

Best Practices Guide for the Promotion and Communication of European Greenways



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Staff

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Greenways4Tour Project

The Greenways4tour project fits in with the call to “promote transnational thematic tourism” products in the European Union to develop sustainable tourism. For the first time, greenways have been included in the grant programme of the European Commission’s General Directorate of Tourism (2011), indicating that they are an area regarded to have great potential and value for the development of sustainable tourism within Europe.

The aim of the project, it promotes and increase international awareness of European greenways as excellent facilities for cyclists, hikers and people with disabilities and improving sustainable tourism choices in Europe. Objectives got:

- To launch the European Greenways Observatory, a web site (to provide an information channel on a European scale) which gives information on greenways in Europe, their main features, location and the general services they offer.
- To facilitate the exchange of information, drawing on existing expertise and sharing best practice experiences in EU Member States, between relevant players and stakeholder organizations.
- To encourage improvement in the offer of services on greenways, through awareness-building and an improvement in the know-how of local service and equipment providers on greenways.

- To encourage the use of greenways, which generally run through rural areas, by specific groups of tourists, particularly cycle tourists and people with disabilities.
- To serve as inspiration for countries, regions and areas which do not yet have greenways and to encourage them to build greenways and include them in their tourism offer.

Further Information:

www.greenways4tour.org

“Promotion of transnational thematic tourism products in the EU as means of sustainable tourism development” 12/G/ENT/TOU/11/411B in the framework of the preparatory action “Sustainable Tourism”

Partners of the project:

- European Greenways Association (EGWA), Lead partner/coordinator, (Spain)
- Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy)
- Eurogites, European Federation of Farm and Village Tourism (Spain)
- Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (Spain)
- Basquetour Turismoaren Euskal Agentzia (Spain)
- Nadece Partersvi (Czech Republic)
- Consorci de les Vies Verdes de Girona (Spain)
- Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região Dão Lafões (Portugal)



Chapter 2 - European Greenways for Sustainable Tourism

European Greenways

Greenways are transport corridors, developed along independent routes following past or disused communication pathways and tracks that are available for non-motorised soft traffic.

They provide a series of common characteristics:

- Ease of passage: their slopes, either low or zero gradient, allow their use by all types of users, including mobility impaired people.
- Safety, due to their separation from roads, and to appropriate safeguards at the intersections.
- Continuity with suitable solutions for any difficulties and alternative routes.
- Respect for the environment along itineraries and encouraging its respect by the users.

Greenways provide facilities based on the infrastructures and fixtures of the old pathways and tracks, such as disused railway stations and lock keepers' houses. These

facilities can take several shapes: general accommodation, museums, bicycle rentals, accommodation for equestrians, hostels... They serve local users as well as tourists.

The greenways should have information available such as maps and brochures, on the route itself and on access to nearby sites of interest is supplied.

Greenways...

- Improve communications and non-motorised itineraries in Europe: hundreds of kilometres running through European countries are available for pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and mobility impaired people.
- Promote healthier and more balanced ways of life and transport reducing the congestion and the pollution of cities.
- Promote rural development, active tourism and local employment.
- Encourage a more human and closer relationship among citizens.
- Bring Europeans closer to both their natural and cultural environment

The European Greenways are "Communication routes reserved exclusively for non-motorized journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low-risk for users of all abilities. In this respect, canal towpaths and disused railway lines are a highly suitable resource for the development of greenways"
(Declaration of Lille, September 2000)



Chapter 3 - Greenways best practices in matters of promotion and communication.

3.1. Introduction

After many years of work by various European and Spanish organizations, the “Greenway” concept has come to be a synonym for attractive, accessible, convenient and safe recreational areas for the people of Europe. This universal image is one of the great achievements of the many people responsible for the management and communication of Greenways at a European level and is an undeniable aid to their promotion. It is vital for citizens to be aware of the existence of Greenways if they are to use them, whether that use be local on a daily basis or as a tourism resource in holiday periods and at weekends.

A growing number of citizens are now aware of greenways and consider them as an alternative option when planning their daily route to the workplace or their family holidays. In this respect, connecting with the user, for whatever reason, is a key element which all stakeholders in the development of a greenway should include among their priorities.

Information needs to be disseminated if it is to reach its target, the citizens. It needs to be disseminated with direct actions but also through information intermediaries, such as tourist offices, and the local, regional and national authorities responsible for tourism in each territory. It is all too common that the efforts put into building a greenway or any tourist facility are not backed up by an effective advertising strategy, with the result that citizens are unaware of the existence of these resources and so do not use them. A case in point is the study carried out on the North Sea Cycle Route,

whose 6,000 km run through 8 European countries, after its launch in 2001. Of the 159 local tourist offices to which information had been sent about the route, only 13% said that they were “familiar or very familiar” with the route. Today, after an intensive information campaign aimed at those tourist offices, that percentage has risen to 72%.

At present there are different levels of development of European greenways and it is precisely this situation, where some greenways have a long history while others are just starting out, which forms the baseline for the European Greenways4tour project. The exchange of experiences between the various greenways helps us move forward more effectively, by fine-tuning the successes and learning from the mistakes of others. This guide provides us with the possibility of sharing some of the best practices which have been developed in the promotion and communication of European greenways.

3. 2. Internet and social networks

Today, presence on the Web and in social networks is indispensable for promoting greenways and making people aware of both the resource and the services it offers.

The first requirement is to build a good informative website where interested parties can find accurate, useful and regularly updated information at a centralized site. Secondly, if possible, profiles should be maintained in the social networks most commonly used by greenway users.

3.2.1. Internet

A good website is essential to make it easy for potential greenway users to organize a trip to their destination. It should be available in the language of the place or places the greenway passes through, with the possibility of choosing other languages, especially English. It should also be accessible to disabled persons and designed with a view to being consulted “on the move” from mobile devices. It is advisable to offer regular news bulletin (normally monthly) to give information about new developments, activities and events.

In the case of a general website covering a number of different greenways, it should also include:

- A description of the greenway or the resource as a whole and its location on a map.
- A breakdown of the greenways into different sections: by theme, estimated time to cover the route, degrees of difficulty, type of users, particular suitability for users with special needs, etc.
- A search engine allowing users to choose a route based on criteria that they themselves have set.

The following information as a minimum should be provided for each greenway:

Routes

- Basic data of interest (length, type of surface, elevation profile...), including contact telephone number for emergencies.
- Weather information service.
- Information about public transport and bikes.
- Video or photographic tour of the greenway.

Services

- Maps, guides and IT applications. Ideally downloadable onto mobile devices.

- Basic public services: drinking water, toilets, tourist information.
- Accommodation and catering.
- Bike rental and repair; local guide and transfer services.
- Online booking of services offered, if possible.
- Information about or links to complementary activities: active tourism, open-air activities, cultural programme, gastronomy, tourist visits.

Links of interest

- Government bodies whose services or information may be of interest, especially tourism services.
- Other greenway-related initiatives, whether public or private, free or paid (such as the [Warmshow_ers](#) project, which provides accommodation and showers to



How Does It Work?

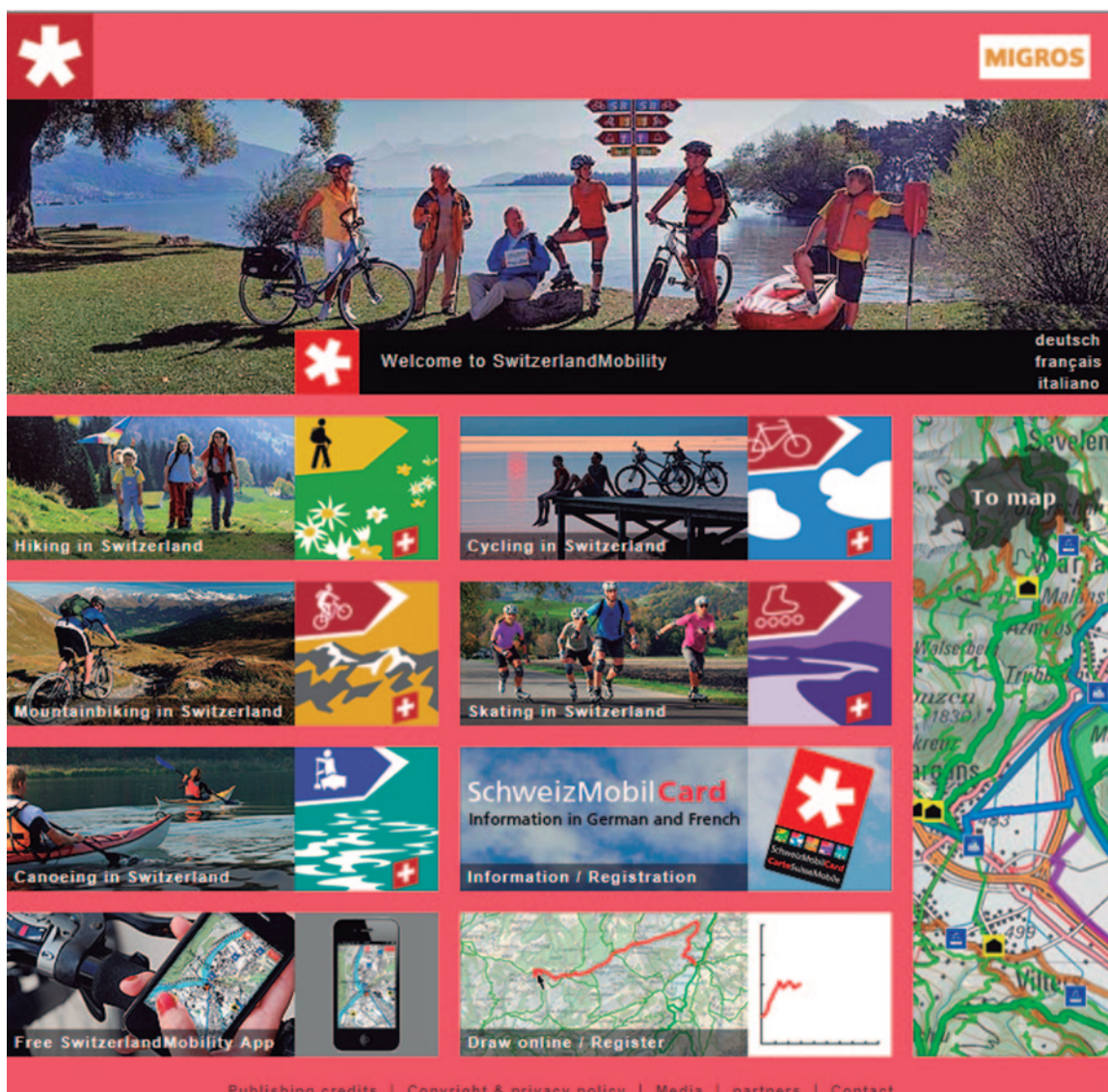
1. Bike tourists and hosts sign up on the site.
2. The interactive map and other search tools let travelers find hosts on their route.
3. Travelers send an private message to potential hosts through the site.
4. Hosts may offer hospitality consisting of a couch, a room, or a place to camp.

Read more in the [Frequently-Asked Questions](#).

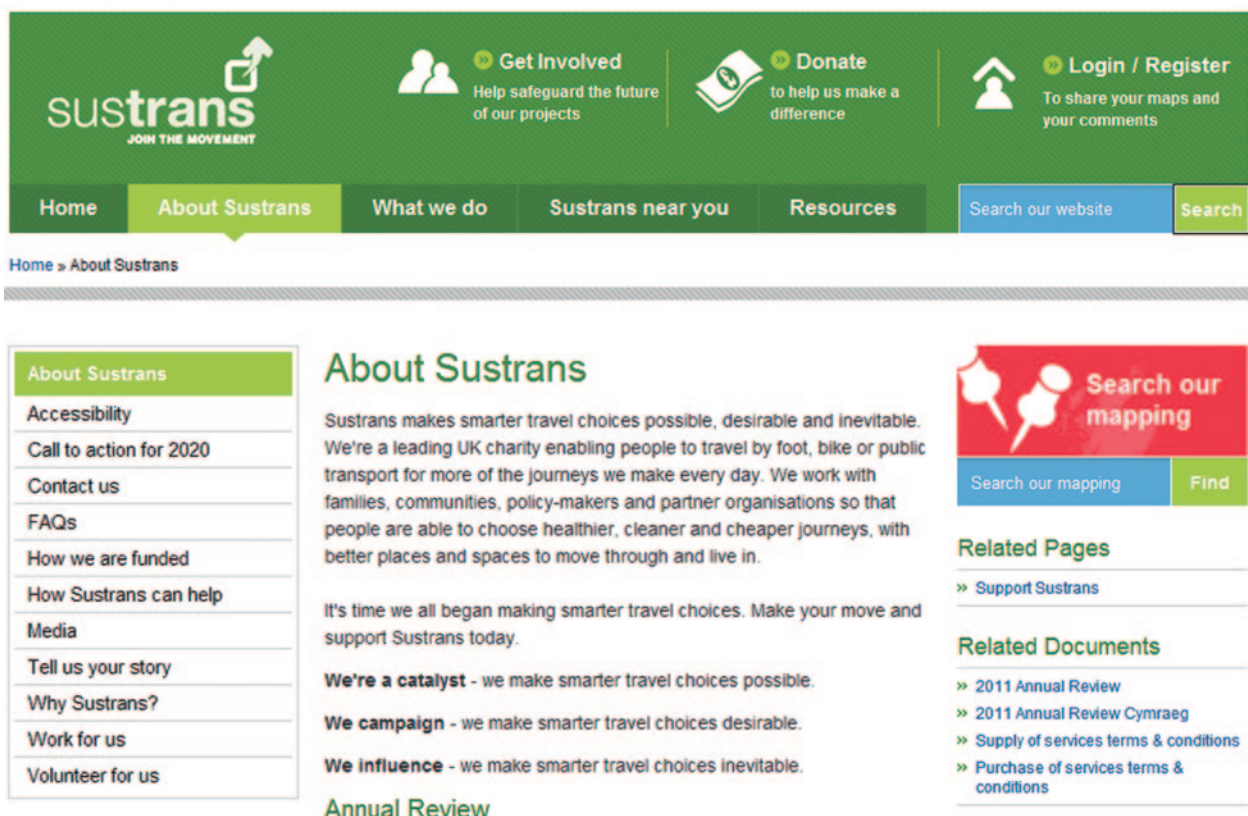
cyclists in private houses), websites for the exchange of experiences or advice among users, etc.

National non-motorized trail networks on the Web

- An outstanding example of an informative website is [SwitzerlandMobility](http://www.switzerlandmobility.ch), with information on over 300 routes all over Switzerland, whether short local trails or national scale routes. It also includes information for hikers, skaters and canoeists. It provides links to companies which organize tourism packages, guides and maps, apps for mobile devices, links to touristic points of interest, and many other options which help tourists organize their non-motorized trips through Switzerland.
- Another excellent example of a website with information at a national level is www.viasverdes.com, published by the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles, which provides descriptive and georeferenced map information covering 2,000 kilometres of disused railway lines converted into greenways. It has direct links to profiles in social networks (with over 9,000 followers in Facebook), to its own television channel on YouTube, "Vive la Vía", an online store of published guides, and information about seminars, activities and trips organized by various Spanish greenways. It sends out a monthly news bulletin and also offers an educational game for children and specific information for disabled persons.

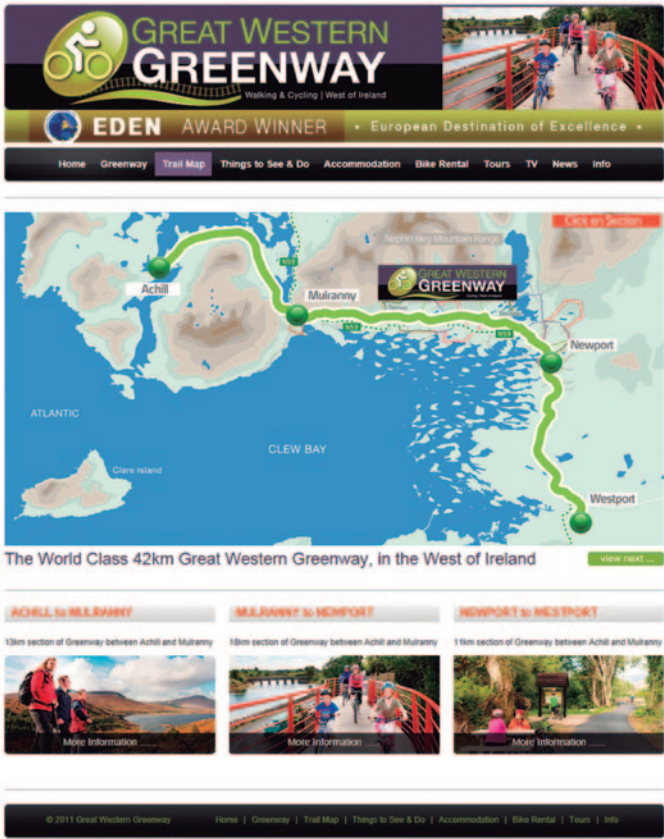


- Also worth mentioning is the website of the British, non-governmental organization (charity) [Sustrans](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) (www.sustrans.org.uk), whose flagship project is the National Cycle Network, which boasts over 22,500 kilometres of routes for cyclists and walkers. The site provides detailed maps, guides and brochures, information about other projects and activities linked to the network, apps for mobiles, etc. It pays special attention to the promotion of citizen involvement and participation.
- Of more recent creation is the website of France Vélo Tourisme, an association founded to promote cycle tourism in France (www.francevelotourisme.com). This site offers interactive maps for various cyclable routes and recommendations for travelling by bike, road safety advice, and even guidelines to follow in order to prepare for a trip properly. The website has a special section dedicated to long-distance routes in France, as well as theme-based itineraries aimed at different kinds of people, such as “rivers by bike”, “cultural



routes” or “vineyards by bike”. Still in France, we should mention the websites of [Départements & Régions Cyclables \(www.departements-regions-cyclables.org\)](http://www.departements-regions-cyclables.org), an association which brings together 72 clubs and groups from around the country for the purpose of promoting cycling as a means of transport and to help develop greenways in France, and of the Association Française de Développement des Véloroutes et Voies Vertes [AF3V \(www.af3v.org\)](http://www.af3v.org), where information may also be found about cyclable routes in France, together with maps of the routes, numerous links to documentation, videos, tourist information points, advice for travelling by bike, etc.

- An excellent website covering the various greenways in the province of Girona (Spain) is www.viesverdes.cat, which includes not only detailed maps of the greenways and their surroundings but also provides information for linking up the various greenways of the province by using other trails. Up-to-date information is provided about incidents or improvements affecting the greenways, tourist services and activities.



Greenways and local non-motorized networks on the Web

- Regarding specific Greenways, we should mention the website devoted to the Irish [Great Western Greenway](http://www.greenway.ie) (www.greenway.ie). This Greenway, winner of the [EDEN](#) (European Destination of Excellence) prize for Ireland in 2011, provides all the information that a cycle tourist might need: maps of the route, information about accommodation and bike rental, access to printed guides, digital guides and guides for mobile devices, touristic points of interest close to the greenway, etc.



3.2.2. Social networks

Social networks have become a major part of our lives and have influenced the way we relate to the world. Therefore an essential part of our communication strategy should be to create a social network profile of the Greenway or tourist destination and ensure that it is always up-to-date. It should be stressed that keeping one or several profiles active in social networks requires daily dedication, with frequent updates, comments, photos, competitions, questions for the followers, etc. The followers expect this dynamism, so not providing almost daily

new postings may create the same sensation of abandonment as an out-of-date website or an unmaintained greenway

Of the most influential social networks today, five stand out in particular: Facebook (with over 900 million users), Twitter, Google +, Pinterest and LinkedIn, although the

latter focuses more on the business world. We will centre on specific examples of the first two.

Facebook

- In Facebook we would highlight the profile of "[La Loire à Vélo](#)", with nearly 13,000 fans, which is constantly active in the network. Recent photos of the trails, videos, cultural and touristic events, quizzes and little competitions make this a highly active profile with frequent feedback from users in the form of answers, comments, shared material and "likes".

Twitter

- The social activism which characterizes [Sustrans](#) is central to its profiles in Facebook and in Twitter ([twitter.com/sustrans](#)), followed by close to 14,000 and 20,000 people respectively. It is constantly active in both networks; it posts several tweets a day, it often re-tweets, and it provides all kinds of links to information of interest to its followers. It also has specific accounts for different regions, although these reach fewer people.





3.3. Audio-visual media

Audio-visual media are a great tool for promoting greenways, offering an overview of the area, landscape and cultural heritage in an immediate and intuitive manner, while giving viewers a certain idea of the difficulty and suitability of the greenway for use by everyone, including persons of reduced mobility.

At the same time, audio-visual media are interesting from the point of view of publicizing the resource. These videos, when made available to the public at large, may be easily shared on the various social networks. They are also an excellent way of providing the media with greenway promotional material in a fast and efficient manner.

For this reason the European Greenways Association, as part of the European Greenways4tour project, decided to produce a video to promote European greenways as excellent infrastructures for the practice of sustainable tourism by bike or on foot. The video, produced by the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (project partner), is available for unrestricted use by all entities interested in promoting greenways at www.aevv-egwa.org.

3.3.1. Television series

- A magnificent example of the promotion of Spanish greenways, one which is easily exportable to other regions or European countries, is the television series “Vive la

Vía”, produced by the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles. Its 18 chapters, each lasting 30 minutes, provide information in a very attractive way about Spanish greenways and the scenic, cultural, and gastronomic wealth of the areas they pass through. A number of factors make this a best practice:

- The intensive **collaboration between public authorities**, since the funding for this ambitious project came from four general sponsors (one of them from the private sector) for the series as a whole, together with the specific backing from another 33 regional and local authorities for the development of each chapter.
- The **broadcasting** of the series, which was carried out in two phases that were launched on the second channel of the Spanish public TV channel (TVE) in 2005 and 2007 respectively, at peak time (Sunday night). Some chapters had audiences of 1,800,000 viewers. Since then, TVE has re-screened the series 8 times on its second channel and on its International Channel. The series has also been broadcast on others television channels and on RENFE trains.
- The series has also been **distributed** on 50,000 DVDs which were sold in bookstores and newsstands, as well as through FFE's website www.viasverdes.com.



The screenshot shows the website of the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles. The header includes the logo and navigation links: LA FUNDACIÓN, INVESTIGACIÓN, FORMACIÓN, VÍA LIBRE, VÍAS VERDES, MUSEOS DEL FERROCARRIL, and CULTURA. A sidebar on the left lists various sections like Misión y Objetivos, Patronato, Organización, Sedes, Agenda, Publicaciones (highlighted), Tiendas on-line, Enlaces, Plan de Igualdad, Empleo, and Perfil del contratante. The main content area is titled 'La Fundación: Publicaciones' and features a section for 'Vías Verdes' with a link to 'Volver al índice de catálogos'. Below this, there are five product tiles for 'Guía de Vías Verdes' (volumes I, II, and III) and 'Vive la Vía' (Fase I and Fase II). The footer indicates 'Viendo página 1 de 1' and 'Ver 10 por página'.

3.3.2. Audio-visual resources

There can be no doubt that if you want to promote a greenway today, it is almost indispensable to have audio-visual resources showing the appeal of the greenway and its surrounding areas. Videos which will be disseminated over the Internet, social networks, screens in the establishments

along the greenways, local information offices, as well as being extremely useful for presentations at conferences, trade fairs and all kinds of events.

- For this reason, at the same time the aforementioned television series on Spanish greenways was being produced,

Why a video?

A [survey commissioned by Google and Ipsos](#) (The 2012 Traveler), conducted in April-May 2012 among US travellers, looked into how travellers take decisions when it comes to preparing their trip. It concluded that **the online video is an omnipresent element in the tourism sector**. This report combines information and conclusions based on questionnaires to 5,000 consumers with proprietary data provided by Google (which is copious to say the least).

The survey concludes that online videos are used for planning trips by:

- 89% of all leisure travellers.
- **93% of all business travellers.**
- 80% of travellers planning their trips online, which is why it's essential to be

present and locatable on the Web.

- **The travellers see online videos at every stage of their planning of the trip:**
 - 66% watch videos when they are thinking of making a trip.
 - **64% when they choose a destination.**
 - **62 % when they are looking for ideas of things to do at their destination.**
 - 57% when they choose where to stay at a certain destination.
 - 34% when they decide on the site to book their trip at.
- **Searches from smartphones** and tablets are gradually replacing the traditional computer. Travellers are beginning to carry mobiles instead of using computers and they look for audio-visual content lasting a short time: short videos.
- **The video is a call to action.** Online video sites encourage travellers to make their booking. The following percentages were encouraged to book as a result of seeing online videos while they were planning their trips:
 - 45% of the leisure travellers
 - 72% of the business travellers
 - 74% of the luxury travellers

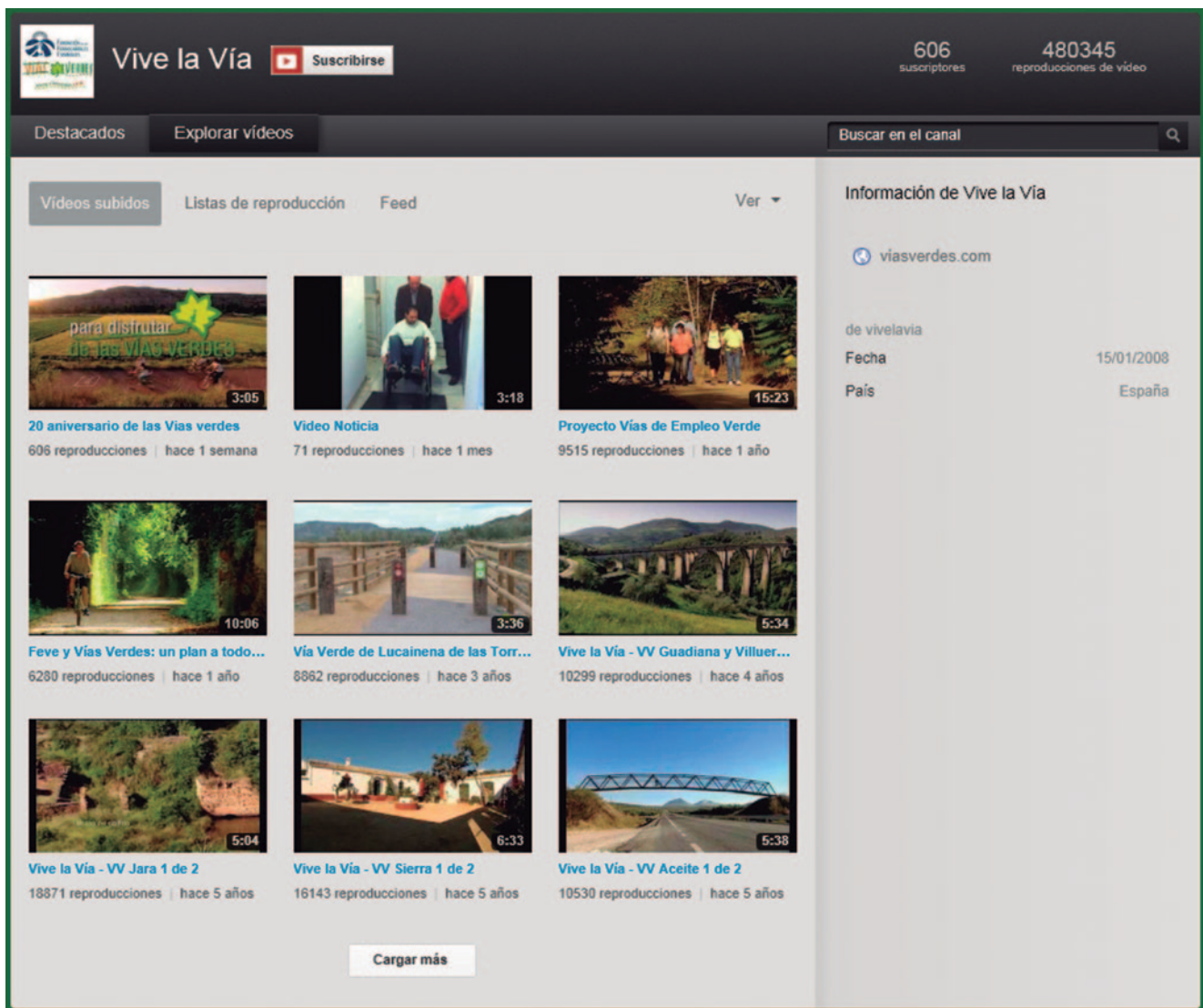
In conclusion: videos generate a choice criterion for tourists and, since smartphones are used with increasing frequency in the world, **citizens may travel and turn up wherever there is a screen.**

a summary video lasting 9 minutes per each chapter was produced, and FFE opened its own channel on YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/vivelavia), which has already racked up 500,000 downloads and on which a great many more videos on greenways have been posted. Recently the FFE has produced a new promotional video, just 3 minutes long, tailored to the brevity of content predominating in audio-

visual communication these days. In the first three weeks of publication, over 750 downloads were recorded.

The establishments and companies offering tourist services based on Spanish greenways can set up links to these videos from their own websites, thereby publicizing them and attracting potential clients.





- La Loire à Vélo (France) has an [audio-visual advert](#) some 5 minutes long which promotes not only the La Loire route, but also a whole series of activities based around that route, such as visiting the castles of La Loire and its cultural heritage, open air sports, flea markets, visits to towns and cities, camp sites, tourist offices, boat tours and gastronomy.

One of the keys of this initiative is that this ad was also put out on French television, precisely during the broadcast of the 2012 Tour de France, which ensured that it reached a great many members of its target audience. What is more, the third French TV channel put out brief reports lasting about 3 minutes

each to explore the route, material which was also posted on the [web](#). Meanwhile, there is a programme entitled “[Vues sur Loire](#)” broadcast by the same television channel, which each weekend takes a look at current affairs in this French region, for which cycle tourism is one of its most important tourist attractions.

- Also France Vélo Tourisme has produced attractive videos to promote the long-distance cycle routes that criss-cross the country, such as La Véloscénie, La Vélodyssée, Le Tour de Manche and L’Avenue Verte Londres-Paris. They are available both from their website and on their video channel on [Vimeo](#) (vimeo.com/user12093946).




- As part of the National Tourism Development Authority's initiative "Discover Ireland" (www.discoverireland.ie) aimed at promoting Ireland as a tourist destination channel, a number of videos have been produced in collaboration with the RTE Travel television. They have been broadcast on television and are available to users on their YouTube channel, many of which cover destinations suitable for cycling and walking in the country. We would highlight the video in which TV personality Diarmuid Gavin and his young daughter Eppie cycle the Great Western Greenway.
- Once again, we need to mention Sustrans as one of the most outstanding practices, since their YouTube video channel boasts a large number of videos on a wide range of different themes: specific Sustrans campaigns and projects, involvement of the local population, education, events, technical solutions on their network of cyclable routes, etc. In this respect, we should highlight the development of the video competition "My National Cycle Network", to mark the organization's 15th anniversary and the production of its promotional video "The National Cycle Network", promoting its search

engine for routes forming part of the National Cycle Network in the United Kingdom, which presents a new symbol in Google Maps for the bicycle to add to the ones currently used to denote private motorized transport, public transport

and foot travel. This original audio-visual proposal for the promotion of the use of bikes has received an extraordinary number of views (over 25,000) in comparison with all the other campaigns launched.

GREENWAY TV

EDEN 2011 The Great Western Greenway, Co Mayo (...)




Great Western Greenway-EDEN Award

European Destination of Excellence

The Great Western Greenway winner of the EDEN Award - European Destination of Excellence.

GREENWAY TV


Discover Ireland - Tracks and Trails 2 - Great ...




Diarmuid Gavin cycles the Greenway

Spectacular mountains and beautiful views across Clew Bay

TV presenter Diarmuid Gavin and his young daughter Eppie cycle from Newport to Mullaranny along the Great Western Greenway.




Sustrans

 **Suscribirse**

68
suscriptores


Featured Playlists

Videos favoritos



8 videos


Videos subidos



72 videos

Campaigns & PR


Films created in support of one of our campaigns...



9 videos

Connect2


Enabling millions of people to get about on foot a...



24 videos

Community involvement


Films about projects such as DIY Streets where S...



1 video

Education & young people


Movies from our projects based in education & wit...



Reproducir todo

Events


From cycle rides to parties



5 videos

National Cycle Network


Films showcasing the Network's 13,400 miles of...



20 videos

Technical


For the engineer in you



5 videos

More movies about Sustrans


Movies that other's have produced about Sustran...



7 videos

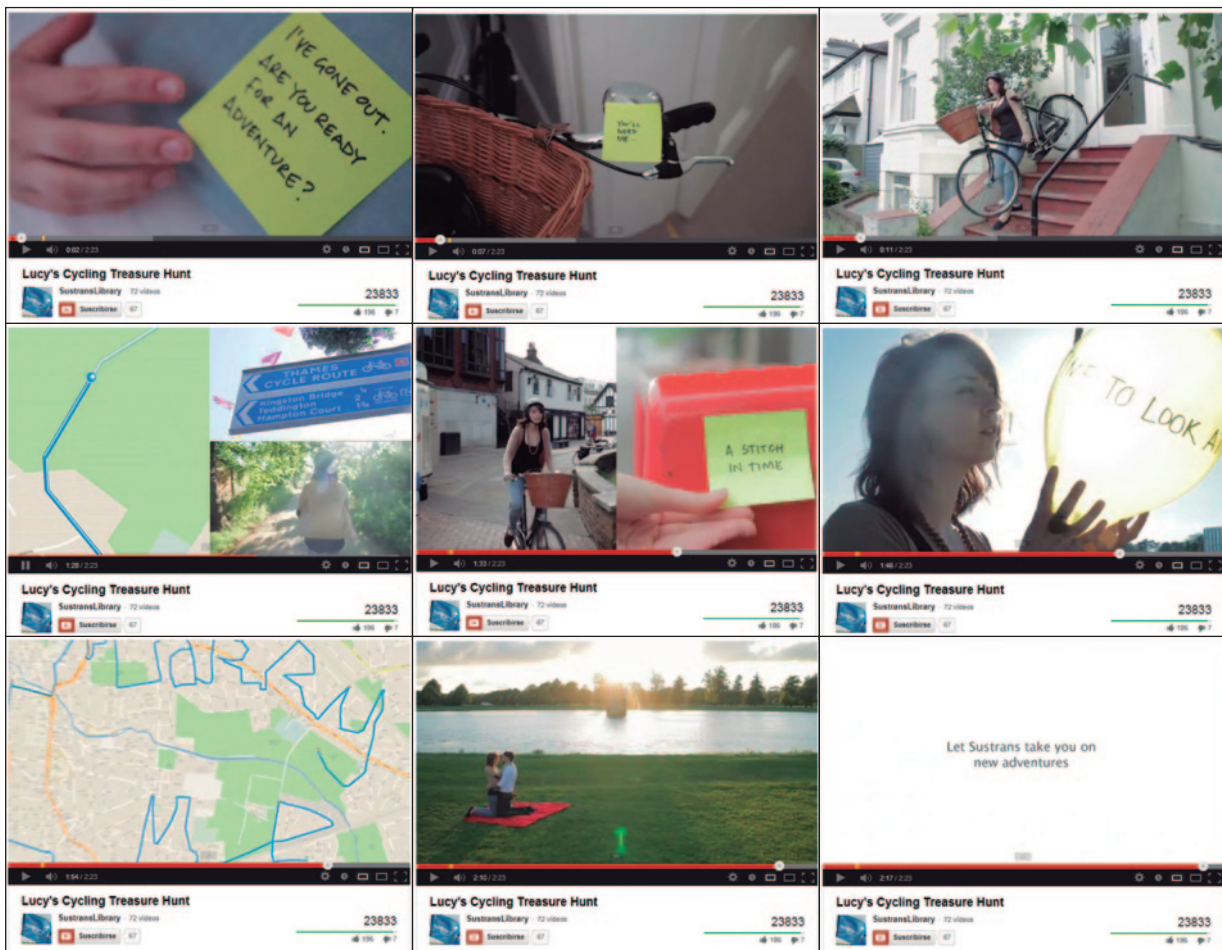
Watching

Other peoples films- Sometimes about Sustrans o...



11 videos

ver todas >



3.4. Apps for mobile devices

The growing popularity of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets is spawning the development of innumerable apps, some of which have been specifically developed to facilitate the use and enjoyment of greenways. Others, while they have not been designed with that purpose solely in mind, may also be used to that end.

According to the latest data released by Google, one out of every four minutes online is accounted for by mobiles and one out of every five searches for destinations and trips originate from these devices, a percentage which is doubling with every passing year.

Already today, six out of ten users have a smartphone, which means that 24 million people access the Internet from their phone,



compared to 30 million who access it from their computer. Everything suggests that in two years' time Internet traffic from mobiles will exceed that from desktop computers.

This growing critical mass will give rise to new patterns of consumption, so it should come as no surprise that the various entities responsible for managing greenways and non-motorized routes are focusing increasingly more on offering this type of resources to users.

- [The Girona Greenways e-routes](#) application guides users along the Greenways of Girona using digital maps on smartphones and keeps travellers informed about the various points of interest near the route by means of some entertaining videos.

These e-routes comprise three main routes belonging to the Girona Greenways



proper and a number of other secondary routes. The user will be accompanied by Jep, a pleasant, virtual character whose job it is to guide visitors through the various multimedia screens and interpret the natural and cultural elements encountered along the way. The screen will also provide a description of the route, how long it takes, any elevation changes, and points of interest.

The application can be downloaded from the Girona Greenways website, www.viesverdes.cat, or be accessed by renting one of the 30 GPS-equipped PDA devices at information points along the route. On the website there are versions available for Windows Mobile, BlackBerry and Android. The user may choose to

follow the guide in Spanish, English, French or Catalan.

- Mayo County Council, governing body of the [Great Western Greenway](#), has developed a free application specific to the greenway. It provides information regarding the route, things to do, maps, bike rental, accommodation, taxi and transfer service, trails and other nearby routes, and instructions on how to use the application itself.

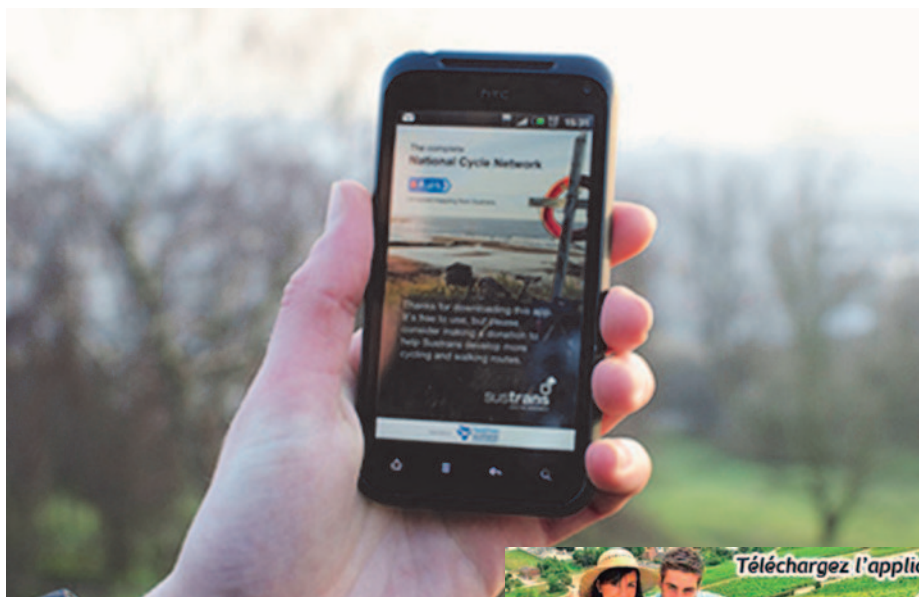
It includes GPS for real time location on the user's map and the possibility of consulting it when there is no Internet coverage, something which is really useful when we are talking about travelling through the countryside where there is not always the coverage we require.

From a more recreational viewpoint, the application mixes audio inputs, photos, drawings and texts to tell the stories surrounding the greenway; tales of princesses, pirate queens, poisonings and carnivorous plants.

- For the French cycle route La Vélodyssée a specific mobile app has also been developed for mobile devices, devoted to the world of cycling in the ["Vendée" Department](#).

This app, which is free to download, has been available since September 2012 and was made possible thanks to the collaboration of the Vendée Department and the Departmental Tourism Committee. It provides extensive information about the cycle paths which run through the Vendée Department. It includes information about bike rental services and various touristic points of interest.





- The SwitzerlandMobility website, devoted to the planning of non-motorized itineraries in Switzerland, has [two applications](#) which are easily accessible from the home page. The first provides information on over 600 national, regional and local routes to be tackled by bike, on foot, in canoe or on skates, allowing users to plan routes. Information about over 4,000 points of interest can be found, such as accommodation, services for cyclists, monuments, towns and cities, etc. It also has a search engine which combines over 24,000 public transport stops with the network of routes and trails, with invaluable information about timetables.

The second application – aimed more at devices like iPads or tablets - enables users to download map-based information about Switzerland, showing the country's official network of trails. The app includes route planning functionality and an audio-guide. Once downloaded, it will continue to work without any Internet connection.

- In the case of the initiative [Nederland Fietsland](#), aimed at promoting the

Netherlands as a cycle tourism destination, [a number of tools](#) have been developed, among which are one or two which are somewhat more “innovative”. These range from an application which enables users to share their chosen route on the Internet or on social networks, to tools which shows routes mapped out by users which serve as links between existing ones, a camp site finder, and even advice on how to ride your bike.

- Sustrans has produced an application for the National Cycle Network, which accesses information on the over 22,500 kilometres making up this network in the United Kingdom, on maps of a scale of 1:10,000. These maps show the best shops selling local produce, school, libraries, museums, sports centres, and places of touristic interest, bike stores, etc. The app also has a link to Sustrans' website where events, news items and projects of interest are posted, and it is synchronized with public transport networks, thereby providing users with the benefits of intermodality.

3.5. Publications.

When we speak of cycle tourism and hiking, the availability of good maps, guides and brochures with detailed information and maps is a key factor in the user's decision to use a greenway or a non-motorized route. It is therefore a good way to promote greenways and their surroundings.

Of the traditional resources published on a physical medium such as a brochures or books, perhaps the most important are those maps and guides on sale in book stores and specialized shops. And there are an increasing number of projects nowadays, funded with public money, which make good tools of this type available to citizens. However, with every passing day it is more common to find a range of links and tools on the websites of each greenway which enable citizens to access material of a similar quality by downloading it from the site in a digital format.

Websites can also provide easy access to innovative resources, offer customized information for the user, or make use of a range of different media to show potential users the same information in an attractive manner.

3.5.1. Printed publications: maps and guides

Although the use of the printed media for providing informative material about greenways is becoming a little outmoded, it is interesting to have maps, guides and brochures on paper, items which can be physically handled and which allow users to refer to them later in quiet moments. This is especially true if the material has been designed with a specific audience in mind which might need to have information in this type of medium, or in cases when, for reasons of design or due to other factors,

printed material has some advantage over other types of media.

One difficulty inherent to printed publications is the problem of ensuring that they reach really interested parties. One solution to this is to use the greenway's website to promote the existence of physical material provided free of charge, indicating where it can be found, since the need to go somewhere in a certain time frame will act as a very effective selection criterion for potential recipients. Obviously, it is always recommendable to have this material available for downloading on the website of the greenway's managing authority.

There are countless examples of excellent promotional material that has been published. Especially well known is the material published by organizations with a national scope, such as Sustrans, SwitzerlandMobility, Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles, France Vélo Tourisme and Association Française des Véloroutes et Voies Vertes.

Below we give some examples; some are for sale and some free of charge.

- [SwitzerlandMobility \(Switzerland\)](#) once again stands out for its excellent guides, each specializing in the various preferences of the users (hiking, cycle tourism, mountain biking, skating or canoeing). These are available from the online store on their website, where there is a different search engine for guides or maps using various criteria: routes, regions or keywords. Once the sought for guide or map has been found, a brief description of the material and its content is provided.
- On [Eurovelo 6's](#) website there is a good selection of quality guides and maps, with a link to the place where they can be acquired and a brief description



of the content. With this material the organization of a bike trip along this 3,500 kilometre long cycle route from Nantes in France to the mouth of the Danube in Romania is child's play. This route has the advantage of following the path of two national and international routes with a great cycle tourism tradition along the Loire Valley and the River Danube.

- The [Fundación de Ferrocarriles Españoles](#) offers a Greenways Guide in 3 volumes to publicize the 2,000 km of disused railway lines available in Spain for walkers and cyclists. The guide has been updated on a number of occasions since its first publication in 1997. Published by a well-known travel book publishing house, this guide can be obtained in bookshops

throughout the country. Over 50,000 copies have been sold, either in book stores or online from the foundation's website www.viasverdes.com. Based on extracts from these books, the FFE has also published a number of greenway guides to be inserted into the Sunday supplements of national and regional papers.

- The Polish greenway, [New Amber Trail Greenways](#), has developed a comprehensive guide over 150 pages long with maps and information in Polish and English, which was funded by a European project on "Sustainable Tourism on Greenways". The printed guide can be ordered online and also is available for downloading and reading online from the trail managers' website.

There are interesting examples of specialized publications on the environmental interpretation of greenway settings, used as aids to environmental education, mainly for schoolchildren.

One of the most interesting environmental education guides on greenways produced in Spain is the one published by Ecologists in Action for the Spanish La Sierra Greenway (available free of charge at the [web](#)) and it served as a reference for the Fundación de Ferrocarriles Españoles when they produced their Environmental Education Guide to the

La Jara Greenway, with the collaboration of the Fundación Biodiversidad. A limited number of printed editions were published; these were distributed to the schools in the province through which this greenway passes (Toledo), since a large number of schoolteachers asked to have the guides in printed form so as to be able to work with them in the classroom. A DVD accompanied the .pdf format guide together with some extras such as environmental education videos, games and activities, all of which may be downloaded from the website www.viasverdes.com.



Guía de educación ambiental - Vía Verde Jara

Febrero, 2010



Guía dirigida a grupos escolares para recorrer la Vía Verde de La Jara (Toledo).

Realizada por la Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles con la colaboración de la Fundación Biodiversidad dependiente del Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural y Marino. (5,6Mb)



Descargar pdf

3.5.2. Free downloads of maps and guides

One of the resources which our new technological era has made available to greenway users is the possibility of downloading the material they are interested in directly from the Web. This option considerably reduces the cost to users, the managing authority, and the environment, while providing quality and up-to-date information. Below we mention a few of the countless examples.

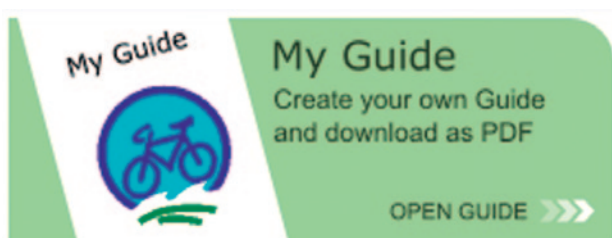
The [Iron Curtain Train](#) (Eurovelo route 13) offers users the possibility of downloading, directly from their website, maps, guides and official brochures on the 6,800 km of non-motorized route which passes through several European countries, following the path of the “Iron Curtain” which used to divided Europe during the Cold War

years. The official brochure is of an excellent quality and is beautifully published. It also provides all manner of useful information about this peerless route. At the end of the brochure a list of official guides (which are not free) is provided for each stage.

An interesting new feature offered by some websites is the possibility to build or customize the guides, so that users can choose and download just the information about the section or sections they are planning to cover.

This is the case of the French [Vélo Luberon](#) website, whose interactive maps enable users to access a database containing the various routes and points of interest, as well as a number of services available. The zoom feature allows users to adjust the depth of image and the scale (detailed maps to a scale of up to 1/500), so that the image





finally shown on the screen can be printed from a .pdf file created by the program. It is also possible to access the brochure on the routes in the region in a very visual and attractive magazine format thanks to a type of tools that may prove useful to greenway managers (in this particular case the site uses [ISSUU's](#) "digital newsstand").

Another route forming part of the Eurovelo project, the [North Sea Cycle Route](#) which runs for 6,000 km around the North Sea, allows users to create an à la carte guide in downloadable .pdf with the information that they decide to include, using such search criteria as region, theme (including accommodation information, services, touristic points of interest, events, historical figures, news, etc.), countries or routes.

3.6. Citizen involvement initiatives

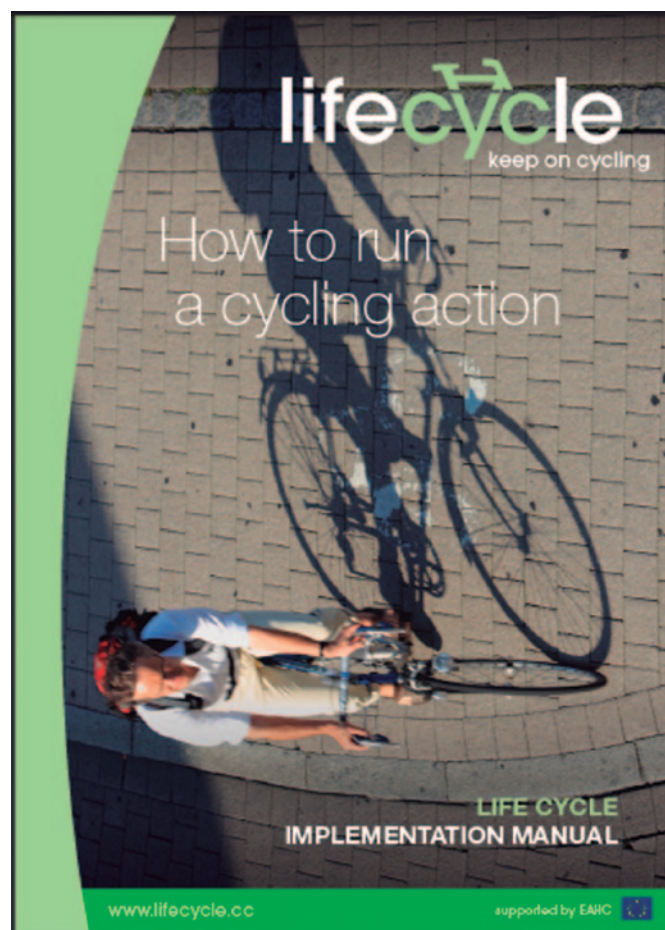
From the very moment the development of a greenway is first conceived and planned we need to initiate actions aimed at involving the citizens of the localities affected in the successful culmination of the project. The success of a greenway depends to a great extent on the degree of acceptance and support it arouses among the local populace, and the extent to which they use, take care of, and promote it. There are many initiatives from which we can learn, and whose strategies we can copy and tailor to the specific circumstances of each project.

[Lifecycle](#) is a project funded by the [European Union's Public Health Programme](#), the purpose of which is to

identify, promote and enhance initiatives which encourage all kinds of people to take up and keep up the habit of cycling.

It recommends a number of key points which any greenway manager or promoter of activities should bear in mind when organizing events involving the local populace:

- Plan the activity properly, according to the specific circumstances of each case, avoiding standardized solutions.
- Set criteria for the measurement of change and the monitoring of actions.
- Observe what is happening in the community or group which each action is targeting, analysing their acceptance or rejection of similar activities and reacting accordingly.



- Obtain support and cooperation, even from entities outside the organization itself, whether it be monetary, in kind, or in human resources, and from those actually targeted by the measures, by means of awareness campaigns.
- It is essential to have a clear communication and advertising plan aimed at all the project stakeholders, including the media, sponsors and local authorities, as well as those actually targeted by the project.

3.6.1. Initiatives at a national or international level

- When we speak of citizen participation, we automatically think of the organization Sustrans; all of their projects stand out for the strong element of citizen involvement. With regard to working with the local populace, the [“DIY Street”](#) project is particularly interesting. It aims to bring together neighbours and people

belonging to the same community so that they can “redesign” their streets, making them a safer and nicer place to live. Special mention should be made of this project’s step by step [Simple Guide](#), which is essential reading for associations or persons wishing to develop a project such as this at a local level with a high degree of citizen involvement. The guide contains instructions for organizing meetings, assessing the viability of projects, calling press conferences, obtaining funds for the development of projects, and a great many more useful tips.

Another successful formula for publicizing greenways and promoting their use and respect among the local populace is to do it through schoolchildren. Once again, we would highlight Sustrans’ efforts in the United Kingdom to promote the use of bikes to make the journey to school, typified by [“The Big Pedal”](#) project. In order to encourage schoolchildren and their





parents to use this means of transport, they have set up a sort of “race on a virtual circuit”, which includes a number of different greenways. The more schoolchildren use bikes, the faster the school gets round the circuit; naturally the completion is weighted so schools of different sizes can compete with an equal chance of success. As a result of this project, in 2012 over 300,000 pupils of nearly 1,000 schools pedalled to school.

- Another action aimed at publicizing the existence of greenways has been in place in Spain since 1999. This is [Greenway Day](#), organized in May of every year by the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles to encourage local authorities, greenway managers, and groups of citizens to organize festivities to promote the use of Greenways. Over 20,000 citizens take part in the numerous activities put on all

over the country. Those organized by the [La Sierra Greenway](#) are particularly lively: mass bike rides (some under a full moon), half marathons, photographic rallies, activities for kids, and walks for adults along the greenway...They put special emphasis on involving the women of nearby localities, a major challenge in the rural setting through which the greenway runs, one which has resulted in a far from inconsiderable female (and family) presence on this greenway.

- This Spanish experience served as a reference for the launch of European Greenways Day by [the European Greenways Association – EGWA](#), which encouraged its members (nationals, regional and local greenway managers) to organize citizen participation activities on their routes every September, timed to coincide with European Mobility Week.

- The creation of [Friends of Czech Greenways](#) (Czech Republic), as its name suggests, an association of friends of Czech greenways, has clearly had a significant and direct impact on the promotion of greenways. Under the umbrella of this citizen participation initiative, since 1994 events have been organized and conferences attended in various countries. Members have worked with travel journalists and tour operators, have provided tourist information (by distributing brochures and guides), and have organized cultural exchange projects.

3.6.2. Initiatives at a local level

- One of the most impressive examples of the momentum that can be achieved by a citizen participation initiative in the field of greenways is provided by the [Great Southern Trail](#) in Ireland, where the “Great Southern Trail Action Group”, a not-for-profit group of volunteers, has worked enthusiastically for the last 20 years to turn an old disused railway line into a splendid greenway which everyone can now enjoy. This effort was recognized by the award of one of the prizes given by the European Greenways Association in 2011.
- The Spanish [Montes de Hierro Greenway](#) has developed an original activity with the local populace. Taking advantage of the fact that the football team Athletic de Bilbao, the most important team in the province, was playing a vital domestic competition final, the Greenway organized a popular march, under the slogan “En busca del alirón”. [A video](#) was produced which was disseminated through social networks and seen by over 100,000 personas, in which the origin of the term “alirón” was explained (a corruption of the English term ‘all iron’) and its relationship with the mining past of the region and the victories of the local football team. A number of media representatives covered the march, in which the mayors of nearby towns and villages took part.



- In the case of the La [Jara Greenway](#) (Spain), the commonwealth of municipalities that manages it developed a community theatre project entitled “The train that never was” in order to publicize this trail which runs through a rural and very sparsely populated area. This participatory theatre initiative involved over 500 people between audience, actors and those participating in the creative workshops. It resulted in a multitude of mentions in social networks, news items in the press, interviews on radio and short TV reports apart, of course, from a lovely piece of shadow puppet theatre which continues to be put on during festivities organized around the Jara Greenway.
- Another project which is transferable to any greenway is the [Go Barrhead! Schools Cycling Initiative](#) (Scotland). This initiative is run by the secondary schools of the town of Barrhead, where bike use was included as just another subject in the school curriculum, and pupils were encouraged to use bikes out of school hours too. To this end, cycling clubs, prizes and activity passports were set up for pupils who cycled to school, among other promotional and educational activities. One of the most noteworthy outcomes was that there was a spectacular increase in the number of pupils between 9 and 12 years old at schools in Barrhead who cycled; the figure rose from 0.4% to 7.75% in two years. This experience is perfectly transferable to all greenways that run near schools or sports and leisure centres for children and young people.

3.6.3. Celebrities, famous peoples and opinion leaders backing projects

Another practice for promoting greenways worthy of mention is to engage the support that sports personalities, TV presenters,



actors and other celebrities can bring to specific projects in order to drive citizen participation campaigns or simply promote and raise awareness of greenways.

- Sustrans teamed up with cyclist and 2012 Olympic champion [Dani King](#) to launch a campaign which called on the government to include cycling in the school curriculum nationwide. In the words of the cyclist herself: *“I speak to so many kids who would love to cycle to school but they don’t have the right training to do so safely or the facilities at school for their bikes. We know kids who cycle to school are healthier, more confident and perform better in their lessons. If we want to see a real change in the number of kids riding to school, and the benefits that entails, we need to minimum level of cycling education and facilities in every school in the UK.”*

In the case of Spanish greenways, two of the most successful cyclists in the country, Pedro Delgado (winner of the Tour de France and twice winner of the Vuelta a



España) and Miguel Induráin (five times winner of the Tour de France and twice winner of the Giro d'Italia) have played an active role in their promotion. Pedro Delgado – also very popular as a Spanish TV commentator for major cycling events - promotes the greenways in the vicinity of places through which the Vuelta a España cyclist races, using information provided by the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (FFE). Miguel Induráin, meanwhile, presented the Greenways Passport, a promotional initiative launched by the FFE in which a total of 19 Spanish greenways took part.



and veteran of Spanish public television, Lorenzo Milá. He appeared in the first chapter of the television series “Vive la Vía”, encouraging people to use greenways, as did the cyclist Pedro Delgado. Another very famous Spanish TV personality, Mercedes Milá, who has presented many different TV programmes, admits to being a real fan of greenways. She has cycled a large number of greenways in recent years and has given several TV interviews wearing the Spanish

Another celebrity to help promote greenways is the former news anchorman

greenways promotional T-shirt, as well as encouraging all her blog followers to go out and enjoy greenways. When the “Greenways, Zero CO2” campaign was launched by the FFE, she wrote this message of support:

We are a group greenway fans. I am not capable of adding up the amount of CO2 we have saved but I can tell you the mountains of happiness that [greenways] have brought us. When I first discovered them I thought they were a great invention; that whoever had had the idea to reuse those useless iron tracks and turn them into routes to paradise deserved our heartfelt thanks. Now, in Spring, they are waiting for us all over Spain and they have beautified themselves as if they knew that a lot of us were going to visit them. We, my greenway group and I, are already planning our next visit and we're counting the days...



3.7. Actions with journalists and tour operators.

Greenways are often referred to by the media and by European tour operators in a somewhat unclear manner. A great deal of the information and offers of cycling and walking tourism do not explicitly include the term “greenway” in the search criteria, and so lose the benefits of this branding, which conveys a positive image regarding the convenience, accessibility, and appeal which are the hallmark of greenways.

In countries such as Spain and France, however, it can be said the greenways vías verdes and voies vertes now enjoy a strong brand image and are well positioned in the market. Here the promotion and marketing of the greenways is based precisely on the advantages inherent to these routes, since potential users can differentiate them for other routes due to their high standards of safety and accessibility.

In order to strengthen the brand image of European greenways, it is essential to leverage all types of media, since in addition to the traditional printed media, specialized magazines, television and radio networks, we now have countless other media to make use of (blogs, chats, social networks...). These journalists and communication activists are essential to help publicize the existence of greenways and their main features, qualities and benefits.

It is fundamental to have a department or person working within the greenway management team who can dedicate at least part of their time to communication. A magnificent investment in this respect, over and above the classic placing of advertising in the media, is to engage or appoint a head of communication to work within the greenway management team and be responsible for writing and issuing

press releases, producing and sending out articles and photos to specialized or general interest magazines and newspapers, calling and conducting press conferences and even producing specialized magazines and video or audio material about greenways and their surroundings. Similarly, it is very worthwhile taking the time to organize activities and events to which the media are invited. In short, you have to keep the media in the loop.

Also, due to the boom in the new technologies, while it is true that printed information or information broadcast by the media reaches its maximum audience when it is first released, it must also be available online and on social networks to be used later.



3.7.1. Best practices: fam-trips.

Familiarization trips (known in the trade as fam tours or fam trips) are recognized as one of the best ways to promote a tourist product or destination in terms of economic cost. These are courtesy trips which are usually offered to journalists, tour operators or travel agencies so that they can experience a tourist destination first hand. The purpose of these trips is to raise awareness of the product and to forge a closer relationship, thereby improving its marketing in the future.

Thus, promotional fam trips organized for journalists (also known as press trips), after which they are expected to give a first hand and detailed account of their experiences on the trip, is one of the most effective strategies for promoting tourism, since it consists of convincing potential tourists that a destination is worth visiting. The idea is not just to invest large amounts of money in advertising campaigns; it is to invest in the people who will recount, first hand, their personal experience with and at the destination on their respective media (television, radio, printed press, blog, social network...). They make up one of the factors which can have most impact on the reputation of an area because they recount their own experience.

Sometimes promotional fam trips are arranged especially for bloggers and online press (blogger trips). In this case a group of travel bloggers with a healthy number of followers and readers on their network are invited. The main difference between a blogger trip and a classic press trip is that the results of the former begin to be seen even before the trip has been made, since the bloggers use social networks to talk about the destination they are going to visit and the route they are going to cover and they begin to interact with their followers and their followers among themselves. Then after the event the 'buzz' is maintained with the posting of photos, video montages and comments. Today the blog world is becoming a great ally of the promotion of tourism.

Of the press trips organized specifically to promote greenways we would highlight the initiative of the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles launched in 2000 and repeated in successive years: **the Spanish Greenways Magic Tour**. It was developed in collaboration with the authority responsible for the promotion of the country abroad (Turespaña) and

the close to 25 public sponsors (local and regional administrations, railway operator) and private sponsors (bus companies).

Foreign tour operators and journalists specializing in active tourism were invited to take part in a trip together; a somewhat unusual practice but one which all the participants considered to be mutually beneficial. Each participant could choose one section of the three into which the circuit organized by FFE was divided with the idea of cycling on the close to twenty Spanish greenways over a period of nearly two weeks. In each place they visited they were offered the best cultural and gastronomic products of the area, and some urban cycle routes were included as well as spectacular rural greenways. The experience was such a success that it was decided to open up the circuit to tourists as an organized package.

In recent years several European greenways – especially many Spanish ones – have been organizing press trips to raise awareness among their potential visitors,



whether domestic or foreign. The entities responsible for the promotion of tourism at a local, regional and national level tend to take part in their organization and funding, although the involvement of the local greenway managers and entrepreneurs is essential if we wish to optimize the results of these visits. The coordination between all the various stakeholders will ensure that the trip is made at the best time of the year for the route, that the best local resources are showcased, and that the greenway is in tip-top condition for the visit, thereby avoiding any unfortunate surprises.



available to the general public from the association's website.

3.7.2. Other interesting examples

An excellent way to ensure that the communication reaches potential users and the local populace is to publicize the activities and the existence of greenways through publications and communication material published by the management authority itself. Numerous European greenways have their own regular bulletin announcing new developments. One such publication is the Bulletin of Spanish Greenways which is distributed by the FFE on a monthly basis by email to 22,000 subscribers, of whom 1,700 are journalists who will often publish the same news in other media.

Greenways also find echo in other publications of a greater territorial or thematic scope. For example, "[Vélo et Territoires](#)", an initiative of the Association des Départements et Régions Cyclables in France, is a quarterly magazine, distributed among promoters and managers in the world of cycling, which contains information about French greenways as well as many other initiatives related to the bike world. Printable versions are also

One sure-fire excuse for a mention in the media is the official opening of a new greenway or new section or facility on an existing greenway. Just the presence of authorities always attracts media attention, as was the case with the inauguration of the [Great Western Greenway](#) in Ireland, which was well covered by the media because both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Tourism formed part of the peloton of cyclists who made the inaugural ride along the greenway.

3.8. Seeking synergies with other projects

As we have seen in the course of this guide, greenways are routes which provide countless possibilities for the development of all kinds of communication and promotion activities and campaigns. They also stand out for their versatility since they are routes which can serve a great many purposes, as we can see in this small selection of initiatives which have sought synergies between greenways and others projects of a very diverse nature in order to publicize and promote their use.



Many actions aim to optimize the great potential afforded by greenways due to their high levels of accessibility and the easiness of their routes, which make them suitable for people of different ability levels.

The [Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles](#) collaborated with the Fundación También, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the integration of disabled

persons through adaptive sport, and with a private group of health specialists to develop a campaign which resulted in the donation of 30 adapted bikes (handbikes and tricycles) to 10 Spanish greenways to be rented out free of charge to persons of reduced mobility. Over 10,000 customers of the aforementioned healthcare group were involved in this campaign, by voting for which Spanish greenways they wanted to donate the bikes to.



Meanwhile, the proven positive impact that the use of greenways has on people's health and welfare has on a number of occasions sparked campaigns in collaboration with the public healthcare system. Thus, in Spain, the Girona Greenways have formed part of programmes supporting regional public health prevention systems, whereby medical practitioners prescribe healthy habits to their patients such as walking and physical exercise. This model is also already in place on the Almanzora Greenway (Almeria), where the local doctors of

Serón, the municipality through which this route runs, have been able to reduce the prescription of medicines to patients who walk along the greenway. An effective way to cure and prevent certain ailments through mild physical activity.

Greenways also have an enormous potential as an educational resource. In Spain there are a number of greenways with environmental education material already published, such as the La Jara Greenway mentioned earlier in this guide, the Agost-Maigmo Greenway, and the Cantabrian Greenways. A good example is the [La Sierra Greenway](#) which, following an agreement between various parties, has produced a didactic guide for the trail which provides an excellent opportunity to reach the schoolchildren in the area and enhance their environmental education with something so close to them but still so unknown to many of them as the greenway itself. Every year the schools of the Andalusian provinces of Cadiz and Seville are offered the chance to send their pupils on school trips to the La Sierra Greenway. In 2010 it is estimated that some 3,000 schoolchildren visited the trail as a result of this initiative, which serves a multiple purpose: awareness raising in environmental matters, job creation, and the promotion of the greenway itself, since each child goes home with information about the greenway and encourages their parents and siblings to repeat the visit another day.

Another interesting example of greenways as an educational resource is the project developed by the [Girona Greenways](#) entitled “The Secrets of the Greenways”, the purpose of which is to turn these trails into a territorial interpretation centre, in order to compatibilize public use of the greenways with the conservation of the natural areas they pass through. To this end an inventory was made of the environmental, heritage, historical, ethnological, etc. recourses,



whether tangible or intangible, that there are along the Girona Greenways. The result has been 25 routes additional routes which have been signposted for users to find their way and help them interpret the trails. With the aid of 54 didactic fact sheets, which make up the pedagogical dossier of the Girona Greenways, users can find out about many of the trails' unique or unusual features, often hitherto unknown. Thus the greenways represent an interesting educational resource; a way of discovering the area and enjoying and understanding its natural and cultural heritage.

The quality of the many and varied activities related to European greenways is evidenced by the number of best

practices and projects regularly submitted in response to the European Greenways Awards' (EGA) calls for proposals. These awards, presented by the [European Greenways Association - EGWA](#), were created in 2003 and have since been held every two years. The European Greenways Awards contribute to the promotion of best practices in greenways. They encourage the qualitative development of these facilities opened to the general public in Europe. Since the awards' inception, many European greenways and their specific

initiatives have been recognized with this distinction. Furthermore, calls for awards are also transferable to a domestic level. For example, the Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles organized the 1st Greenway Jobs Awards within the framework of the Greenway Jobs Project, for the purpose of recognizing the best greenway-related employment initiatives exhibiting environmental and innovational excellence and promoting the sustainable development of greenways and their surroundings.





Chapter 4 - Conclusions and recommendations

According to recent surveys presented by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), the cycle tourism sector is one of the fastest growing in the European tourism sector as a whole. Together with hiking, it is also more sustainable in environmental and socioeconomic terms than practically any other type of tourist activity. The development of greenways causes practically no impact on the environment, since they make use of existing infrastructure. The use of motorized vehicles on this type of routes is not permitted. Since the vast majority of greenways run through rural areas, they are elements of local economic development, which help to prevent rural depopulation. Sustainability is undoubtedly one of the characteristics which differentiates hiking and cycle tourism from other tourist activities, and is a hallmark which we need to leverage in our communication campaigns.

We can sum up by saying that it is essential to have professionals in the management organization to carry out the specific tasks of communication and promotion of the greenway in question. It is necessary to have a comprehensive website to provide the information that users need. We need to offer carefully selected printed material, very targeted to the end user, for one-off or special case distribution, and it is also very interesting to have a digital bulletin or regular magazine to keep users informed about greenway-related activities and projects.

As we have seen in this guide, it is also important to make use of the new channels of promotion for greenway-based tourism, such as social networks, apps for mobiles, or online video channels, which require an



increasingly greater communication effort. Today, more and more tourists prepare their trips using mobile devices and their associated tools rather than desktops and laptops, so for a greenway to position itself as tourist destination, it is necessary to offer interesting information and contents to both regular and potential users via different channels of communication, both on- and off-line, which encourage them to visit and return to a greenway, to “stay in touch”. In short, we need to win tourists’ loyalty to the destination.

Naturally, this is not just the responsibility of the managing authorities of the greenways. Often it is the travel agencies or tourism service companies which put user and greenway in touch with one another. Therefore additionally the companies providing this type of services for greenways must, firstly, have an in-depth knowledge of the greenways and, secondly, devote a major effort to the new channels of communication. Also, local enterprises such as those offering accommodation, restaurants, stores selling local products, bike rental services, etc. need to collaborate with the managing entities in the promotion of the destination and provide quality services to the visitors. In this way they will help give a greenway an image of quality which can be passed on by means of these new channels, so that tourists will choose or return to a destination of this type on their next holidays.

As we have mentioned before, the nature of greenways makes them a tourist destination with an enormous range of potential users. If we consider the fact that 70% of all tourists start to look for their tourist destination on the Internet and on mobile devices without having a specific

destination in mind but rather in the manner of a brainstorming exercise, we can see how important it is to develop activities which leave behind a strong web footprint due to their ability to grasp the attention of that enormous touristic potential. Therefore it is important to develop activities that highlight the benefits of greenways, with the collaboration and participation of both the local populace and the tourists, while focusing special efforts on organizing activities with tour operators and journalists.

Finally, there are an increasing number of people who decide to spend part of their holidays travelling round an area on foot or by bike. This means that there is an ever-growing call for coordinated tourist services, and so the future, and increasingly more, the present of greenway-based tourism depends on the possibility of offering organized packages to potential users. And not just that, since tourists are increasingly focused on “experiential tourism” and not just on a well thought out tourism package, so the economic stakeholders associated with greenway and other non-motorized trails need to focus not only on creating and selling traditional tourism packages but also on delivering touristic experiences.



Appendix

European Greenways Association



In May 1997, it was decided within the framework of the First European Conference on Soft Traffic and Railways Paths (Val-Dieu, Belgium) to set up the European Greenways Association.

The association's constituent assembly was held in Namur, Belgium, on January 8th, 1998. A statute was signed by 17 representatives of institutions and associations from many European countries.

European Greenways Association (EGWA), is a not profit association created with the aim of spreading and promoting greenways in Europe. From 2009 Secretariat and executive office held in Madrid at the Spanish Railways headquarters. Currently 45 member organizations from 13 countries support EGWA.

Since its foundation in 1998 the European Greenways Association...

- Contributes towards the **preservation of infrastructures** such as disused railway corridors, tow paths and historic routes (Roman roads, pilgrim's path, drove ways,...) in the public domain to develop, **along them, non-motorised itineraries.**
- Encourages the use of non-motorised transport, draws up inventories of potential routes and writes technical reports.
- Promotes and coordinates **the exchange of expertise and information** among different associations and **national and local bodies** which are currently developing these initiatives in **Europe.**
- **Informs and advises** local and national bodies on how to develop non-motorised itineraries.
- Collaborates with **European bodies** to support their policies in term of **sustainable development, tourism, environment, rural development, regional balance and employment.**

Join us: EGWA encourages all promoters of Greenways to take part in this active Association to spread in Europe the concept of greenways so that they can be recognized as indispensable infrastructures to move towards a more sustainable Europe with a better quality of life for its citizens.

European Greenways Association
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Lead partner/coordinator:

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Partners:

Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy); Eurogites, European Federation of Farm and Village Tourism (Spain); Fundación de los Ferrocarriles Españoles (Spain); Basquetour Turismoaren Euskal Agentzia (Spain); Nadece Partnersvi (Czech Republic); Consorci de les Vies Verdes de Girona (Spain); Comunidade Intermunicipal da Região Dão Lafões (Portugal).



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