

MEDCYCLETOUR Good Practice – Methodology to create a permanent bike-friendly service network retaining local stakeholders

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Organisation in charge of the good practice		
Organisation in charge of this good practice	<i>Consorzio Oltrepò Mantovano</i>	
Location of the organisation in charge:	Country	<i>Italy</i>
	Region	<i>Lombardy</i>
	City	<i>Consorzio Oltrepò Mantovano</i>

Good practice general information	
Title of the practice	<i>Methodology to create a permanent bike-friendly service network retaining local stakeholders</i>
Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project?	<i>Yes</i>
If yes, what is the name of that project?	<i>INTERREG Mediterranean MEDCycleTOUR (MEDiterranean Cycle route for sustainable coastal TOURism)</i>

Category of the practice	<p>Please select the category of the practice (you can mark the category in bold):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Cycling tourism route infrastructure</i> <i>Cycling-friendly services solutions</i> <i>Solutions for combining bike and public transport</i> <i>Promotion / Marketing</i> <i>Sustainable organisational or financing solutions</i> 	
Geographical scope of the practice	<i>Provincial-Local</i>	
Location of the practice	Country	<i>Italy</i>
	Region	<i>Lombardy</i>
	City	<i>The Mantuan municipalities near the river Po stretch of the EuroVelo 8 Route</i>

Detailed description	
Short summary of the practice	<i>Creation of a permanent bike-friendly service network in an area with a lack of tourist accommodations, encouraging local operators to autonomously create and manage cycling-friendly services.</i>
Detailed information on the practice	<p><i>The Mantuan territory along the Po river is an agricultural area with a lack of services for cycle tourists. Most of the accommodation facilities consist in family-run farmhouses placed in a rural area, whose owners still lack skills and know-how to promote the territory, the cycling routes or the attractions of the tourist destination as a whole.</i></p> <p><i>The aim of the action was to build a bike-friendly services network along the EuroVelo 8 route in the Mantuan territory, to attract more cycle tourists, raise stakeholder self-awareness on cycle tourism potential and create a network of actors that can support and communicate with public authorities for improving cycle tourism in the area.</i></p> <p><i>The innovation of the methodology lies in the process to achieve the results: a multi-step approach. The steps were:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Direct invitation of the stakeholders to the communication workshops that explained the cycle tourism opportunities;</i> <i>2. Building a group of accommodation facilities interested in cycle-tourism promotion;</i> <i>3. Carrying out training meetings related to cycling-tourism themes: How to do business with cycle tourism, learn about local attractions; events realization/participation and tourist packages creation;</i> <i>4. Coordinating scheduled meetings self-managed by the group;</i> <i>5. Commitment by signing a paper to join the bike-friendly services network;</i> <i>6. Promotion of the network during events and on social networks.</i> <p><i>Involved stakeholders consisted in restaurants, b&bs and farmhouses who have joined the network. Indirectly, cycle tourists, cycling/environmental associations that organise guided bike trips and local municipal economies have benefited from this network.</i></p>
Resources needed	<p><i>€ 30,000 as main investment for this pilot action</i></p> <p><i>€ 2,000 for activities coordination</i></p> <p><i>€ 3,000 for three training workshops for bike-friendly accommodations</i></p> <p><i>€ 6,000 to build support for the bike-friendly network</i></p> <p><i>After these investments, all other cost was assumed by the network itself.</i></p>
Timescale (start/end date)	<i>April 2018 - December 2019 (now the network is self-managed)</i>
Evidence of success (results achieved)	<i>The methodology allowed to create a network of 30 operators that transformed from offering simple activities to bike-friendly facilities signing a commitment paper to join the bike-friendly service network (offering services for cyclists like bike rental, repair and bicycle assistance, selling bike accessories, sheltered bicycle parking, travel assistance, flexible meals, washing clothes, etc.). Now the network is promoting itself and its bike services at local events. The network is working also to encourage other tourist accommodations in the area to join, to continuously increase the number of members.</i>
Challenges encountered	<i>The main challenge was obtaining operators' participation during workshops and meetings. Many times, they were busy and did not understand the importance of networking and the advantages generated by cycle tourism. It was necessary to create a strong core group to stimulate other operators to join the network. Training courses were necessary.</i>
Potential for learning or transfer	<p><i>In a large territory such as the Mantuan region along the Po river, it is important to create a network of services dedicated to cycle tourists. The implemented methodology allows to the Consorzio Oltrepò Mantovano, thanks to a small initial investment, to realise a bike-friendly autonomous network for cycle tourism promotion.</i></p> <p><i>A permanent cycle-tourism services network can participate in a public tender on territory promotion and support decision-makers on cycling themes.</i></p>
Further information	https://www.eurovelo8mantova.eu/it/resource/blog/Webmaster/gruppo-operatori-bike-friendly-del-tratto-mantovan/
Keywords related to your practice	<i>Methodology, bike-friendly, network, services, cycle-tourism, workshop, training, promotion, communication</i>

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