

# Preservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage through GreenWAYS



## Interreg Europe Action Plan

### Podkarpackie Region

*This Action Plan is a document that provides detailed information on how the lessons learned from cooperation in the realisation OUR WAY project will be implemented to improve policy instruments for Podkarpackie Region. This AP provided information about 3 identified activities and it is an explanation of the relationship between the activities and the project OUR WAY, the nature of the activities undertaken, the schedule, stakeholders involved, costs and sources of funding.*

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## Part I - General information

Project: **PreservatiOn and promotion of cUltural and natural heRitage through greenWAYS (OUR WAY, PGI05077)**

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## Part II - Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- ☐ Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- ☐ European Territorial Cooperation programme

**X Other regional development policy instrument**

Name of the policy instrument (s) concerned by the Action Plan:

- **Regional Innovation Strategy for the Podkarpackie Region for the years of 2014-2020 for smart specialization (RIS3),**
- **Development Strategy of the Podkarpackie Region 2030.**

*Further details on the policy context and how the Action Plan should contribute to improving the above policy instruments:*

Podkarpackie Region is a partner in the OUR WAY project co-financed by INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020 <https://www.interregeurope.eu/ourway/> . The implementation of the project started in 2018 and its aim is to improve the preservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage in Europe using the greenways by improving the instruments of appropriate regional development policies in the area of cultural and environmental quality, including tools for their management and the development of specific actions for their promotion and preservation.

As a result of many activities of the project, among others, interregional workshops on improving coordination between various key players, identification of financial instruments for the creation and management of greenways routes, as well as ways to promote tourist products related to greenways routes, creation of a dynamic Regional Stakeholder Group of the Podkarpackie

Region, which brings together more than 30 entities interested in the area of cultural and natural heritage and development of greenways and bicycle routes, we are ready to change regional policies of Podkarpackie Region.

An element that also influenced at the shape of the Action Plan were identified by the partners of the project Good Practices and study visits, which deepened the knowledge on the details of these practices. Unfortunately, in the COVID-19 era, with the exception of the study visit to Bulgaria, the remaining visits took place online, hence the access to the details of these practices was significantly difficult.

In the currently binding programme document of the Podkarpackie Region *"Regional Innovation Strategy for the Podkarpackie Region 2014-2020 for smart specialisation (RIS3)"*, three regional smart leading specialisations were defined: aviation and aerospace, quality of life, automotive and one smart supporting specialisation - information and telecommunications (ICT).

Leading Intelligent specialization - Quality of Life for the Podkarpackie Region is a complex of areas of activity and solutions, interrelated, aimed at creating a new, sustainable model of society and ecosystem functioning, including mobility - multimodal transport, climate and energy, food of the highest biological and health quality, energy-saving construction, sustainable tourism, ICT information and communication technologies. It is a complex of solutions to meet EU requirements, and at the same time guarantee intelligent development of the entire region, with particular emphasis on rural environments and small towns.

One of the four distinguished areas of this specialization is the area of sustainable and responsible tourism. The Podkarpackie Region is an area with very large opportunities for tourism development. This is due to, among others, presence of protected areas and great cultural potential of the region. The priority actions include, among others, cognitive tourism, recreational, ecotourism and agrotourism. As a tactical goal in the area of sustainable tourism, an increase in the tourist attractiveness of the region has been indicated by creating eco-innovative and socially innovative tourist products as well as protecting environmental resources and biodiversity. One of the operational goals in this area was the development of eco-innovative profiled tourist services. The RIS3 strategy indicates the tactical goals of areas of activity (activities) that require intelligent support. Sustainable tourism is one of the areas - the tactical goal of which is to increase the activity of the tourism sector in the region as a result of newly developed tourist products based on eco-innovations and social innovations, as well as to protect the resources of the environment and biodiversity, and thus the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

During the implementation of the OUR WAY project, thanks to the interregional learning process, both representatives of the Podkarpackie Region and the stakeholders, who are part of the



Podkarpackie Regional Stakeholders Working Group gained experience and knowledge in the creation, management, promotion of greenways and regional and local bicycle routes, their role in the preservation, protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage, as well as their impact on the local economy and quality of life of the residents.

In the process of preparation of the Regional Innovation Strategy for Podkarpackie Region for years 2021-2030 (RSI WP), which was launched in May 2020 by the staff and stakeholders, activities are undertaken to take into account the conclusions drawn from the implementation of the OUR WAY project, including the implementation of solutions applied by other project Partners. Taking into account the above, there is a need to develop a modified model of functioning of the Podkarpackie Innovation System under the Regional Innovation Strategy. In the process of developing a new model of functioning of the Podkarpackie Innovation System under the Regional Innovation Strategy, both for the period 2014-2020 and the years 2021-2030, the submitted proposals concern the introduction to this instrument of the policy of greenways and regional bicycle routes, inter alia, through the creation of a subpanel of greenways and regional bicycle routes under the panel "Quality of Life" and in the context of the RSI WP for 2021-2030 the creation of a newly defined smart specialisation "Tourism" and the continuation of the greenways subpanel.

In the region's most important programming document for 2013-2020, developed in 2013 Podkarpackie Strategy 2020 there were no records regarding the development of greenways and their impact on the development of the region, including the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of the Podkarpackie Region. Therefore, based on the knowledge and experience gained in the implementation of the OUR WAY project, subjecting a detailed analysis to the "Good Practices" (BP) identified by the project partners, project staff and members of the Stakeholder Regional Working Group took an active part in updating the basic strategic document of the Podkarpackie Region: Development Strategy of the Podkarpackie Region 2030. Issues related to the need to be included in the above mentioned Strategy of bicycle routes and greenways were notified to the Board of the Podkarpackie Region, which is responsible for updating this document. Thanks to the submitted comments, the Strategy contained provisions regarding the development of an integrated network of bicycle paths, including greenways, the development of an integrated network of bicycle paths as an alternative to traveling on short distances and for recreation. These provisions strengthen the image of the Podkarpackie Region as an attractive region for cycling tourism, in which activities in the field of preservation, protection and development of cultural and natural heritage through these routes will be able to be implemented. These comments were accepted by the Board of Podkarpackie Region. Document entitled "Podkarpackie Strategy 2030"

was approved by Assembly of Podkarpackie Region on 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2020. It will give the possibility to implement these routes in subsequent programming periods and will allow for their financing from public funds, including EU funds.

## Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

**ACTION 1: Creation of a subpanel of greenways and regional bicycle routes and development of a methodology for the work of this subpanel within the framework of the panel of intelligent specialization "Quality of Life" of the RIS3 Strategy 2014-2020, and then continuation of the activities of this subpanel in case of creating a new intelligent specialization "Tourism" of the RSI WP Strategy 2021-2030.**

1. **Relevance to the project** (please describe how this action derives from the project and in particular from the interregional exchange of experience. Where does the inspiration for this action come from?)

The implementation of the OUR WAY project aims to preserve, protect, promote and develop natural and cultural heritage through greenways. Many of the OUR WAY project partners have extensive experience in the creation, use and promotion of greenways and cycle paths in their area (Ireland, Spain, France). Thanks to the use of experience and solutions applied by these project partners, it is planned in the Podkarpackie region to increase interest in the use of greenways and bicycle routes and to preserve, protect and develop the rich cultural heritage this unique region in Europe's natural heritage. The undertaken activities will serve to support the development of the region and its inhabitants. For this purpose, it is necessary to create an entity which will bring together people representing various people, organizations, local and regional authorities, having knowledge and experience, among others during the implementation of phase I OUR WAY project, which will meet periodically to influence the development of sustainable tourism, with particular emphasis on tourist and bicycle routes, including greenways and regional bicycle routes within the framework of intelligent specialisation "Quality of Life" within RIS3 for the period 2014-2020, as well as within the framework of intelligent specialisation "Tourism" (if the intention to create a new intelligent specialisation "Tourism" will be included in RSI WP project for the period 2021-2030).

Due to the implementation of the OUR WAY project, a wider need to involve stakeholders in the process of developing eco-innovative, sustainable, profiled tourist services related to the implementation of routes, including greenways, has been observed. The basis for creating a subpanel of greenways is based on the experience of the "Good Practices" of the Spanish

partner and the Irish partner.

As part of the above action, the following good practices were identified during the learning process (interregional thematic workshops and study visits):

Spain - Murcia BP Region '*Greenways management model - consortium*'. The Greenways Trail Consortium has been operating in the Murcia region since 2003. The partner identified the problem of uniform management of greenways running across the territories of various administrative units. This diversity of management, financing and promotion was an inconvenience in agreeing many topics regarding the designation, management and maintenance of routes. Thanks to the created Greenways Consortium of the Region of Murcia, it is possible to use greenways as a dynamic tool for the development of the area and improving the quality of life of the residents. By creating a consortium - an entity currently associating 17 administrative units and managing 4 greenways with a total length of ca. 150 km it was possible to improve the quality of services provided, introduce high-quality products and develop a methodology for the work of the consortium whose task is to coordinate activities aimed at protecting the cultural and natural heritage of the region through the optimal use of greenways.

Ireland – as part of best practices (BP) provided by the Irish partner - Northern&Western Regional Assembly (Ulster Canal Greenway, North West Greenway Network, Great Western Greenway and the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways adopted in 2018), actions have been identified concerning the need for partnerships between local authorities and other actors (government agencies, associations, etc.) to identify and develop greenways routes, which are both a tourist product and a convenience for residents.

**2. *Nature of the action*** (please describe precisely the content of action 1. What are the specific activities to be implemented?)

The task of the subpanel of greenways routes and regional bicycle routes created under Action 1 will be to develop a methodology for the work of this entity and tools that will contribute to the development of an integrated network of bicycle paths, including greenways in the Podkarpackie region and to analyze the implications of improving the policy instrument (RIS3 Strategy/RIS WP Strategy and Podkarpackie Region Development Strategy 2030) in order to more effectively preserve and promote natural and cultural heritage through greenways and regional bicycle routes. This entity will act as a regional coordinator of the creation of regional bicycle and greenways routes in Podkarpackie Region and a coordinator of interregional and cross-border cooperation in the field of bicycle and greenways routes.

After consultation with stakeholders within the Regional Stakeholder Working Group and based

on the best practice of the Spanish partner who created the consortium for managing the greenways in Murcia („*Greenways Management Model. Consortium*”), it is necessary to create an entity that brings together people with experience and knowledge in the creation and use of greenways and regional bicycle routes to protect and care for cultural and natural heritage, will affect the shape of activities aimed at creating a network of routes in Podkarpackie, including greenways. The experience of the Spanish partner in the creation, maintenance and management of routes indicates that the appointment of a coordinating entity has an important role within the intended scope, because the activities carried out so far in the field of bicycle and greenways routes were dispersed and allowed for a coordinated development of the routes so that they formed a network of interconnected routes. In this subpanel, solutions and models for the creation, management and promotion of greenways and regional bicycle routes will be discussed and worked out, which will allow for a dynamic development of a sustainable tourism area in the Podkarpackie Region. It is important to introduce pro-operational activities, i.e. activities supporting cooperation of various entities for the implementation of the best possible solutions. The decision-making schemes will be based on the decision-making process of the implemented practices of the Spanish and Irish partners. In order to implement the planned action, a subpanel of greenways and regional bicycle routes will be created, operating under the RIS3 Quality of Life Panel. Intelligent Specialization Panels (SSP) are structures created in accordance with RIS3 strategy and Action Plans for Intelligent Specializations.

At the time of its creation, this subpanel will include:

- stakeholders of the Regional Stakeholder Working Group (public bodies, local authorities, foundations and associations),
- representatives of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region,
- representatives of the Podkarpackie Innovation Council,
- representatives of entrepreneurs, with particular emphasis on the tourism field.

Throughout the functioning of the subpanel it will be open with the possibility of admitting new members who want to engage in the development of sustainable tourism in Podkarpackie.

This group will develop a methodology for the work of this subpanel. Regulations for the functioning of the subpanel will be developed, a framework meeting schedule and the scope of tasks that the subpanel should deal with will be indicated. The thematic catalog will be open.

The goal of the greenways and regional bicycle routes subpanel will be:

- ✓ Identification of business areas and sources of financing for project applications that can be submitted in ROP and national programs or financed from European Programs contributing to the promotion and valorization of the natural and cultural heritage present



via bicycle trails, greenways, which are part of the Intelligent Specialization "Quality of Life",

- ✓ Improving coordination between entities that are responsible for creating, maintaining and managing routes,
- ✓ Improvement of cooperation between Podkarpackie Region and neighboring regions and cross-border cooperation in the field of creating a coherent network of bicycle and greenways routes,
- ✓ Development of a map of proposed greenways and regional bicycle routes in Podkarpackie Region,
- ✓ Development of a model guide for route management,
- ✓ Developing a model of functioning of bicycle trails and greenways in the Podkarpackie Region,
- ✓ Developing a network of links between tourist products that enrich the attractiveness of green routes and contribute to the promotion and valorization of natural and cultural heritage in the Region,
- ✓ Periodic monitoring and evaluation of the situation of greenways and regional bicycle routes in Podkarpackie Region,
- ✓ Undertaking initiatives to coordinate promotional activities in the field of tourism, including the promotion of trails, bicycle routes and greenways.

**3. *Stakeholders involved*** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action 1 and explain their role)

- a) Region Authority of the Podkarpackie Region - is the leader of the regional development policy, which operates through the Management Board of the Podkarpackie Region - the body implementing the Podkarpackie Strategy 2030 and RIS3/RSI WP Strategy;
- b) Department of Regional Development of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region - it plays the main role in implementing the Podkarpackie RIS3 Strategy/RSI WP Strategy (programming, monitoring and coordination);
- c) Department of Regional Economy of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region - an entity implementing the OUR WAY project - the employees of this Department will serve their own experience gained during the implementation of the project during the meeting of the created greenways subpanel and will be responsible for the organization and work of the subpanel;
- d) The Department of Promotion, Tourism and Economic Cooperation of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region, which plays the main role in creating and promoting

tourism activities undertaken in the Podkarpackie Region,

- e) Podkarpackie Innovation Council - an advisory body to the Board of the Podkarpackie Region - will provide substantive support;
- f) Members of the Regional Working Group of Stakeholders (associations, foundations, the other Departments and offices and units of Marshal's Office, stakeholders from science sector and R&D sector, local government units, representatives of government administration (Bieszczady National Park, State Forests, etc.).
- g) Entrepreneurs with particular emphasis on the tourism field.

**4. *Timeframe*** (please specify the timing envisaged for action 1)

The establishment of the greenways subpanel will take place as part of the development of Action Plans for the updated RIS3 Strategy in March 2021 and the subpanel will be operational during the OUR WAY project i.e. by 30 November 2022. After the project implementation period, the sub-panel will operate throughout the implementation of the updated RSI WP Strategy.

**5. *Indicative costs*** (please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 1)

The costs will relate to the organisation and operation of the greenways subpanel and regional bicycle routes. Two meetings of the greenways subpanel per year are planned within the "Quality of Life" Panel. Each meeting will be attended by about 30 representatives mentioned in 3<sup>th</sup> point above (local governments, public entities, associations, entrepreneurs etc.) operating in the field of sustainable tourism. The total annual cost of this activity will not exceed 20 000 PLN.

**6. *Indicative funding sources*** (please describe how action 1 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II):

The costs related to the organization of the greenways subpanel and its functioning by 2023 will be covered by the own project of the Podkarpackie Region Self-Government - the leader of the RIS3 process called "Smart specializations - tools for intelligent development of the region". Source of financing - Regional Operational Program of the Podkarpackie Region for 2014-2020. This project is the main tool supporting the implementation, monitoring and updating of the RIS3 Strategy in the region and a source of financing for the "entrepreneurial discovery process" and other activities aimed at increasing the region's innovation. In the 2021-2027 programming period, measures will be taken to finance the costs of operating the subpanel from the resources of the Podkarpackie ROP for the years 2021-2027.

## **ACTION 2: Development of the concept of greenways routes and regional bicycle routes in Podkarpackie and other documents necessary for the development of routes for active and ecological tourism in the Podkarpackie Region (i.a. Bicycle Policy of the Podkarpackie Region).**

1. **Relevance to the project** (please describe how this action derives from the project and in particular from the interregional exchange of experience. Where does the inspiration for this action come from?)

Podkarpackie has no greenways except the East Carpathian Greenway Bike Trail, which is suitable for complete revitalization. For the coordinated development of greenways and regional bicycle routes in the Podkarpackie Region it is necessary to develop a document which will indicate where these trails should be routed in order to take advantage of the rich cultural heritage of the region and its environmental values; how to consult the course of these trails with residents and local entities; how to acquire land for their construction, how to manage the routes etc.

The implementation of this action was inspired by the BP of the Irish partner - Northern & Western Regional Assembly ("*Great Western Greenway*"). The development of greenways in Ireland is based on the National and Regional Greenways Development Strategy adopted in 2018. This document was preceded by a number of supporting documents (e.g: "*Greenways and Cycle Routes Ancillary Infrastructure Guidelines*", "*Strategy for the Future Development of Greenways - Public Consultation Paper*", "*Rural Cycleway Design*"), which set standards for the design, implementation and maintenance of greenways in Ireland. The implementation of greenways designated as BP's by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (Ulster Canal Greenway, North West Greenway Network and Great Western Greenway) has been carried out in a multi-stage partnership, following a multi-stage process of consultation on the course of these trails, establishing rules for land acquisition, etc. The success of the Irish partner shows the huge impact of the trails created on the economic development of the rural areas they run in and their impact on the growth of tourism and thus on the quality of life of the inhabitants. These inhabitants identify themselves with the route in which creation they have participated, and see and accept its positive impact on their daily lives. Through joint activities very attractive tourist products are created.

2. **Nature of the action** (please describe precisely the content of action 2. What are the specific activities to be implemented?)

In recent years, tourism, including bicycle tourism, has been experiencing a renaissance. The demand for well-prepared tourism products of various kinds is increasing. Thanks to skillfully

organised tourism it is possible to actively influence the protection and development of cultural and natural heritage of the Podkarpackie Region. Within the framework of this action, *The Concept for development of greenways and regional bicycle routes network in Podkarpackie* will be developed. This document will indicate the course of the planned trails together with the indication of cultural and natural attractions which are located in the Podkarpackie Region and will be accessible through the designated trails. The current practice of creating trails, including bicycle trails, is not coordinated. Local government units build trails that do not connect in a network, are not jointly managed and promoted, these trails usually do not allow to reach natural and cultural attractions. Therefore, it is necessary to establish rules for designation, construction and co-financing of only such routes which will meet the criteria relevant for the development of the region and its inhabitants. *The Concept for the development of a network of greenways and regional bicycle routes which will be prepared* will indicate all the necessary elements to create a comprehensive tourist product, which will not only enable safe movement along the route, but will also enable the users of these routes to learn about the cultural and natural values of the region. The preparation of the concept will be preceded by the designation of potential greenways and regional bicycle routes that will be included in the Podkarpackie Greenways Ecological Trails (e.g. Beskid Niski, Bieszczady, Roztocze and other cultural and natural attractive areas) together with connecting routes to other trails, e.g. Green Velo and connection with the trails of neighboring regions (Małopolskie, Świętokrzyskie and Lubelskie).

It is assumed that ***Podkarpackie Ecological Greenways and Regional Bicycle Routes*** will be marked on a total length of about 500 km. These routes will correspond to the assumptions of greenways as defined by the European Greenways Association (EGWA), e.g. in terms of their accessibility for non-motorized participants such as pedestrians, cyclists, skaters, cross-country skiers in winter, etc. Due to local conditions, which are slightly different than in Western Europe, these routes (on some sections) will allow for low and limited traffic of PGL State Forests vehicles on the PGL internal roads and limited traffic of local residents etc. This will serve the safety of users and allow for a significant increase in tourist traffic, while at the same time allowing for the use of the created roads of local residents. A similar solution (the Greenway trail available for State Forests vehicles) was used in Latvia and Estonia (The Green Railway Trail) and was observed during a study visit to Latvia / Estonia. The estimate of the costs of these routes was based on the costs of the Green Velo route in the Podkarpackie Region and amounts about 150 million PLN.

In preparation for this initiative, in July 2020, about 30 local authorities of the Low Beskid Mountains signed a letter of intent concerning an agreement on the establishment of

Multifunctional Tourist Roads of the Ambitious Tourism Basin using the course of roads with low traffic density and independent road routes. The following routes are planned under this system: Rowerstrada Solina - Zakopane (the route from the border of the Podkarpackie Region (Rozstajne, Wyszowatka) to Solina; Velo San and connections to the Green Velo route, as well as tourist routes of the Ambitious Tourism Basin. The parties to this agreement accepted the course of ZAT Tourist Roads adopted by way of social consultations and the standard of roads depending on the function and location, the method of design, execution, maintenance and the functions performed and widely understood rules of conducting the project, including its coordination between local government units, including the Board of Podkarpackie Region, State Forests and social organizations. The idea, accepted by local governments, consists in the execution of roads in a coordinated and communicated way, but independently and economically by individual units. The entities which signed this agreement are to serve as an important, municipal tourist infrastructure in the Bieszczady and Low Beskid Mountains. The practice is calculated on a long-term basis - the measurable target are tourist roads with a length of about 300 km, forming a network in the form of a honeycomb, allowing for non-repeated bicycle trips in the area of 12 municipalities of the Ambitious Tourism Basin with an area of 1700 km<sup>2</sup>. The estimated cost of a joint investment made locally but in a coordinated manner by each of the municipalities is about 45 million PLN.

A baseline document will also be developed to enable coordinated bicycle tourism in the Podkarpackie region, i.e. The Cycling Policy of the Podkarpackie Region. The regional bicycle policy will define the objectives and actions necessary for their implementation, indicate the directions of development of the bicycle infrastructure and regional bicycle routes of the region, define the criteria necessary to ensure a high level of design and implementation of the bicycle infrastructure. The Cycling Policy of the Podkarpackie Region will be developed in the process of wide social participation.

**3. Stakeholders involved** *(please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action 2 and explain their role)*

The following entities will be involved in the implementation of task No 2:

- Department of Regional Economy UMWP - coordinating role. The Department has knowledge of the OUR WAY project implementation. It is also responsible for creating this Action Plan. It is also obliged to ensure financing of the undertaken action - either from the funds of the ROP 2014-2020 or from the budget of the Region. The Department has identified good practices within the OUR WAY project,
- Department of Promotion, Tourism and Economic Cooperation UMWP - department



coordinating the preparation of The Cycling Policy of the Podkarpackie Region,

- Podkarpackie Office of Spatial Planning - an organizational unit of the Podkarpackie Region with knowledge and experience in the preparation of strategic documents of the region - a one of the main role in the process of creating documents of "The Cycling Policy of the Podkarpackie Region " and the Concept for the development of the network of greenways and regional bicycle routes;
- members of the greenways subpanel within the framework of the panel "Quality of Life" - will actively participate in the preparation of documents described in Action 2, will participate in talks with the owners of areas where routes will be designated;
- interested local government units - a leading role in determining routes and agreeing their course;
- interested associations, foundations, natural persons - a supporting role in the process of creating and determining routes;
- external experts - in terms of substantive support for the documents being prepared.

**4. *Timeframe*** (please specify the timing envisaged for action 2)

The key documents will be developed by the end of November 2022, which will make it possible to apply for co-financing of the implementation of the planned projects from EU funds for the years 2021-2027.

**5. *Indicative costs*** (please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 2)

Initial activities (e.g. development of the concept of potential greenways and regional bicycle routes that are part of the Podkarpackie Greenways Ecological Trails, etc.) will be undertaken at no cost by members of the greenways subpanel. Estimate cost of the experts' contribution to the documents, among others "The Bicycle Policy of the Podkarpackie Region" is the amount of about 100 000 PLN.

**6. *Indicative funding sources*** (please describe how action 2 will be financed. Is it through the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II)

The development of *The Concept of Podkarpackie Greenways and Regional Bicycle Routes* and expert contribution to the development of "The Bicycle Policy of the Podkarpackie Region" will be financed from the budget of the Podkarpackie Region. Source of funding - Regional Operational Programme for Podkarpackie Region (ROP PR) for years 2014-2020 or own resources of the Podkarpackie Region. During the 2021-2027 programming period, actions will be taken to finance costs from the ROP PR for years 2021-2027.

**ACTION 3: Development of technical and design documentation necessary to expand the network of tourist bicycle routes in the Bieszczady Mountains and their inclusion in the Green Velo bicycle route, together with the application of technical solutions tested by other partners of the OUR WAY project, and identification and description of tourist attractions of cultural and natural heritage sites available from this route**

1. **Relevance to the project** (please describe how this action derives from the project and in particular from the interregional exchange of experience. Where does the inspiration for this action come from?)

Using the experience of the OUR WAY project partners in the implementation of greenways and the experience of members of Podkarpackie Regional Stakeholder Working Group, the scope of tasks related to Action 3 started in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the OUR WAY project. Action 3 was inspired by elements of BP of the partner from Ireland, Spain and in part by the partner from Bulgaria.

In Ireland the process of greenways development has been going on for many years and is still continuing. The experience of the Irish partner shows that using the trail as the most important element of the trail indicates landscape values and safety during the use of the trail. The identified BPs also indicate that the creation of the trail (e.g. Great Western Greenway) gives a great stimulus to the development of rural areas where the trail leads. As a result of the trail, many projects and additional tourist products are being created (e.g. cooperation of food producers within the "gourmet trail" located along the Great Western Greenway). In addition, the excellent promotion of this trail causes great interest in using the trail and brings measurable effects to both businesses and the local population. The way of marking the route is also very important - in direct contact with local authorities and the population. During the implementation of technical documentation of the routes in the Bieszczady Mountains, the experience of the Irish and Spanish partners in terms of the applied solutions will be used - both technical (use of eco-counters, facilities for the disabled, elements increasing mobility safety, etc.) and other (e.g. the way of acquiring the land, agreements concluded, etc.). For example, an interesting element to be used in the designed technical solutions are counters for people using the routes. In the case of Murcia, these are devices that detect the direction of users' movement and distinguish between pedestrians and cyclists in both directions. The sensor uses a combination of passive infrared pyroelectric technology with a precise lens to detect heat emitted by the human body. Thanks to the exceptional sensitivity and strength of the algorithm, the sensor is able to distinguish between two people who pass in close proximity. The sensor calibrates itself and installation is simple and

reliable. Data is transmitted via a mobile application and via bluetooth. Other technical solutions and facilities for disabled people on the trail are also available for implementation in Podkarpackie Region. In terms of the use of BP partner from Bulgaria "100 tourist sites in Bulgaria" - The practice of promoting cultural and natural resources through the possibility of obtaining stamps for visiting these sites assumes the use of some elements of this practice. As this example shows, a kind of rivalry (who gets as many stamps as possible from the places of interest) generates increased tourist traffic. Podkarpackie having valuable cultural and natural values in its area, with particular emphasis on the Bieszczady and Beskid Niski regions, when developing the documentation of such a trail, will identify and describe the interesting cultural and natural heritage objects which are available from this trail. This action should give a developmental stimulus to local communities, create new jobs (accommodation, sale of local products and handicrafts, etc.) and the pristine nature and multiculturalism of the region will attract many tourists from different regions of Poland, Europe and the world. In addition, from the main route to places attractive for tourists, it will be possible to designate thematic routes (the so-called "reaches or loops"), which will be able to be made in a slightly lower standard, but will give the opportunity to reach the most important cultural and natural sites of the region by a designated, standardised route.

**2. *Nature of the action*** *(please describe precisely the content of action 3. What are the specific activities to be implemented?)*

The action started in phase 1 of the OUR WAY project. The information about the implementation, objectives and current experience from the OUR WAY project, as well as the developed concept of revitalization of the only greenway in the Podkarpackie Region Green Bicycle - East Carpathians Greenway were submitted to the Ministry of Investment and Development RP. On 27 September 2019, an agreement was signed between the Minister of Finance, Investment and Development and the Podkarpackie Region for the implementation of the project to develop technical and design documentation necessary to expand the network of tourist bicycle routes in the Bieszczady Mountains and include them in the Green Velo bicycle route. Based on the concept of revitalization of the Green Bicycle - East Carpathians Greenway, developed by the Bieszczady Foundation, a program-spatial concept will be developed. The next stage will be to determine the course of the planned route, preliminary technical solutions and arrangements with land owners. At this stage, the experience of the partner from Ireland will be used to agree the routes in detail with the land owners, so that after the implementation of the route they will identify themselves with the product. Technical documentation for this route will be developed in 2 sections:

- section 1: Construction of a branch from the Green Velo bicycle route from the direction of

Przemyśl (incorporation into Green Velo in Olszany) to Wołosate (state border).

- section 2: Connection of the bicycle route with the Greenway East Carpathian Trail on the section Cisna - Ustrzyki Górne (part of the Great Bieszczady Loop).

The planned length of the route for which documentation is being developed is over 174 km. The technical documentation will use the technical solutions used by the partners from Ireland and Spain, e.g. automatic counters for route users, technical solutions improving safety etc.

On the basis of the experience of the partner from Bulgaria, descriptions of places attractive for tourists on the route or accessible from the route with historical or natural values will be developed.

**3. Stakeholders involved** *(please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the implementation of the action 3 and explain their role)*

The following entities are involved in the implementation of Action 3:

- Podkarpackie Region Road Administration in Rzeszów coordination role preparation of project documentation;
- Poviats: Przemyski, Bieszczadzki;
- Communes: Krasieczyn, Fredropol, Ustrzyki Dolne, Czarna;
- Forest Districts of the State Forests;
- Bieszczadzki National Park;
- General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways Branch in Rzeszów;
- District of Regional Roads in Ustrzyki Dolne;
- Department of Roads and Public Collective Transport UMWP;
- Department of Promotion, Tourism and Economic Cooperation UMWP - all the above entities will participate, through the conclusion of an appropriate agreement, in consultations on the route, the technical solutions applied;
- Department of Regional Economy of UMWP - advisory role in the use of technical solutions tested by OUR WAY project partners on the projected route;
- Stakeholders will be involved in the documentation preparation at each stage of the process.

**4. Timeframe** *(please specify the timing envisaged for action 3)*

The task will be completed by the end of November 2022.

**5. Indicative costs** *(please estimate the costs related to the implementation of action 3)*

The cost of implementing this measure is PLN 5 555 500,00.

**6. Indicative funding sources** *(please describe how action 3 will be financed. Is it through*

*the policy instrument(s) indicated in part II)*

The Action will be financed in 85% from the EU Cohesion Fund under the Technical Assistance Operational Programme 2014-2020 and in 15% from the national budget. The own contribution (regional self-government unit) is 555 550 PLN (10% of the project costs). On 27 September 2019 an agreement was signed between the Minister of Finance, Investment and Development and the Podkarpackie Region in this matter.

## Monitoring the implementation of all actions

Monitoring plays a key role in the implementation of the Action Plan as it is a management tool to track progress towards the objectives set (and intervene, if necessary). It is important to distinguish between monitoring and certain similar activities, such as control or evaluation.

	Control	Monitoring	Evaluation
<b>Why?</b>	To examine the compliance with rules and regulations	Track progress towards the objectives set	Examining the impact of interventions in relation to the identified socio-economic challenge(s) of high relevance
<b>When?</b>	Current, during the implementation of the project	Current, during the implementation of the project	Ex ante, mid-term (ongoing), ex post
<b>Who?</b>	Internal	Internal	External body
<b>The result?</b>	Sanctions, if irregularities detected	Change the way /direction of operation if necessary	Learning process

Monitoring is used to:

- understand the cause and effect, check the assumptions,



- keep track of progress (is implementation progressing as planned?),
- obtain management information: steer your intervention,
- planning possible changes and results,
- assessment of the actual contribution of your intervention.

Successful implementation of the Action Plan for Podkarpackie Region will require a programmatic approach and the involvement of the identified key actors and sources of funding to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the Plan. Implementation of the OUR WAY Action Plan will mean an innovative approach to the creation of Podkarpackie's recreational and tourist offer through which it will be possible to better protect and promote the region's rich cultural and natural heritage. The implementation of the OUR WAY Action Plan will significantly contribute to the EU's priority objectives of sustainable development and sustainable and inclusive growth. The OUR WAY action plan will also have an impact on the preservation, protection and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of the Podkarpackie region and at the same time will contribute to the development of opportunities to explore our region through greenways and regional bicycle routes, which will have a positive impact on the development of the tourism and recreation sector. Increasing and maintaining cooperation with stakeholders is also a key factor for successful implementation of the actions. Stakeholder involvement and cooperation will be promoted and supported through these targeted actions, which include the designation of responsibility for the implementation of each of the actions indicated.

Monitoring of the results and continuous evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan will be carried out by the Regional Economy Department of the Marshal's Office of the Podkarpackie Region on two levels:

1) internal - the Department of Regional Economy will be continuously monitoring the state of implementation of the assumed measures, i.e.

- ✓ Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the planned tasks and preparation, at least every 3 months, of concise information on the status of their implementation of the activities based on qualitative data. This information will be sent to the stakeholders of the OUR WAY project and the participants in the individual activities envisaged in the Action Plan;

2) in a broader partnership (regional, international). The Department of Regional Economy will carry out quality control of the implementation of the planned activities mainly through the following actions:

- ✓ Ongoing consultations on key results with regional stakeholders, (regional level),

- ✓ Control of the implementation process during international partnership meetings of the OUR WAY project (international level),
- ✓ Final exchange of results with the authorities of the Interreg Europe Programme 2014-2020 (international level).

## Indicators

Indicators are key to monitoring the performance and results of the Action Plan. Indicators describe complex reality in a simplified form. They have an exact definition, a base and target value, and a source of information.

### Action 1 indicators:

- Creation of a subpanel of Greenways and regional cycling routes,
- Development of work methodology and subpanel regulations.

### Action 2 indicators:

- Development of a concept for the development of a network of greenways and regional bicycle routes,
- Development of Cycling Policy of Podkarpackie Region.

### Action 3 indicators:

- Development of technical and design documentation necessary to expand the network of tourist bicycle routes in the Bieszczady Mountains and include them in the Green Velo bicycle route,
- Identification and development of descriptions of tourist attractive cultural and natural heritage sites accessible from the designed route.

## Risk Assessment Plan

It is very important that the Action Plan identifies potential risks that may stand in the way of successful implementation of the planned actions.

Potential risks	Probability of occurrence	Impact	Risk management tool
<b>Action 1</b>			
No/difficulty in creating a subpanel of greenways and regional cycling routes.	Low	High	Carrying out intensive efforts to create a subpanel.
No/difficulty in developing the	Low	High	Continuous monitoring of the state of the works and

methodology of work, the rules of this entity and the tools that will contribute to the development of an integrated network of bicycle routes, including greenways.			intensive efforts to develop working methodologies, regulations and other tools contributing to the achievement of the objective.
No/difficulty in the continuation and operation of the subpanel in the absence of the creation of a new smart specialisation "Tourism" in the RIS3 Strategy 2021-2030	Medium	Medium	Carrying out intensive activities aimed at the development of green routes through other activities.
<b>Action 2</b>			
No/difficulty of developing <i>The concept and development of a network of greenways and regional cycling routes in Podkarpackie Region.</i>	Low	Medium	Carrying out intensive efforts to develop the document.
Problems with coordination of joint activities of local government units in the field of plans to build routes that would connect in a network and their joint promotion.	Medium	Medium	Continuous monitoring of the state of the works and intensive efforts to well coordinate joint actions.
No/difficulty of developing a Cycling Policy of the Podkarpackie Region.	Medium	Medium	Carrying out intensive efforts to develop the document. Active cooperation with the Department of Promotion, Tourism and Economic Cooperation.
<b>Action 3</b>			
Difficulties in conducting arrangements with landowners on the planned route, combined with the concept developed by the Bieszczadzka	Medium	High	Using experience of a partner from Ireland, indicating the potential benefits to landowners, so that they identify with the resulting product.

Foundation for the revitalization of the Green Bike Greenway East Carpathian route.			
The difficulty of developing the technical and design documentation necessary for the development of the network of tourist cycling routes in the Bieszczady Mountains on 2 sections and their inclusion in the Green Velo route, together with the application of technical solutions tested by other partners of the OUR WAY project.	Low	Medium	Continuous monitoring of the state of play and intensive efforts to include technical solutions in the documentation that work well for OUR WAY project partners (e.g. eco-counters).

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of the institution:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature(s) of the representative(s) of the institutions concerned by the Action Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_