

MEDCYCLETOUR Good Practice – Natural Trails Programme

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Your organisation	
Country	<i>Spain</i>
Region	<i>Madrid</i>
City	<i>Madrid</i>

Organisation in charge of the good practice	
Organisation in charge of this good practice	<i>Subdirección General de Regadíos e Infraestructuras Rurales. Dirección General de Desarrollo Rural, Innovación Y Política Forestal. Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación.</i>
Location of the organisation in charge:	Country <i>Spain</i>
	Region <i>Madrid</i>
	City <i>Madrid</i>

Good practice general information	
Title of the practice	<i>Natural Trails Programme (National Network of Natural Trails)</i>
Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project?	<i>No</i>
If yes, what is the name of that project?	

Category of the practice	<i>Please select the category of the practice (you can mark the category in bold):</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cycling tourism route infrastructure 2. <i>Cycling-friendly services solutions</i> 3. <i>Solutions for combining bike and public transport</i> 4. <i>Promotion / Marketing.</i> 5. <i>Sustainable organisational or financing solutions</i> 	
Geographical scope of the practice	<i>National</i>	
Location of the practice	Country	<i>Spain</i>
	Region	
	City	

Detailed description	
Short summary of the practice	<i>The Natural Trails Programme contributes to the conservation of our natural spaces, through the restoration of infrastructure and old disused tracks and trails currently in disuse that allow to enjoy the natural environment.</i>
Detailed information on the practice	<p><i>The main goal of the Natural Trails Programme is to promote and enhance these trails and to make people more aware of their existence. Their implementation contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas by reusing transport infrastructure, livestock trails, old railway platforms, towpaths and traditional pathways in disuse, or by opening up new paths and enabling citizens to get in touch with nature and visit rural areas in general, meeting a growing demand for the eco-recreational use of the countryside by the population. As part of the task of promoting the green tracks that the Ministry has been creating, it has cooperated efficiently with the Railway Foundation, reaching agreements with developers to disseminate them at the national and international level through the Green Ways Programme once the works are finished.</i></p> <p><i>Fulfilment of the following goals is intended through the use of these infrastructures as nature trails:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To maintain the public use of communication infrastructure.</i> • <i>To meet social demands for alternative tourist services.</i> • <i>To provide citizens with easy access to sporting, cultural, educational and nature-related experiences.</i> • <i>To encourage the sustainable development of the action area by boosting economic resources, fostering employment and encouraging the settlement of citizens in their place of origin.</i> <p><i>The actions to be carried out in order to adapt this environmental infrastructure to its new use are comprised of two stages:</i></p> <p><i>1) Refurbishment of the infrastructure that will be financed by the Ministry.</i></p> <p><i>2) Maintenance of the works carried out and management of the recreational activities that are generated around this new infrastructure, whose costs shall be assumed by the developing entity.</i></p>
Resources needed	<i>Investment by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food up until the end of 2018 amounts to €238.1 million and has already benefitted hundreds of municipalities. The number of kilometres of new nature trails executed every year has seen a significant increase in recent years.</i>
Timescale (start/end date)	<i>1993 - ongoing</i>
Evidence of success (results achieved)	<p><i>More than 10,000 km of nature trails have been built and made available to public use since the beginning of the programme in 1993. There are 130 itineraries, 1,300 km on old railway lines (greenways), and more than 30 million visitors/year.</i></p> <p><i>The amortisation of investment in cycling infrastructure is very fast in most of the cases (often it is just one year).</i></p> <p><i>In recent years, the increase in kilometres has been considerable due to the start-up of long-haul trails such as those of Ruta del Cantábrico, Matarraña-Algars, Via de la Plata, Santander - Mediterráneo, Via Verde Entre Ríos, etc.</i></p>
Challenges encountered	<p><i>The entities that wish to take part in the "Nature Trails Programme" must commit to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The availability of the land where the works will be carried out.</i> • <i>Assume the maintenance and preservation tasks of the trails once they are finished.</i> • <i>Accept any property and extra-contractual liability in the event of any hypothetical damage or accident.</i>
Potential for learning or transfer	<p><i>The activities linked to the Natural Trails Programme offer great benefits, especially to those places where tourism is incipient or non-existent, with the creation of new employment helping the local and rural population.</i></p> <p><i>Hiking and cycling tourism require relatively low investments, especially when old disused infrastructure is reused as traced railways and service roads of canals or others, as well as shared road space with roads featuring very low traffic intensity.</i></p>
Further information	http://www.mapa.qob.es/caminosnaturales
Keywords related to your practice	<i>Natural Trails, Green Trails, cycle tourism</i>
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