Interreg

EUROPEAN UNION

Danube Transnational Programme

LENA

LENA – LOCAL ECONOMY AND NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE DANUBE REGION



Photo: Alexander Ivanov

ABOUT LENA



There are 70 national parks and more than 1000 Natura 2000 areas, covering a large spectrum of ecosystem services in the Danube region. Due to the protected status, these areas are often regarded as hampering local development, while their intrinsic economic potential is usually overlooked. At the same time, more and more studies confirm the multiple benefits, including social and economic, of Natura 2000 sites.

The international Interreg DTP project "LENA" **(Local Economy and Nature Conservation in the Danube Region)** worked with 11 protected areas, covering more than 375,000 ha and more than 14 Natura 2000 sites, chosen based on outstanding nature values and untapped potential for sustainable economic use. The project covered approximately half a million people, most of them living in communities with low income (monthly income ranging between 200 and 500 EUR), struggling with out-migration and ageing population.

The broad partnership coalition implementing LENA (17 partners from 9 Danube countries) supported and strengthened joint and integrated approaches and policies for the conservation and sustainable use of protected areas, in particular in Natura 2000 sites, along the Danube and its tributaries. It created new income opportunities in the nature-based economic sector and up-scaled impact across the region.



The implementation of the initiative led to:

1) Knowledge generation and empowerment of local communities through pilot actions;
2) Developed tools for sustainable resource use in protected areas and;
3) Improved framework conditions for sustainable use of protected areas.

The wide range of the project contributed to informing and gaining the buy-in of local stakeholders to nature conservation as well as to empowering local entrepreneurs to profit from natural heritage sites in a way that protects natural resources.

LENA also supported the shaping of policies for development of functioning framework for sustainable use of protected areas.

The following deliverables were created within the project:

- **Four Guidance documents based on the experience gained in the project pilot sites. The booklets are focused on:**
  - Communication of the value of nature;
  - Sustainable resource use;
  - Business planning and marketing of ecosystem based economic activities;
  - Securing funding for sustainable development of communities.

- **New opportunities for tourism and sustainable transportation**
  - 97 people from 6 countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Germany) were trained and certified as Danube Guides.
  - E-mobility was promoted through creating e-bikes routes, installation of charging stations for e-bikes in Germany (10), in Romania (2) in Bulgaria (2) and through buying 10 e-bikes and e-rickshaw.







- **Opportunities for sustainable income generation and natural resources management**
  - A number of reports and analyses were produced with focus on fish, wild plants and agriculture and distributed to the target groups with useful information, good practices and practical advice.

- **LENA implemented activities on policy level** – a profound analysis on the nature-based business and green jobs was elaborated as well as recommendations for strategic actions to create an integrated approach for nature protection, natural resources management and "green" jobs creation. The recommendations were disseminated among decision-makers in all countries involved in the project.

The project implementation led to the creation of integrated approaches and policies for nature protection and sustainable use of protected areas. And what is most important – the project reached and empowered the local communities throughout the project countries.

In appreciation for its achievements project "LENA" was awarded with the German sustainability award for projects: "Projekt Nachhaltigkeit 2018" by the Regional Network Units Sustainability Strategies (RENN) – https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2018/07/26-07-2018-interreg-project-lena-wins-german-sustainability-project-2018-award

It would be beneficial and efficient to implement the created approaches, instruments and products in other territories to achieve balanced development across the Danube region.

PROJEKT NACHHALTIGKEIT

Our partners:

E-MOBILITY AND NATURE ROUTES

The main objective of the E-Mobility Network pilot action is to strengthen human and social capital in protected areas in the Danube region. Human capital is strengthened by e-mobility-managers and social capital by providing green mobility options like e-bikes and its infrastructure with charging stations along nature routes.

Local E-Managers were appointed in Belene, Bulgaria; Ivanovo, Bulgaria; City of Tuttlingen, Germany; WWF Romania, [Ciocanesti fish farm] and BSC Kranj, Slovenia. The appointed e-managers are the "multipliers" who should carry the EU-wide trend towards the use of e-bikes into their region and further develop green mobility options for the local population and tourism. For the e-managers common curricula for training were developed. The training of the e-managers consisted of developing common strategies on how to improve e-mobility in the Danube region by involving the relevant stakeholders. In June 2018 the E-Managers came to the City of Tuttlingen and the Landscape Park Young Danube for a theoretical and a practical training that included besides an e-bike excursion, some hands-on experience on e-bike repair and the participation at a stakeholder conference. Further trainings were done through a webinar and during the partner meetings, participants exchanged ideas and experience.

Nature Routes as a green mobility solution were developed in Germany, Bulgaria and Romania.



Nature routes within LENA were defined as

> "A safe, scenic and sustainable path that connects natural landmarks and touristic highlights as well as places for buying local products and opportunities for learning about nature protection. In order to create a green mobility option for e-bike users e-hub stations are along the way. The target group are families and tourists interested in nature."

The Danube Bike Path runs from the source in Donaueschingen to the Danube Delta and is part of the well-known and highly frequented European Bike network Velo6 – Atlantic – Black Sea. In order to direct tourists also away from the Danube to explore the landscape and attractions beyond, Nature routes are developed. They should guide visitors to the beautiful valleys and mountains of the subsidiaries. With e-bikes it is comfortably possible to discover also more mountainous areas. Like loops the nature routes are attached to the EuroVelo6 Route.



PILOT ACTION DANUBE GUIDES

Background

Danube culture and nature guides called "Danube Guides" have very particular aims and visions. As for the visitors they want to make the nature and culture of the respective region tangible in every way, and thus, create an unforgettable experience. In the long-term a transnational network of "Danube Guides" will be developed aiming to communicate the importance of protecting nature for the public.

The training of "Danube Guides" wants to enable future "Danube Guides" to design their own innovative touristic offers (e.g. guided tours, nature workshops, landscape interpretation, etc.) and thus create new income opportunities for regions and protected areas.

As a project partner Donaubüro Ulm / Neu-Ulm (DE) is responsible for the implementation of this pilot project. The qualification program was conceived by the Donaubüro Ulm / Neu-Ulm together with response & ability gmbh.

Transnational and regional trainings

In a transnational training, participants from Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Germany were trained to become "Danube Guide" trainers, during an intensive five-day workshop at National Park Donau-Auen in Orth (Austria) in April 2018.

Those "Danube Guides" trainers acted as multipliers and educated "Danube Guides" in the course of regional trainings in their respective country. The regional trainings consisted of four modules, each one lasted 2,5 days. After a theoretical and practical exam, the participants received an official certificate.





Content of the "Danube Guides" regional trainings

The four training modules consist of a theoretical part and a more practical one which should either give participants the tools to convey content, or help participants to develop an educational tourism product themselves. Those modules include regional-specific content about the history of the Danube, sustainable development, ecosystems, cultural and natural heritage, societal trends, marketing and communication, didactics and product development.

Together we aim at establishing a transnational network of "Danube Guides" in order to raise the awareness for protecting and valuing the natural and cultural heritage along the Danube.

Results in a nutshell:

- 6 countries involved: Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Germany
- 12 active Danube Guide Trainers qualified
- 97 Danube Guides qualified in regional trainings

NATURAL CAPITAL ACTIONS

In total three types of natural capital actions were implemented across six countries. Their main aim was to reduce perceived trade-offs between nature conservation and economic development. They showcased different opportunities to improve local livelihoods and create long-term benefits for local communities while using the Danube region's rich biodiversity in a sustainable way and conserving it for future generations. During the project duration strong transnational partnerships have been established to share knowledge of natural and agricultural production and value chains.

6 countries involved: Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary Romania, Serbia and Slovenia

Utilizing wild plants, sustainably harvested in buffer zones of protected areas

The harvesting of wild plants and their commercial use have a long tradition in the Danube region and present a great opportunity to local communities that live in biodiverse rural areas. The pilot activities were focused on engaging local communities in wild harvesting activities through capacity building workshops and trainings based on the FairWild Standard. This Standard was specifically developed for wild plant collection and trade and is widely recognised as the best voluntary code of practice addressing ecological, social and economic requirements.



www.fairwild.org

- 169 participants engaged in 8 capacity building workshops and trainings on sustainable wild plant collection in 4 countries
- Final lessons learnt publication describing the transregional approach and FairWild methodology used
- FairWild Standard and Performance Indicators available in Bulgarian, Serbian and Slovenian languages







NATURAL CAPITAL ACTIONS

Boosting the potential of legal and responsible commercial fishing and direct marketing

Markets for Danube fish in Bulgaria and Romania are underdeveloped, financial capital is lacking and illegal activities such as poaching and fishing out of season are common. In order to tackle these issues, the pilot activities included working with fishing families and communities for income diversification, supporting the establishment of physical local markets for direct fish sales and capacity building workshops for local fishermen.



- 101 fishermen trained on good practices, financial opportunities and direct marketing in Bulgaria and Romania
- 2 trans-border meetings with participants from both countries and the Fishery Agencies from Bulgaria and Romania discussed traditions and the differences in local legislation and established a cross-border fishermen network
- Analytical reports on legal frameworks, good practices, ecological carrying capacity as well as lessons learnt
- Information material for fishermen in Bulgarian and Romanian languages





Completing sustainable agriculture value chains

A number of production, marketing and capacity-building activities were implemented with the goal to demonstrate viable and ecologically sustainable options for food production and agriculture value chains from protected areas. These included producing and marketing ecological-suitable crops like non-GMO soy and animal species such as the Black Slavonian pig, as well as creating local brands for adding value to the products.

- 2 regional labels established in close consultation with the stakeholders
- "Certified product from the Comana Nature Park": 7 producers/companies currently use the label (3 cereal, 2 vegetable and 2 honey producers)
- Mark of origin "Meat of Black Slavonian Pigs": 46 breeders participated in special trainings
- Best practices in sustainable Non-GMO soybean production according to the Danube Soya Standard were disseminated to more than 500 local farmers and stakeholders along the feed and food value chains
- Awareness of Danube Soya Non-GMO certification and labelling was raised, giving "face" to local farmers and bringing identity to locally produced soybeans

NATURAL CAPITAL ACTIONS

Nature Business Tools

The Danube region has an invaluable natural and cultural heritage creating potential for sustainable business, protecting, preserving livelihoods and thus increasing quality of life for the people living in the nature protected areas and their vicinity. LENA addresses this business potential of underdeveloped settlements by preparation of four Guidance booklets, in order to support the interest groups in their endeavours creating nature friendly economic activities.

Communicating to local people and visitors the value of nature to the local economy is meant for protected area managers, tourism organisations and public administrations responsible for building knowledge capacity of local people and visitors about the importance of ecosystems, their preservation and how this should be communicated to general public as an opportunity for economic activities.

Developing capacity for sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage, as element of Protected Area management gives the knowledge to the potential entrepreneurs and small and medium sized companies in rural areas to utilise given resources in the environment, having a beneficial or neutral impact to nature and to build successful businesses giving an added value to them, local communities and visitors as well.

Increasing market access of sustainably sourced natural products supports small and medium sized companies in rural areas and elsewhere increasing the value of their products by branding the quality, production process and the origin of the products, aiming to expand their market. Products made in a sustainable, nature friendly way, which are also as an end products nature and people friendly, hold a higher value on the market.

Mobilising finances for conservation, nature based jobs and business models addresses needs of non-governmental organisations, small and medium sized enterprises, public authorities and others in developing the protected areas across the Danube region and utilising the available national and European grants. Guidance booklets are available online at the addresses of the LENA partners' premises.



POLICY ASSESSMENT OF LENA



A broad policy assessment was carried out under LENA Project aiming at providing decision-makers in LENA countries with updated information on the current level of uptake of "nature-based" jobs and businesses into the EU, regional, national and local policy-making.

The analysis evolved through several steps, as follows: literature review, data collection, development of a methodological basis, review of the most relevant policy plans, programmes and strategies for each pilot site in terms of the actual level of integration of nature-based jobs and businesses concepts, and formulation of recommendations. The analysis aimed at assessing how substantial, explicit and comprehensive are the levels of integration of nature-based jobs and nature-based businesses into various sectoral policies. Following the assessment, policy recommendations were formulated for each country with regards to: a) strengthening the knowledge base, b) policy formulation, and c) policy implementation.

Key Insights

- Nature-based businesses and nature-based jobs are useful concepts to reveal the positive socio-economic conditions generated locally by protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites.
- Nature-based businesses are directly or indirectly benefiting from services provided by healthy eco-systems in natural areas with high biodiversity.
- There are market niches for nature-based business models in all economic sectors of interest under the LENA project: environmentally friendly agriculture and wild plant harvesting, sustainable fisheries, ecotourism and e-mobility.
- There is a wide spectrum of nature-based types of jobs created in local communities either in connection with the actual protected sites administration or due to nature-based business developments.

Research methodology

1) Starting with January 2018, relevant data has been collected through the network of LENA partners, with regards to the business and/or socio-economic activities carried out in an environmentally-friendly manner in the local context of selected pilot sites: Landschaftspark Junge Donau (Germany), Triglav National Park (Slovenia), SCI Dunav Vukovar - HR2000372 (Croatia), Szatmár-Bereg Nature Park (Hungary), National Park Fruska Gora, Special Nature Reserve Gornje Poduvanije and Special Nature Reserve Deliblato Sands (Serbia), Persina Nature Park, Rusenski Lom Nature Park (Bulgaria), Comana Natural Park and ROSPA0021 Ciocănești – Dunăre (Romania).

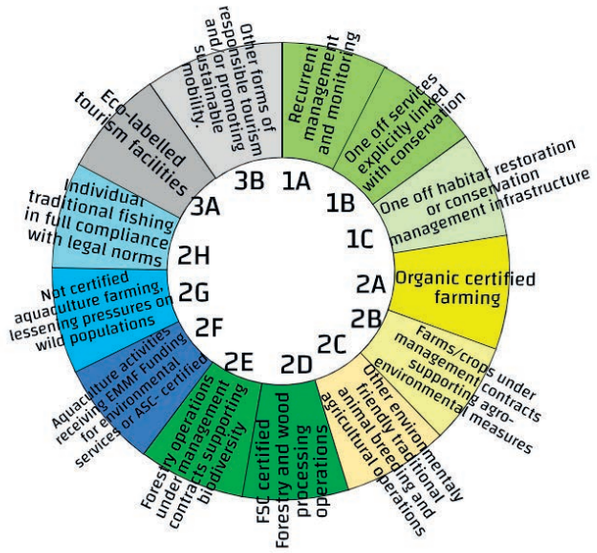
In addition, a detailed list of relevant policies at national and regional level has been compiled.

2) Following a literature review, the definition of "nature-based" business was agreed upon within the project partnership:

> Nature-based businesses, which are also the main source for nature-based employment refer to: "socio-economic activities oriented towards profit-making or income generation, driven by the recognition of the added-value of ecosystem services, natural landscape features and biodiversity, and carried out in a manner that ensures their long-term preservation".

POLICY ASSESSMENT OF LENA

3) Another crucial element in the methodology consisted in the elaboration of a common classification scheme for understanding the typology of nature-based jobs likely to occur in local communities, either triggered by nature-based business activities or explicitly linked with biodiversity conservation/protected area management. A number of 13 types of nature-based jobs were taken into consideration as relevant to those sectors of interest for LENA (see diagram).



4) The data collected with the support of LENA partners coupled with other data collected on-line were processed; the respective policies were examined content-wise with regards to relevant references made on the afore-mentioned types of jobs and/or underpinning socio-economic activities at the level of local communities situated in the proximity of protected areas.





Looking to the future – generally applicable strategic recommendations

The assessment concluded on three main areas for policy improvement, where both local stakeholders and national policy-makers should further develop and strengthen their efforts, as follows:

- Strengthening the knowledge base - understanding the connections between well-preserved ecosystems/ biodiversity and local economies, and awareness raising in terms of mutual benefits, mainly through the joint set-up of a database by the national and regional statistics offices in the Danube countries on the labour market, linked with nature-friendly activities and through the promotion of research and innovation and integration of results in the relevant public policies;

- Better sectoral policy elaboration, in terms of enhancing the integration of nature-based jobs and businesses and reflecting it in clear, integrated goals, actions, indicators;

- Strengthened and locally/geographically-targeted policy implementation through various mechanisms (incentives, funding programmes, etc.) with a view to achieve a measurable growth of the nature-based business sector and human capital in urban and rural communities located within or in the proximity of protected areas.

BELENE MUNICIPALITY, BULGARIA



Belene Municipality is a municipality in Pleven Province, northern Bulgaria. It is located along the south bank of Danube river, by the border with Romania. Some parts of Persina Nature Park are located on Belene Territory. The designation of the park aims at conservation and restoration of Danube wetlands. The park is named after Persin Island, which is part of the Belene Islands Complex. Belene Municipality is one of the LENA project partners.



What has been achieved within the project:

E-mobility

- 7 representatives of Belene Municipality took part in the Danube Guides trainings and now the municipality dispose of trained people to guide tourists and visitors.
- Charging station for e-bakes was installed as well as3 e-bikes bought
- New bike-routes were identified and information was disseminated.
- The new infrastructure has already been used by the citizens.



Fish activities:

- A survey was conducted on the local fishermen communities and the necessity to promote sustainable fishermen practices;
- Two trans-border meetings with the participation of fishermen communities from Belene and Giurgiu were conducted. The main topics for discussion were connected to the differences in the local legislation and the different fishermen traditions.
- Two-day training for fishermen was organized in Belene
- "River Danube and its fish fest" has been organized promoting the river and its natural value. For the past two years during the fest some biking to protected areas in Persina Park was organized as well as fish contests and culinary treats. Two movies have been shot and these were showed on the national TV and disseminated via the social media.
- With regards to the development of the fish market in Belene municipality a mobile fridge showcase was bought. It will be promoted during the Danube fest in 2019.

IVANOVO MUNICIPALITY, BULGARIA

Ivanovo Municipality is a municipality in Ruse Province, Central-North Bulgaria, located along the right bank of Danube river in the Danubian Plain.

The area is best known with the Rock-hewn Churches of Ivanovo which is an UNESCO World Heritage Site. Other important sights in the municipality include the medieval Bulgarian fortress of Cherven, which reached its apogee in the 13th and 14th centuries and features a well-preserved keep from the 14th century, and the Rusenski Lom Nature Park.

Ivanovo municipality is a project partner of LENA project and the activities implemented there and in Russenski Lom PA supports the implementation of the project goals.

E-mobility

Within the project an e-charging station was installed in Ivanovo city and 3 new e-bikes were bought. In order to use the e-bikes some bike routes were identified in different areas of Ivanovo municipality.

There is also a roster of trained people in Ivanovo who well provide for the e-mobility on the municipality's territory.

Ivanovo and wild plants

Steps have been taken to create new business opportunities and introduce sustainable practice connected to collection and use of wild plants (training, demonstrations, fests).



A meeting was held in Ivanovo back in 2017 dedicated to the topic "Sustainable use and trade with wild plants in Bulgaria" with the participation of suitable stakeholders. The international certification standard FairWild was presented. This activity was to encourage and motivate the local stakeholders to get better awareness of the local wild plants market and to position themselves.

Within the project implementation Ivanovo municipality prepared a pre-investment research for establishing Wild Plant Collection Point which will give the local community the opportunity to increase their income.





VUKOVAR-SRIJEM COUNTY, CROATIA





The pilot area of Vukovar-Srijem County refers to the promotion of the breeding autochthonous breed of pigs – black Slavonian pigs. Location selected for pilot area is under Natura 2000 protected area which was precondition for participation in the Project. Within pilot activities conducted by Vukovar-Srijem County are:

- the formation of an experimental farm of black Slavonian pigs
- development of the Management system of the farm
- education of breeders and potential breeders of black Slavonian pigs
- development of Study analysis on the contribution of the breeding program of Black Slavonian pigs in the function of environmental protection and biodiversity

Educations were implemented 4 different locations in the Vukovar-Srijem County so that every breeder, who is interested in this topic, can participate with travelling as little as possible.

What is also particularly important to mention is the cooperation with partners from Serbia – Danube Soya. This gives a special emphasis to transnational impact which is the main purpose of this kind of programs. Danube Soya in their business deal with certification of products with NON-GMO labels which gives added value to producers. Breeders feed pigs with soy so this is great link that has been used in this within the project.



SZATMÁR-BEREG NATURE PARK

The LENA project was launched in January 2017 in the framework of INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme. Its objective is to create work opportunities that, beyond their economic benefits, can contribute to the preservation and exploitation of our natural and cultural heritage, by helping the preservation and maintenance, and the sustainable use of protected natural areas.

Within the framework of the Szatmár-Bereg programme, we have organized and realized the harvest of the fruits of wild plants (like sloe, elderberry, briar), whose processing has resulted in the birth of a well-liked product typical of the region. During the community educational and demonstrational cooking events, jams are prepared of t sloe, elderberry, and briar. Upon this example, the product can be sold locally, thus up to dozens of families per settlement can gain additional income.

A kind of secondary income, the amount of which depends only on the activity and engagement of the persons involved in making jam. Moreover, sloe and briar to be preserved, can become a base material for jam in the Szatmár-Bereg Nature Park (and in the Szatmár-Bereg Landscape Protection Area, as well as NATURA 2000 area). In other words, not only will the realized programme have economic benefits, but also for the nature, (since a significant part of the sloe bushes has been destroyed by the employees of the public works programme in the area for the recent years causing enormous damage to the wildlife).





Moreover, we hope that, the completion of the programme will set an example for the citizens of the region, and the areas with sloe shrubs will turn into value-creating habitats. By doing so, stopping their destruction, true value is going to be created.



COMANA NATURE PARK, ROMANIA



Comana Nature Park Administration plays an important role in the management of environment and biodiversity in a national and European protected area of 25.000 ha, situated in Giurgiu County, Romania, near to Danube River, of which one third represents forests and the rest are agricultural lands, ponds, rivers, pastures, vineyards, orchards, rural settlements, roads, etc. It also protects and is engaged in supporting local identity, culture and social development.

A certification procedures and labeling activity have been carried out within LENA project for a local brand label of farmers and their products in Comana Park. In a simple, concise and accessible way there is established a clear set of conditions and criteria on the basis of which local agricultural producers can be selected for certification and promotion through a direct association with the park's name and status. Anyone can apply for free to become a locally certified producer. Once certified, their products are labeled and promoted, recognized as being obtained in the protected area, reliable from the perspective of observing park's principles, sustainability, restrictions and values. The estimated benefits of certification and labeling for manufacturers are expected to come from: a less bureaucratic certification system, the ability to access a dedicated niche market, streamlines sales and marketing, acquiring a visual identity and promoting through park assets.





The tool is enabling conservation management in business context, in order to ensure transition to sustainable resource use in the protected areas, to establish and promote the value of nature to the local economy, and to operationalize nature-based models of economic activities, inside the nature park.

CIOCANESTI NATURA 2000 SITE, ROMANIA



WWF-Romania and Outlying Cycling Romania have created, for two-wheel adventurous lovers, 5 new cycle routes. Not far from Bucharest, after just one hour and a half drive, the cyclists will discover the routes that cross one of the most important natural protected areas in Calarasi County: Ciocanesti Danube.

The area is unique due to the richness of wetland species. There are plenty of lakes, swamps, fishing areas where cyclists can make stops: important natural areas, cultural places (handicraft workshops, local producers) and buildings (museums, memorial houses, etc.).

With different length and level based on different experience and free time, the routes can be finished in one day or in 2-3 days. There are centuries-old crafts in the area: ironing, carpentry and wooden sculpture. And local producers can offer to the tourists products which are homemade or grown in their own garden, with 100% natural resources: vegetables, dairy, jams, honey.

Pedal to a complex cultural experience

As no adventure on two wheels is complete without the knowledge of the cultural heritage offered by the areas it crosses, the 5 trails from Ciocanesti are sprinkled all the way with churches, monasteries, museums or memorial houses.

Cyclists are encouraged to visit the ruins of the Brancoveanu court (Silistea-Obileşti), the Gulmenita Civilization Museum, the Lower Danube Museum (Calarasi). Whether you go for a day trip with your family or choose to spend a few days with your friends on the wild routes that have the departure/ arrival point at Ciocanesti Farm, you will have a guaranteed full cultural experience that will help you better understand the local community and reconnect to nature.









TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK, SLOVENIA



GREEN MOBILE POINT
Get a ride for free and without emissions

Gorenjska region, with its new integral tourist products, developed in the LENA project, received its first e-rickshaw, the electric tricycle. The use of e-rickshaw experimentally promotes development of sustainable mobility in Natura 2000 sites.

E-rickshaw performs the function of e-mobile transport in the Natura 2000 area Bohinj and in the urban areas of Kranj and Škofja Loka, thus promoting sustainable mobility, in particular e-biking, in protected and urban areas.



DANUBE GUIDES

Training for tourist guides along the Danube and its tributaries "Danube Guides" was carried out in six countries. As part of the pilot activity, two representatives from Gorenjska gained the title of trainers for guides across the Danube Region, while 15 participants successfully completed regional training. 80 hours training for guides across the Danube region took place at different locations in Gorenjska and covered various content modules of heritage interpretation and sustainable development. The participants gained a diverse knowledge of innovative interpretation as well as responsible tourism entrepreneurship.

With the trainings conducted, a network of "guides across the Danube" is being established, which aims to highlight, among other things, the importance of natural and cultural heritage, their conservation and interpretation.



SUSTAINABLE HARVESTING OF WILD PLANTS IN PROTECTED AREAS

Triglav National Park has as the result of the LENA pilot activity integrated FairWild standard in the standard of the new Quality brand of Triglav National Park. The standard addresses regulations of sustainable wild plants harvesting for selected species in buffer zones of protected areas.

CITY OF TÜTTLINGEN, GERMANY



Danube Guides and E-Hubs

For the e-hub network stakeholders were brought together in a regional conference on "E-Bikes and Tourism". Within the Landscape Park Young Danube a continuous network of ten e-bike charging stations that are connected with nature routes could be installed between the source of the Danube in Donaueschingen and the city of Sigmaringen 100 km away. The goal was to have a charging station in each municipality of the landscape park. The ten charging stations were placed in the region within a distance of 30 kilometers following the principle of triple B: Bike needs energy * Body needs food * Brain needs entertainment. The use of e-bikes makes it possible to travel not only on the mostly flat surface along the Danube in the valley but also explore the less travelled sites on the higher plateau. The nature routes create access to natural landmarks, places for buying local products and touristic highlights away from the highly frequented Velo 6 Danube path.

Also 15 Danube Guides were educated in Germany. There were two training weeks in spring 2019. One week was in a more urban setting in the city of Ulm and the other training was in the more rural environment of the landscape park. one week was in a more rural environment in Tuttlingen Möhringen the landscape park. All participants have developed touristic products with the aim at making the nature and culture of the young Danube tangible by communicating the value of protected areas and creating an unforgettable experience.



DANUBE SOYA PILOT ACTIONS, SERBIA



Pilot actions in Serbia were conducted at three pilot areas of Danube region: Gornje Podunavlje, Deliblato sands and Fruska Gora. On selected areas, Danube Soya implemented following activities supporting LENA project goals:

- Sustainable agriculture pilot actions resulted in knowledge transfer on best practices of sustainable soybean production and practical demonstration to more than 500 local farmers and stakeholders along the whole value chain during the Field Days located in Gornje Podunavlje. Awareness about Danube Soya certification and labelling scheme was raised and Danube Soya label is introduced into local products.





- Wild plant workshops were organized in pilot region Fruska Gora and Deliblato sands with the support of the project partner WWF Hungary Traffic program, resulted in knowledge exchange about good sustainable collecting practices of MAPs in protected areas
- Danube Guides Trainings were successfully completed by 15 local tourist guides in Gornje Podunavlje and Fruska Gora becoming part of Danube Guides Network which support responsible and sustainable tourism along the Danube with respecting natural and cultural heritage, their conservation and interpretation.
- Moreover, transnational cooperation on sustainable soybean supply and value chains is established through learning interactions with Vukovar Srijem County, resulting in knowledge generation, institutional cooperation between partners and their stakeholders and empowerment of pilot regions in sustainable value chains with added value market possibilities.

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Photo: Alexander Ivanov