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PART I

General Information

Project: CYCLEWALK

Partner organisation:

EGTC GO (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation of Gorizia, Nova Gorica, Sempeter-Vrtojba)

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): -

Country:

EGTC GO is legally based in Italy.

The actions take place in the transnational territory of EGTC GO: Italy and Slovenia

NUTS2 regions:

- ITH4 Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy
- SI02 Western Slovenia (Zahodna Slovenija), Slovenia

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Comune di Gorizia



MESTNA OBČINA
NOVA GORICA



Občina
Šempeter-Vrtojba

PART II

Policy Context: EGTC GO and cross-border Integrated Territorial Investments

The Action Plan aims to impact: Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
 European Territorial Cooperation programme
 Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

Integrated Territorial Investment (I.T.I.) of INTERREG CBC Italy-Slovenia.

EGTC GO was established in 2011 by the municipalities of Gorizia (ITA), Nova Gorica (SLO) and Sempeter-Vrtojba (SLO) - forming a single functional urban area - to identify and cope with common challenges, in order to strengthen the cross-border territory. After a long consultation process, in 2013 the EGTC GO Assembly approved the strategic plan for the development of the cross-border area for the following 7 years. Three pillars were identified, one of which relates to the promotion of cultural tourism and cross-border natural resources.

In December 2015, the EC specifically identified the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) for the development of the cross-border territory of the three municipalities, with a total grant of €10 million (85% covered by ERDF and 15% by national co-financing), €5 million of which are allocated for cultural tourism and cross-border natural resources. EGTC GO was assigned the role of intermediate body with the responsibility to implement the ITI in the territory of the three municipalities. It represents the first and unique case in Europe of implementation of an ITI at cross-border level. In February 2017 the Interreg CBC Italy-Slovenia Programme approved the "Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park" Project with a grant of €5 million. The project is implemented by EGTC GO as sole beneficiary.

The Project "Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park" (01.04.2017-31.03.2021) consists firstly of infrastructural works (new cycle and pedestrian paths, including a new bridge over the river), to be built both in Italy and in Slovenia. The works were divided into lots. The new cycle and pedestrian paths will be integrated with the existing ones to create a cross-border cycle network aimed at both daily mobility of citizens and cycle tourism. The core network is a "Ring for bicycles" with two axis, North-South along the border corridor, East-West with a straight link between the centre of Gorizia and that of Nova Gorica. The network is connected with other cycle routes in Slovenia and Italy – existing and under construction – to enable the building of a transnational cycle route along the Isonzo-Soča river from the source to the mouth.

Secondly, the project includes the development of a strategic plan for the promotion of the new cross-border natural park.



The ITI Project governance and management documents are:

1. the calls for tender for cycle and pedestrian infrastructures in the lots;
2. the executive projects of the cycle and pedestrian infrastructures in the lots;
3. the *Strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park*.

The current stage of the ITI project development is as follows:

1. As far as the calls are concerned, the EGTC GO Assembly approved the division into lots and decided that for the works to be carried out in Slovenia the EGTC GO would apply the Slovenian legislation on

public procurement. The EGTC GO, a public Italian body, has succeeded in overcoming this challenge and was the first Italian body to publish a tender on the Slovenian public procurement portal, applying the Slovenian legislation. In doing this the EGTC GO not only implemented the DIRECTIVE 2014/24 / EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18 / EC, but went much further.

2. The cycle and pedestrian infrastructures in the Project are now already under construction.

3. The strategic plan for the promotion of the park is the first document ever that takes into consideration the promotion the cross-border territory as a whole.

So far, the first part of it has been delivered, with proposals for the future development and enhancement of the area. It will serve as a basis for the strategic development of tourism in the cross-border area. The plan proposes to increase the number of visitors to the area and to diversify the tourist offer by focusing on gastronomy and cycling. It also proposes to create a cycling Ring for tourists and for daily mobility of the citizens. The strategy developed takes into consideration economic, but also environmental, infrastructural, transport, cultural, historical and sociological aspects and was preceded by a consultation of numerous actors of the territory (from the University to the hoteliers, from environmental associations to cultural ones, to give some examples). The first part of the plan has already been officially approved by the Gorizia municipal council. The final version will be presented by EGTC GO to the municipal councilors of the three founding municipalities of the EGTC GO during an event of enormous historical significance.

In 2017 the EGTC GO organized the first meeting of the councilors of all three cities to share the ITI project plan. It was the first joint meeting after the second world war (for 57 years Gorizia and Nova Gorica have been divided by a wall) and for that reason it can be considered a historic event. It represents also an innovative way of communicating, which the EGTC GO intends to turn into practice and which has great scope for sharing strategies. At the end of the event the councilors formally undertake to adopt the proposed strategies/documents in the following session of their municipal council.

A second part of the plan has to be drafted, also to fit the new opportunities offered by the candidacy of Nova Gorica and Gorizia as European capital of culture 2025. Gorizia and Nova Gorica have been working together for about 1 year and a half to prepare the candidacy document and the EGTC is coordinating this process. The candidacy has activated the territory and its stakeholders and is outlining new synergies, new visions and new development strategies for the cross-border area, which will be implemented regardless of the outcome of the candidacy.

The strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soca cross-border natural park is an important tool, on which the future of the area will be based. The plan will also be taken into account by the Assembly of the EGTC GO, which in 2020 and 2021 will draw up its own second strategic plan, defining the priority development themes for the next 7-10 years.

Part III

DETAILS OF THE ACTIONS ENVISAGED

Background common to all actions

As indicated in the CYCLEWALK application form (point B.2.3.1- policy instrument 3), the EGTC GO action plan will focus on actions that can influence the ITI. Given the current stage of the ITI project development – outlined in Part II Policy Context – the action plan targets the third of the listed ITI management documents, in particular the drafting of the second part of the strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park, and focuses on the adoption of the best practices and quality criteria about:

- “accounting features of the urban areas surrounding the planned new/renewed infrastructure for walking and cycling”;
- “characteristics of walking and cycling stakeholders and their involvement (i.e. children, tourists, elderly people)”¹.

The planned actions have the common goal to enable evidence-based decision-making about the priority measures to promote the new Isonzo-Soča park as a successful leverage in order to increase local active mobility and cycle tourism in the EGTC GO territory and beyond, in synergy with the ongoing developments in both countries.

Three actions are planned in the ITI project area of Isonzo-Soča cross-border park:

- 1. Sustainable intermodality audit**
- 2. Usage monitoring pilot** (active mobility)
- 3. Setup of a network of service providers** for active mobility and cycle tourism.

¹ Quotes from the CYCLEWALK application form (point B.2.3.1- policy instrument 3), field answering the question: “How do you envisage the improvement of this policy instrument?”

ACTION 1

Sustainable intermodality audit

ACTION 1: Sustainable intermodality audit

The background

To promote and add value to the active mobility infrastructure, existing and in construction, with the ultimate goal of winning a modal shift from car use to sustainable mobility (walking, cycling, public transport) it is best practice to smoothly integrate it with public transport. The public transport catchment area, that is the number of potential users, is much wider when the public transport nodes can be smoothly accessed by bicycle.

Measures to improve sustainable intermodality are to be inserted in the ITI policy tool, in particular in the second part of the ITI governance document *Strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park*. A first step to define such a strategic set of measures is an audit of intermodality.

The source of inspiration for this Action 1 is the **lesson learned** during the study visit in **Burgenland**, where the facilities for intermodality were experienced, raising attention on the importance of the smooth transition between the sustainable modes of transport (bus-bike-bus, train-bike-train). During the visit Clotilde Imbert presented the **methodology** developed in 2017 by the European project BiTiBi (Bike Train Bike), which EGTC GO chose as reference for this Action, combining it with the bike and train intermodality guidelines by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF 2016), and within the integrated mobility framework of 'Fusion Mobility'². Among the lessons learned relevant for Action 1 there is also the Quality criteria 1.3 ("Connect your walking and cycling network to public transport nodes") defined by the CYCLEWALK project, and its related indicator will be applied.

The action

The action consists of an **Audit** of sustainable **intermodality** (public transport combined with active mobility) and of the setup of a political negotiating table. The audit will be run and focused on the main public transport nodes and all railway stations in the ITI project area of the cross-border park Isonzo-Soca, identified as the following:

- IT: Gorizia centrale (main railway + bus station)
- IT/SLO: cross-border Transalpina/Evropska square (Nova Gorica railway station, bus station)
- SLO: Avtobusna Postaja Nova Gorica (bus station)
- SLO: Solkan (railway station)

² See: www.bitibi.eu; ECF, *Bikes and trains: 7 basic services that give cyclists a smile*, 2016; Manfred Neun, *TDM and Fusion Mobility: the Systemic Triangle of Active, Public and Connected Mobilities*, 2019.

- SLO: Sempeter pri Gorici (railway station)

The action will be structured in five steps:

- a) Setup of a technical committee, coordinated by EGTC GO, including the relevant transport operators (train and bus), authorities responsible for the stations, and the bike sharing operators. The committee will provide the EGTC GO the available data about the current combined use of public transport and active mobility in the identified multimodal nodes and along the public transport lines accessible via the nodes, that is the data of the last three/five years about bike sharing, data about controlled access bike parkings, where existing at public transport nodes, about bicycle carriage on trains and buses (capacity, conditions, communication), and data about regulations related to intermodality as well.
- b) Field survey run by EGTC GO to collect other (missing) data required to apply the chosen methodology, particularly by the BiTiBi Dutch approach structured in six building blocks (Bike parking, public bikes, coordinated organisation, payment and tariff system, communication and marketing, routes to access the stations). Field observation will be conducted at the five nodes for minimum one entire week during the cycling season (March/April to October), to monitor the number of bikes parked nearby and the passengers reaching/leaving the nodes by bike, during the service operating time. Also data available via desktop search and via request to the Chambers of Commerce (e.g. trends of motorization rate, commuting for work and educational purposes, and tourist arrivals in/to/from the EGTC GO territory) will be collected.
- c) Analysis of all collected data and drafting of an audit report on the status of intermodality by EGTC GO. The draft report will contain the results of the analysis and a description of possible solutions to the identified weaknesses, accompanied by a cost-benefit analysis. The draft report will be presented to the technical committee.
- d) The technical committee will provide feedback on the draft report and provide input about the preferred solutions. The audit report will then be finalized and, based on that, the technical committee will approve an action plan laying out technical solutions to improve sustainable intermodality.
- e) Setup of a negotiating table, coordinated by EGTC GO, involving the political decision making level of Regione Friuli-Venezia and Slovenian Ministry of Transport, the two public authorities responsible for mobility and transports in the EGTC GO territory. Based on the audit report and the action plan received by the technical committee, the negotiating table will aim at a joint cooperation political agreement on sustainable intermodality that will act as roadmap and framework within which the transport operators in charge of passenger services and of managing stations can develop detailed solutions.

The Intermodality Audit will contribute to the second part of the ITI governance document *Strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park*.

It will also be an important start point for updating the EGTC GO Strategic Plan, scheduled for 2020. Sustainable mobility emerged as a priority theme, together with cross-border urban public transports and culture, during the last meeting of the EGTC GO Assembly, where the thematic pillars of the next strategic plan were discussed. Improving mobility and transport is a priority need to enable higher integration and

social and economic development of the EGTC GO communities. Currently, there is no passengers train connection between Gorizia and Nova Gorica: that missing link has a strategic relevance at national level for Italy and Slovenia and is acknowledged among the “potentially most beneficial projects for additional passenger services on cross-border rail connections” selected by the European Commission³. Since a number of years the EGTC GO has been involved in institutional working groups with the main rail operator at national level. Nova Gorica railway station square – the cross-border Piazza della Transalpina/Trg Evrope – will be redesigned within the framework of an Urban Innovative Actions project and will be crossed by a backbone itinerary of the ITI Isonzo-Soca project.

Finally, the Intermodality Audit will result in a synergic complement to the process, running in parallel, of the EGTC GO Cross-Border Public Urban Mobility Planning (CB PUMP, funded by the B-Solutions initiative), aimed at setting up a joint framework for the development of a cross-border integrated urban network of public transport, focusing on solutions to remove legal and administrative obstacles hindering for instance an effective bus service at cross-border scope. The solutions, based on an analysis of urban mobility flows in the cross-border area, will be submitted to the relevant authorities, Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Slovenian Ministry of Transport.

Players involved

Beyond EGTC GO, the main players involved are the railway infrastructure operators (managing the stations), the public transport service operators of Italy and Slovenia, and the public authorities in charge of public transport planning and funding:

IT: Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia; Rete Ferroviaria Italiana (RFI); Trenitalia, APT Gorizia, Flixbus Italia;

SLO: Slovenske železnice (SŽ); AVRI GO; Nomago, Eurolines Germany; Ministry of infrastructures; GOLEA.

Additionally, the municipalities of Gorizia, Nova Gorica, Sempeter Vrtojba, as far as they have responsibility on the public space in front and/or around the stations.

Finally, educational institutions (schools and universities) and Chambers of Commerce of Gorizia and Nova Gorica can be involved as far as commuters and tourists to/from the EGTC GO territory are concerned, who can be identified as specific target audience of the action.

Local stakeholders, like associations or volunteers in field of sustainable mobility, will play a crucial role to support the survey activities.

The timeframe

2020-2021.

Costs

€ 6.500.

³ EC, *Comprehensive analysis of the existing cross-border rail transport connections and missing links on the internal EU borders*, 2018: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/cb_rail_connections_en.pdf

Funding sources

ITI Isonzo-Soca funding.

Local stakeholders own funding.

ACTION 2

Usage monitoring pilot (active mobility)

ACTION 2: Usage monitoring pilot (active mobility)

The background

To promote the infrastructures, existing and in construction, it is best practice to know the users, their needs, their satisfaction.

As an action to enable evidence-based decision making about the promotion strategy, a user monitoring action is planned. The results of this action are to be inserted in the ITI policy tool, in particular in the second part of the ITI governance document *Strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park*.

The usage data collection, planned in three spots of the park, will provide a picture of the current users of the cycle network under construction and to monitor the effects of the new infrastructures being built.

The source of inspiration for Action 2 is the lesson learned during the study visit in **Delft**. Monitoring of users was a topic of the presentation by a leader of Dutch cycling expertise, Herbert Tiemens (Board member of the Dutch Cycling Embassy, Senior Cycling Policy Advisor of the City of Utrecht): a city willing to develop an integrated cycling network needs monitoring, fixed and temporary, as a basic measure to acquire figures about the cycling traffic flows, to enable evidence based decision making about planning and design of streets.

The study visit in **Vilnius** was also an inspiring lesson, as the project partner – Municipal Enterprise “Connecting services” – developed a digital platform where citizens can report to the City, anonymously and easily, any issue about the active mobility network.

Among the lessons learned supporting Action 2 there are two quality criteria, criterion 3.2 “Collect data to assess the success of walking and cycling interventions” and criterion 3.3 “Involve citizens in data collection and information exchange for inclusive feedback loops”.

Action

The audit process will be structured in three parts:

- a) Quantitative data collection about the cyclists and pedestrian flows in three key spots where new infrastructure is under construction, to make a picture of the usage that can be compared later, after the new infrastructure will be launched and promoted. The three spots are: nearby the new cycle-pedestrian bridge over Isonzo river at Solkan (SLO); cross-border square Transalpina (SLO/IT), in front of the Transalpina railway station, the main station of Nova Gorica; a spot

in Gorizia to be defined (IT). The counting will be conducted with automatic counters, temporarily positioned along cycle and pedestrian paths at the mentioned spots, for minimum two entire weeks during the cycling season (March/April to October). The minimum data collected will be the number of passages, the direction, the time.

b) **Qualitative data collections**

Surveys will be held at the same three spots and in the same period where and when the automatic counters will be running, to know the profile of different users' segment (e.g. utility cyclists, leisure cyclists, cycle tourists).

c) **A system to collect users' feedback will be implemented, with an online form made available via the EGTC GO website.**

A report on the usage flows, users' profiles and feedback will be delivered.

Players involved

Beyond EGTC GO, the two municipalities of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, whose authorization for installing the temporary counters will be needed.

Timeframe

2020-2021.

Costs

€ 11.000

Funding sources

ITI Isonzo-Soca funding.

Local stakeholders own funding.

ACTION 3

Setup of a network of service providers

ACTION 3: Setup of a network of service providers for active mobility and cycle tourism.

The background

To promote cycling infrastructures, existing and in construction, it is best practice to accompany them with the parallel promotion of a variety of services.

To enable evidence-based decision-making about the promotion strategy, as far as services are concerned it is envisaged to setup and establish a network of service providers.

The results of this action will be taken into consideration in the ITI policy tool, in particular in the second part of the ITI governance document Strategic plan for the promotion of the Isonzo-Soča cross-border natural park. As far as services are concerned, the first part of that document contains an analysis of the current offer of hospitality services in general, followed by a promotion strategy proposal based on the knowledge base considered. Now there is the need to update the strategy after extending the knowledge base with a new survey more targeted about hospitality and investigating a wider scope of cycling-related services.

The source of inspiration for Action 3 is the lesson learned during the study visit in Amsterdam, where a presentation was given by Evelin van Damme about street management from the commerce point of view. In the Netherland we experienced an example of services providers network: "Fietsers Welkom!".

Action

The setup of a network of services providers will be articulated in three steps:

An initial survey to build a knowledge base of the existing and potential offer (desktop search) of a variety of services from bike sharing to bike rentals, from mechanical assistance and repair service to bike shops, from bike kitchens to bike-friendly accommodation, from charging stations for e-bikes to luggage transfer for cycle tourists, from routes information websites to mobile apps.

Involving the Chambers of Commerce of Gorizia and Nova Gorica, launching an open call to invite the existing providers interested in developing their activities in this field to gather together to inform about their current capacities and to identify new potential services that can be offered.

Setting up a network of those operators interested in further development, who will be consulted on a regular basis (like other expert groups already established by EGTC GO). The purpose of the new network, set up and coordinated by EGTC GO is to create a community of the bicycle-related service providers, to nudge them to extend their offer to meet the specific needs of cyclists in those areas where the current offer is limited (for instance upgrading standard accommodation to bike-friendly accommodations) and to stimulate new startup activities to provide brand new services in the areas where they are lacking. The service operators that join the network will receive visibility in the promotional material produced by EGTC

GO such as a website providing information about the routes and printed materials. Additional visibility may be offered on signposts on the ground via QRcode links to the website.

Players involved

Beyond EGTC GO, the Chambers of Commerce of Gorizia and Nova Gorica, Promoturismo FVG (regional tourism board). The service providers.

Timeframe

2020-2021.

Costs

€ 4000

Funding sources

ITI Isonzo-Soca funding.

Date

...11.03.2020.....

Signature

Ivan Curzolo- Direttore GECT GO

.....

Stamp of organisation

