (IMS) was developed as a harmonised sustainability assessment framework for organised EuroVelo 13 cycling tourism products. It consists of a structured scoring system applied to predefined tour products based on clearly defined services and itineraries.</p> <p>The IMS defines sustainability indicators for Booking Centres, accommodations, food services, transport, activities and tour operators. These are supported by declaration forms and a structured Tour Script, enabling systematic data collection linked to the product design rather than individual traveller behaviour.</p> <p>Development included partner consultations, indicator definition, scoring logic creation, preparation of guidelines, and internal testing using sample tour data. The system was refined through partner feedback and practical validation within pilot tours.</p>
<p>Positive impacts of the deliverable</p>	<p>The IMS provides a harmonised, indicator-based digital framework to measure the sustainability performance of organised cycling tourism products across environmental, social and economic dimensions. It supports evidence-based product development and strengthens transparency by linking structured sustainability assessment with the Good Impact Programme.</p> <p>The system facilitates cooperation among booking centres, tour operators, service providers and guides by establishing a shared sustainability framework and comparable performance indicators. It enables cross-country comparability for organised products and supports continuous improvement of services included in the tour design.</p> <p>The IMS contributes to strengthening the credibility of EuroVelo 13 by providing measurable sustainability criteria and structured reporting. Its methodology can serve as a reference model for other organised cycling tourism products operating under similar governance and data conditions.</p>
<p>Limitations of the deliverable</p>	<p>The IMS is currently designed and validated for organised cycling tourism products with predefined services and structured data collection. Its implementation is resource-intensive and requires trained staff, cooperation from service providers, and reliable documentation, including self-declarations.</p> <p>Rural areas and micro-SMEs may face challenges in providing complete documentation for full scoring. The system assumes implementation according to the predefined tour structure; deviations require additional verification.</p> <p>The IMS is not designed as a monitoring tool for independent or unstructured cycling tourism. Its applicability depends on the existence of organised products, defined itineraries, and a governance framework capable of coordinating data collection and reporting.</p>



<p>Suggestions for further development of the deliverable</p>	<p>The IMS prototype demonstrates strong potential but would benefit from further methodological refinement and technical simplification. Future development could focus on improving digital automation, enhancing data verification mechanisms, and streamlining usability for booking centres and SMEs.</p> <p>Further integration with carbon footprint calculation tools could improve operational efficiency. Capacity-building measures, including training for booking centres and service providers, would strengthen consistent implementation.</p> <p>Any broader application beyond organised cycling products would require additional methodological development, governance structures, and data systems and is therefore considered a potential future development area rather than part of the current validated scope.</p>
<p>How to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes or national policies</p>	<p>The IMS offers a structured, indicator-based methodology for assessing the sustainability performance of organised cycling tourism products. It can inform product development standards, service provider engagement, and sustainability criteria within route-level or regional tourism strategies where similar governance and data conditions exist.</p> <p>Transferability requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organised tourism products, • clearly defined service structures, • coordinated data collection, • and responsible managing entities. <p>Under these conditions, the IMS can serve as a reference framework for other EuroVelo routes or comparable long-distance cycling corridors. Training and institutional capacity are essential prerequisites for successful replication.</p>
<p>Types of cycling routes and/or regions the deliverable's knowledge could be applied to</p>	<p>The IMS methodology is transferable to other long-distance cycling routes or regional cycling tourism systems where organised products are operated by booking centres or tour operators capable of structured data collection.</p> <p>It is particularly suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross-border routes with coordinated governance, • long-distance corridors with defined product packages, • regions seeking structured sustainability assessment of organised cycling tourism products. <p>Application to unstructured or independent cycling tourism contexts would require additional methodological adaptation and governance mechanisms.</p>

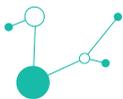


3.2.4. Developing the ICTr Good Impact Programme

<p>Description of the deliverable and how it was developed and tested</p>	<p>The Good Impact Programme (GIP) is a mechanism aimed at reducing the negative environmental and social impacts of the ICTr cycling product. It achieves this by supporting projects implemented along the route, lowering or even preventing negative impacts. Funding for these projects comes from a surcharge added to the tour price, determined using the carbon footprint calculator and the IMS.</p> <p>The document defines the purpose of the GIP, its components and their interrelations, as well as the step-by-step implementation process. It also outlines a preliminary action plan for GIP implementation as well as the general types of projects/measures to be supported.</p> <p>The GIP output was developed in two stages. The first was the preparation of a concept based on our experience and intensive consultations with project partners. This concept will then be elaborated into a full document, again in communication with the partners.</p>
<p>Positive impacts of the deliverable</p>	<p>The GIP channels environmental and socio-economic contributions from ICTr cycling tourists back into local communities, offsetting tourism’s negative impacts while strengthening local economies, culture, and nature protection. By increasing transparency and trust among stakeholders, it promotes responsible traveller behaviour and enhances the green image and competitiveness of destinations. The GIP goes beyond traditional tourism models by integrating tourism, ecology, climate protection, and social inclusion, demonstrating how long-distance cycling products can be bookable and operational across borders. It also shows how experience design and digital tools can improve customer satisfaction while supporting sustainability monitoring. The programme raises public and institutional awareness of both the environmental and socio-economic benefits of cycling tourism, encouraging reflection on sustainable travel choices.</p>
<p>Limitations of the deliverable</p>	<p>The GIP concept is promising but faces significant implementation challenges. Regional coordination, SME capacity, and digital readiness vary across the route, requiring substantial local adaptation. Because the GIP is not tested within the project, practical difficulties remain unknown, but limited funds from the GIP surcharge will restrict support to small projects. Demonstrating direct impact on reducing negative effects of cycling tourism will be difficult, making project selection reliant on expert yet subjective judgment. Effective governance is essential to ensure transparent allocation, fulfil promises to guests, and manage cooperation among national implementers—demands that exceed typical tourism business capacities. Communication risks also exist, as public acceptance is unproven and the surcharge may be seen as a penalty. The large number of eligible organisations adds complexity, while dependence on IMS/CARMACAL data makes the programme sensitive to booking volumes and future funding uncertainty.</p>
<p>Suggestions for further development of the deliverable</p>	<p>The Good Impact Programme (GIP) has not yet been tested, making concrete improvements hard to define. Three future steps are suggested: creating a public online Impact Dashboard to show real-time contributions and project</p>



	<p>results; introducing an “ICTr Good Impact Supporter” label to motivate tourism SMEs to join the programme and gain visibility through communication channels; and using strong storytelling and visuals to highlight tangible outcomes such as rest areas, tree planting, or cultural events. Successful implementation will require professional, trustworthy partners, high-quality supported projects, and full transparency in fund allocation, particularly for cross-regional operation (e.g., SK-CZ). Since the programme is not yet active, assessment must follow implementation. Additional guidance could include practical scenarios for adapting the business model to regions with varying tourism maturity and clear minimum requirements for successful adoption.</p>
<p>How to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes and/or national policies</p>	<p>The approach provides a practical model for integrating sustainability, digitalisation, and SME participation into national cycling tourism strategies. Its business model offers a transferable reference for creating Booking Centre structures along other long-distance routes, helping destinations coordinate services and enhance visitor experiences. National tourism bodies can also draw on the documented pilot experience to design support programmes that encourage SMEs to join similar cycling initiatives.</p> <p>In the near term, dissemination will focus on presenting and explaining the GIP concept at a theoretical level. After a successful launch and the start of supported projects, strong promotion will be essential to motivate stakeholders in other regions to adopt the model. To ensure wider uptake, a dedicated training programme on how to establish a GIP will also be required.</p>
<p>Types of cycling routes and/or regions the deliverable’s knowledge could be applied to</p>	<p>The GIP works for any trail type, limited only by partner expertise and project quality. Designed for long-distance routes, it can also support destinations, but only for organised cycle tourism. It suits regions building structured SME models, rural areas needing coordinated products, and EuroVelo routes seeking professionalisation and sustainable impact.</p>



3.2.5. Developing trainings for local SMEs

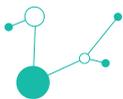
<p>Description of the deliverable and how it was developed and tested</p>	<p>There are three deliverables connected to the Training of Local SMEs (D.3.1.1. Gap analysis of current and desired competences for the digital ICTr, D.3.1.2 Mentoring and qualification plan for improving competences of SMEs & other target groups along ICTr, and D.3.1.4. Report on implemented mentoring and qualification activities). At first, we focused on the Gap analysis of skills and competences, which showed that there are discrepancies between countries and regions in the skill levels and skill sets. The analysis was the basis of the Mentoring and qualification plan. Iskriva, together with the Lead Partner and ECF created a proposal for the topics that need to be covered within the mentoring and qualification deliverables. It consisted of 6 different modules covering basic and advanced marketing, AI technologies, Business development, cultural and regional specifics, bike-friendly schemes and presentation of the ECF work and EuroVelo routes (read more in the deliverable). A joint report of all mentoring and qualification workshops was written by Iskriva.</p>
<p>Positive impacts of the deliverable</p>	<p>The ICTr-CE training and mentoring programme significantly strengthened cycle-tourism development across participating regions. It enhanced the digital, managerial, and marketing skills of SMEs and DMOs—while promoting EuroVelo 13 and its sustainability principles. Joint implementation along the borders, such as Hungary-Slovenia, improved cross-border cooperation, and the modular training approach effectively supported SMEs at different maturity levels. Participants gained practical knowledge in AI, digitalisation, tourism business development, EuroVelo and responsible, impact-based tourism management.</p> <p>The mentoring component provided personalised, on-demand support to SMEs, yielding highly positive results. Across regions, the programme helped identify capacity gaps, professionalise services, and strengthen alignment between SMEs and the overall ICTr product. It also fostered regional partnership networks among SMEs, coordinators, and public institutions while increasing awareness of ICT-related tools and effective marketing for cycling tourism.</p>
<p>Limitations of the deliverable</p>	<p>While the mentoring programme was implemented comprehensively across all partner regions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The diversity of regional contexts, SME maturity levels, and general interest of SMEs resulted in creation of “flexible” or “tailor-made” Mentoring Plan. The only objective was to incorporate the main proposed topics when organising regional workshop. All project partners had an option to adapt the workshops to the actual needs of the SMEs, since they are the ones who know their need best. This limits direct comparability of results across countries. Participation numbers varied considerably, and engagement in optional activities depended on local capacity, time availability, and individual motivation of SMEs. Some partners implemented combined or adapted modules (e.g., Slovak SK1-SK3, Czech CZ2, HU-SI), which proved to be a valuable approach. Finally, the practical impact of all implemented workshops and mentoring hours—particularly in Modules 5 and 6—will require longer-term observation, as many improvements in service quality, digital competence, and product development will materialise gradually beyond the project’s reporting period.</p>



<p>Suggestions for further development of the deliverable</p>	<p>There are many ways to improve the deliverable however it will depend on the people and organisation you are working with. Below we present a few options, but it is important to emphasise that one solution will not fit all regions or all organisations. There are cultural and organisational differences that need to be taken into account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organising focused, needs-based trainings for a limited group of service providers, noting that commitment and measurable impact improve when trainings are not free. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o However, on the other hand we can see that personal connections with SMEs, connecting with other projects (Interreg Central, Interreg Danube, Interreg cross-border) and organisations that are planning similar workshops (techno parks, tourism info centers, regional or destination management agency) are seen as beneficial especially when working in a smaller region. Everybody is working towards the same goals (skill improvement, engaging SMEs and stakeholders) - cooperation is key. - Additional modules should explain how tools like CARMACAL and IMS function and how SMEs can join related business models. This is especially important for the continuation of the results. - While online workshops reach more SMEs - especially family-run businesses constrained by seasonal workloads and from other regions as well - they weaken personal connections that support long-term cooperation. - Strong expectations for the ICTr Innovative Tourism Product make training all SMEs along EuroVelo 13 challenging, highlighting the need for a permanent training cycle delivered along the route. - Future improvements include creating long-term programmes on cycling tourism, involving central authorities, integrating study visits, embedding cycling knowledge within broader tourism training, offering practical case studies, combining diverse training formats, and providing follow-up mentoring to ensure real implementation rather than just knowledge transfer.
<p>How to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes and/or national policies</p>	<p>The model can be integrated into national SME support schemes for cycling and sustainable tourism, and specific modules could be adopted by national tourism authorities within certification or quality-label programmes. An approach with gap analysis offers an effective way to identify training needs before major route development. The existing training materials are already suitable for use along further sections of EuroVelo 13 or other EuroVelo routes, destination and regions in any part of EU. Such training is typically available in established cycling destinations, often delivered by regional or national destination management organisations (DMOs).</p>
<p>Types of cycling routes and/or regions the deliverable's knowledge could be applied to</p>	<p>A continuous capacity-building programme is needed in all destinations, regardless of cycling route type. Training for local SMEs is not restricted by the nature of the route, but by trainer expertise and available resources. Priority areas include destinations introducing booking centre structures or new</p>

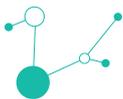


sustainable tourism products, as well as established cycling destinations seeking to improve skills in digitalisation, marketing, and sustainability management.



3.2.6. Creating impactful communication

<p>Description of the deliverable and how it was developed and tested</p>	<p>Impactful communication in Activity 3.2 Raising awareness with impact communication about the ICTr and its unique collective memory focuses on raising awareness about EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail and its unique collective memory through three key deliverables, supported by results from Activities 2.4 Pilot testing of the environmental footprint calculator and impact measurement system and presenting the innovative climate neutral travel innovative solution and Activity 1.3 Pilot testing of the ICTr cycling product and sustainable business model in 3 pilot areas. The action plan (D.3.2.1 Action plan for impact communication to tourists and visitors) provides clear guidelines and tools for partners to communicate project activities effectively to tourists and stakeholders. Online promotion plays a central role, with ECF redesigning the EuroVelo 13 pages of the EuroVelo website and updating the EuroVelo mobile app to showcase the new ICTr tourism product (D.3.2.2). Dissemination efforts (D.3.2.3) involve participation in events, conferences, and media publications, with data tracked collaboratively. Cross-border promotional events (D.1.3.3) supported the launch of pilot actions and new ICTr tools, while the promotion of innovative, climate-neutral solutions (D.2.4.2) laid the foundation for a unified awareness-raising campaign concerning innovative tourism solutions.</p>
<p>Positive impacts of the deliverable</p>	<p>The ICTr-CE project implemented coordinated online and offline communication to raise awareness of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail, its innovative tourism tools, and the broader possibilities of cycling tourism. Engagement with stakeholders, public institutions, and SMEs along the route significantly improved understanding of the EuroVelo system, the Iron Curtain’s history, and sustainable cycle tourism opportunities. Guided by the principle “Do good and talk about it,” partners effectively promoted what they view as one of the most sustainable and innovative international cycling products. Communication efforts can be divided into two phases: during the project, dissemination focused on presenting new approaches, tools, and sustainable tourism offers as outlined in deliverables D1.3.3 ICTr cross-border promo events to launch the pilot actions, D2.4.2 Report on promoting the innovative solution that benefits the community via promo events, and D3.2.3 Report on dissemination and networking events and publications. The communication about the ICTr-CE project results and innovative solutions will also be communicated after project completion, especially between partners in the ICTr Alliance and the EuroVelo partnership.</p>
<p>Limitations of the deliverable</p>	<p>The project’s dissemination activities effectively reached professional and expert audiences and helped build strong recognition within the tourism and cycling sectors. As it has been presented in the D.3.2.1 - Action plan for impact communication to tourists and visitors we were and will continue to target different target groups (tourists, cycling agencies, DMOs...). Engaging the wider public—particularly tourists—proved more challenging, since adaption of key messages and content is needed, offering valuable insights into how innovative concepts like the ICTr tourism product can be communicated more clearly and compellingly. Since the product is intended to support cyclists’ booking decisions rather than serve as an independent attraction, future communication can place even greater emphasis on its practical value for</p>



	<p>visitors. However, it needs to be taken into account that simpler wording needs to be used.</p> <p>Seasonal conditions, especially winter months with limited opportunities for outdoor events, naturally influenced the intensity of promotional activities. Partners engaged in communication activities with different levels of intensity depending on their marketing and communication skills and connections to other stakeholders, offering valuable opportunities to further enhance coordination. Similarly, the degree of local media involvement varied across countries, influencing the visibility of promotional events but also providing helpful insights for adapting future outreach strategies.</p> <p>Finally, integrating sustainability-related messages—such as IMS, CO₂ calculator and Good Impact Programme—more prominently into general tourism promotion represents a promising area for further development, supporting both the project’s goals and broader trends toward responsible travel.</p>
<p>Suggestions for further development of the deliverable</p>	<p>The project could further strengthen its communication impact by translating technical sustainability results into clear, engaging messages for tourists. Using accessible language, concrete examples and visuals will help make concepts such as the Good Impact Programme more understandable and valuable. Developing a unified communication kit once the Good Impact Programme comes into full effect, including templates, slogans, infographics and social-media-ready content, would support Booking Centres and partners in delivering consistent and appealing messages.</p> <p>Stronger coordination between the EuroVelo 13 website and national channels is needed to ensure coherent storytelling and long-term, well-funded communication through structured, high-quality content. Enhanced collaboration among partners will also help maximize the promotional potential of Facebook and the EuroVelo 13 web page.</p> <p>As the ICTr Innovative Tourism Product continues to evolve, hands-on experience will clarify future communication needs. At that stage, modern tools—including AI—can be used strategically to increase visibility and reach new audiences more effectively. In Hungary, early experiences show that stakeholder engagement works best when communication highlights positive, tangible outcomes and clearly demonstrates the benefits for each target group.</p> <p>While dissemination among professionals has progressed very well, expanding outreach to regional SMEs and service providers remains a promising next step for strengthening the project’s overall impact.</p>
<p>How to apply the knowledge of the deliverable to other cycling routes and/or national policies</p>	<p>The existing communication materials can support other sections of EuroVelo 13 and other EuroVelo routes. National tourism bodies can use the approach to showcase sustainability in active tourism. Shared guidelines and experience help other routes adopt consistent messaging, enhance branding, and communicate innovations more effectively.</p>
<p>Types of cycling routes and/or regions the</p>	<p>The implementation of impactful communication is not restricted by the types of routes.</p>



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3.2.7. Summary of ICTr-CE deliverables and their combined impact

The ICTr-CE project developed a holistic, sustainable, and bookable cycling tourism framework along EuroVelo 13, combining digital innovation, evidence-based monitoring, and experience design. Central to the project was the ICTr tourism product and business model, which engaged SMEs, DMOs, and local stakeholders to deliver commercially viable, climate-neutral cycling trips while promoting cross-border cooperation. The CARMACAL carbon-footprint calculator, integrated with the Impact Measurement System (IMS), provided data-driven assessment of emissions from transport, accommodation, food, and mobility, enabling transparency and informed decision-making. The IMS further harmonised evaluation of environmental, social, and economic impacts, offering structured scoring systems for group tours and individual tourists, and supporting evidence-based product development and sustainability benchmarking. The Good Impact Programme (GIP) channels environmental, social and/ economic surcharges, into local projects, offsetting negative tourism impacts while promoting ecology, social inclusion, and local economic development. Complementing this, the training and mentoring programme for SMEs addressed skill gaps in digitalisation, marketing, AI, and business development, fostering professionalisation and alignment with Booking Centres. Activity 3.2's communication strategy enhanced awareness of EuroVelo 13, ICTr innovations, and sustainable cycling tourism, targeting both professional audiences and stakeholders.

Collectively, these deliverables strengthen long-distance cycling tourism's sustainability, promote responsible travel, and provide transferable tools and methodologies for other EuroVelo routes and national policies, despite ongoing challenges such as uneven infrastructure, resource limitations, and the need for broader SME engagement and data reliability.

It is hoped that the knowledge created with these deliverables will be used to enable the development of many other cycling routes and future EU-funded projects that will also enable further development and improvement of the ICTr innovative solutions. A few ongoing and future cycling related projects are particularly likely to use this knowledge to further develop their planned activities. These include the Inclusive Border Cycling project (IBC)(Interreg Danube Region) - which enables social inclusion by valorising heritage along existing cycling routes in remote border areas, Amazon of Europe Bike Trail, an initiative that combines sustainability, innovation and a positive impact on local communities and the environment both of which can apply this knowledge to strengthen their cycling tourism offer and enrich the overall visitor experience. Amazon of Europe Bike Trail Hungary-Croatia (Interreg SI-HU) which aims for better integration of local touristic services into the transnational tourism product. Project Kul-Well (Interreg SI-HU) strives to co-create common quality standards for unique cross-border cultural experiences, which will form the basis for sustainable niche tourism offerings in the Slovenian-Hungarian border region. Finally, a project focusing on accessible tourism in cycling destinations was submitted to the Interreg Central, last (capitalisation) call. If accepted, the findings of ICTr-CE will be very useful for the future project.

3.3. Project proposal suggestion

Below is a project proposal concept note. It may serve as a good basis for the development of new projects which use knowledge created in ICTr-CE. This project proposal may be viewed as a potential action plan that could be taken on by the ICTr-CE partners or a new consortium.



The concept notes include a description of the aim of the potential project as well as the activities that it will take on. It also includes the type of partners to involve, a suggested geographical location and type of funding programme the proposal could be submitted under.

3.3.1. Concept Note: capitalisation of the tool developed within ICTr-CE

3.3.1.1. Project concept

This project proposal aims to further develop the innovative tools developed during the ICTr-CE project which ended in February 2026. The Good Impact Programme ([GIP](#)) is a mechanism aimed at reducing the negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the ICTr cycling product. It achieves this by supporting projects implemented along the route lowering negative environmental or social impacts associated with (cycling) tourism. Funding for these projects comes from an environmental, social and/ or economic, surcharge added to the tour price, determined using a [carbon footprint calculator](#) and the [Impact Measurement System \(IMS\)](#). In order to fully exploit the GIP and enable its positive impact, a few activities should be developed in the context of a project.

All in all, there is a general need to further promote the GIP in order to enable customers to understand what it is and use it. Four fundamental steps to do so are described below.

First a public online Impact Dashboard to show real-time contributions and project results should be created. This would allow a public tracking of the money gathered from the GIP and how it is being distributed among sustainable projects. This additional feature of the GIP would play an important role in enabling transparency of the programme and reassure users who may need it before booking a tour package. This platform would also be useful as a channel to further promote the tool.

Related to this, a second activity to put into place is using strong storytelling and visuals to highlight tangible outcomes such as rest areas, tree planting, cultural events, and so on, that the GIP funds contributed to. This once again allows users to concretely understand and see how the Good Impact Programme, has a direct beneficial impact on the local surroundings. For this activity, the projects affected by the GIP will be involved. They will be asked to share testimonies and pictures so as to personalise the storytelling. These will be used online but also at local events organised around the theme of the Iron Curtain Trail (museums, cultural fairs, summer festivals, ...).

The third activity will consist in developing and introducing an “ICTr Good Impact Supporter” label. The goal of the label is to motivate tourism SMEs to join the programme and gain visibility through communication channels. Having the label will imply that SMEs have made their relevant data available to CARMACAL so that it can then be integrated within the GIP. Having accurate data on the services used by clients is essential for the good functioning of the GIP. This activity will be divided into two main parts, the development of the label, what it entails, how to distribute it, ensure its long-term usage. And the contacting of SMEs, gathering their interest in terms of being a “ICTr Good Impact Supporter”, collect their data to input on CARMACAL.

The fourth and final activity will consist in finding new tour operators to join the GIP initiative by becoming a licensee of the GIP and implementing the GIP on their tour packages. The GIP works for any cycle route, limited only by partner expertise and project quality. Designed for long-distance routes, it can also support destinations, but only for organised cycle tourism. National tourism bodies will be used as a main channel to find tour operators interested in joining the initiative. To ensure organised and accurate uptake, a dedicated training programme on how to establish the GIP will be given to the participating tour operators.



3.3.1.2. Geographical region

The geographical area of the project proposal is between Estonia and Germany on EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail. This region has been chosen for two main reasons. First off, the cycling infrastructure along that stretch is, according to the current EuroVelo route development categories, mostly developed or developed with EuroVelo signs. The EuroVelo definitions of these terms may be found below.

Developed with EuroVelo signs: Developed route (see category below) with continuous signing along the route, incorporating EuroVelo route information panels.

Developed: Route developed for cyclists and signed in line with the respective national standard (i.e. it is part of a local, regional or national cycle network). There must also be a website providing information to users. Developed route can be heterogeneous in terms of infrastructure: type of cycling infrastructure, surface, width, gradients, etc

Having a developed route is ideal to promote and use the GIP, as having good cycling conditions can play a role in how much users are willing to pay to participate in a tour on the route. If the route is in good condition and agreeable, cyclists are likely to be willing to invest more of their money to enjoy it.

Secondly, this region of EuroVelo 13 is already popular among cycle tourists. Tour packages are also well established and popular. This will make it easier for tour operators to integrate the GIP into their tour packages as the tours have already been tested and confirmed as can be trusted by customers.

3.3.1.3. Partners involved

For this proposal, it is suggested to involve actors from each of the countries that EuroVelo 13 goes through between Estonia and Poland. This includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland. These actors could be regional authorities or regional tourism boards.

Including ECF in the project would be very beneficial. They would bring their unique knowledge and experiences of EuroVelo and cycling tourism on the European level into related activities. ECF is located outside the EuroVelo 13 countries, but it coordinates the network of EuroVelo routes, including EuroVelo13, and will thus have a significant role and added value to the project. ECF's role within the project will be of a knowledge provider in terms of cycling tourism methodology, organisational solutions, good practices.

Finally, the consortium should also include a partner from ICTr-CE who worked on the development of the Good Impact Programme. Ideally, this would be Ekopolis, as the activity leader of the GIP but it could also be organisations that followed its development closely such as Westpannon or OETE. Alternatively, ECF could also play this role.

3.3.1.4. Funding call

[Interreg programmes](#) as funding sources are ideal for the type of activities suggested in this proposal. They have the aim to support cooperation across borders through project funding. They aim to jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and more.

Given the geographical region suggested for this proposal, the [Interreg Baltic Sea Region](#) programme could be a good funding source to investigate. As of now, no relevant Calls are open, but some might open in the future. A Call such as the "Project Platforms" could be applicable, as one of their main aims is to capitalise on the tools and activities developed in a previous project.



3.3.1.5. Applying this proposal to other routes and regions

Although this concept note focused on applying the project to the Northern part of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail, it could in fact be applied to many different regions and cycle routes.

As noted in the Geographical region section above, the main concern would be to select areas where cycle infrastructure is already well developed as well as having existing tour packages along the cycle route. However, the latter could also be optional. The tour packages could be developed as part of the project although this would complexify the project.

A few examples of cycle routes that could be good options for such a proposal are listed below:

- [EuroVelo 1](#) - Atlantic Coast Route
- [EuroVelo 6](#) - Atlantic-Black Sea between France and Hungary
- The [Elbe Cycle Route](#) from Germany to Czechia
- [La Vélo Francette](#) from the English Channel to the Atlantic

The funding programme would have to be selected according to the regions covered and the extent of the topics addressed.



4. Conclusion

The Sustainability and Transferability Plan (STP) demonstrates how the achievements of the ICTr-CE project will endure beyond its lifetime and how its outcomes can generate value well outside the Iron Curtain Trail region. By addressing both sustainability and transferability, the STP ensures that the project's institutional structures, governance models, and knowledge outputs continue to support the long-term development of cycling tourism and inform future initiatives.

At the core of the sustainability approach lies the EuroVelo 13 Partnership, which provides a concrete and operational framework for maintaining transnational coordination, collaboration, and strategic action after the project's conclusion in February 2026. Building on established EuroVelo Route Partnerships and supported by relevant national and regional stakeholders, this partnership enables the continuation of the most impactful and realistic ICTr-CE activities, ensuring lasting benefits for EuroVelo 13 and its surrounding regions.

Beyond institutional sustainability, the STP highlights how the knowledge, tools, and innovative elements developed during ICTr-CE can be transferred to other cycling routes and policy contexts. Through clear guidance on participatory governance models and concise summary boxes for selected deliverables, the plan allows stakeholders to easily identify, adapt, and apply relevant outputs to their own local or national contexts. This flexible, modular approach supports learning, replication, and innovation without duplicating existing materials.

Finally, the inclusion of a project proposal concept note provides a forward-looking perspective, offering a foundation for future projects that build on ICTr-CE results. While distinct from the already established EuroVelo 13 Partnership action plan, this proposal outlines additional opportunities to further extend the project's impact through new collaborations and initiatives.

In summary, the STP ensures the continuation of cooperation among ICTr-CE partners, promotes the effective transfer and reuse of project knowledge, and opens pathways for new projects that build on ICTr-CE's achievements—thereby securing both the legacy and the future relevance of the ICTr-CE project.



5. Annexes

Annex 1: EuroVelo 13 Partnership in brief

Annex 2: EuroVelo 13 Partnership: Defining the Ambition slides

Annex 3: Example of Bilateral Partnership contract with Hungary for the EuroVelo 13 Partnership



EuroVelo 13 Partnership

Joining forces to further promote EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail!

Concept:

One goal: Increase the transnational visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail and generate more users cycling the route.

How? Stakeholders from different countries and regions join forces to finance and coordinate a shared multiannual action plan and sign a 3-year Partnership Agreement.

What? Transnational promotional activities implemented to raise awareness and attract tourists on EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail and coordination of the transnational development of the route.

Why? EuroVelo routes with partnerships (e.g.: EuroVelo 15 and 19) are on the most attractive routes on EuroVelo.com. There is also a clear economic return on investments when the route is developed and promoted (e.g.: EuroVelo 19 in France: 10,2M€ direct revenues per year, 22,800€ direct revenue/km/year).

Who? Potential partners are invited to express their interest to make a EuroVelo 13 Partnership a reality starting in 2026 or 2027 (contact: eurovelo@ecf.com).

Geographical Scope:

EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail from Czechia to Hungary (~1500km)



Potential partners:

Czechia: National partner (Ministry or Visit Czechia, NEC-Partnerství), Regional partners (Karlovy Vary, Pilsen, South Bohemia, South Moravia)

Austria: National partner - NECC (Energy Agency), Regional partners (Lower Austria, Burgenland)

Slovakia: National Partner (Ministry or Visit Slovakia,

NEC-Cykloklub), Regional Partners (Bratislava, Trnava)

Hungary: National partner - NECC (AOFK + Meketusz), Regional partners (West Transdanubia, South Transdanubia, Southern Great Plain)

Slovenia: National partner - NECC (Ministry of Environment),

Regional partner (Mura)

Croatia: National partner - NECC (Cikloturizam Hrvatska), Regional partners (Central Croatia, Slavonia)

+ the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) as a Coordinator/Secretariat of the Partnership



Expectations from partners:

- » Commitment to the Partnership
- » Provide input to set up the objectives
- » Approve the action plan and Partnership Agreement
- » Actively participating in the Partnership tasks when needed and collecting national inputs
- » Paying the annual Partnership fee

Examples of actions that could be taken on within the Partnership:

Action	Impact	Resources Needed	KPI
Recertification of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail as Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2027-2028 ¹	Prestige and visibility for the route	HR for coordination - approx. 10 days in total	Certification of the route which brings more visibility to it
Increased web visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail	Raising awareness on EuroVelo 13 as a tourism product and attractive destination, bringing more visitors	Content creation and SEO - 2,000€ external costs/year + 10 days of coordination	Multiply number of web session by 2
Increased social media visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail	Raising awareness on EuroVelo 13 as a tourism product and attractive destination, bringing more visitors	Ad campaigns and content creation - 1,000€ external costs/year + 5 days of coordination	Successful social media campaigns with 0.10€-0.20€ average cost per click (CPC)
Manage EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail booking centre established during ICTr-CE project	Facilitate booking options for cycling tourists and increase the number of cycling tourists on the route with newly converted visitors	10 days of coordination a year	Increase the booking of cycling tours on EuroVelo 13
Coordination of transnational quality of the offers on EuroVelo 13	Facilitate access to information for users to support planning cycling trips and increase the number of cycling tourists on the route with newly converted visitors	5 days of coordination a year	Increase of traffic on EuroVelo 13. Measured with automatic cycling counters when possible
Increased print visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail (creation of a EuroVelo 13 Handbook with stage descriptions and good addresses)	Raising awareness on EuroVelo 13 as a tourism product and attractive destination, bringing more visitors	Printing 600 copies 2,000€ external costs + 25 days of coordination (collecting information and design)	Distribution of 600 copies of EuroVelo 13 Handbook at local and tourism events (fairs, conferences, ...)

¹ EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail is the only cycle route certified as Cultural Route of the Council of Europe and need to go through a re-certification process every 5 years.

EuroVelo 13 Partnership

Opportunity to make Iron Curtain Trail grow



03.09.2025



Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



Co-funded by
the European Union

ICTr-CE



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

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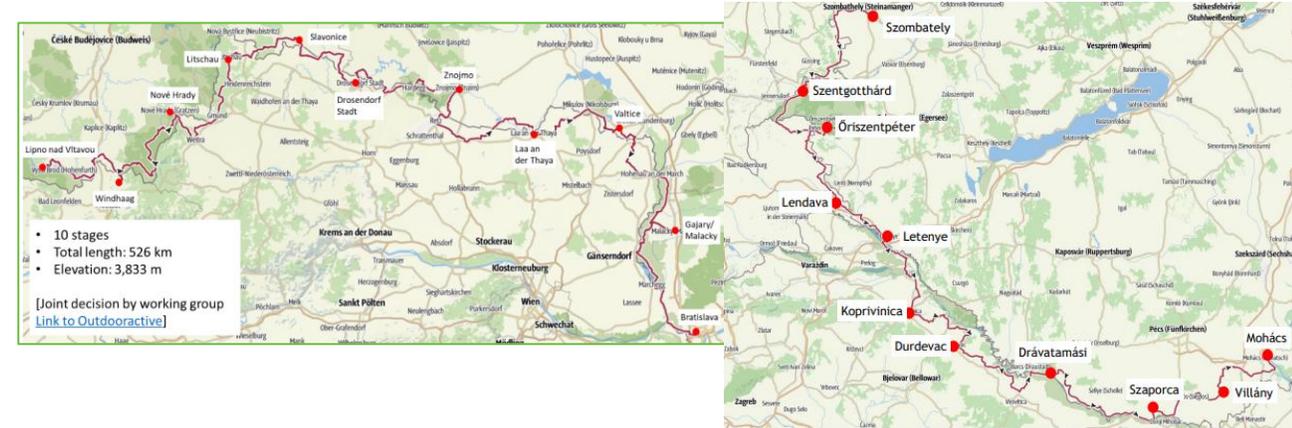
1. Recap of last meeting in April
2. Tour the table + update on steps taken in the last few months
3. 3 options of ambitions for a EuroVelo 13 Partnership
4. Discussion with all on what was presented
5. Next Steps

Recap of last meeting in April

EuroVelo 13 Partnership – Concept and modus operandi

Recap

- 2 online meetings in April 2025: Central and South Pilot areas –
- Good attendance and positive feedback from participants
- Presented
 - what is a EuroVelo Partnership
 - Its benefits
 - Examples of existing Partnerships



Concept:

One goal: Increase the transnational visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail and generate more users cycling the route.

How? Stakeholders from different countries and regions join forces to finance and coordinate a shared multiannual action plan and sign a 3-year Partnership Agreement.

What? Transnational promotional activities implemented to raise awareness and attract tourists on EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail and coordination of the transnational development of the route.

Why? EuroVelo routes with partnerships (e.g.: EuroVelo 15 and 19) are on the most attractive routes on EuroVelo.com. There is also a clear economic return on investments when the route is developed and promoted (e.g.: EuroVelo 19 in France: 10,2M€ direct revenues per year, 22,800€ direct revenue/km/year).

Who? Potential partners are invited to express their interest to make a EuroVelo 13 Partnership a reality starting in 2026 or 2027 (contact: eurovelo@ecf.com).

Conclusions

- Merging of sections to create one continuous stretch
- Evaluation of interest and possibility to participate in Partnership
- Looking into involving regional actors
- Creation of a concept note on Partnership to be shared with potential partners



Tour de Table



3 options of ambitions for a EuroVelo 13 Partnership

EuroVelo 13 Partnership – Concept and modus operandi

First Option of Ambition

Increase the usage of the route through the development of bookable offers

Priority #1: Manage trail model

- Action 1.1: Manage the Booking Centres licensing
- Action 1.2: Encourage more business offers to be developed on EuroVelo 13 in coordination with Booking Centres
- Action 1.3: Actions needed on Carbon footprint, IMS, Good Impact Programme

Priority #2: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

- Action 2.1: Coordinate the partnership, organise meetings, produce annual report
- Action 2.2: Admin coordination of the partnership

Estimation of management needs (HR & EC) / year

€ 3,150

€ 2,700

€ 2,000

€ 3,600

€ 900

TOTAL: 12,350€

First Option of Ambition

Hypothesis of all partners on board to cover the costs:

12,350 € with a baseline of 500 € for each partner

- Czechia: 2,277 €
- Austria: 3,212 €
- Slovakia: 968 €
- Hungary : 2,931 €
- Slovenia: 874 €
- Croatia: 2,090 €

Czechia	344.58	19%
Austria	508.2	29%
Slovakia	83.74	5%
Hungary	457.62	26%
Slovenia	65.64	4%
Croatia	307.54	17%

Second Option of Ambition

- Increase the usage of the route through the development of booking offers
- Increase the visibility of EuroVelo 13

RANKING OF EUROVELO ROUTES IN 2023 (SORTED BY WEB SESSIONS)

Rank	Route	Sessions	+/-	Visitors	Mobile usage
1	EuroVelo 8 Mediterranean Route	150 702	75%	114 035	59%
2	EuroVelo 15 Rhine Cycle Route	146 019	19%	111 136	56%
3	EuroVelo 6 Atlantic-Black Sea	109 953	17%	84 239	56%
4	EuroVelo 1 Atlantic Coast Route	82 030	4%	62 999	53%
5	EuroVelo 19 Meuse Cycle Route	73 625	2%	59 517	52%
6	EuroVelo 12 North Sea Cycle Route	61 323	26%	47 106	54%
7	EuroVelo 3 Pilgrims Route	61 094	43%	46 467	57%
8	EuroVelo 5 Via Romea (Francigena)	60 243	31%	45 792	55%
9	EuroVelo 7 Sun Route	48 321	5%	34 851	53%
10	EuroVelo 4 Central Europe Route	38 009	62%	29 420	53%
11	EuroVelo 13 Iron Curtain Trail	36 867	27%	29 034	53%
12	EuroVelo 10 Baltic Sea Cycle Route	35 337	15%	26 864	57%
13	EuroVelo 17 Rhône Cycle Route	24 758	45%	19 498	55%
14	EuroVelo 9 Baltic-Adriatic	20 604	31%	16 079	56%
15	EuroVelo 2 Capitals Route	16 641	81%	12 814	50%

Second Option of Ambition

Priority #1: Increase the visibility of EuroVelo 13

- Action 1.1: Create engaging content to generate more traffic on EuroVelo 13 webportal
- Action 1.2: Create and advertise EuroVelo 13 content on social media channels to raise awareness and bring traffic to the webportal
- Action 1.3: Improve SEO on EuroVelo 13 webportal
- Action 1.4: Management and recertification process of EuroVelo 13 as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

Priority #2: Support improved quality of offers on EuroVelo 13

- Action 2.1: Collect knowledge and support national partners to increase continuous cycling infrastructure and signage
- Action 2.2: Encourage more business offers to be developed on EuroVelo 13 in coordination with Booking Centres

Priority #3: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

- Action 3.1: Coordinate the partnership, organise meetings, produce annual report
- Action 3.2: Admin coordination of the partnership

Priority #4: Manage trail model (to be further defined)

- Action 4.1: Manage the Booking Centres licensing
- Action 4.2: Actions needed on Carbon footprint, IMS, Good Impact Programme

Estimation of management needs (HR & EC) / year

€ 3,600

€ 3,300

€ 4,700

€ 1,680

€ 1,800

€ 2,700

€ 3,600

€ 900

€ 3,150

€ 2,000

TOTAL: 27,430€

Second Option of Ambition

Hypothesis of all partners on board to cover the costs:

27,430 € with a baseline of 500 € for all partners

- Czechia: 5,142 €
- Austria: 7,585 €
- Slovakia: 1,722 €
- Hungary : 6,852 €
- Slovenia: 1,477 €
- Croatia: 4,653 €

Czechia	344.58	19%
Austria	508.2	29%
Slovakia	83.74	5%
Hungary	457.62	26%
Slovenia	65.64	4%
Croatia	307.54	17%



Third Option of Ambition

- Increase the usage of the route through the development of booking offers
- Increase the visibility of EuroVelo 13 with boosted activities
- Boost the quality of the route

Third Option of Ambition

Priority #1: Increase the visibility of EuroVelo 13

Action 1.1: Create a specific communication partnership to boost the visibility of the route

Action 1.2: Create and advertise EuroVelo 13 content on social media channels to raise awareness and bring traffic to the webportal

Action 1.3: Improve SEO on EuroVelo 13 webportal

Action 1.4: Management and recertification process of EuroVelo 13 as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

Priority #2: Support improved quality of offers on EuroVelo 13

Action 2.1: Collect knowledge and support national partners to increase continuous cycling infrastructure and signage

Action 2.2: Encourage more business offers to be developed on EuroVelo 13 in coordination with Booking Centres

Action 2.3: ECS quality management, training, guidance, license?

Priority #3: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

Action 3.1: Coordinate the partnership, organise meetings, produce annual report

Action 3.2: Admin coordination of the partnership

Priority #4: Manage trail model

Action 4.1: Manage the Booking Centres licensing

Action 4.2: Actions needed on Carbon footprint, IMS, Good Impact Programme

Estimation of management needs (HR & EC) / year

€ 15.000

€ 3,300

€ 4,700

€ 1,680

€ 1,800

€ 2,700

€ 9,900

€ 3,600

€ 900

€ 3,150

€ 2,000

TOTAL: 48,730 €

Third Option of Ambition

Hypothesis of all partners on board to cover the costs:

48,730 € with a baseline of 500 € for all partners

- Czechia: 9,189 €
- Austria: 13,762 €
- Slovakia: 2,787 €
- Hungary : 12,390 €
- Slovenia: 2,329 €
- Croatia: 8,274 €

Czechia	344.58	19%
Austria	508.2	29%
Slovakia	83.74	5%
Hungary	457.62	26%
Slovenia	65.64	4%
Croatia	307.54	17%



Discussion



Next Steps



Next Steps

- Decide on an ambition
- Informal meeting at the EuroVelo & Cycling Tourism Conference
- Who will participate in the EuroVelo 13 Partnership?
 - Deadline 30th of November
 - Signing of Partnership in February 2026



**EuroVelo & Cycling
Tourism Conference**
Balatonfüred
24–26 September 2025

Thank you!

Do you have any questions?
eurovelo@ecf.com

Support us to
connect Europe
by bicycle!



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**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 2026-2029
FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF EUROVELO 13 – Iron Curtain Trail named “EuroVelo 13
Partnership”**

between the following partners:

Active Hungary Development Center Nonprofit Limited Liability Company
Szépvölgyi Street 39, 1037 Budapest, Hungary
Represented by: CEO Mirkó PETÉNYI
Amount of match funding per year: 6,852 €

And the Secretariat:
European Cyclists' Federation
Rue de la Charité 22, 1210 Brussels, Belgium
Represented by: CEO Ms. Laurianne Krid

This Partnership Agreement is signed bilaterally but connected to similar Partnership Agreements established for Poland, Austria, and Slovakia.

Article 1: The Objectives of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

This Partnership Agreement defines rights, roles, and responsibilities of partners and serves as a framework to facilitate further development of the EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail through cooperation on a transnational level. Historically, its aim is to sustain the activities of the ICTr-CE Interreg Project (2023-2026).

The Partnership Agreement has 3 priorities in achieving its ambition:

- Priority no. 1: Increase the international visibility and promotion of EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail to potential users
- Priority no. 2: Support the improvement of quality of offers on EuroVelo 13
- Priority no. 3: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership

Partners' contributions are stated in this Partnership Agreement annex.

Article 2: Subject of the Partnership Agreement

By this Partnership Agreement, the Secretariat and the project partners shall define the procedural framework for the work to be carried out and the relations that shall govern them within the transnational partnership set up in order to sustain the positive results of the aforementioned project and to realise the ambition and priorities in the 2026-2029 period for EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail.

The annex comprises:

- The overview description of the indicative multiannual Action plan and financial plan for the transnational partnership.

The annex is an integral part of this Partnership Agreement.

Article 3: Duration of the Agreement

3.1 This Partnership Agreement shall take effect on 1st March 2026. It shall remain in force until 28th February 2029. The partners can agree on another three-year extension by way of an addendum to the current agreement.

Article 4: Secretariat

4.1 The Secretariat is responsible for the overall coordination, management and implementation of the transnational Partnership Agreement.

4.2 The Secretariat should appoint a project coordinator who has operational responsibility for the implementation of the overall project.

4.3 The Secretariat shall notify the project partners of any factors that may adversely affect implementation of the project activities and/or financial plan.

4.4 The Secretariat is responsible for the preparation of a detailed yearly work and financial plan and a report setting out the tasks to be undertaken as part of the Partnership Agreement and the role of project partners in their implementation. The budget shall be denominated in euros. The annex (referred to in article 2) serves as basis for all plans and reports.

4.5. The Secretariat appoints representatives to the Steering Committee (without voting rights) to take part in its meetings and to organise the Steering Committee meetings.

4.6. The Secretariat is also responsible for any other tasks agreed with the project partners.

Article 5: Project Partners

5.1 Project partners are the organisations that are part of the agreement.

5.2 The project partners will be responsible for 1) providing the match funding every year 2) providing all necessary information and data to the Secretariat 3) notifying the Secretariat of any factors that may adversely affect the implementation of the Partnership Agreement in accordance with the work plan 4) appointing a representative to the Steering Committee to participate in its meetings 5) supporting national or regional developments of EuroVelo 13 in any forms possible to support the relevance of transnational activities.

5.3. In cases of legal succession (e.g. where the project partner changes its legal form), the project partner is obliged to transfer all duties under this contract to the legal successor.

5.4. Accession of additional partners to the EuroVelo 13 Partnership after March 1st 2026 is possible, by signing a dedicated bilateral Partnership Agreement, with equal rights and responsibilities within the Partnership.

Article 6: Organisational Structure of the Partnership

6.1 The Steering Committee will be responsible for monitoring and steering the implementation of the Partnership Agreement. The Steering Committee will be chaired by ECF and includes all signatories of a EuroVelo 13 Partnership Agreement. The Steering Committee shall meet online on *at least one occasion a year*.

6.2 The Steering Committee will have the authority to delegate specific tasks or responsibilities to potential sub-committees as it shall deem appropriate to establish.

6.3. The Steering Committee resolutions are passed by simple majority of the votes present or represented. The Steering Committee shall only deliberate validly if at least 50% of the partners are present or represented or have voted by email. The Steering Committee has powers that are expressly recognised by the present Agreement. Reserved to its competence are, in particular: 1) acceptance of the work and financial report from the previous/ongoing year, 2) acceptance of the detailed activity and budget plan for next year, 3) decision about Partnership's ambition and priorities.

6.4. The agenda together with supporting documentation and the detailed program of sessions will be sent by email at least **six days** before Steering Committee. The steering Committee meeting should take place **before 20 December** of the ongoing year.

6.5. The minutes of the Steering Committee meeting will be prepared and circulated by the Secretariat to all of the project partners within **one month** of the meeting.

6.6. All partners need to agree to increase or decrease the partners' financial contribution, to change the Secretariat or to significantly change ambition, priorities or main tasks of the Partnership Agreement.

Article 7: Cooperation with third parties

7.1 In case of cooperation with third parties, including subcontractors, delegation of part of the activities or of outsourcing, the Secretariat shall remain solely responsible to the project partners concerning compliance with its obligations as set out

in this Partnership Agreement. The project partners shall be informed by the Secretariat about the subject of any contract concluded with a third party.

7.2 No project partner or the secretariat shall have the right to transfer its rights and obligations under this Partnership Agreement without the prior consent of the other project partners.

7.3 Cooperation with third parties in the frame of this agreement, including subcontractors, shall be undertaken in accordance with the procedures set out in EU public procurement directives as well as with the Secretariat's own policies and procedures.

Article 8: Financial regulations

8.1 The eligibility of expenditure will be determined based on the work and financial plan and national laws. Eligible expenditure must be: 1) directly related to the subject matter of the Partnership Agreement 2) necessary for the Partnership Agreement management and reasonable and consistent with the principles of operational efficiency and economy; 3) actually incurred and are identifiable and verifiable in the accounting and taxation records of the Secretariat.

8.2. The match funding shall be paid into the account of the Secretariat **by 30th June** every year in case their official, approved budget contains the necessary contribution to the Partnership Agreement.

8.3. The annual budget of the Partnership Agreement should match the revenue collected through the partners' contributions.

8.4. Additional income should only be used for more advanced project activities.

8.5. One or more partners can agree voluntarily to increase their contribution in order to implement additional tasks. These activities should be in line with the common standards and strategies and do not replace the most important Partnership Agreement tasks (covered by the obligatory contribution). This voluntary contribution will not be obligatory for all partners (unless all of them agree).

Article 9: Reporting, planning, accounting

9.1. The Secretariat is responsible for the yearly reports to the project partners. The yearly reports together with the yearly plans should be developed and sent to the project partners by **31st May** every year. The project partners can give feedback until **15 June**.

9.2. The Secretariat must keep and file all accounting documents and other documents for a period of three years from the date of the affected year.

9.3. The Secretariat is responsible for the project's overall accounts, to be distinguished from its own accounts.

Article 10: Communication, dissemination and Intellectual Property Rights

10.1. The Secretariat and the project partners shall ensure that all products developed within the framework of the project are, subject to the provisions of national laws regarding intellectual property, kept free of all rights.

10.2. The result of the joint activities covered by the agreement, no matter whether they are disseminated free of charge or commercially, are the joint property of the project partners.

10.3. Although the nature of the implementation of this project is public, it has been agreed that part of the information exchanged in the context of its implementation between the project partners themselves or with Secretariat can be confidential. Only documents and other elements explicitly provided with the statement "confidential" shall be regarded as such.

Article 11: Modifications, Withdrawals and Disputes

11.1 Any modification to the present Partnership Agreement shall form the subject of an additional clause to this contract, which shall be approved by all the project partners.

11.2 The Secretariat and the project partners agree not to withdraw from the Partnership Agreement unless there are clear and unavoidable reasons for it. If this were nonetheless to occur, the Secretariat shall adjust the financial and work plans to ensure a balanced budget.

11.3 In case of any disputes among themselves, the project partners and Secretariat commit to working towards an amicable settlement. Disputes will be referred to the Steering Committee. If efforts to achieve an amicable settlement should fail, the project partners are obliged to seek an out-of-court arbitration procedure.

Article 12: Non-fulfillment of Obligations or Delay

In cases where the non-fulfilment of a project partner's or the Secretariat's obligations has financial consequences for the funding of the Partnership Agreement, the project partners or the Secretariat may demand compensation to cover the sum involved. Non-fulfilment could mean not paying the contribution in case of the project partners or not implementing the action plan in case of the Secretariat.

Article 13: Working Language

The working language of this Partnership shall be *English (language of the Partnership Agreement)*. In case of translation of this document into another language, the English language version shall be the binding one.

Article 14: Legislation

This Partnership Agreement is governed by Belgian Law, being the law of the country of the Secretariat. Written in *4 digital* copies.

The partners mentioned on the first page hereby sign this agreement.

Mirkó PETÉNYI
CEO, Active Hungary Development Center Nonprofit Limited Liability Company

The partners mentioned on the first page hereby sign this agreement.

Ms Laurianne Krid
CEO. European Cyclists' Federation asbl.

Annex - a) Overview of indicative multiannual Action plan, budget and share of the contributions.

At the beginning of each year, the Steering Committee of the EuroVelo 13 Partnership shall officially adopt an annual work plan that accurately reflects the available budget.

EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail passes through Norway, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Czechia, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Greece Türkiye.

The present EuroVelo 13 Partnership will cover the following countries: Poland, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary.

The contributions overview includes all potential partners of the countries covered in the EuroVelo 13 Partnership.

The contributions are calculated based on the number of kilometers of EuroVelo 13 Route in each relevant country and region, according to the latest data from 2024.

EuroVelo 13 Partnership 2026-2029

Ambition: Develop the international visibility of EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail as a flagship product in Europe and the regions involved

	2026-2027		2027-2028		2028-2029		3 years	
	HR	EC	HR	EC	HR	EC	HR	EC
#1 Priority: Increase the international visibility and promotion of EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail to potential users								
<i>1.1 Create engaging content to generate more traffic on EuroVelo 13 webportal</i>	3,150 €		3,150 €		3,150 €		9,450 €	
<i>1.2 Create and advertise EuroVelo 13 content on social media channels to raise awareness and bring traffic to the webportal</i>	2,925 €		2,925 €		2,925 €		8,775 €	
<i>1.3 Improve the structure, analytics and effectiveness of EuroVelo.com to attract more visitors on EuroVelo 13 webportal (SEO)</i>	2,025 €	1,775 €	2,025 €	1,775 €	2,025 €	1,775 €	6,075 €	5,325 €
<i>1.4 Management and recertification process of EuroVelo 13 as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe</i>	1,800 €		1,800 €		1,800 €		5,400 €	
#2 Priority: Support the improvement of quality of offers on EuroVelo 13								
<i>2.1 Collect knowledge and support national partners to increase continuous cycling infrastructure and signage</i>	900 €		900 €		900 €		2,700 €	
<i>2.2 Manage the Booking Centres licensing</i>	3,150 €		3,150 €		3,150 €		9,450 €	
#3 Priority: Manage efficiently the EuroVelo 13 Partnership								
<i>3.1 Coordinate the partnership, organise meetings, produce annual report</i>	3,600 €		3,600 €		3,600 €		10,800 €	
<i>3.2 Admin coordination of the partnership</i>	900 €		900 €		900 €		2,700 €	
SUB-TOTAL	18,450 €	1,775 €	18,450 €	1,775 €	18,450 €	1,775 €	55,350 €	5,325 €
TOTAL FOR 3 YEARS	20,225 €		20,225 €		20,225 €		60,675 €	
TOTAL PER YEAR							20,225 €	

HR (Human resources)

EC (External costs)