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AISSER

COMMON STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE INTEGRATED TOURISM PRODUCTS



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DANUBE **ON 2 WHEELS**

DISCOVER
some of the most beautiful cycling trails



COMMON STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE INTEGRATED TOURISM PRODUCTS

This strategy was conducted within financing contract no. 86680/27.07.2018 for "Danube on 2 Wheels" project implementation, eMS code ROBG 277, co-financed by the European Union, through the European Regional Development Fund, under the INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme, Priority Axis 2 "A Green Region", 3rd Call.



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I. INTRODUCTION

Projects are changing the lives of their promoters and their communities; hence they constitute plenty of potential good news about Europe... But these pieces of news need messengers...[which]... is a shared responsibility of everybody... at EU, national, regional or local level.

Commissioner Corina CRETU,
Stockholm, November 2016

1.1 Sport events role in promoting CBC touristic destinations

1.1.1 General context of tourism promotion through sports activities

The role of sports events has been evolving over time. If events are still planned to bring people together and to generate economic benefits, they are increasingly used as marketing strategies to help promote, position, and brand destinations in a similar way that events contribute to touristic development through sports activities. This aspect of the role of special events has only been examined recently in the literature. The purpose of this strategy is to show how sports events can contribute to a city's... a country's... a region's touristic development.

Among special events, sports events have long had a privileged position. From the ancient to the modern Olympic Games, from the Football World Cup to the America's Cup, sports have been a fertile ground for bringing people together around an event. Participants, followers, spectators, business people all converge and contribute to make sports events some of the most sought-after opportunities to showcase a destination.

In order to illustrate the interdependence between event and destination marketing, we present in the following chapters of the strategy the connection between the tourism products developed within `Danube on 2 Wheels` project - cycling events - and the tourist development of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area.



Sport events tourism is a huge and growing global industry with important economic implications for both the sport events and the impact of travel and tourism related benefits on host destinations. A primary function of a sport event is to provide the host community with an opportunity to secure high prominence in the tourism market place. However, international or regional prominence may be gained with significant social and environmental costs. Hosting sport events has been focused of destination marketers as a strategy to enhance its destination image and differentiate its tourism products.

All over the world, communities are attracted to hosting sport events to draw marketing benefits that will contribute to the success of the destination in the long run by creating awareness, improving their image with visitors and attracting tourism business to generate inbound travel. Starting from this idea, the three partner associations - AISSER, `Sport for You and Me` and ACTIS Sport Club - have developed an innovative project to increase tourism on the riverside cities of the Danube in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area through sports events.

As such, destination images can be influenced by the hosting of sports event and the attributes associated with these. The purpose of this strategy is to outline the role of sport event tourism in the promotion of tourist destinations.

Events can become the most common channel through which visitors satisfy their desire to sample local foods and traditions, participate in games, or are entertained. Local and regional sport events can have the added advantage of keeping the domestic tourism market active (Getz, 1991).

Sport event tourism is internationally recognized as a substantial and highly desirable niche market (Getz, 2002). Most of the tourism literature concentrates on mega sport events, while regional sport events or specific sport events are less studied.

Considering these international trends, this strategy proves that sport event tourism is an opportunity to improve the touristic profile of CBC area as a tourist destination. The future recommendations are aimed at assisting the destination in getting the most of sport event tourism and help the local authorities to develop appropriate and sustainable strategies.



1.1.2 Literature review

Events can be described by referring to their tangible components. Getz (1991) proposes that the tangible products of an event are actually presented to the public as a `façade`: these are the mechanisms by which a visitor experience is partially created. There is a synergistic process involving these products and many intangibles to create the atmosphere that makes the event.

Further, events are usually produced as a means of achieving some greater goal. Event tourists or visitors can be defined as those who travel away from home for business, pleasure, personal affairs or any other purpose (except to commute to work) and who stay overnight at an event destination (Masberg, 1998).

Even in cases where events have not been planned with tourism objectives in mind, tourism tends to become a strategic factor once the destination managers begin to market, promote or package the event as part of the attraction mix of destination. To become a touristic product, a sport event has to be attractive to specific target segments, high in quality and (if the case) priced right (Hudson, 2003).

Sport tourism is not just an experience of sport activities. It forms a distinct culture of a destination, called by Pigeassou (2004), *sport culture* - a culture that can influence the choice of the destination. According to Oh (2002), sport events can be used as the promotion tool of the tourism in the destination country. Sporting events attract more and more tourists.

In the changing tourists' behaviour sports become a part of tourism, resources that can gradually improve the host country's image and further promote tourism in that country. The development or upgrading of sport facilities may be an effective strategy to access new markets for sport event tourism (Hinch and Hingham, 2004).

From the destination's perspective, sport event tourism is the development and marketing of sport events to obtain economic and community benefits. To the consumer, it is travel for the purpose of participating in, or viewing, a sport event (Getz, 2002). Events have a significant economic impact (Formica, 1998).

Community events are expected to increase the number of tourists and the amount of expenditures (Murphy and Carmichael, 1991). They are believed to bring



social benefits towards community (Getz, 1991; Ritchie, 1984) and last but not the least they lengthen the life cycle of destination (Getz and Frisby, 1998). The enhancement of community and creation of positive image (Jago and Show, 1998) improve destination`s image. Several researches verified that image improvement is associated with hosting different events (Jeong and Faulkner, 1996; Pyo, 1995; Ritchie and Smith, 1991).

Destination gets a wide media coverage, as well as advertising. The participants of the events and the attendees of events visit the destination to take part in the event which brings lot of foreign currency to the particular destination.

Events also help to build an image into the minds of tourists who have never visited the place and point their attention to the destination through media coverage. Tourists have several options and the first thing comes in their mind is the brand name, which emerges from the level of satisfaction (Jayswal, 2008).

Lasting social benefits are potentially available to the host community through properly planned and promoted special events. These include the enhancement of community spirit and pride, the promotion of cooperation and leadership within the community, the strengthening of support or local cultural traditions, and the building of greater cross-cultural understanding (Getz, 1992).



1.2. `Danube on 2 Wheels` - project description

`Danube on 2 Wheels` project (eMS code ROBG 277) is financed through INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme, under Priority Axis 2 `A green region`, within 3rd Call. The total eligible value is 497,713.26 EUR, out of which EUR 423,056.25 EUR represents the amount of EU contribution (through European Regional Development Fund), 64,850.04 EUR represents the State Budgets co-financing and 9,982.67 EUR is the partners own contribution.

The financing contract was signed in the summer of 2018 and had an implementation period of 18 months, until February 2020.



1.2.1 Project`s partners

`Danube on 2 Wheels` is a project implemented in partnership by AISSER Association from Calarasi (Romania), as lead partner, together with `Sport for You and Me` Association from Belogradchik (Bulgaria) and the ACTIS Sports Club Association from Calarasi (Romania), as partners.

Together, the three partners had developed in the implementation period new tourism products by organizing twelve pilot actions consisting in cycling events and trips held in the area of natural and cultural sites of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region, in order to promote and capitalize on the cultural and natural heritage, for the sustainable economic development of the border area.



AISSER Association was founded in 2011 at the initiative of two young brothers from Calarasi, passionate about nature, tourism and outdoor sports, who have started their journey with a very clear objective: to develop as many innovative and useful projects as possible for the local, regional and not only communities in fields such as education, tourism, environmental protection, volunteering, youth etc.

The Association purposes is to run projects (with national or international funds) that contribute to the economic, social, educational, cultural, ecological and tourism development in the local and regional communities, especially in Lower Danube, by establishing partnerships to identify and make use of EU funds and also promoting the national and international values, environmental protection and encouragement of youth to practice sport as a lifestyle.

The NGO is actively supporting a healthy lifestyle and the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage.

Likewise, it aims to support all forms of economic and social cooperation, multicultural, sports, religion between the two neighbouring countries - Romania and Bulgaria.

At the same time, through the projects that it implements, it aims to develop in an organized environment the fluvial tourism, the ecological tourism, and the

leisure tourism, in all its forms, at the highest level, and to promote the alternative forms of education and culture - for a healthy lifestyle among young people.

Through its projects, the AISSER Calarasi Association wishes to exploit the unique tourism and cultural potential existing in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border region and to transform the Danube River into a bridge, and not a barrier to the development of relations of both countries.



`Sport for You and Me` Association is a non-profit public benefit organization devoted to sports. It is actively involved in amateur sports development in Bulgaria and in the cross-border area. The association`s team is deeply convinced that sports in leisure time are important and absolutely necessary means of fighting stress at work and sedentary lifestyle.

Its` believe is that sports should be part of a modern life of all people and should create in them values such as motivation, discipline and fair play.

To improve the quality of infrastructure needed to practice sports, to develop and promote sports practice as lifestyle, the Association became part of the `Danube on 2 wheels` project.



ACTIS Sport Club Association was founded in 2015 as a non-profit public organization devoted to the development of Romanian sport and improving sporting culture in Romania. Its purpose is to organize and manage sportive and recreational activities, to promote sport and practice it by its members and all age groups of those who want to participate at any type of sport activities and competitions.

The association aims to develop sport at the rank of *Healthy Lifestyle*. Practically, the Association has the purpose to develop a mass sports culture. It plans to develop projects based on experience and fun, in which people who participate in events, from children to young people, parents and grandparents, can enjoy sports. Sport has been and will remain the most accessible tool through which people are brought together, connect and interact easily, naturally. Regardless of the

organizational form, event sports can stimulate the spirit of people, enhance their passion and enthusiasm, discover and develop abilities, increase social activities, excite emotion and create memorable experiences worthy of being shared with families, friends or colleagues. The association's main objectives are taking into account all types of sports - from sports for all to performance sports. Its purpose is to organize and to develop sports and recreational activities, to promote sport as a healthy way of life and to attend at other sport competitions.

ACTIS Association has relevant experience in the project field, having an important role in the development of essential sports activities, through its knowledge and expertise regarding the sports events logistics and conducting sports activities in a safe and relaxing manner in the touristic areas of the cross-border.



1.2.2 The objective of the project

As part of the `Danube on 2 Wheels` project, unique tourism products have been developed for nature lovers and outdoor activities enthusiasts, through cycling trails in the area of natural attractions and cultural sites in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region.

Through the cycling activities, which combine ecotourism with sports tourism, we want to promote areas with unique characteristics for the cross-border region, which, through their extremely rich and varied natural habitats, they are truly unique and priceless.

The target group of the project is represented by the general public, basically everyone who is interested in taking part in cycling adventures in the heart of nature, from amateurs to performance cyclists, families, groups of friends or adventurous colleagues, and also disabled people, who want to participate at outdoor activities, combined with a healthy lifestyle. These actions will also contribute to the economic growth of both Bulgaria and Romania, creating a closer link between the two neighbouring countries.

The green banks of the Danube in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area, the woods, wetlands and islands offer an opportunity for diverse outdoor activities and by networking of different stakeholders, diverse products can be developed.



Cross-border touristic offers allow local tourists to meet neighbouring cultures and nature and give visitors from distant countries the unique opportunity to discover a whole new region consisting of various landscapes, ethnicities and traditions.

The project partners identified cycling trails to combine green tourism with healthy activities whilst with small costs. This type of outdoor activities had a significant growth in the last years and could have a major impact on the cross-border region, especially the Danube region. The proposed activities envisage on-road and off-road cycling on the natural and cultural sites that the cross-border region has to offer.

Common cycling standards, which will be introduced to stakeholders from Romania and Bulgaria, aim to draw cycling and accommodation conditions closer to tourist expectations, nevertheless preserving the countries' unique appearance and atmosphere. Through cycling we come to promote the region, a healthy lifestyle and attract tourists in the region by organizing joint events on important natural and cultural areas.

The main objective of the project was to create three new integrated tourism products in order to facilitate better utilization of joint tourism potentials. The integrated tourism products are based on cycling trips/ adventures in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area, by using resources from both countries on the Danube.

The target group is formed out of adventure tourists (beginners and advanced participants), families and persons with disabilities - in order to facilitate a better use of the common tourism potential. At the same time, the new tourism products will support the sustainable development of the region from an economic, cultural and social point of view.

The projects' specific objectives are the following: development of two common strategies for improving the sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage; increase in the number of overnight stays in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region, up to 5,600, due to the new integrated tourism products created by the project and the pilot actions developed during the project implementation period and also during its sustainability period.

The new integrated tourism products will focus on attracting school groups, families and friends on weekends and vacations to participate in recreational sports activities by cycling in the cross-border area with vestiges and unique cultural and natural values.



II. ROMANIA - BULGARIA CROSS-BORDER REGION - A TOURIST DESTINATION

The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union has also led to the fact that the Danube has become more or less a component of the EU, with the few countries crossing the Danube not being part of the European Union (Serbia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). The benefits of this status are now countless.



The Danube, as part of the EU, can open the Union to the Black Sea region, Central Asia or the South Caucasus, and so it can lead to better economic development, competitiveness, environmental protection and, of course, general security, not just the transport corridors.

The cooperation of the states crossed by Danube river have the capacity to lead to a better protection of the environment, which in turn will greatly reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as droughts or floods. But important steps need to be taken in this regard, and the modernization of transport interconnections between people is a very good starting point.



The ultimate goal is a better education, a better workforce and a better security, which will lead to the development of the area, in some places (Romania and Bulgaria) being some of the poorest areas of the European Union.

Tourism is perhaps the most important and offering way of development of the area, Danube being all over the world recognized for its natural multiculturalism, created in centuries of history, multiculturalism that generated from cosmopolitan cities to historical sites, more and more varied than in any basin river in this world. With the help of good and sustainable infrastructure, all this cultural mix can be presented to a much larger number of tourists than it is at the moment.

2.1 The tourism potential of CBC region cultural and natural heritage

The Romanian - Bulgarian cross-border region:

- 7 counties in Romania: Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Constanta;
- 8 districts in Bulgaria: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Plevna, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra, Dobrich.



Romania - Bulgaria cross-border area is characterized by a cultural and natural heritage, which requests a unitary approach and a consequently joint cooperation to overcome national boundaries in the field of tourism. `Danube on 2 Wheels` project aims to enhancing the tourist potential of the cross-border area.



Therefore, offering to the potential tourist some alternatives routes to enjoy nature and discover the cultural and historical heritage from the CBC area, the phenomena of cycling can become an ordinary activity for tourists. The variety of natural, as well as cultural heritage along the Danube is huge, waiting to be discovered.

Visitors should get the possibility to widen their horizons and encounter a unique cycling experience within a variety of landscapes and regions.

The green banks of the Danube in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area, the woods, wetlands and islands offer an opportunity for diverse outdoor activities and by networking of different stakeholders, diverse products can be developed.

Cross-border touristic offers allow local tourists to meet neighbouring cultures and nature and give visitors from distant countries the unique opportunity to discover a whole new region consisting of various landscapes, ethnicities and traditions.

◆ The tourism potential of cultural and natural heritage - Romania

The main cultural and historical tourist resources of Romania are the following:

- archaeological artefacts;
- historical, architectural and art monuments, of unique value in the world;
- museums and memorial houses;
- folklore and traditions;
- tourist villages.

Of the 266 historical monuments of national interest, 84.9% of them are on the Romanian territory, which means 69 monuments and archaeological sites and 155 monuments and architectural ensembles.

This is a very important asset for the economic growth of the area, from tourism. It also helps that the monuments are distributed relatively evenly in the counties on the border, being concentrated around places with high urban density as follow; 73 in Constanta county, 34 in Dolj county, 32 in Teleorman county and 13 in Calarasi county.



The natural heritage is an attraction for tourists. Biodiversity offered by the Danube basin, relief, from mountains to meadow, vegetation etc., all represent points of interest for tourists, points on which cross-border tourism can be developed sustainably.



Comana National Park, Giurgiu county - Neajlovului Delta

In the Romanian area there are three natural parks and one national park. Romania also has 15 Ramsar sites, areas of international interest. Natura 2000 sites are mainly concentrated in two counties, Mehedinti and Constanta.

◆ The tourism potential of cultural and natural heritage - Bulgaria

The Bulgarian tourism potential is slightly deficient, in comparison to the Romanian one, when it comes to historical monuments of national interest, but it compensates through the natural resources and the high number of protected areas.

The most important attractions in the Bulgarian part of the cross-border area are located in the western part of the region: "Belogradchik rocks" with the 3rd century fortress, Magura Cave, Ledenika Cave and rutile stone formations. Two of the nine Bulgarian sites of cultural and natural heritage protected by UNESCO, are located in the cross-border region - the stone-carved churches of Ivanovo and the Srebrna Nature Reserve.



Skaklya waterfall, 1.5 km south of Vratsa

It is noted by UNESCO sites in the Ruse and Razgrad districts. In the Bulgarian area the district of Veliko Tarnovo is the one with the most monuments, 10 in number. The district Dobrich has 7, Ruse has 6, and the districts with the least are Pleven, Silistra and Montana, each with 2.

Dobrich district from Bulgaria is the most developed, due to the best infrastructure for the agreement tourism, the only one directly comparable with Constanta county from Romania.



Veliko Tarnovo - city view

For cultural tourism, Veliko Tarnovo is the leader of the Bulgarian side, here the main tourist flows come. Veliko Tarnovo also dominates the historical tourism side. As part of mountain tourism, it is practiced in Vratsa and Montana districts. In Vratsa, ecotourism is also practiced, and in Montana, business and spa.



The districts along the Danube in Bulgaria have 4 natural parks and 6 Ramsar sites. The Natura 2000 sites are uniformly concentrated, unlike in Romania, these being in the mountain area of Montana and Vidin districts and in Silistra, Pleven, Razgrad and Dobrich districts.

Along the Danube there are some natural protected areas, 3 biosphere reserves of international interest, Natura 2000 sites, all of which can be easily included in tourist circuits for a sustainable development of cross-border tourism.

2.2 Cycling trails identified to develop sport tourism in CBC green region

The purpose of `Danube on 2 Wheels` project is the creation of new tourist products in the form of cycling adventures in the districts and counties of the two neighbouring countries along the Danube shore. This type of sport activities will contribute to the popularization of the environmental and cultural resources that Romania and Bulgaria have to offer in the project eligible area. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of overnight stays in the region in order to sustainably develop the tourism economy.

In many cases, some areas are not quite popular, except for the coast with Constanta county and Dobrich district, they will be accessible to all tourists who want to visit some cultural sights, admire beautiful landscapes and do all this in a healthy manner, without high costs.

For all these reasons, cycling trips are the perfect formula. They allow everyone, at their own pace, to visit and focus on what they find interesting and to enjoy these cultural and natural resources offered by the Danube area.

Cycling events are relatively one of newest forms of tourism, which are welcomed by both locals and enthusiastic active tourists, who enjoy outdoor movement. Through this type of touristic product, the project partners managed to promote the region, a healthy lifestyle and attracted tourists to the cross-border area, by organizing joint events in some of the most beautiful and rich natural and cultural areas from Romania and Bulgaria.



The cycling trails proposed in the study conducted in the project implementation period are almost 60, meaning over 3.600 km on-road and off-road cycling routes along the Danube river, half in Romania, half in Bulgaria, divided as following: on-road cycling trails in each country; off-road cycling trails.

More details of the cycle routes can be found in the study of identifying cyclo-touristic routes, 6th chapter - *Bicycle Routes identified in the eligible area of the project*, 6.1 subchapter - *Bicycle routes identified in the Romanian part of the RO-BG cross-border area*.

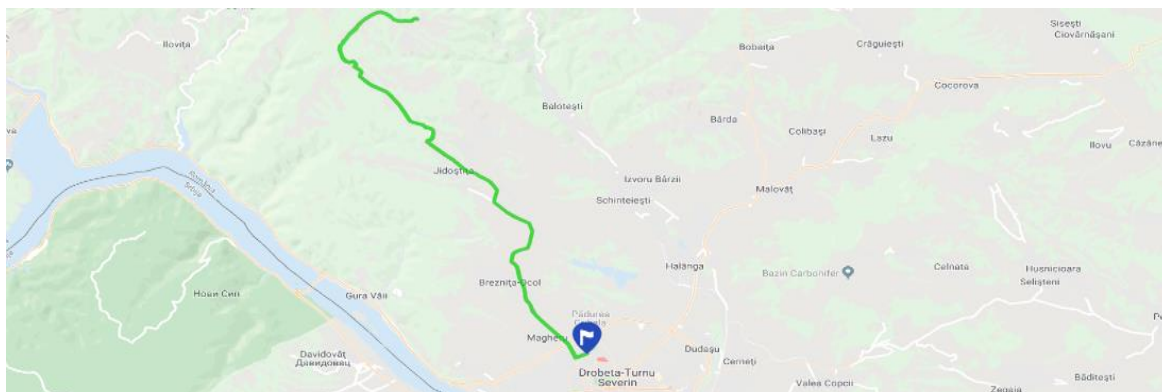
In the following we`ll present to you the integrated Tourism Products - Cycling Trails in Romania and Bulgaria:

❖ Romania

✓ 1st Integrated Tourism Product - Road cycling trails

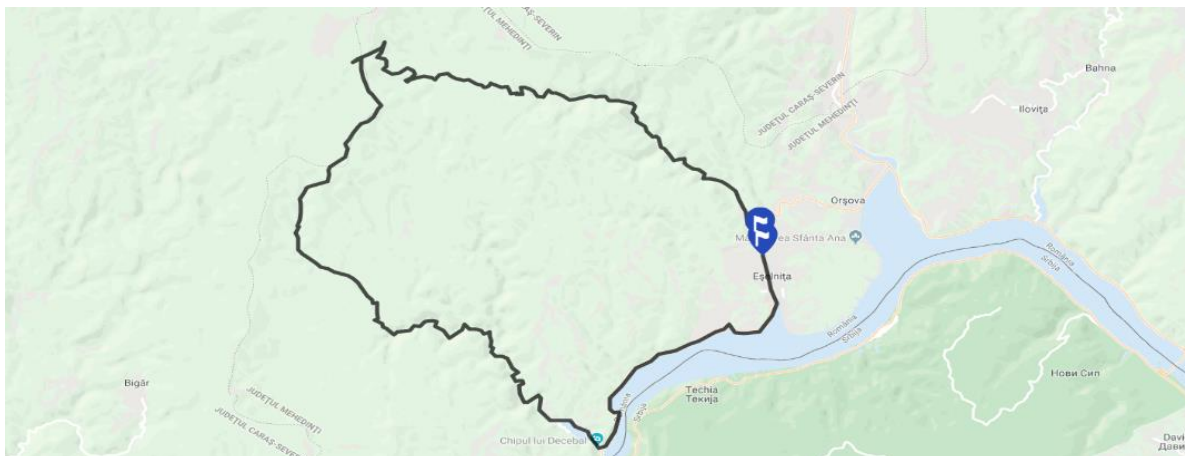
◆ Drobeta Turnu Severin - Jidostita - Schitu de Sus cycling route

o Distance - 43 km



◆ Eselnita - Pregheda round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 67 km





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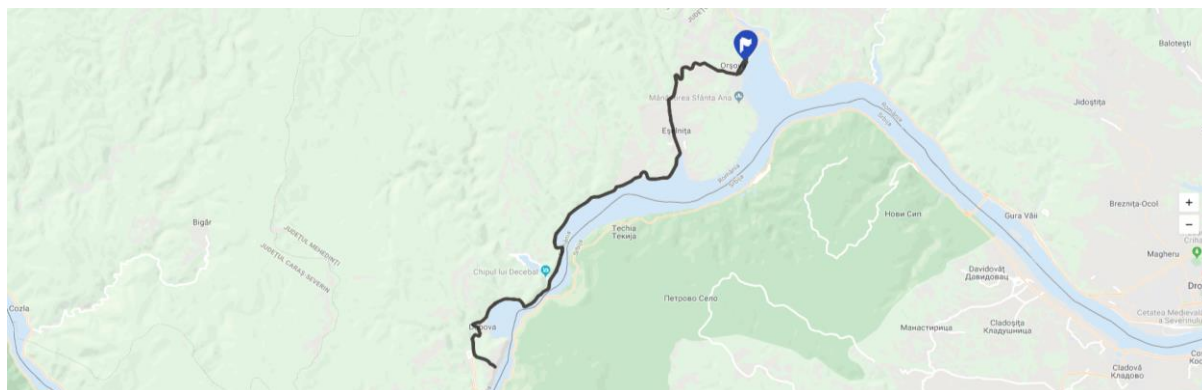


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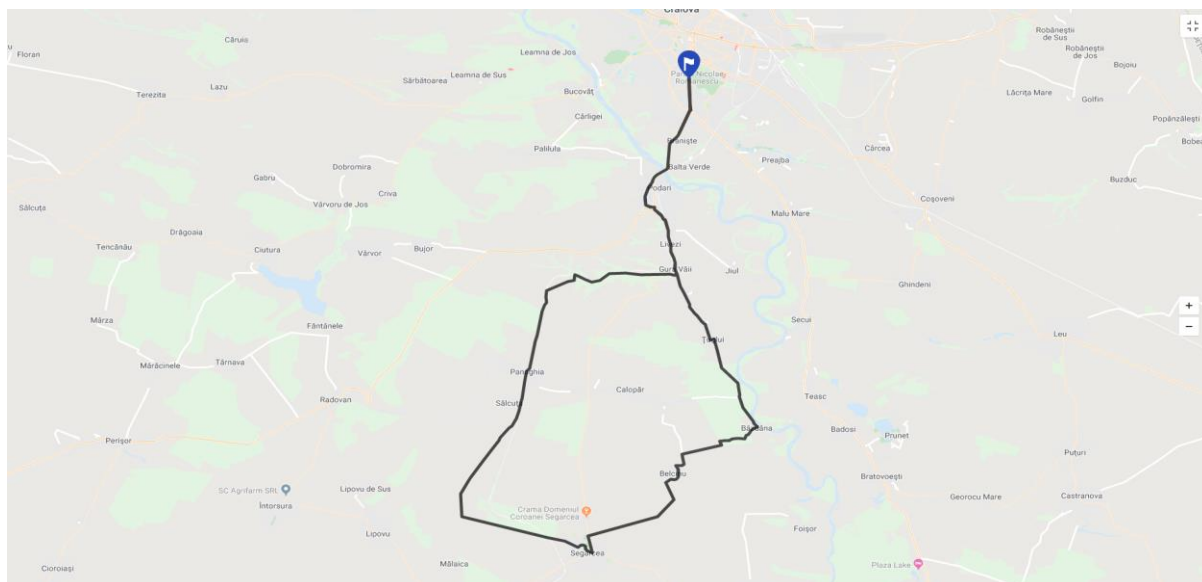
◆ Orsova - Ciucaru Mare cycling route

o Distance - 52 km



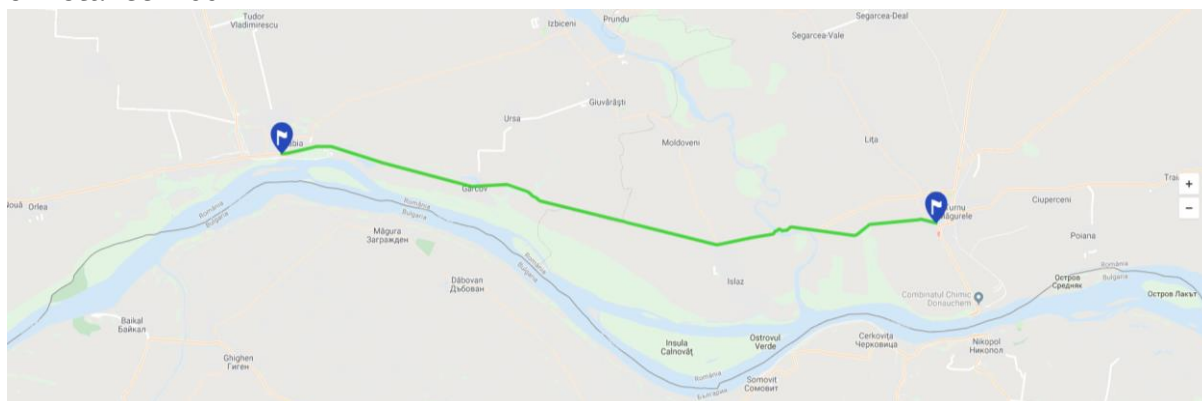
◆ Podari - Segarcea cycling route

o Distance - 66 km



◆ Corabia - Turnu Magurele cycling route

o Distance - 60 km





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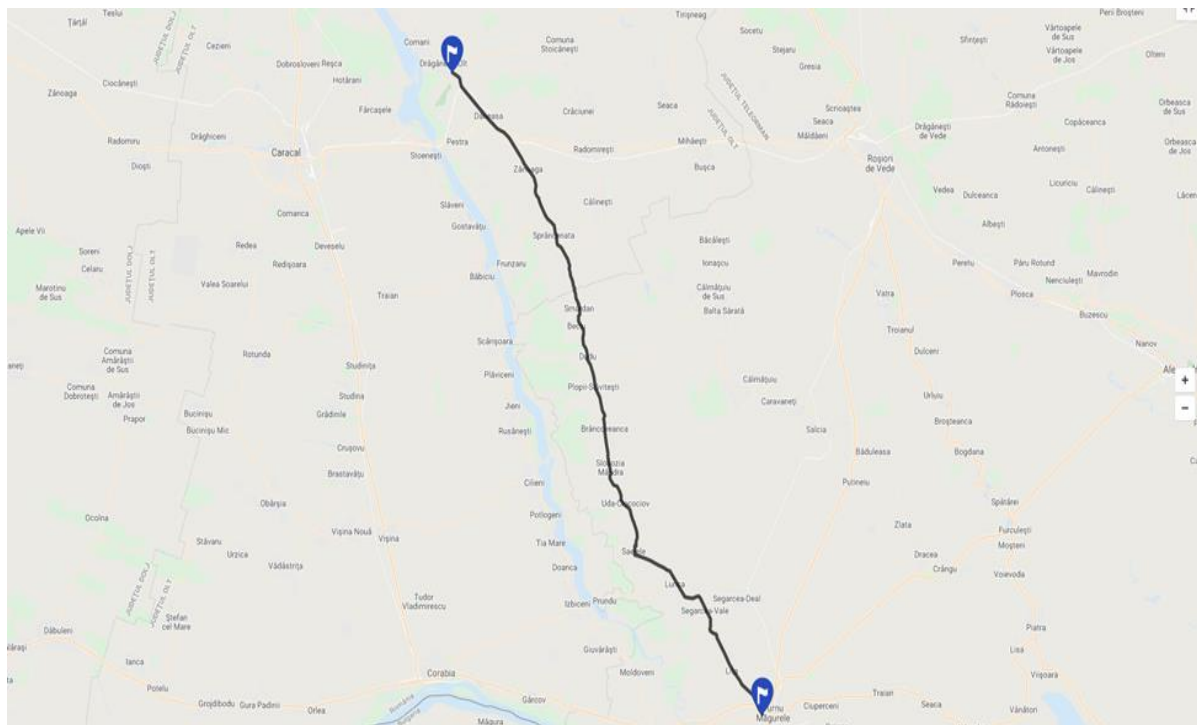


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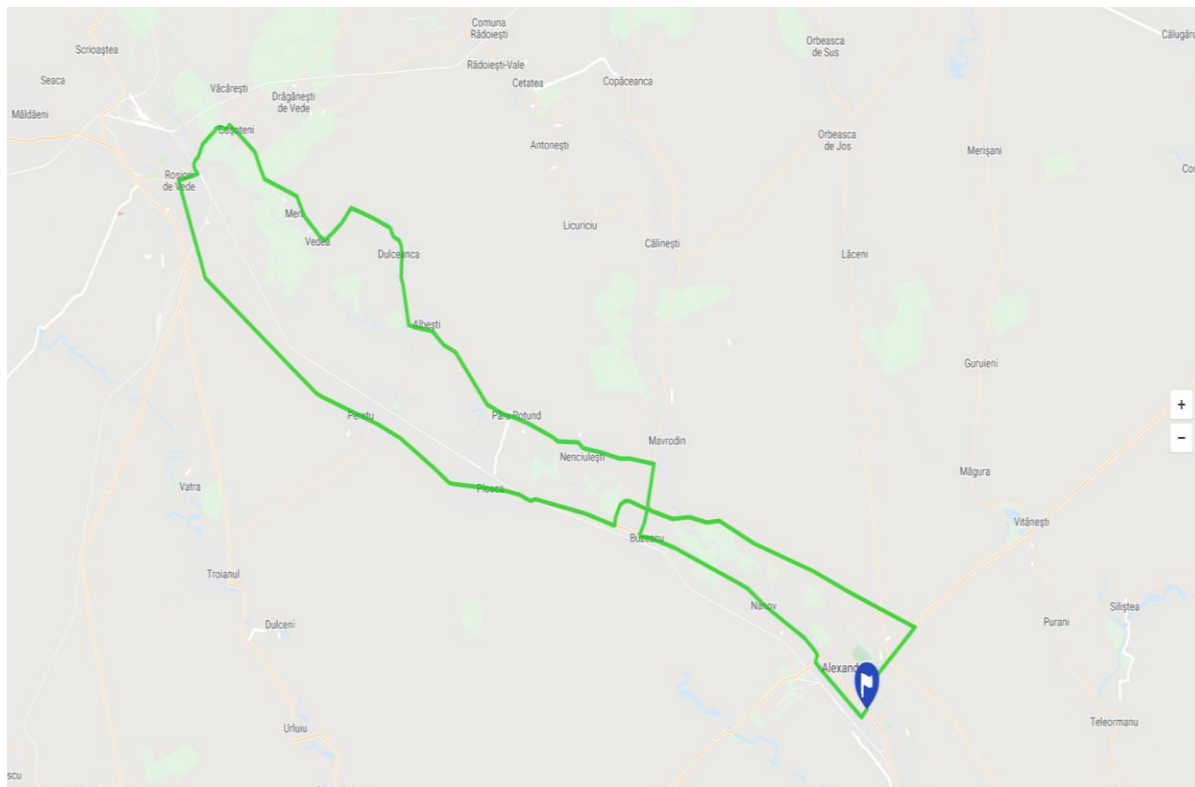
◆ Draganesti-Olt - Turnu Magurele cycling route

o Distance - 60 - 120 km | 2 days-cycling trail



◆ Alexandria - Peretu - Rosiori de Vede - Vedea - Nanov - Alexandria round-trip

o Distance - 79 km





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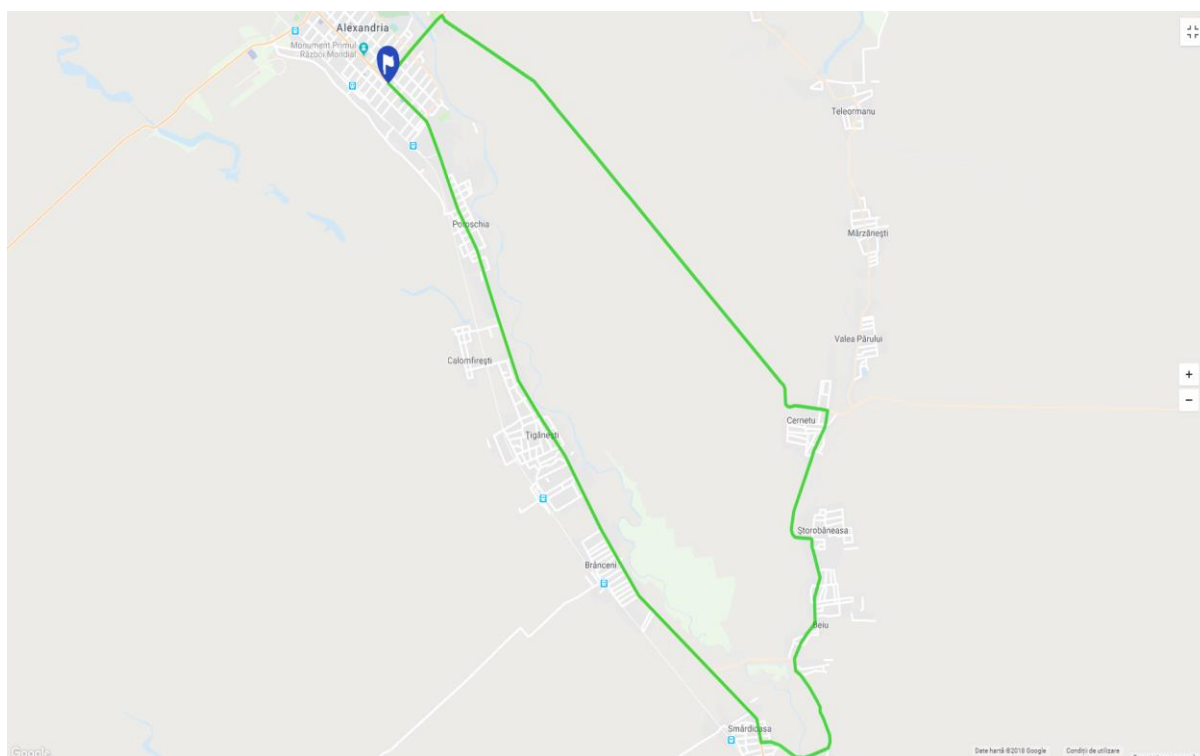


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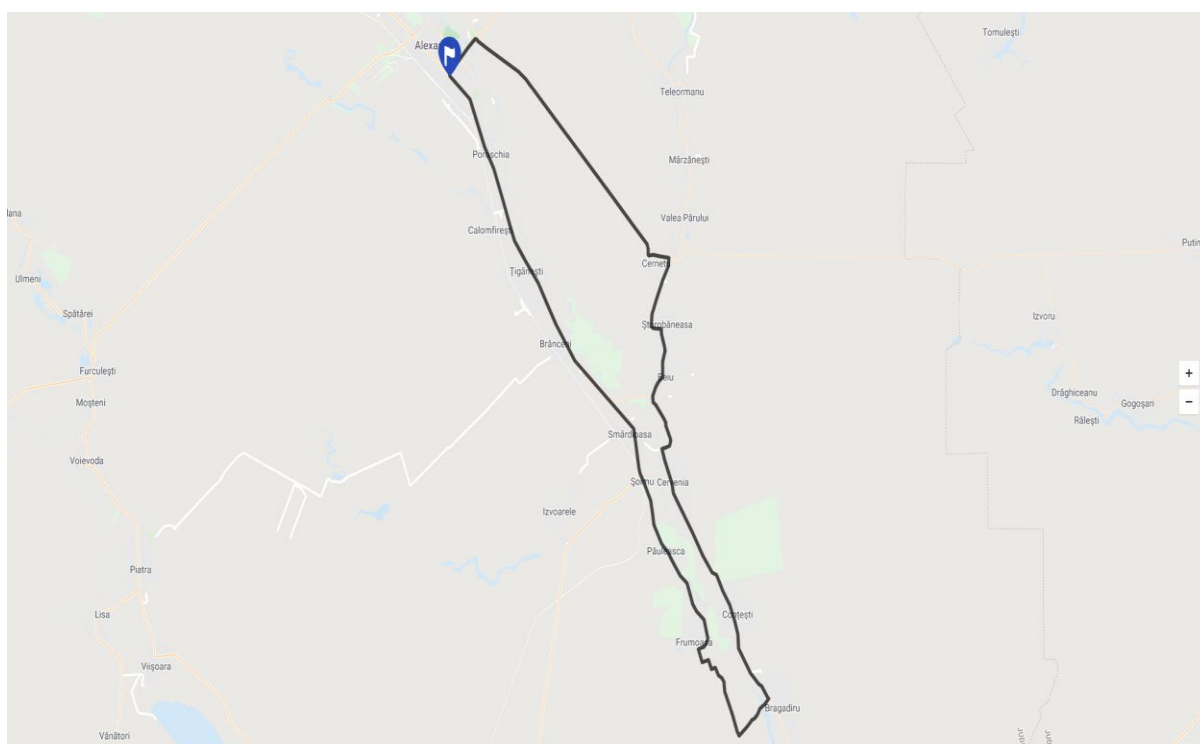
♦ Alexandria - Cernetu - Branceni - Alexandria round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 45 km



♦ Alexandria - Bragadiru round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 68 km





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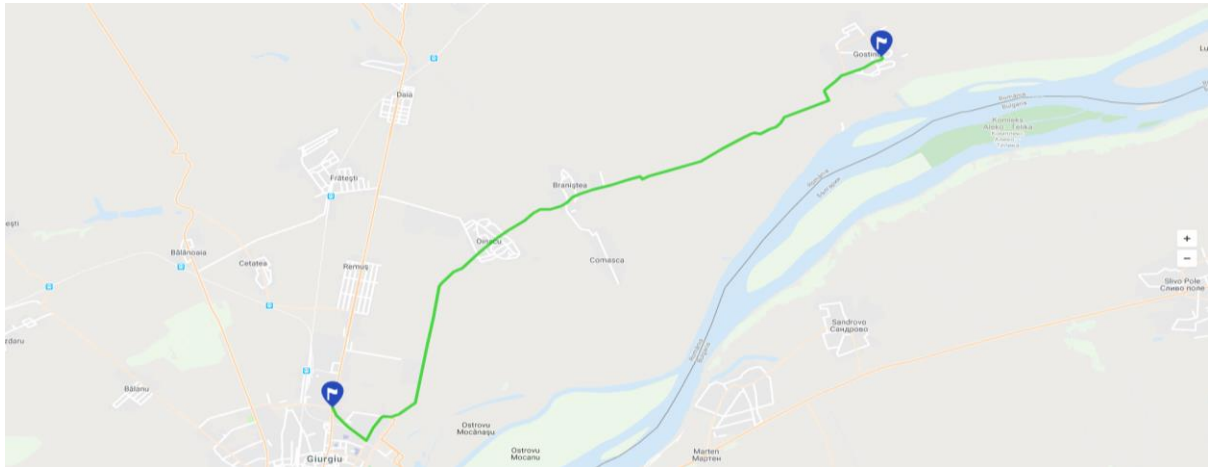


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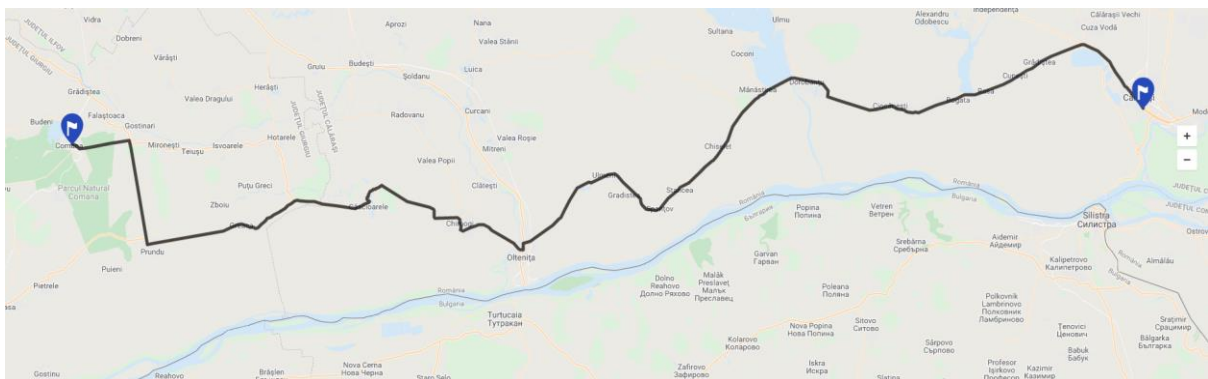
◆ Alexandria - Cernetu cycling route

o Distance - 28 km



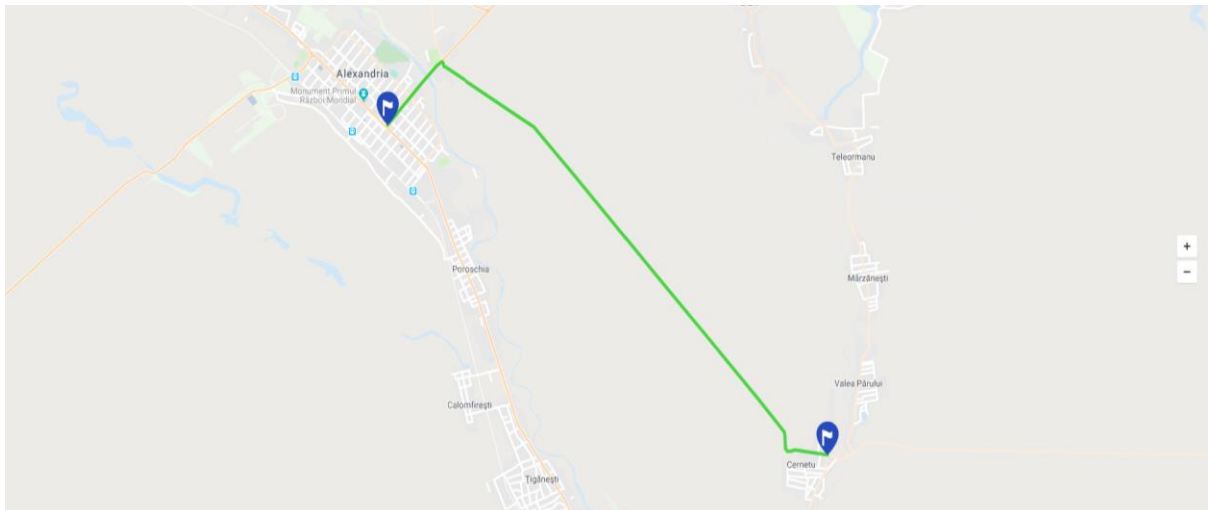
◆ Comana - Calarasi cycling route

o Distance - 121 km | 2 days duration



◆ Giurgiu - Gostinu cycling route

o Distance - 34 km





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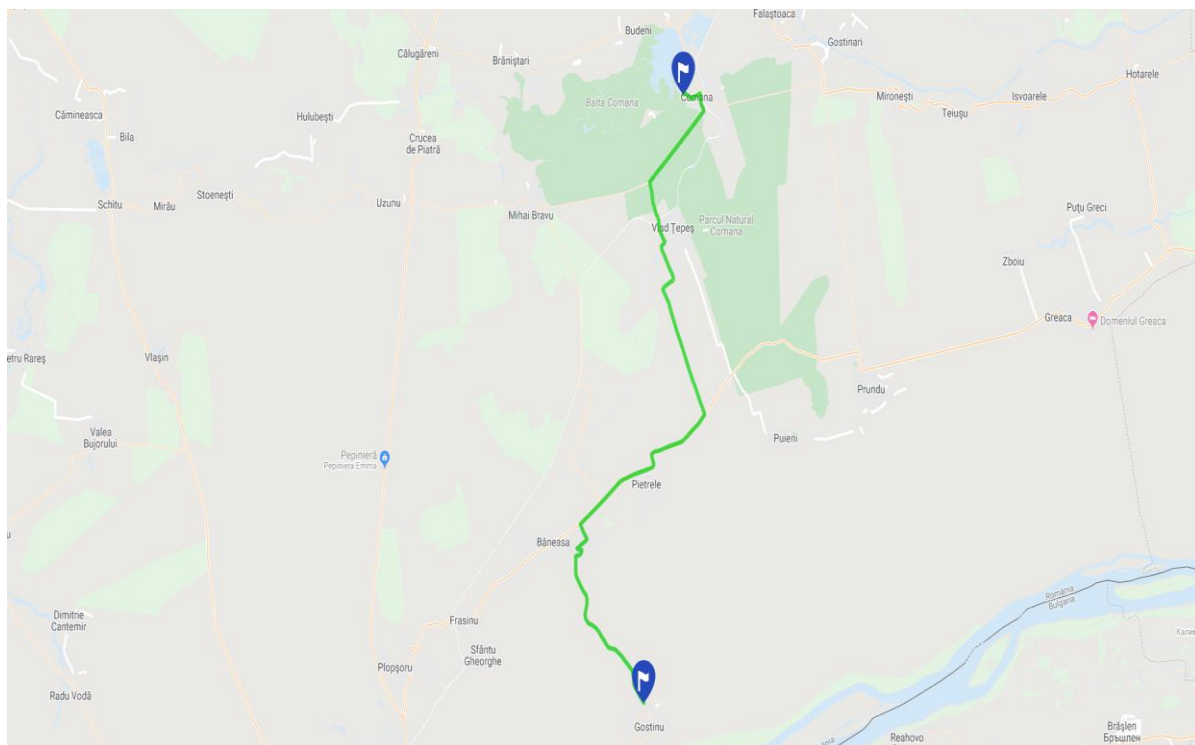


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◆ Gostinu - Comana cycling route

o Distance - 27 km | 54 km



◆ Vlad Tepes - Prundu - Comana - Vlad Tepes round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 34 km





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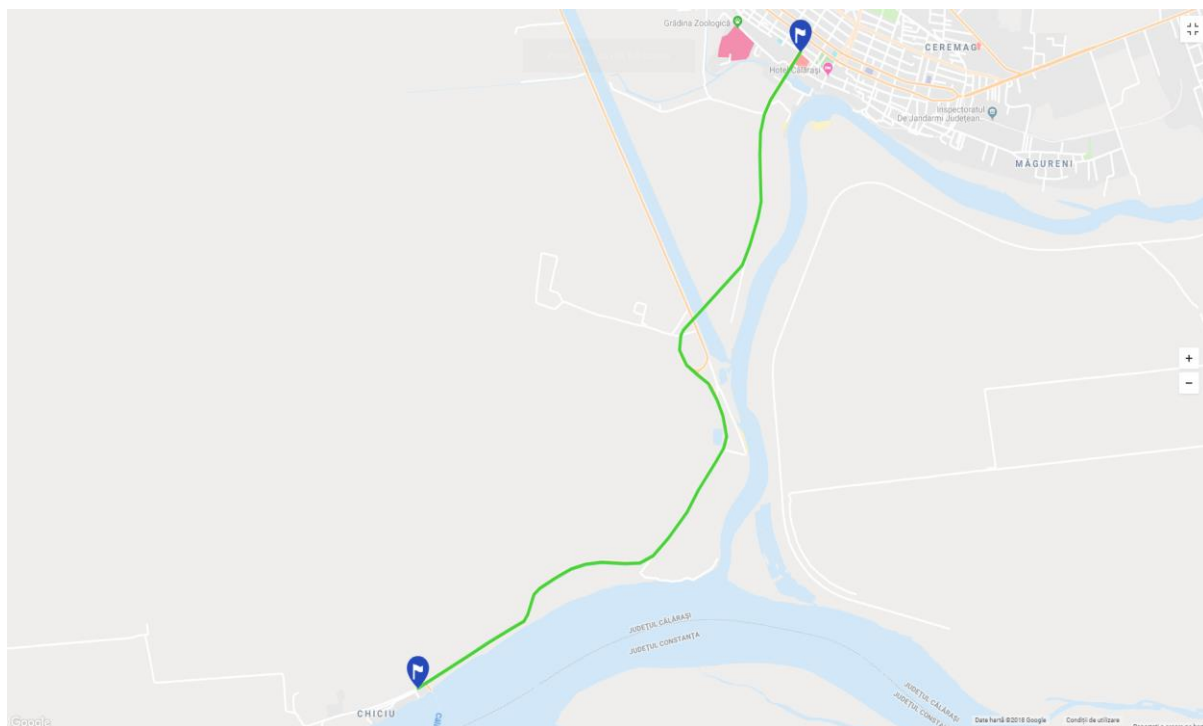


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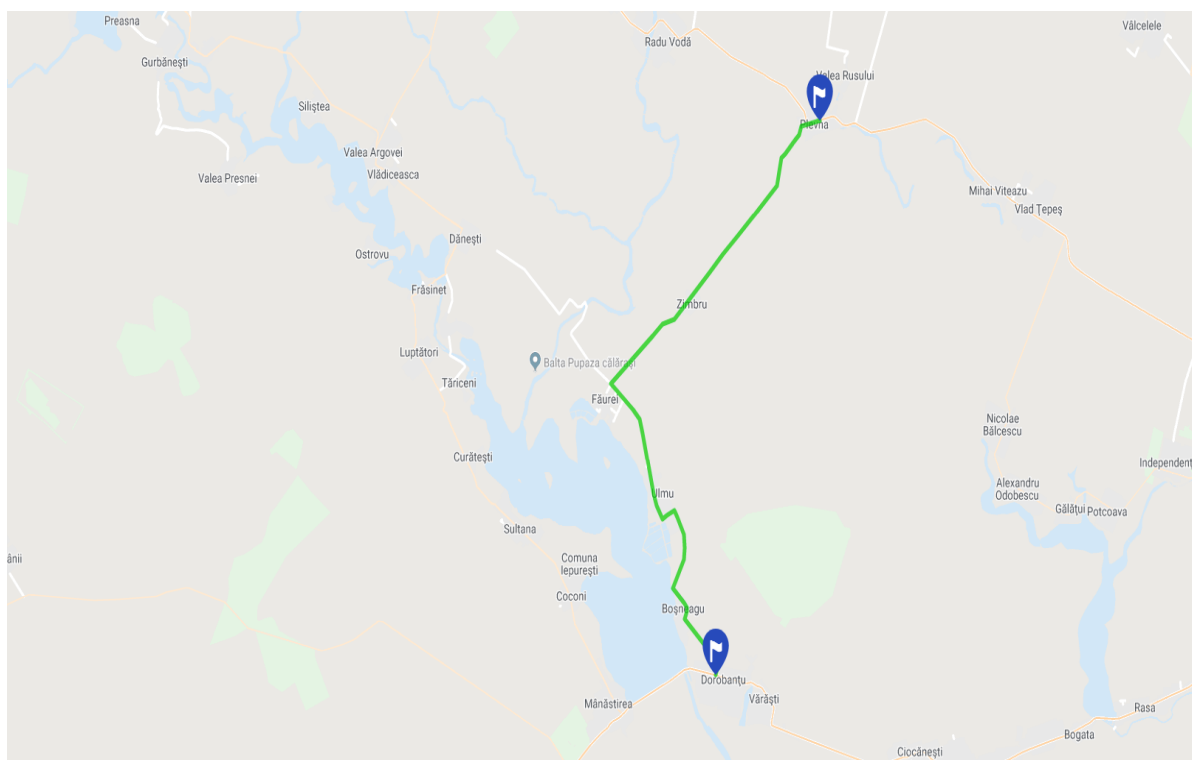
◆ Calarasi - Chiciu cycling route

o Distance - 20 km



◆ Dorobantu - Plevna cycling route

o Distance - 44 km





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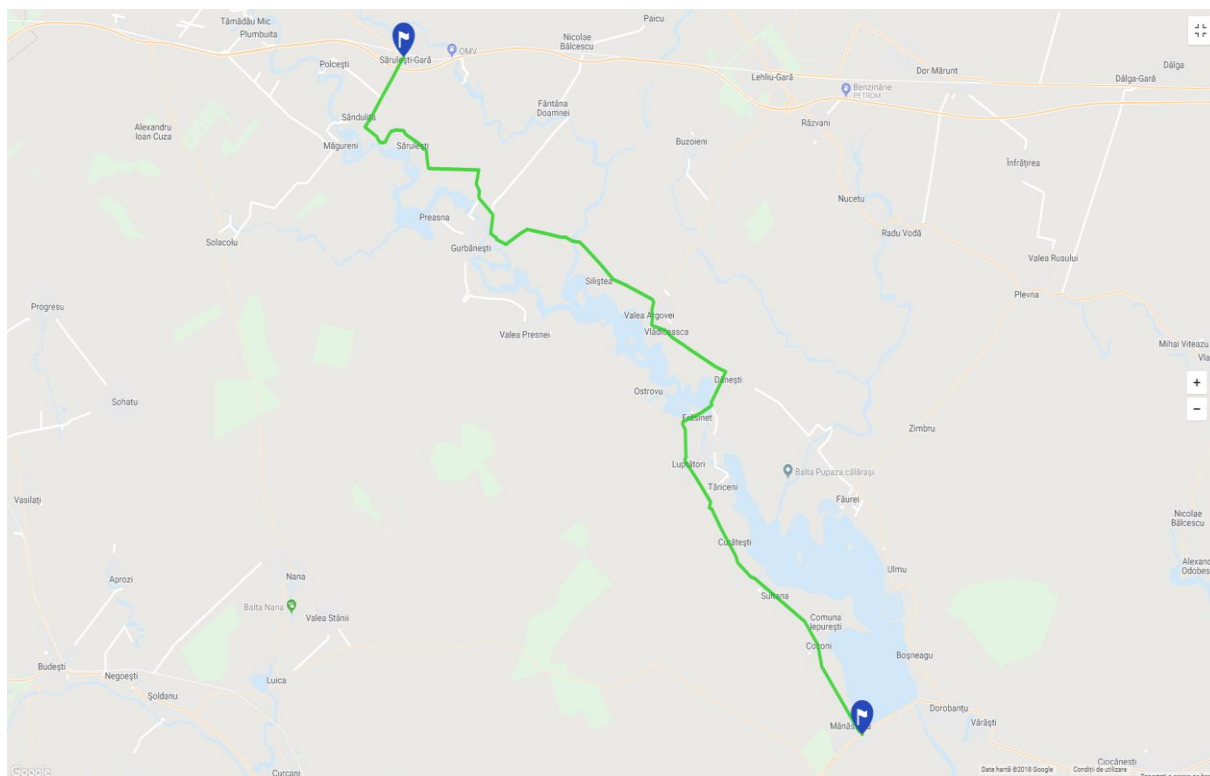


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



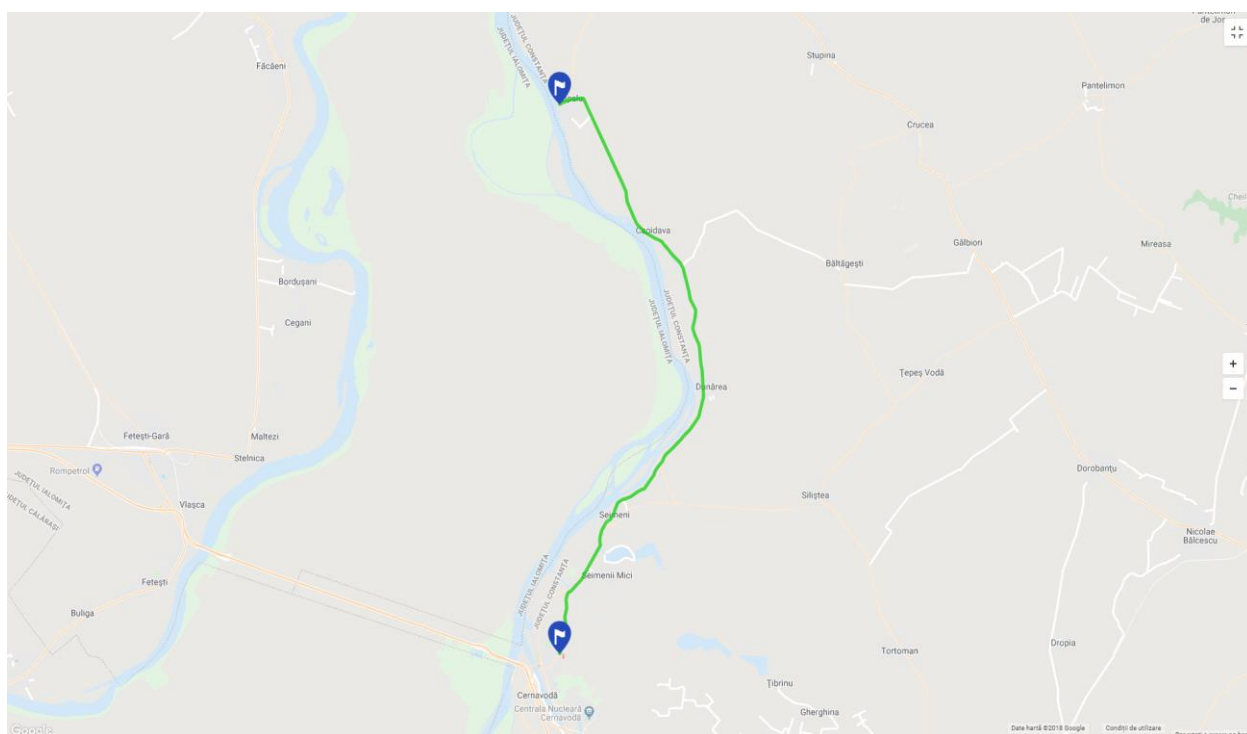
◆ Manastirea - Sarulesti railway station round-trip

o Distance - 42 km | 84 km



◆ Cernavoda - Topalu cycling route

o Distance - 27 km | 54 km





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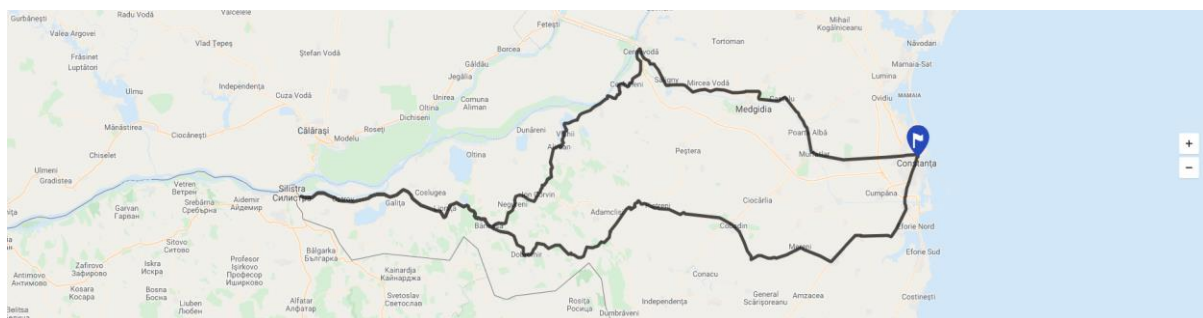


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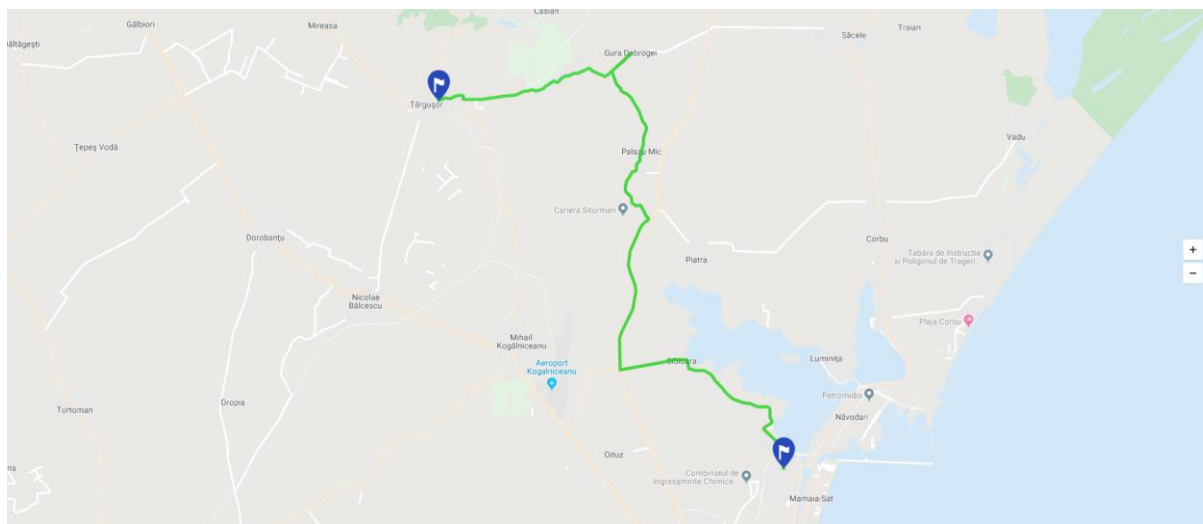
◆ Constanta - Calarasi cycling route

o Distance - 300 km | 3-day cycling trail duration



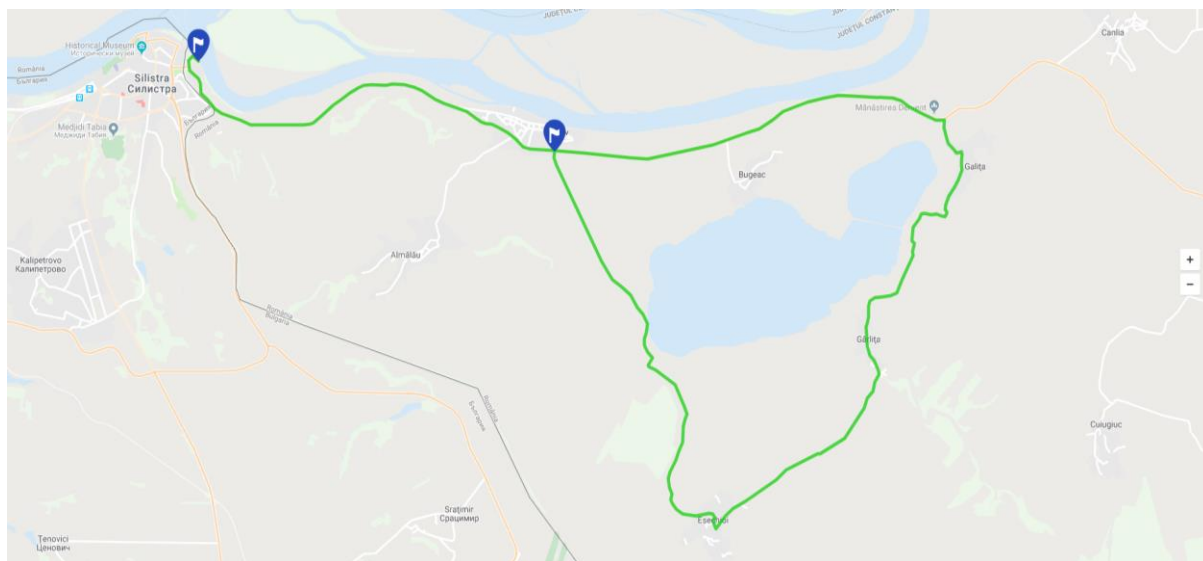
◆ Targusor - Navodari cycling route

o Distance - 36 km



◆ Ostrov - Derwent Monastery cycling route

o Distance - 27 km





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✓ 2nd Integrated Tourism Product - Off-road cycling trails

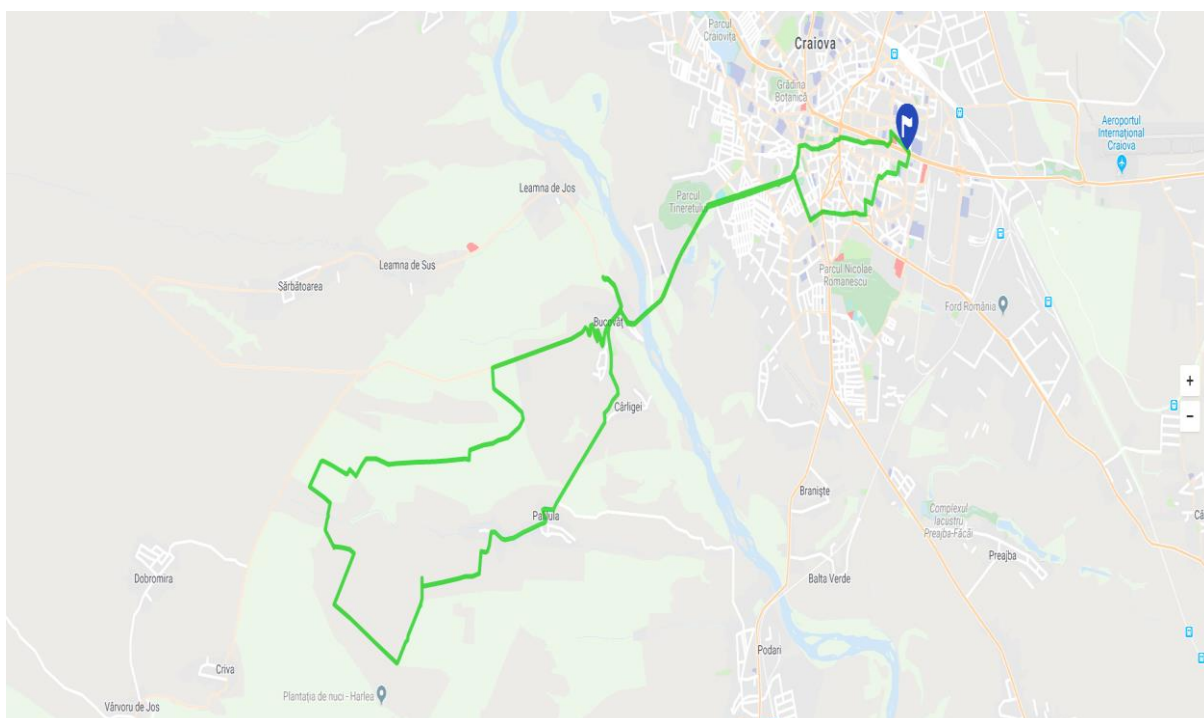
◆ Drobeta Turnu-Severin round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 88 km



◆ Craiova - Bucovat - Palilula - Carligei - Craiova cycling route

o Distance - 41 km





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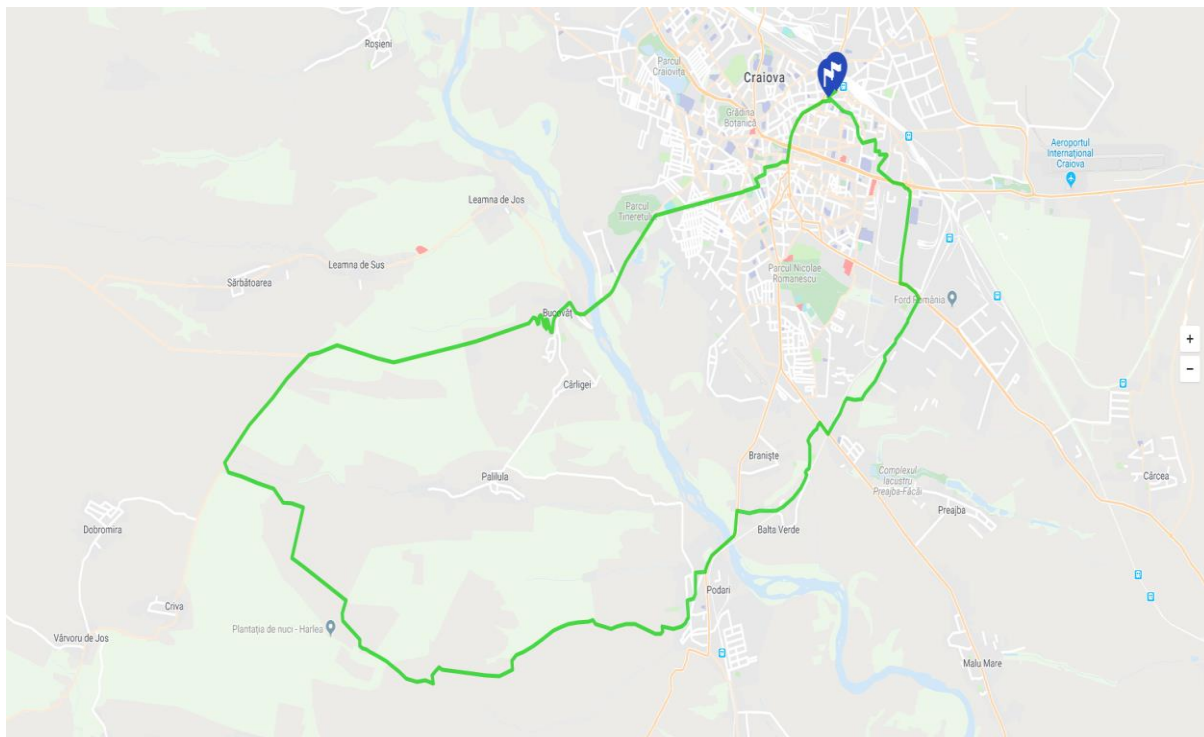


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



♦ Craiova - Podari - Bucovat - Craiova round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 46 km



♦ Fantanele lake round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 20 km: 5 laps of 4 km for beginners

- 40 km: 10 laps of 4 km for the advanced





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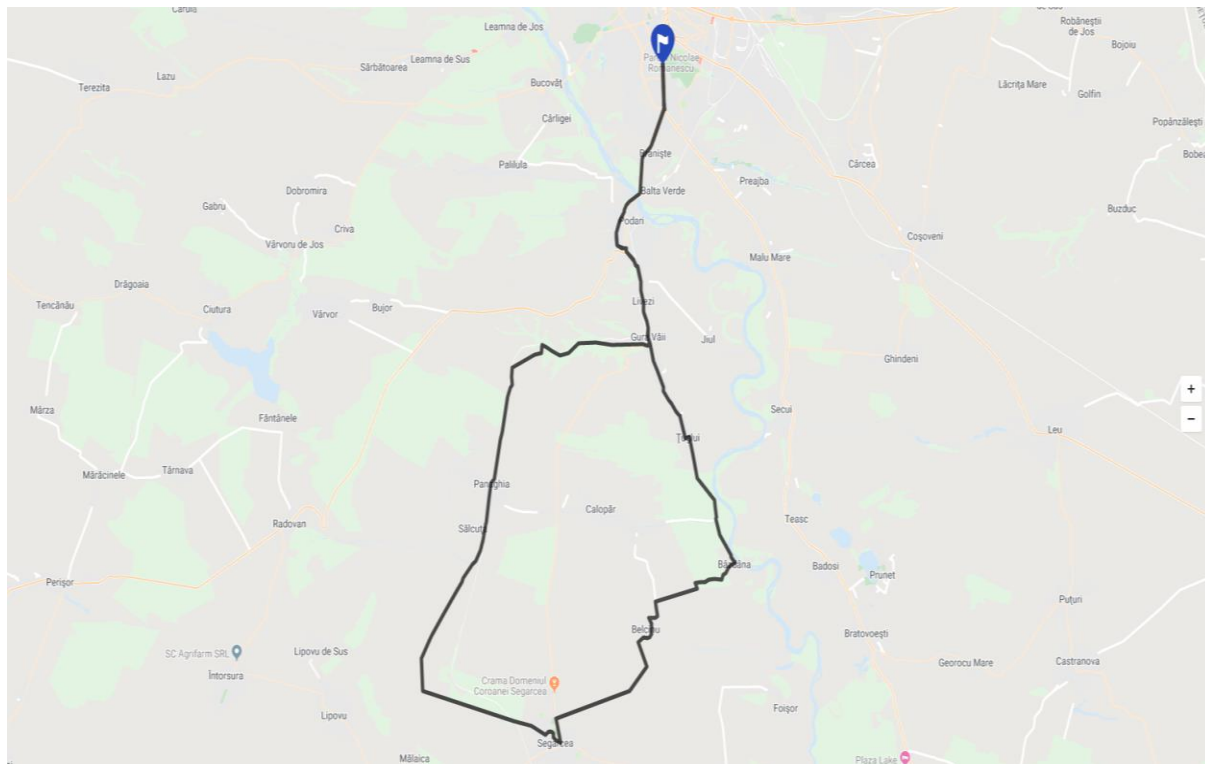


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



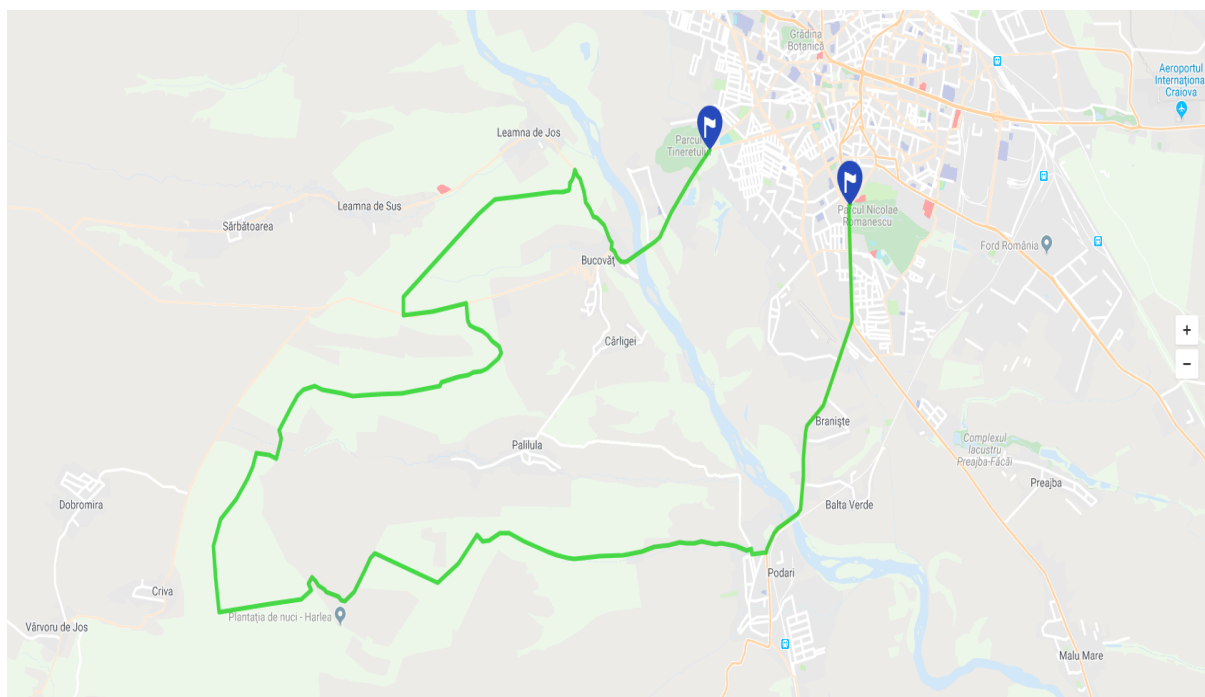
♦ Craiova - Segarcea cycling trail

o Distance - 70 km



♦ "Green" cycling route - one day to Craiova

o Distance - 38 km





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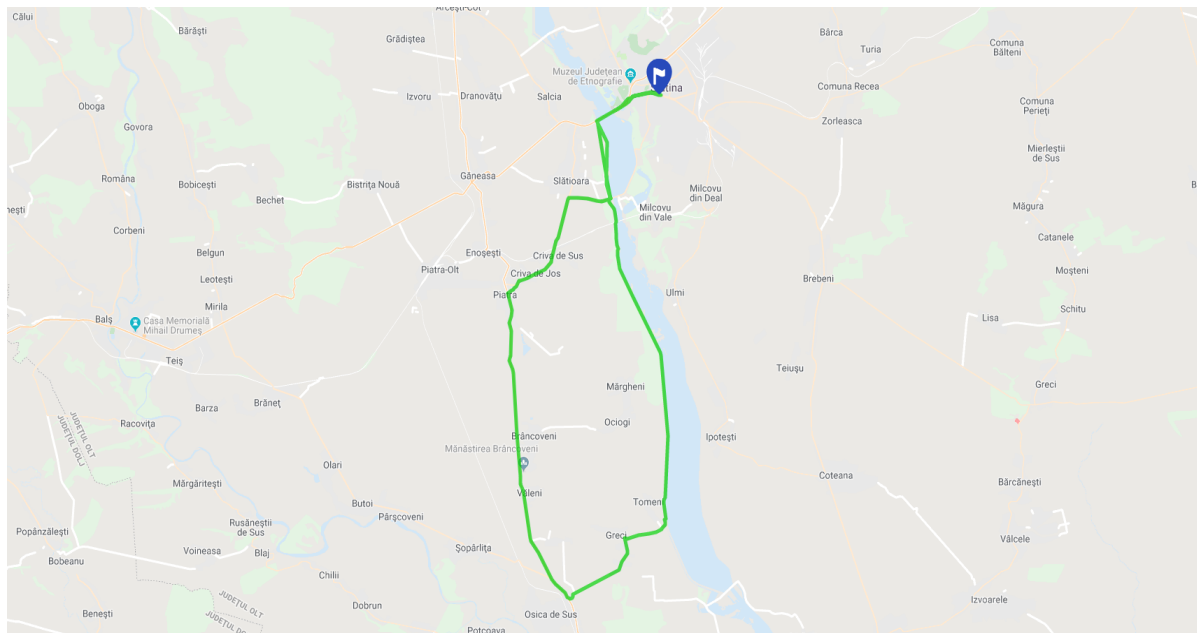


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



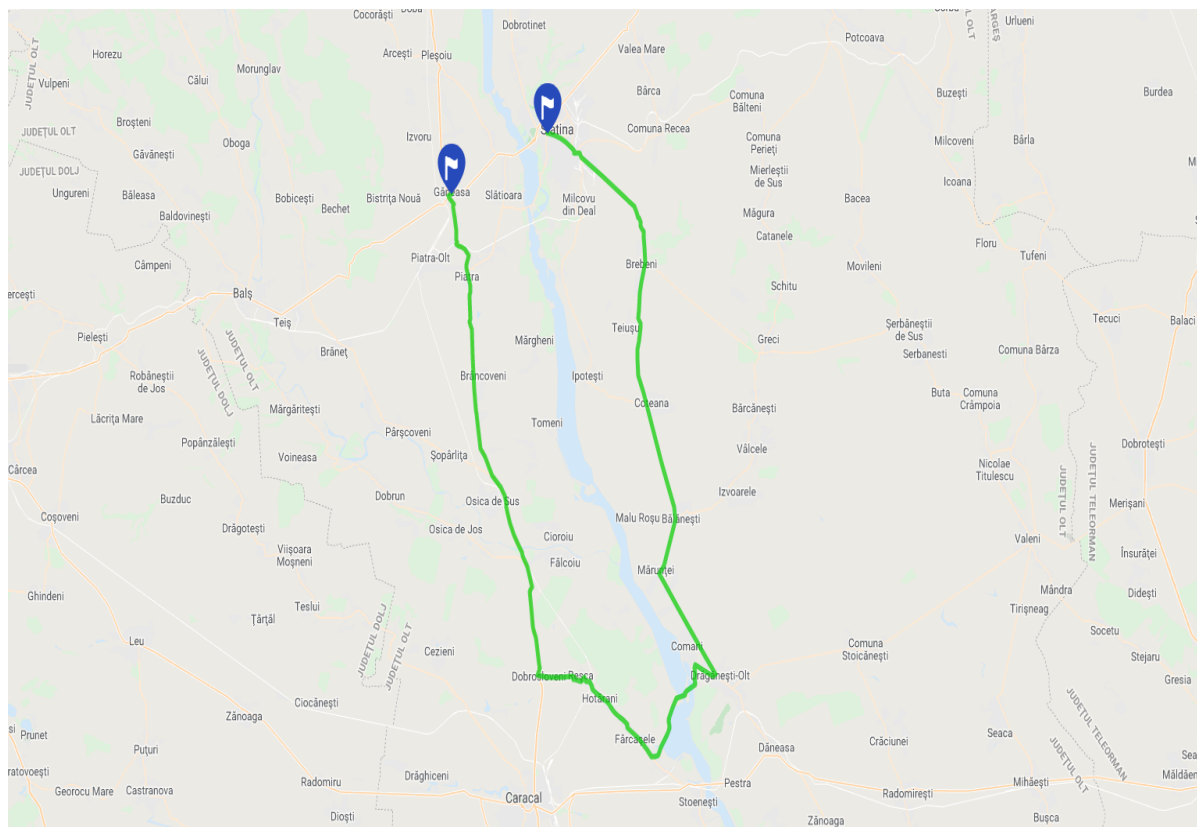
◆ Slatina - Peretu - Osica - Slatina cycling route

o Distance - 48 km



◆ Slatina - Ganeasa cycling trail

o Distance - 82 km





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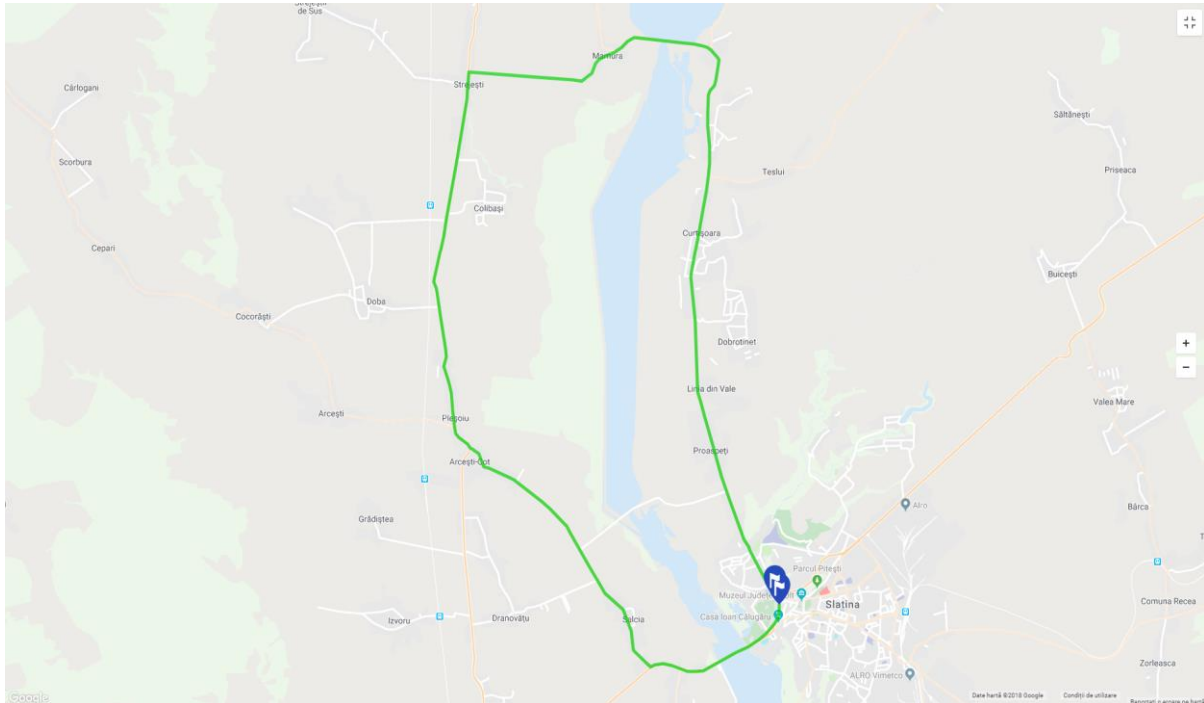


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



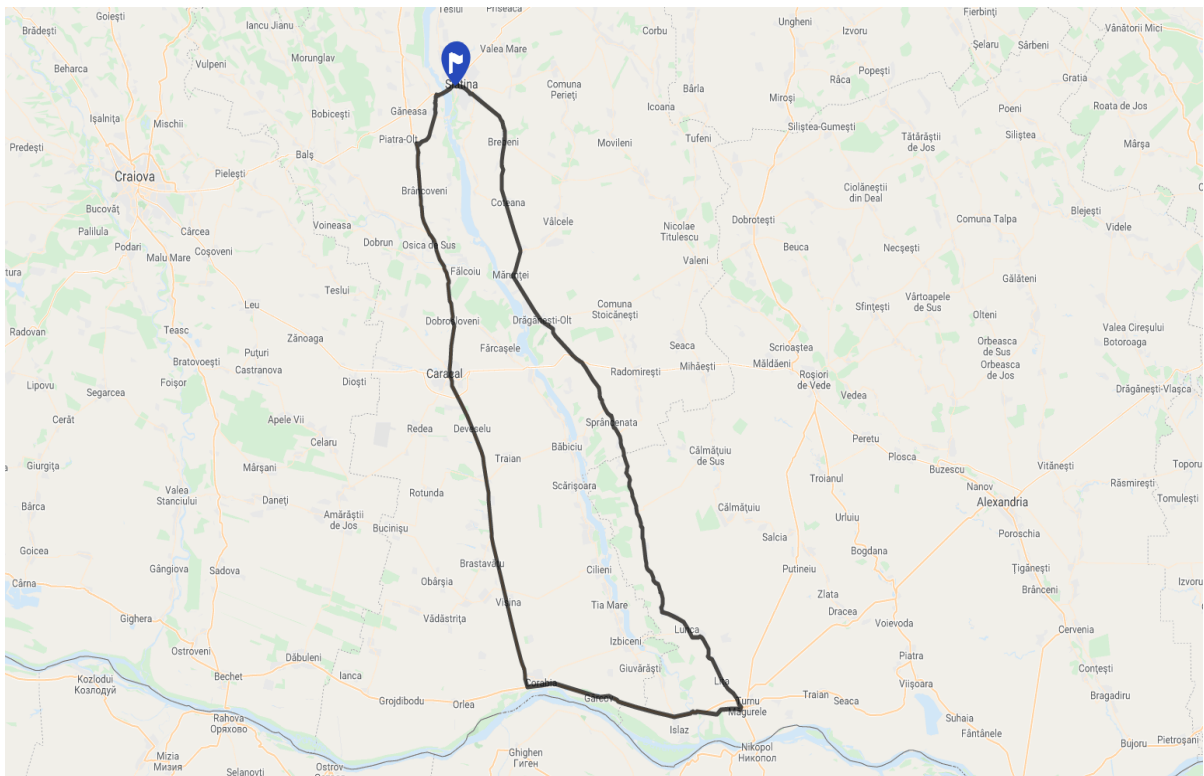
♦ Slatina round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 45 km



♦ Slatina - Turnu Magurele - Corabia - Slatina round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 211 km | 2-3-days duration





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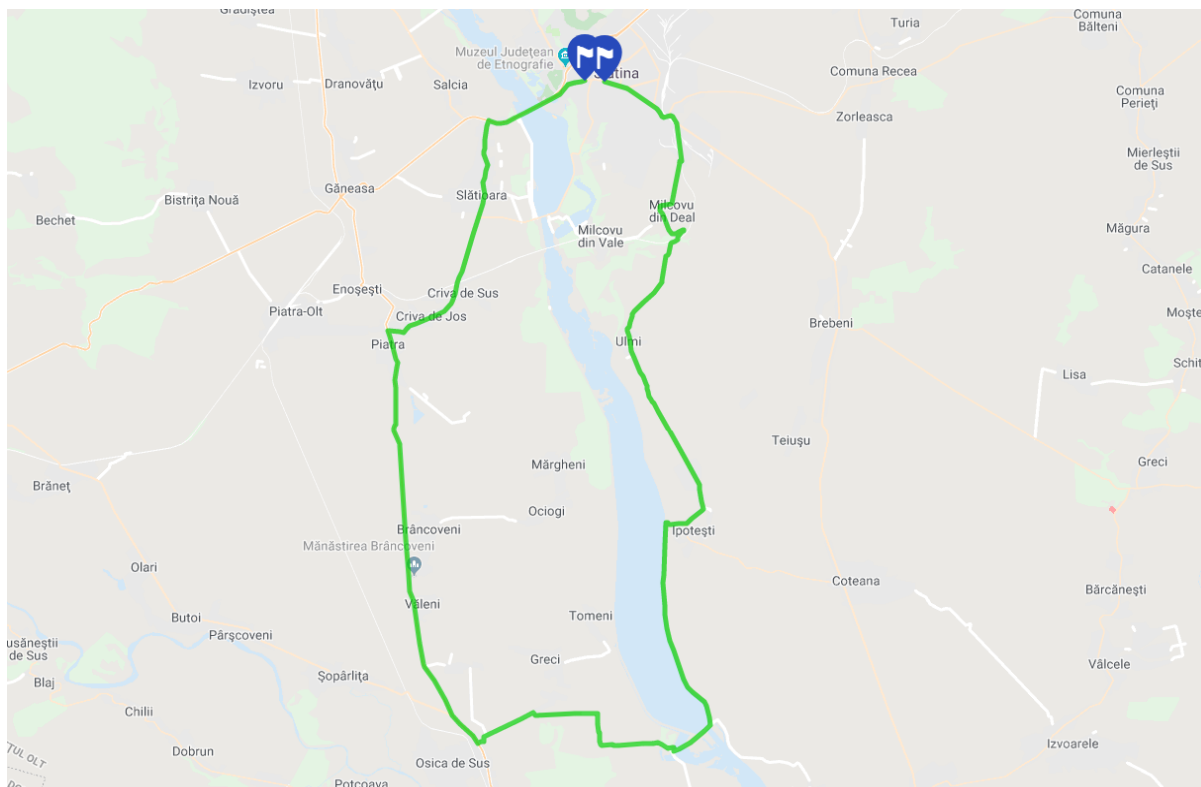


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



♦ Slatina - Ulmi - Valeni - Slatina round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 50 km



♦ Protected Area `Vedea - Danube` cycling route

o Distance - 30 km





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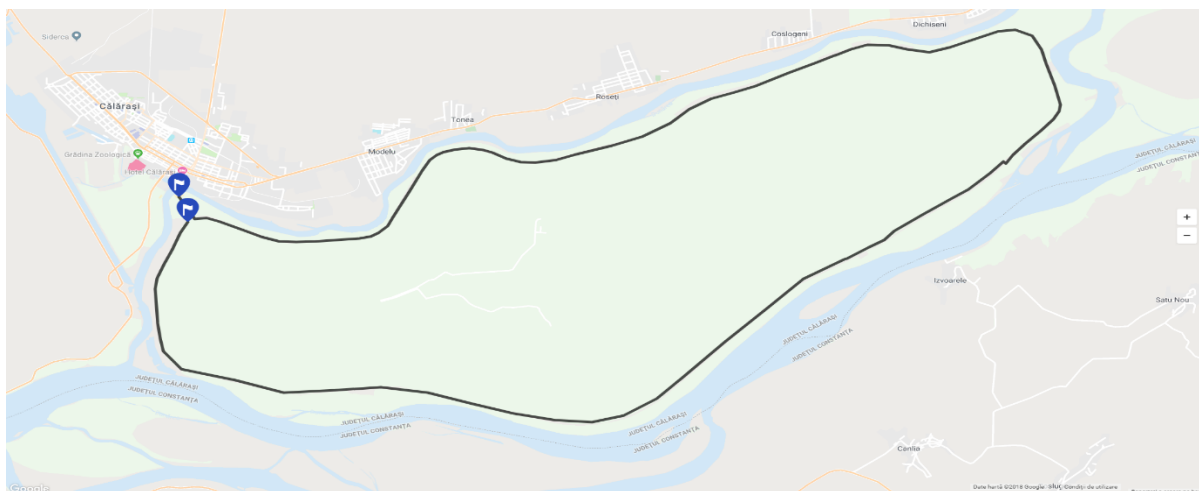


GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



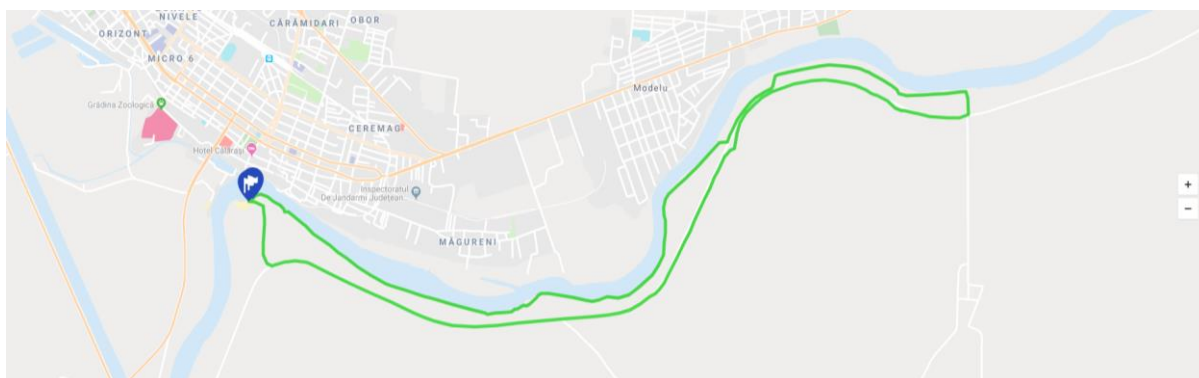
♦ Calarasi round-trip cycling trail

o Distance - 55 km



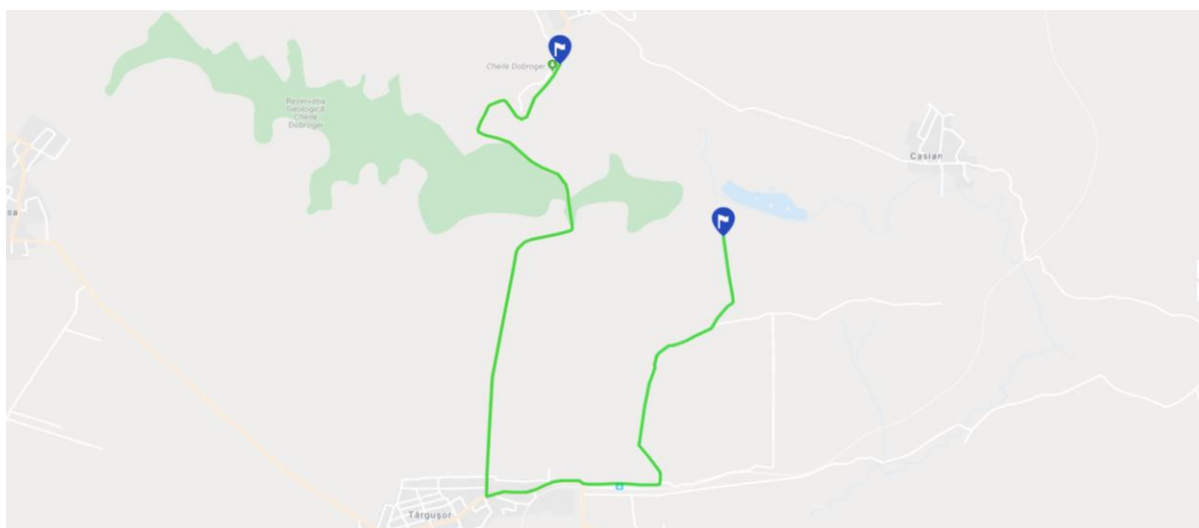
♦ Calarasi cycling route

o Distance - 18 km



♦ Dobrogea Gorges - Saint Ioan Casian Cave Monastery cycling trail

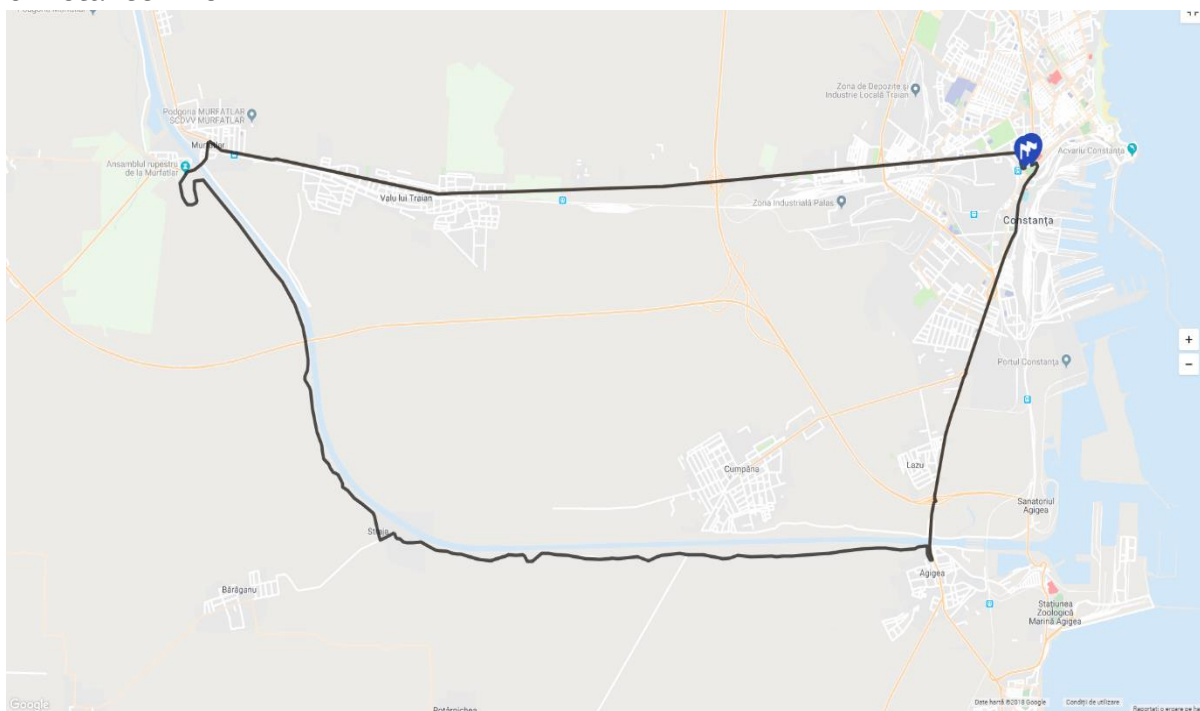
o Distance - 22 km





♦ Constanta - Murfatlar - Agigea - Constanta round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 45 km



✓ 3rd Integrated Tourism Product

- Experimental cycling trails for families and disabled people

For both target groups - families with children and disabled people - during the project implementation were identified a series of cycling trails suitable for them, which do not imply a sustained physical effort, all the routes being properly marked and offering a pleasant cycling experience in safe conditions.

A number of two cycling trials were identified in the southern region of Romania, which are suitable for leisure cycling for families with children and disabled people.

For a safe and pleasant experience, the project partners have purchased the following cycling equipment exclusively for these two target groups:

- trailers for bicycles with stroller for babies (younger than 4 years);
- trailers for bicycles for children older than 4 years;
- bicycles with stroller for disabled people (bikes with attendant and bikes with own propulsion);

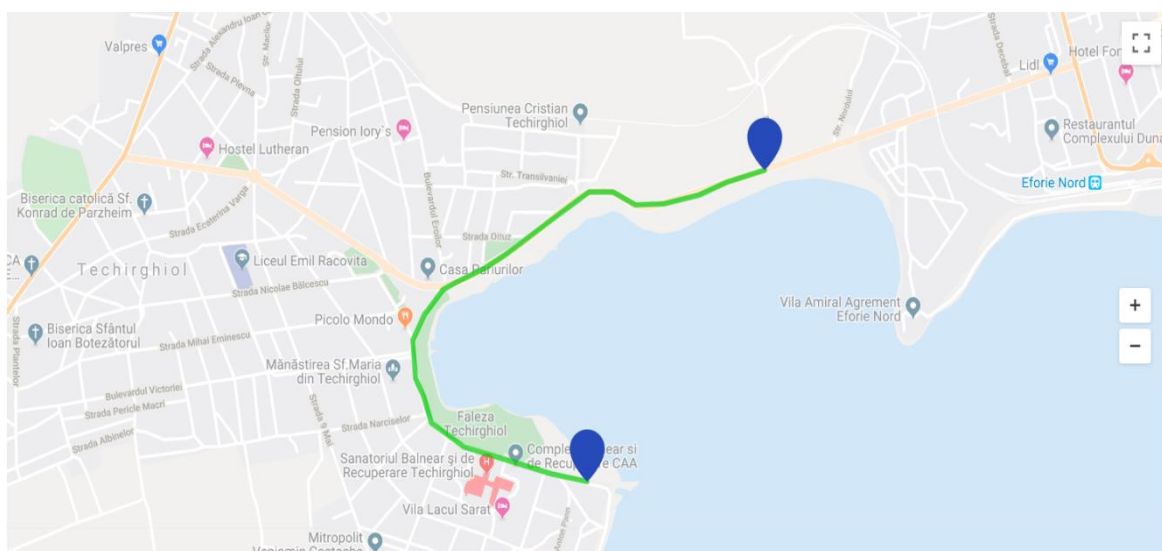


- safety and technical equipment for the reparation of the bikes (medical kit, helmet, water tank, sport watch with compass, sunglasses with UV protection, tool kit).

The two cycling routes proposed within the study conducted during the project implementation, which were also used for the pilot actions carried out for the both target groups, are the followings:

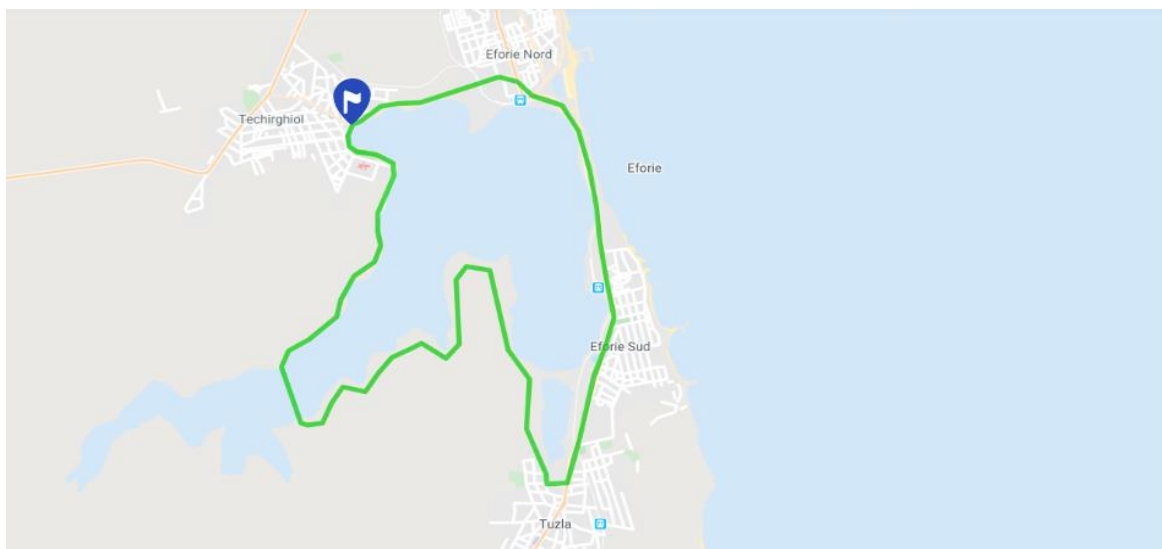
◆ Techirghiol cycling route

o Distance - 10 km



◆ Techirghiol lake round-trip cycling trail

o Distance - 10 km





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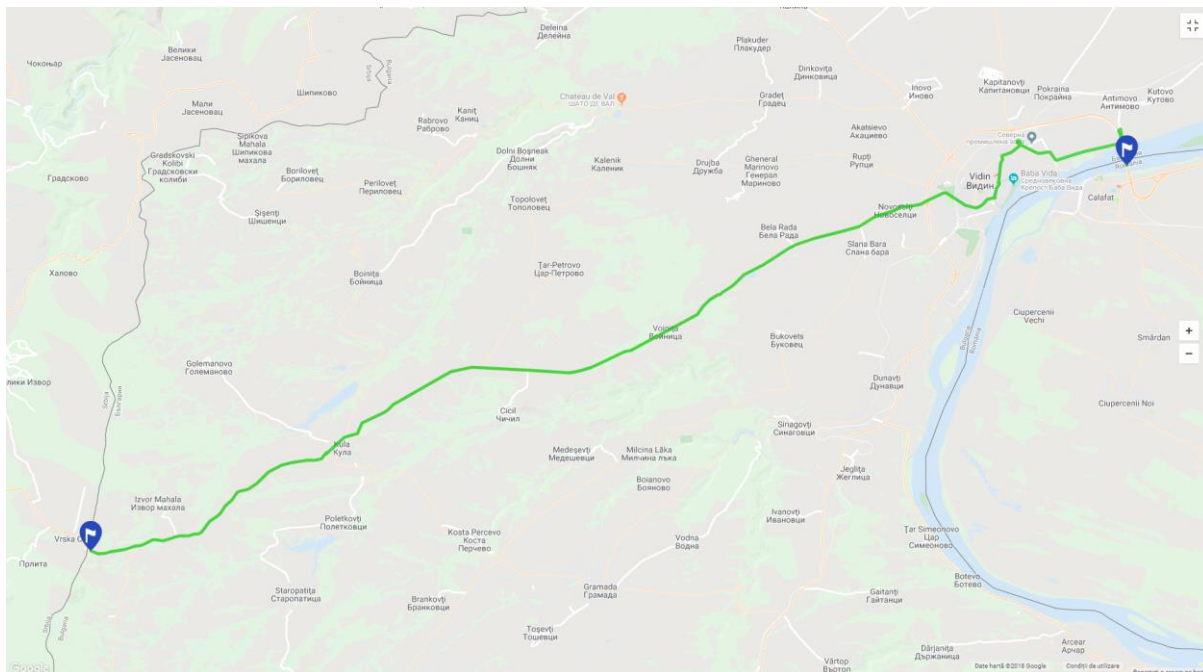


❖ Bulgaria

✓ 1st Integrated Tourism Products - Road cycling trails

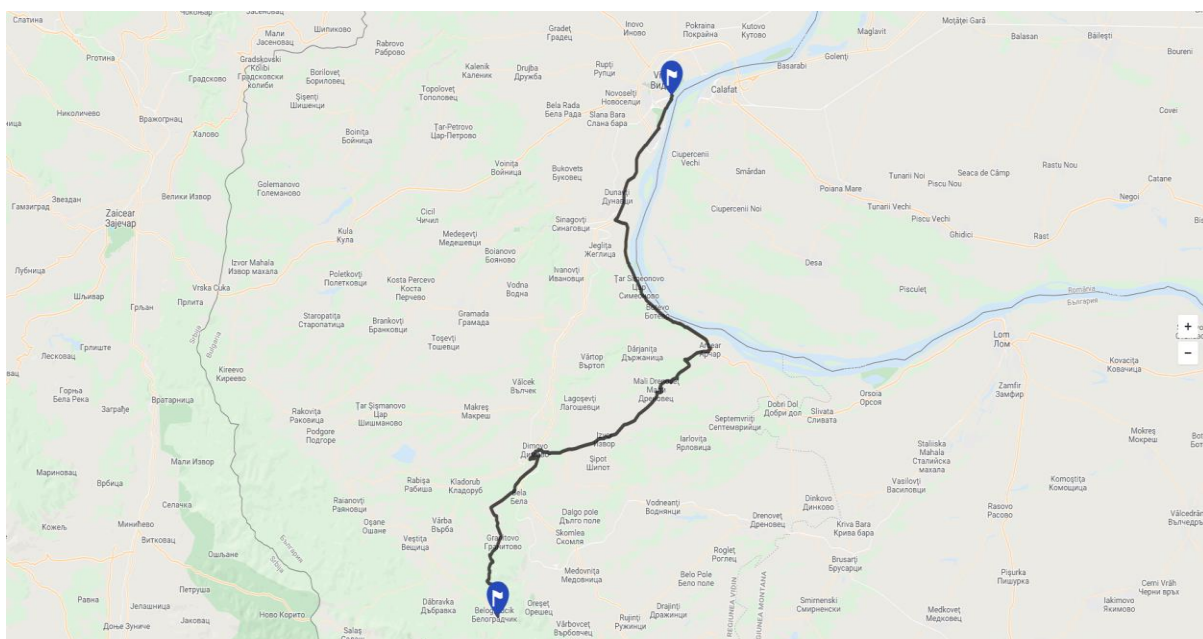
◆ Vidin - Vrashka Chuka Peak cycling route

o Distance - 56 km



◆ Vidin - Belogradchik cycling route

o Distance - 130 km | 2-days cycling trail





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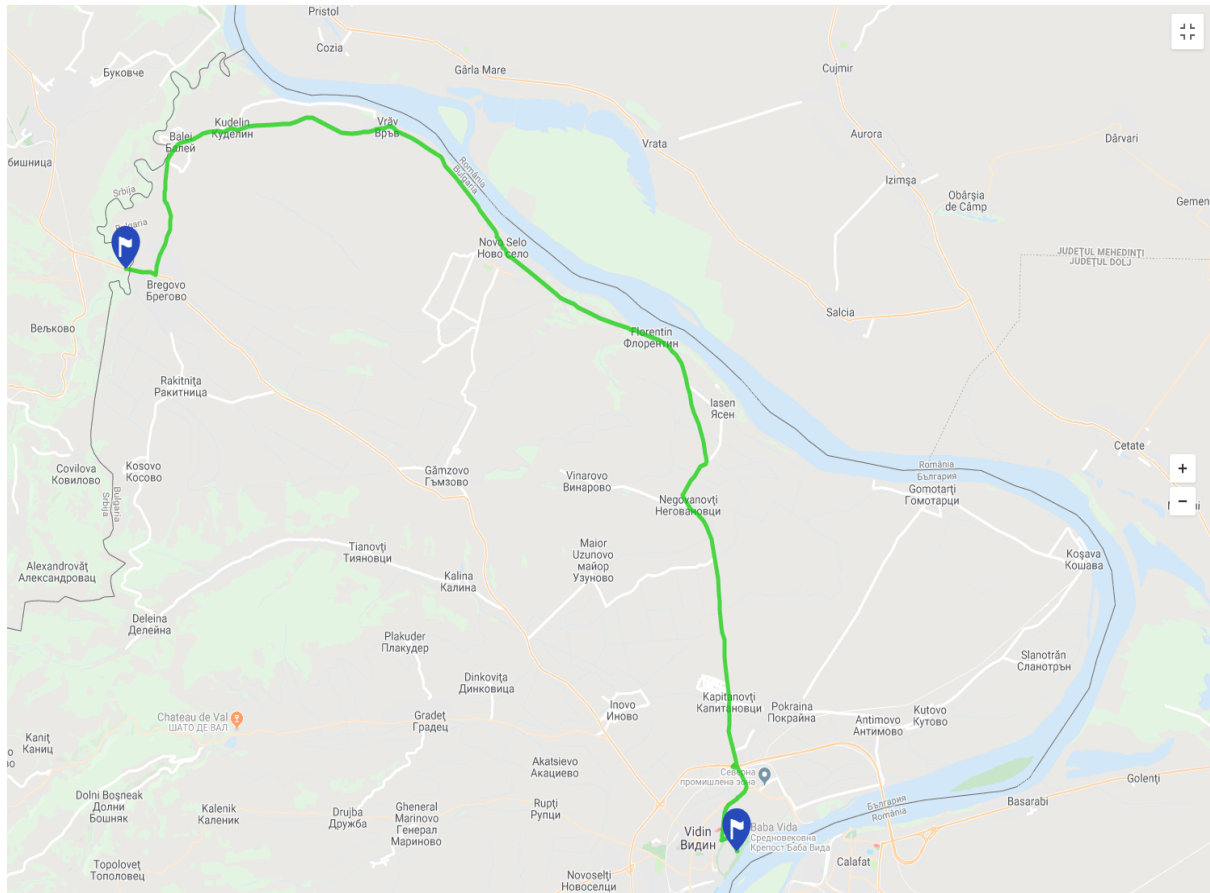


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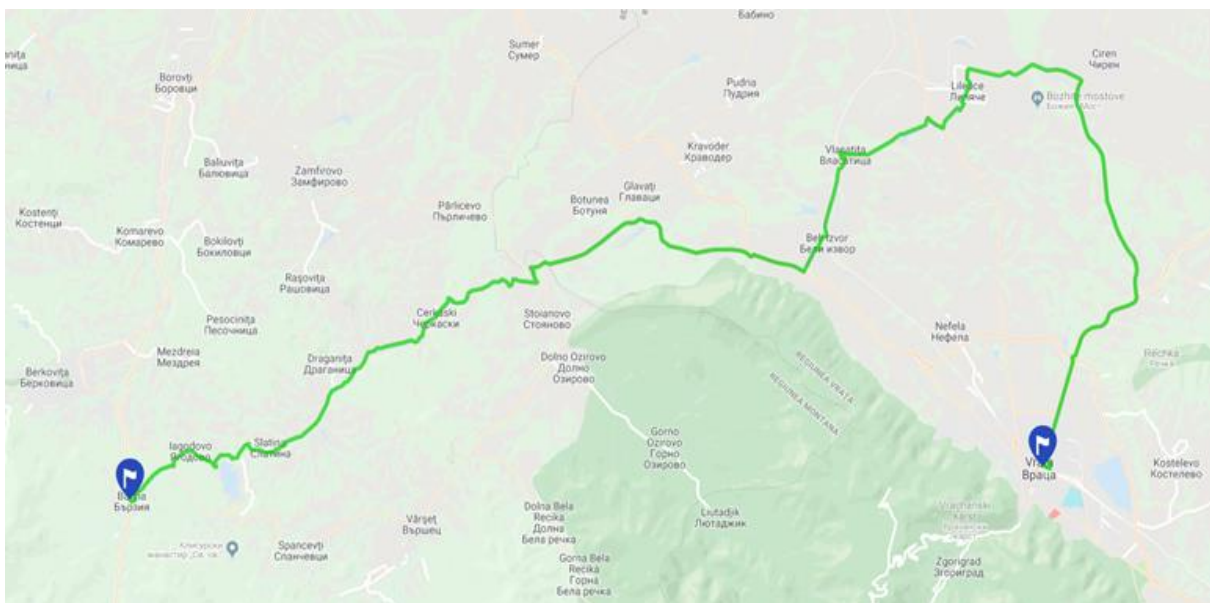
◆ Bregovo - Vidin cycling route

o Distance - 43 km



◆ Barzia - Vratsa cycling route

o Distance - 124 km | 2-days cycling trail





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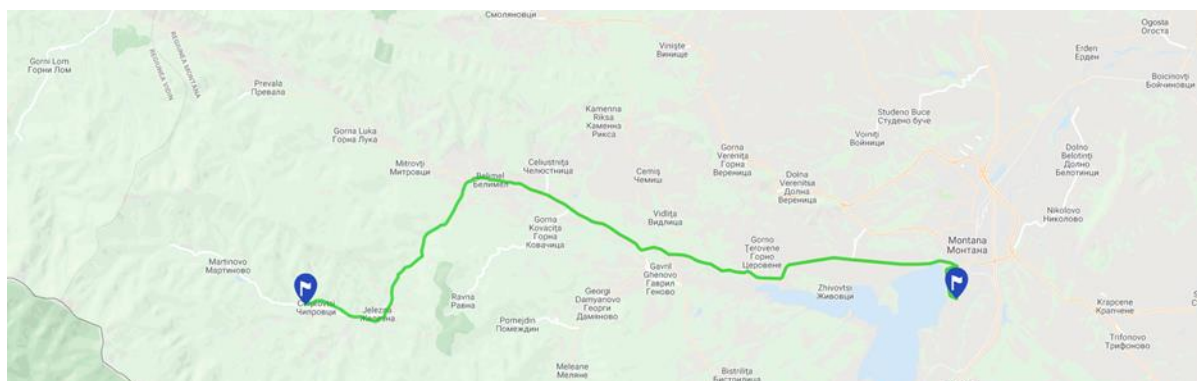


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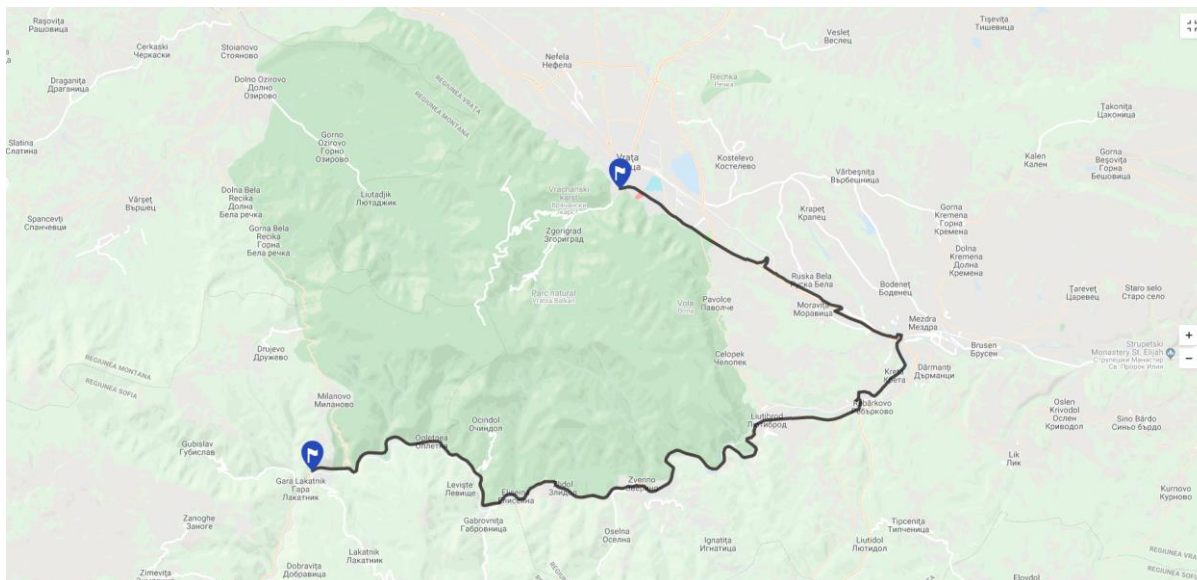
♦ Montana - Ciprovti cycling route

o Distance - 35 km



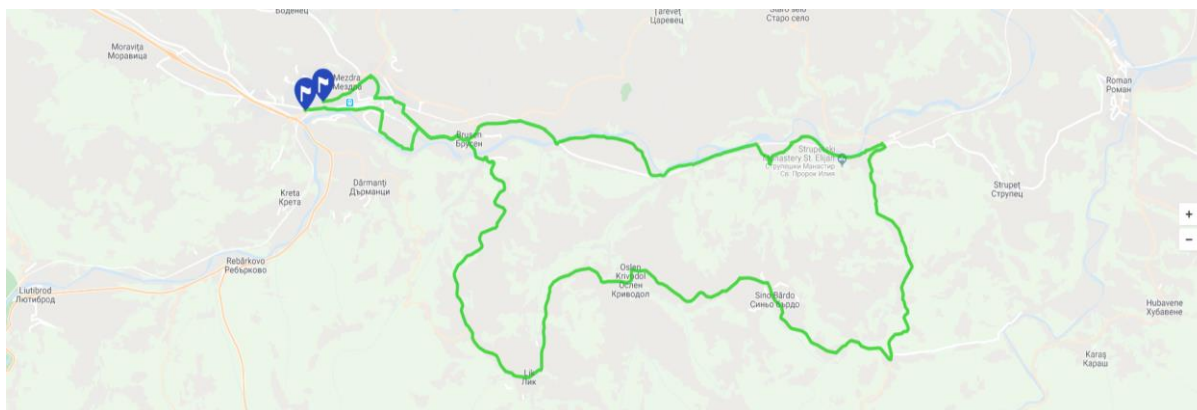
♦ Vratsa - Lakatnik station cycling route

o Distance - 174 km | 2-days cycling trail



♦ Mezdra - Strupetski round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 45 km





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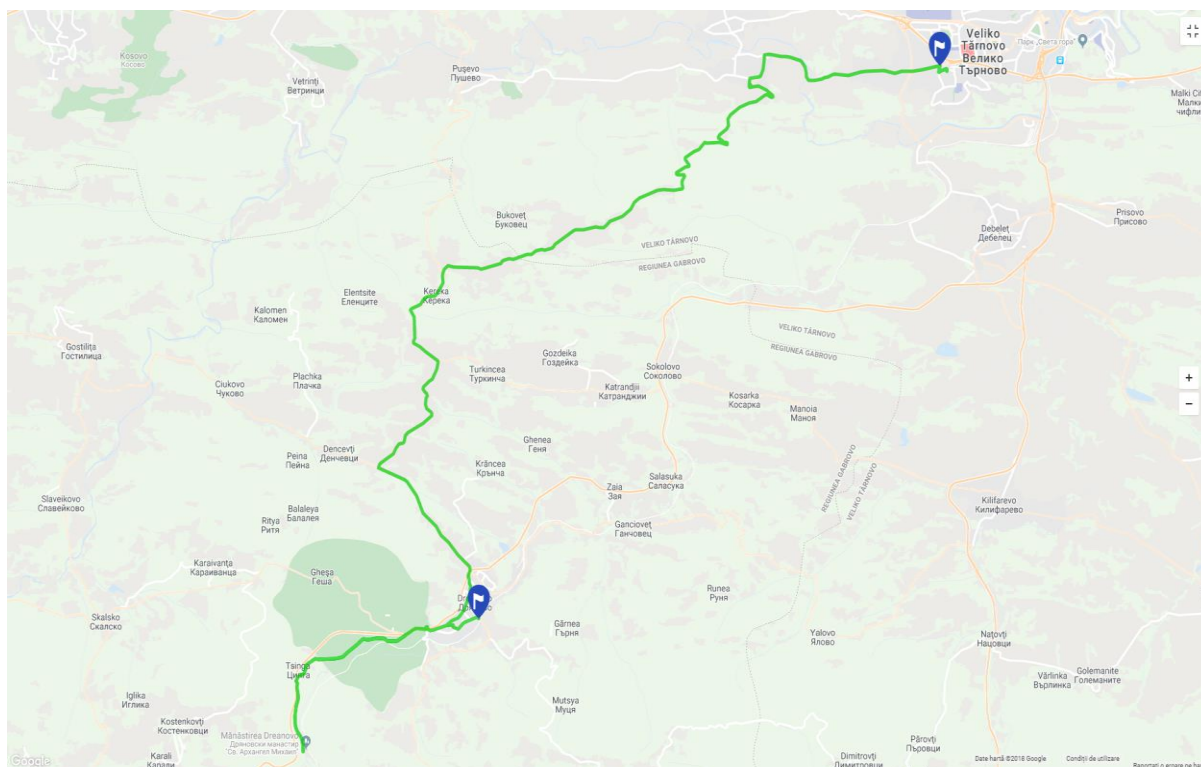


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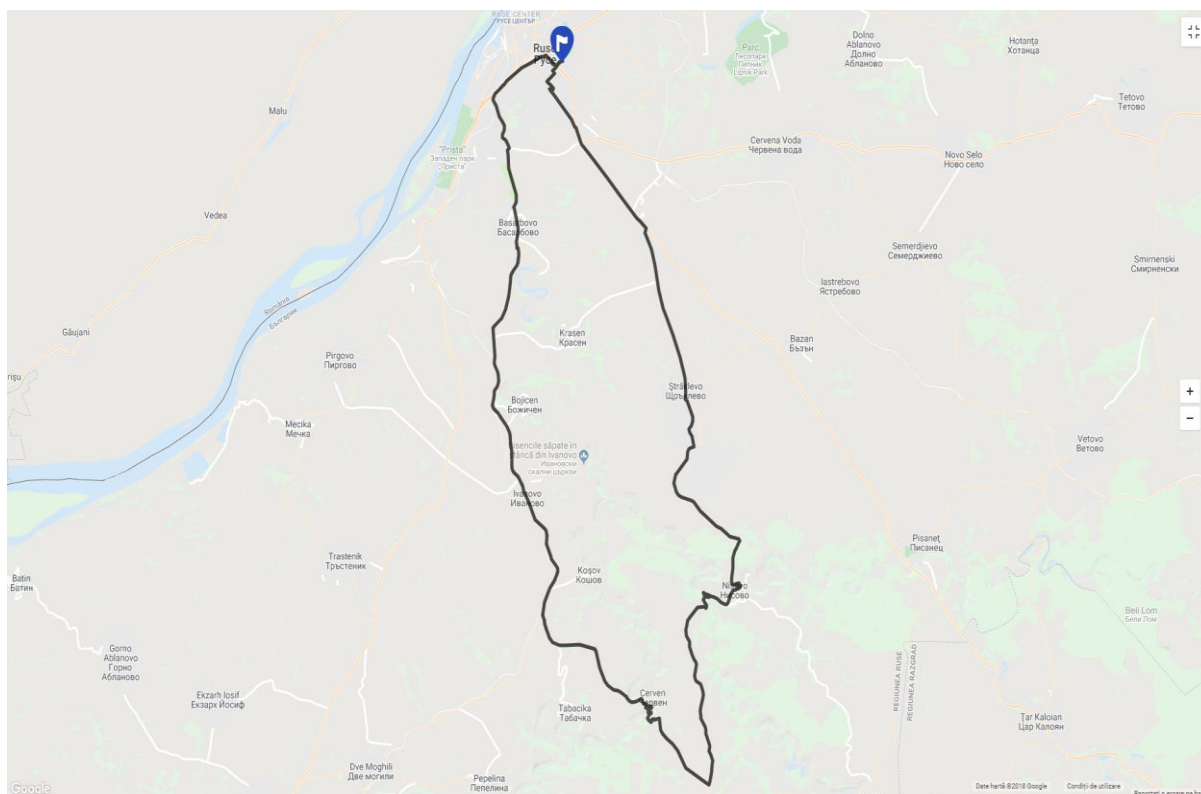
♦ Veliko Tarnovo - Dryanovo Monastery cycling route

o Distance - 38 km



♦ Rusenski - Lom Natural Park round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 74 km





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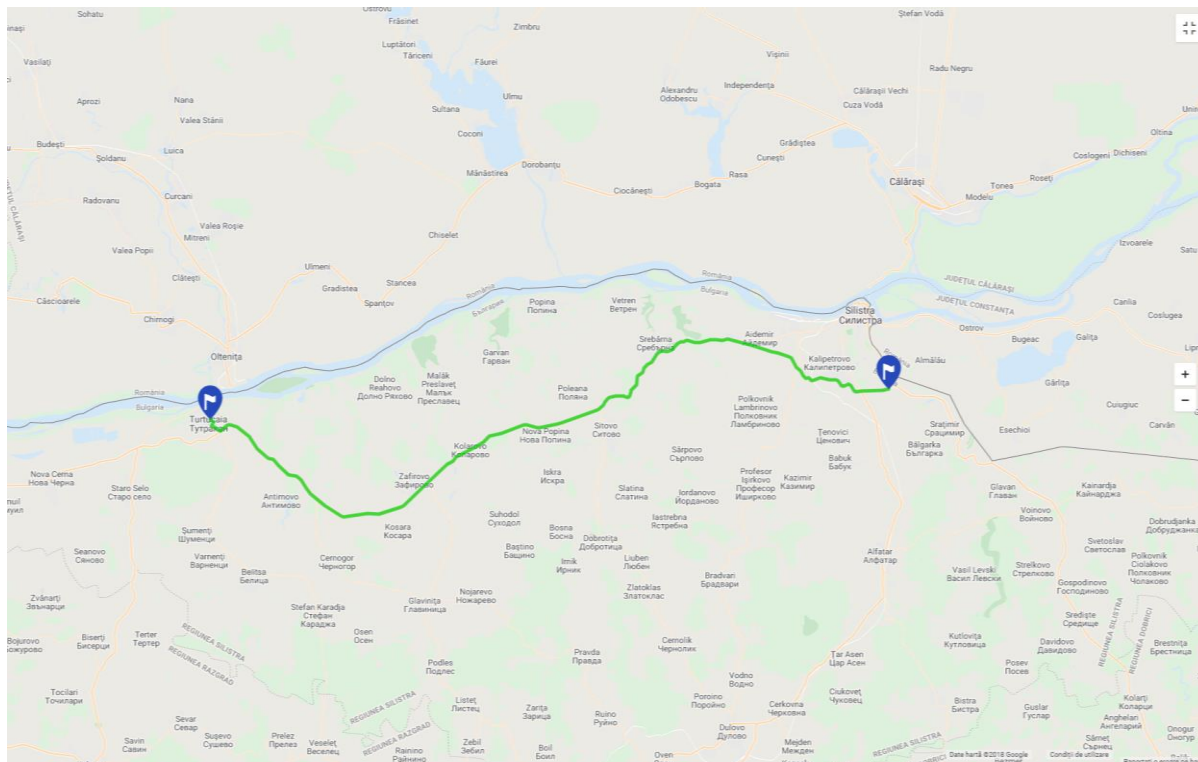


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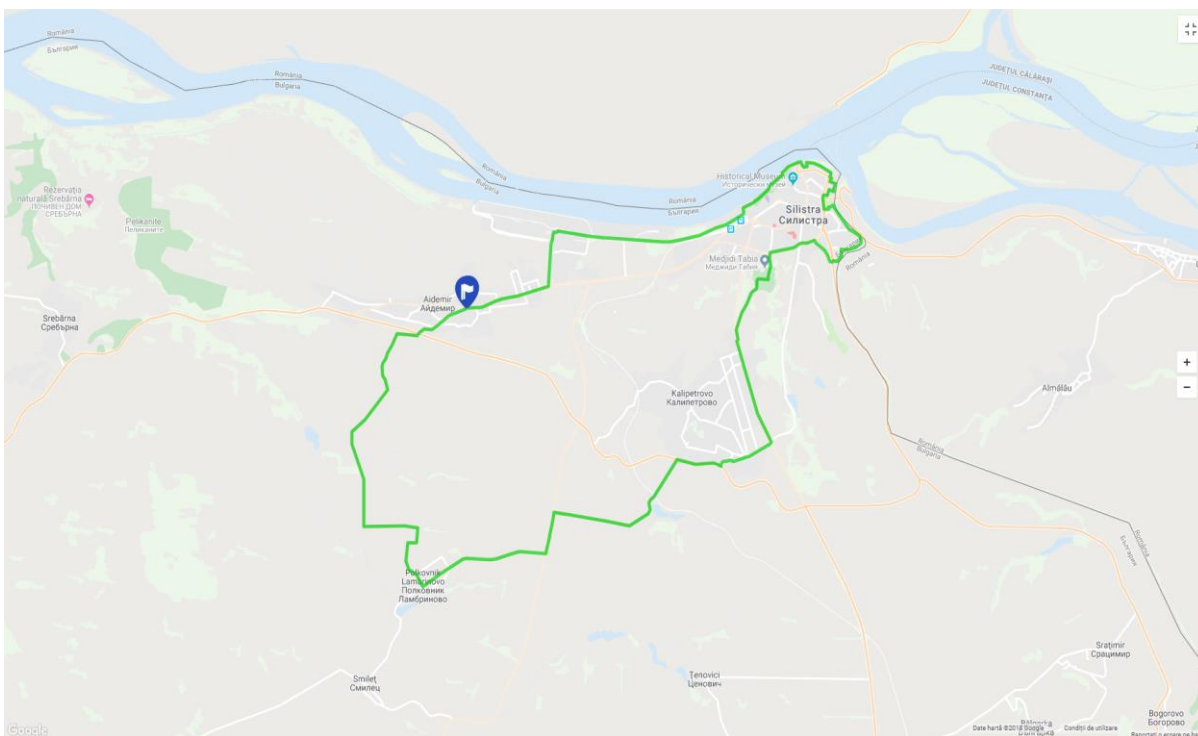
◆ Silistra - Turtucaia cycling route

o Distance - 65 km



◆ Silistra round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 65 km





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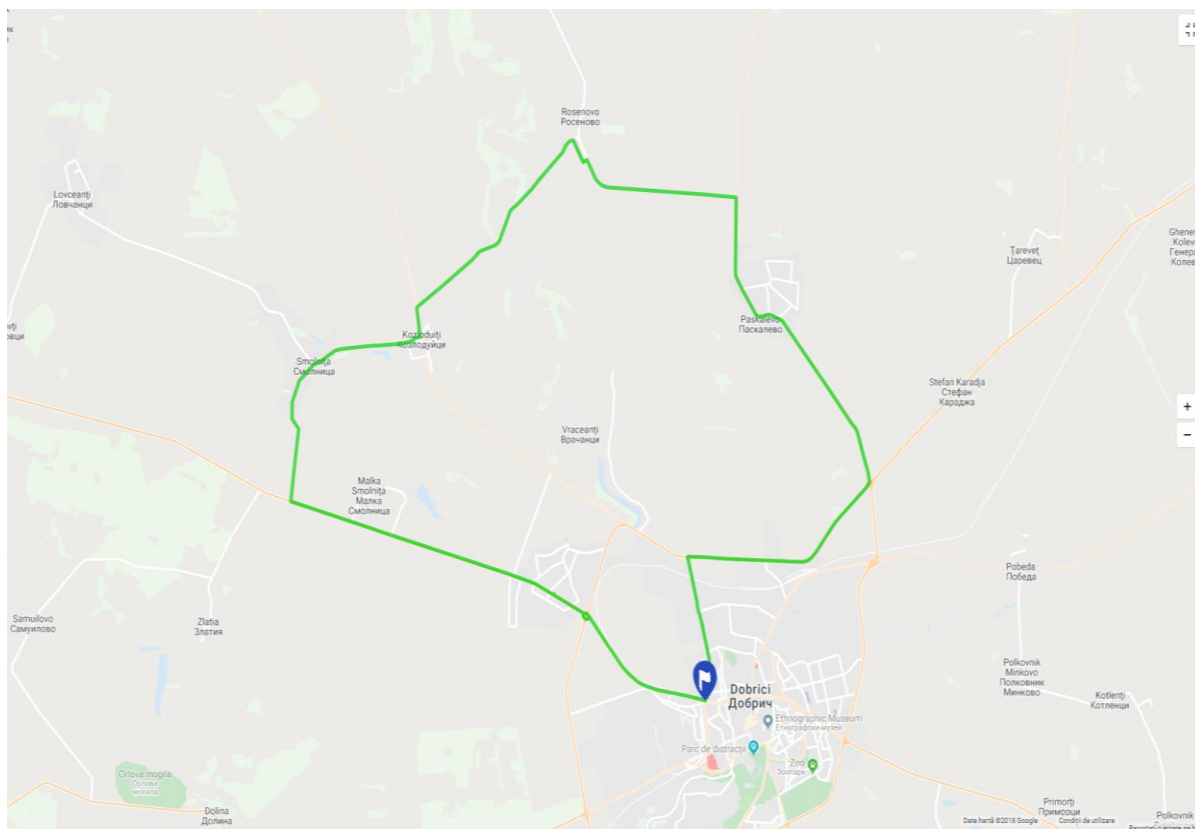


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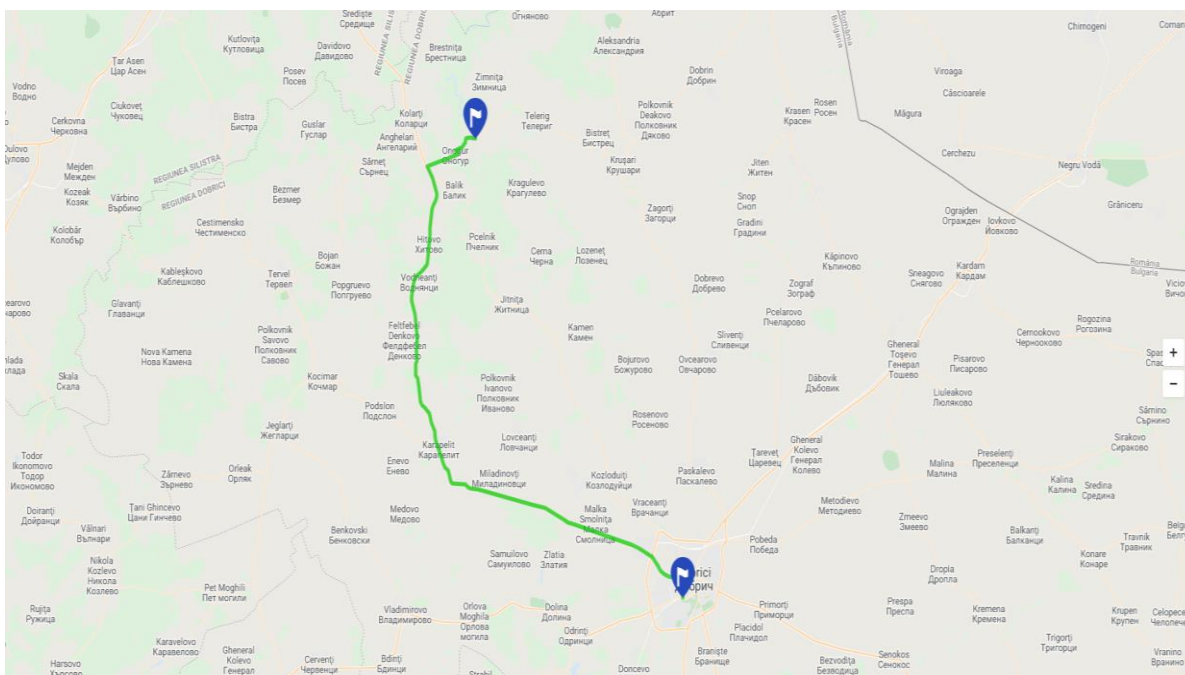
◆ Dobrich - Rosenovo round-trip cycling route

o Distance - 38 km



◆ Dobrich - Efretor Bakalavo cycling route

o Distance - 49 km





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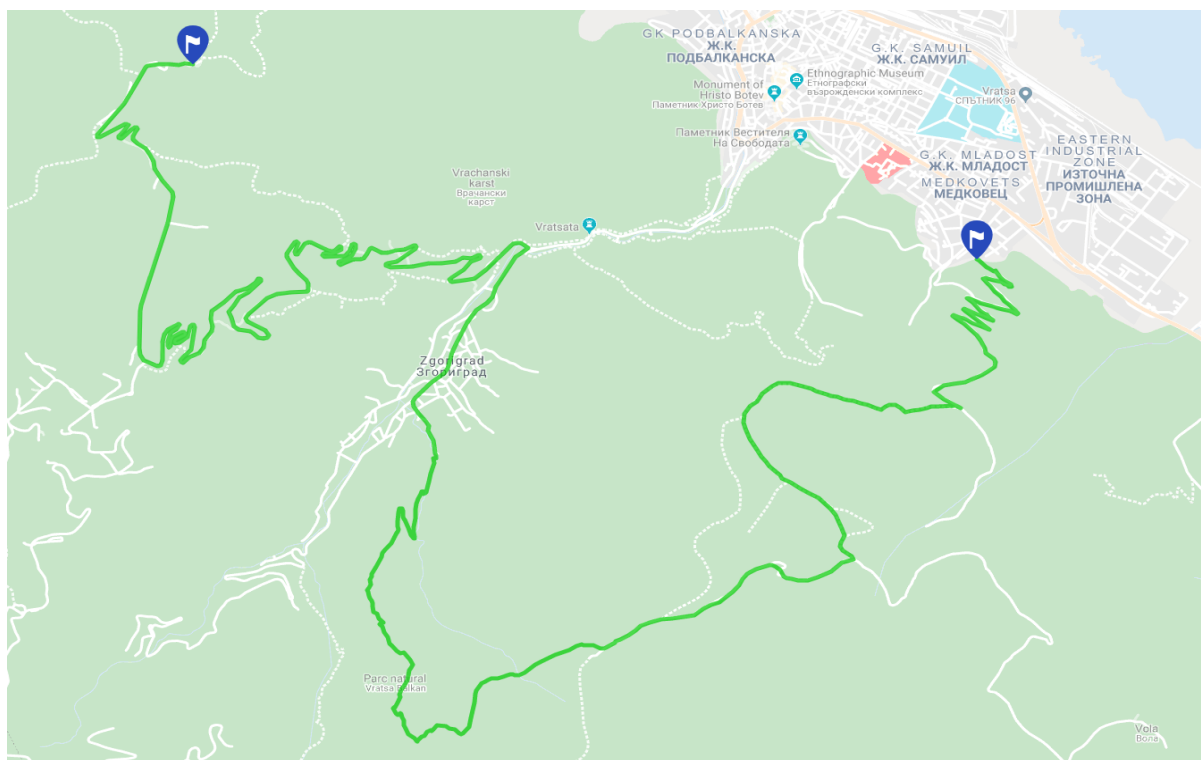
GOVERNMENT OF BULGARIA



✓ 2nd Integrated Tourism Products - Off-road cycling trails

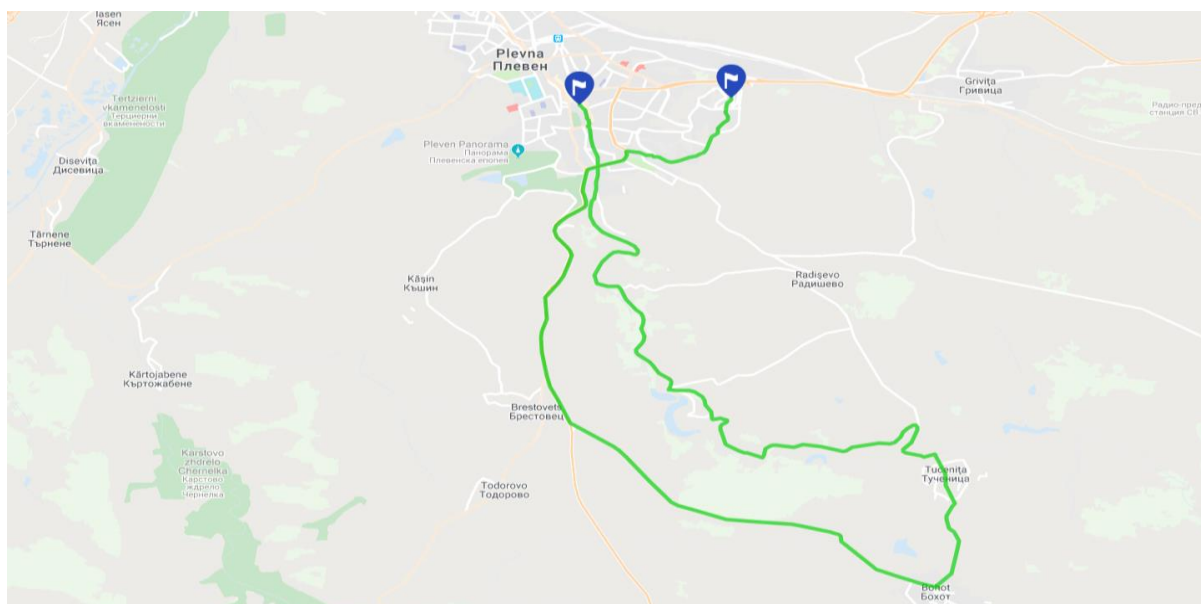
♦ Vratsa - Ledenika cave cycling route

o Distance - 31 km



♦ Plevna - Bohot cycling route

o Distance - 34 km





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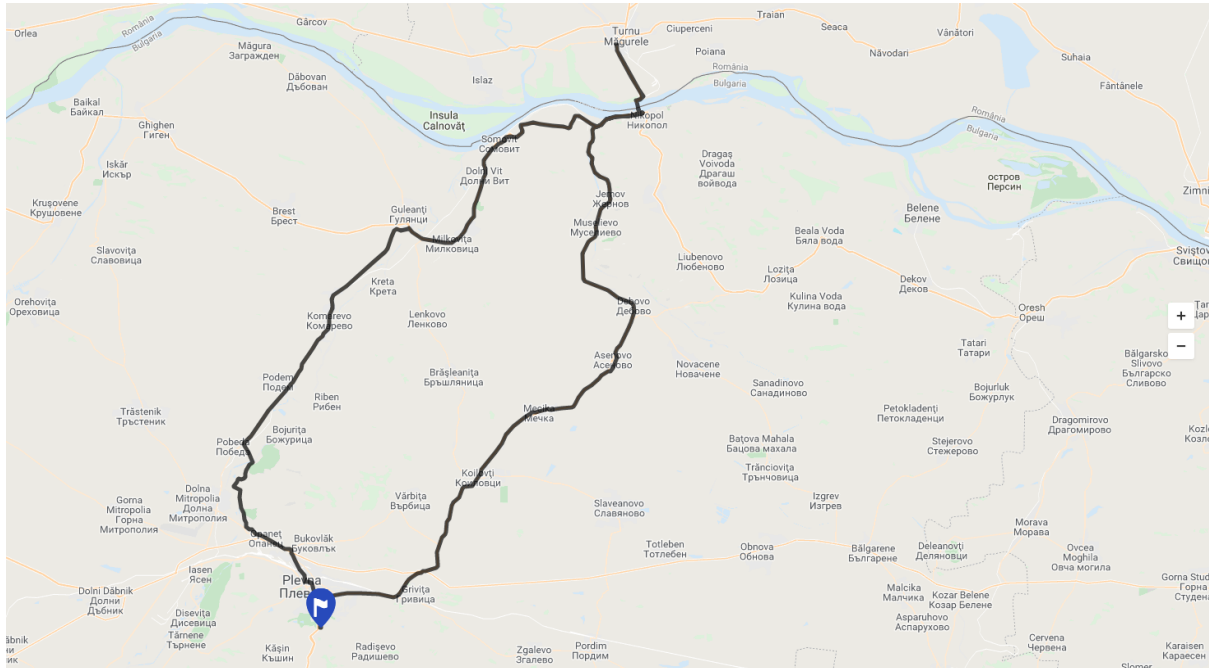


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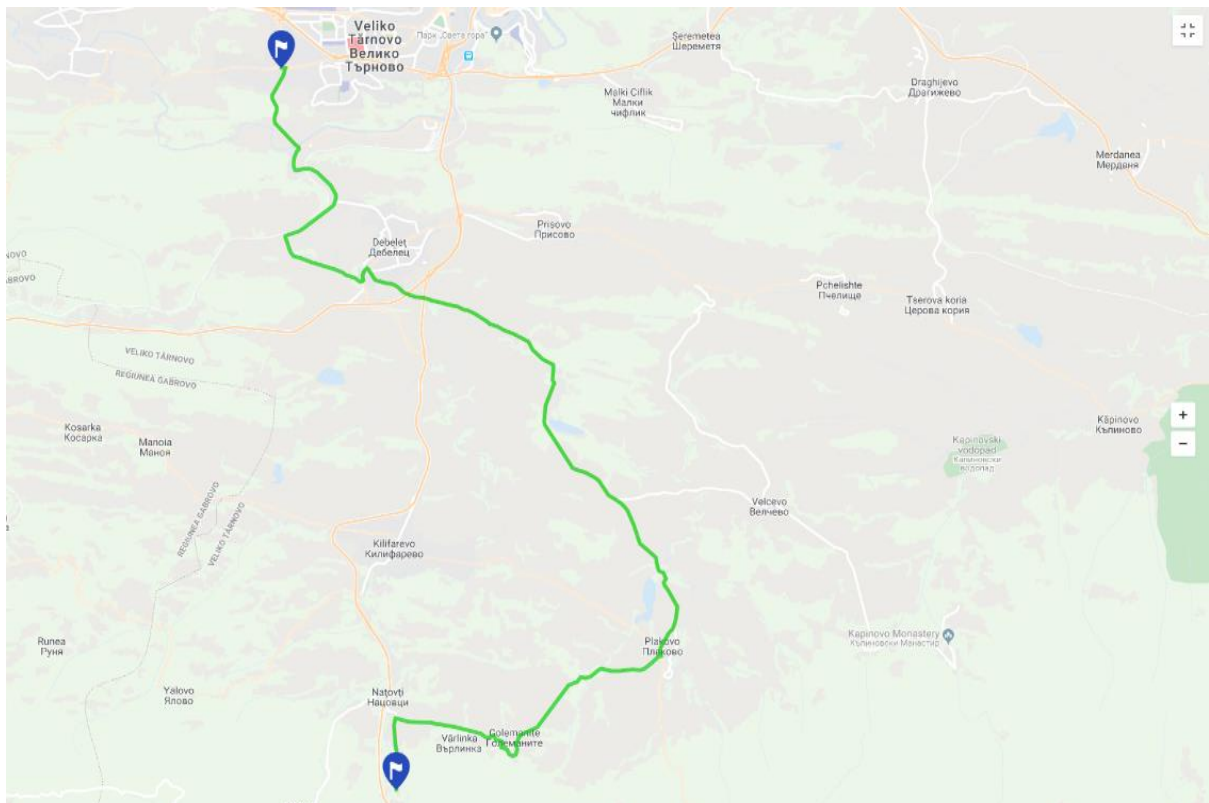
♦ Nikopol cycling route

o Distance - 126 km | 2-days cycling tour duration



♦ Veliko Tarnovo - Kilifarevski Monastery cycling route

o Distance - 45 km





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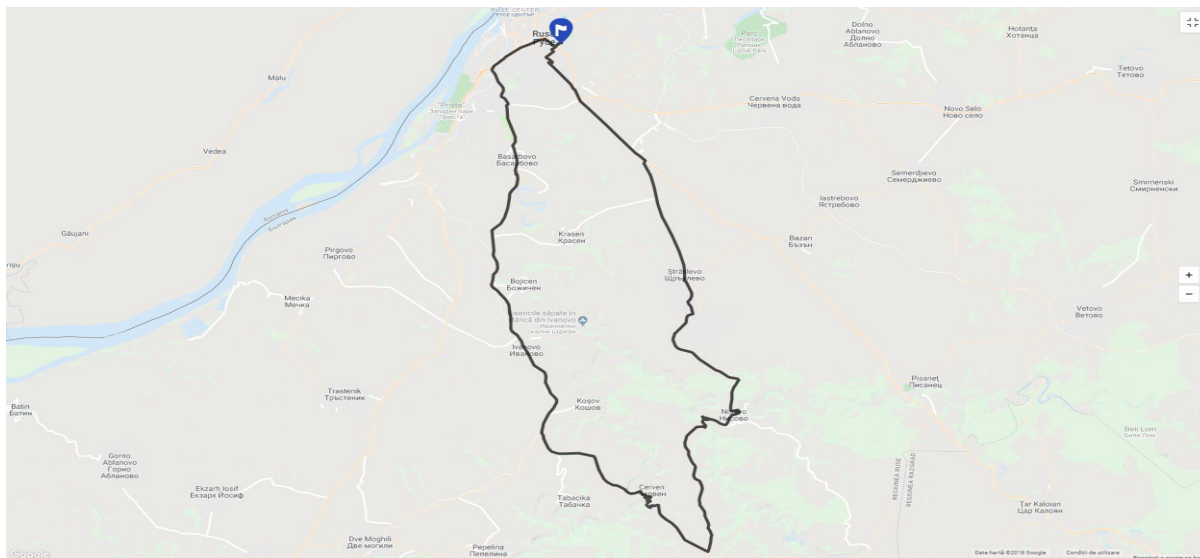


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◆ Basarbovo - through Rusensky - Lom Canyon cycling route

o Distance - 50 km



✓ 3rd Integrated Tourism Product

- Experimental cycling trails for families and disabled people

For both target groups - families with children and disabled people - during the project implementation was identified a cycling trail in Bulgaria suitable for them, which do not imply a sustained physical effort, all the routes being properly marked and offering a pleasant cycling experience in safe conditions.

The identified cycling route is on asphalt route, in tourist attractive area, in natural area of invaluable beauty.

The route was, first and foremost, chosen to provide safety for cyclists, so there are no significant obstacles or elevation on the cycling trail.

The cycling trial was identified in the northern region of Bulgaria, which is suitable for leisure cycling for families with children and also for disabled people.

For a safe and pleasant experience, the project partners have purchased the following cycling equipment exclusively for these two target groups: trailers for bicycles with stroller for babies (younger than 4 years); trailers for bicycles for children older than 4 years; bicycles with stroller for disabled people (bikes with

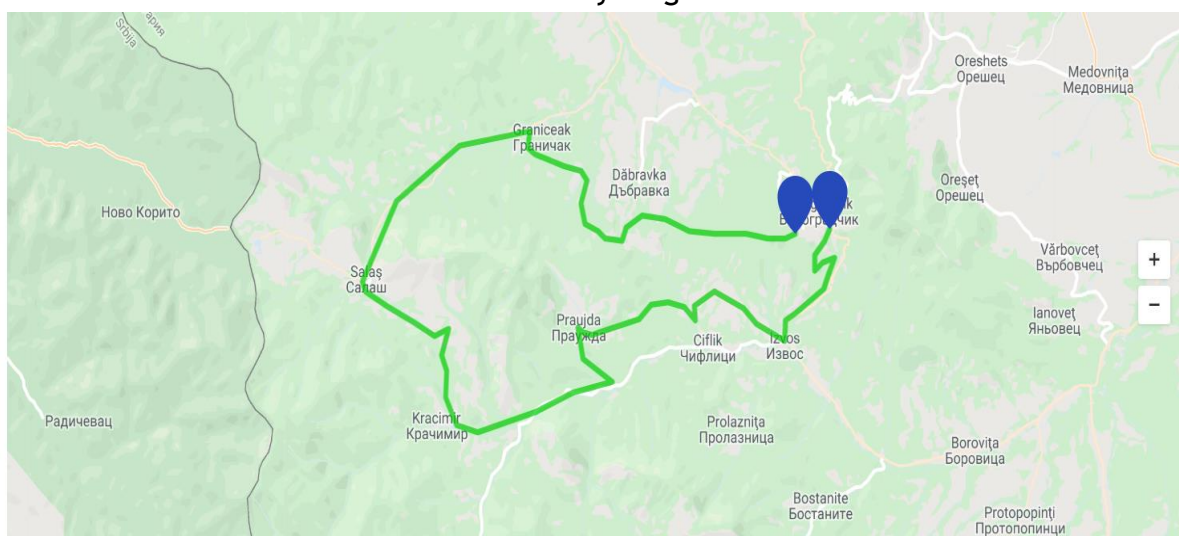


attendant and bikes with own propulsion); safety and technical equipment for the reparation of the bike's (medical kit, helmet, water tank, sport watch with compass, sunglasses with UV protection, tool kit).

The cycling route proposed within the study conducted during the project implementation, which was also used in the pilot actions carried out for the both target groups, is the following:

◆ Belogradchik cycling route for families & disabled people

o Distance - 45 km total distance of the cycling route





III. COMMUNICATION MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT TO PROMOTE TOURISM PACKAGES IN CBC AREA

Developing an effective communication strategy is an opportunity to promote 'Danube on 2 Wheels' project in the CBC region, and even widely. Strengthening a systematic communication between the project beneficiary partners and the target groups at regional and local level is essential.

For all these reasons, the implementation of information and publicity measures for the project takes into account the fact that this is one of the few times that the cross-border public comes into contact with this type of project that promotes sports tourism, combined with ecotourism.

Given these premises, the implementation period of the project was dedicated to familiarizing all target groups with the existence of this project, the pilot actions carried out within and its tourist offer.

The project started its actions in August 2018, immediately after the financing contract was signed, and it ended in February 2020, with the final conference, that took place in Calarasi, in which were promoted all the activities and actions carried out during the 18 months of implementation.

BRANDING: Creating an identity for 'Danube on 2 Wheels' project

During the project implementation period the first action carried out by the lead beneficiary AISSER Calarasi was to create the project branding. So, it has started by developing a brand personality, so every action made after have focus and consistency.



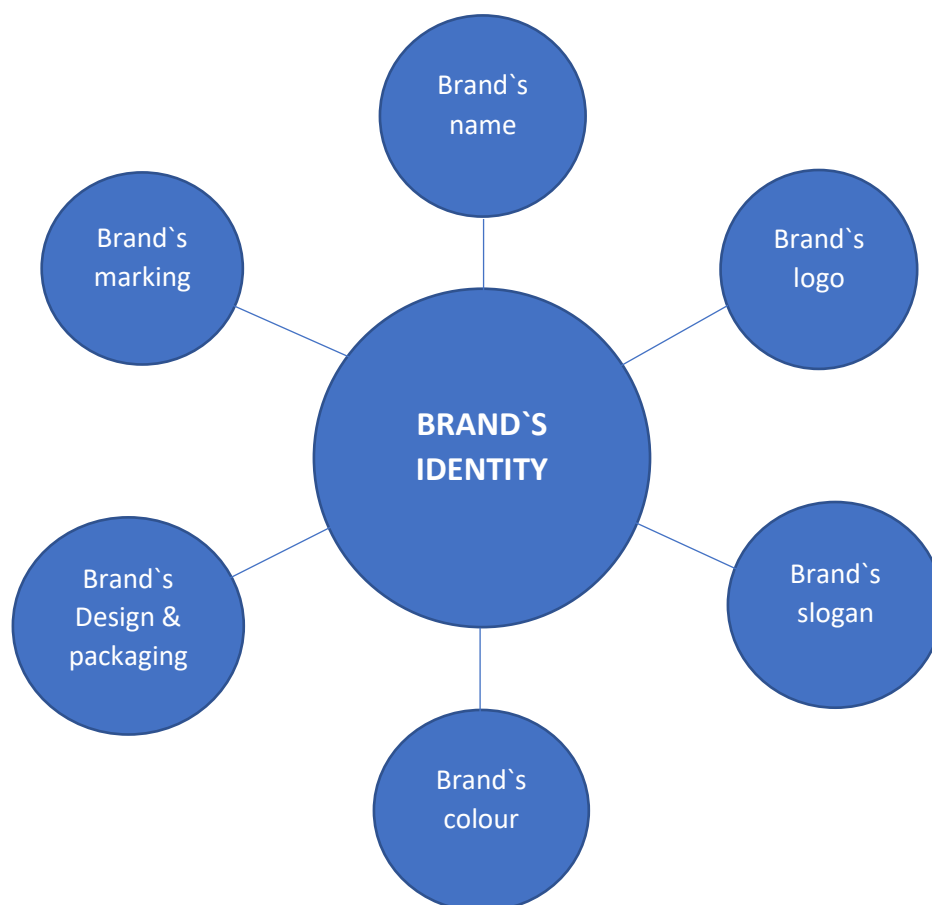
First of all, it was mandatory to create a symbol/design that was easily identifiable as belonging to the project. This symbol/design helped the project to be identified and distinguished from other projects and sporting events.

Branding is the way in which a company individualizes or differentiates its offer (from products/ services) on market, being different on its way to its competition.

At the same time, branding is a process that creates the desired perception of a particular product/ service, as well as a mix of associations on that consumers make about the product/ service.

The brand strategy is based on the essential values and the associations that consumers make. Main direction in formulating the strategy, the brand must be in line with what the company does. It is necessary that the attention is always focused on the essential values of the brand, which constitutes the company's offer on the market.

Brand identity is a set of essential elements through which is achieved the fastest communication on target group:





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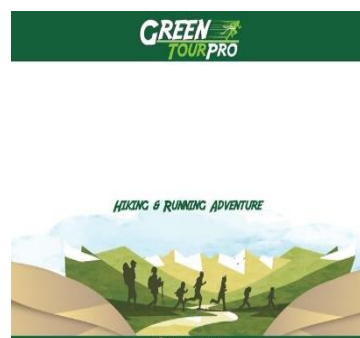


Starting from these essential concepts of branding, we considered it important to establish it in the first place, being the very first step to be taken because it allowed our target group to know what to expect from us. Also, our brand was built to be a true representation of who we are, what the meaning of the project is, and how we wished to be perceived.

Considering that AISSER and ACTIS Sport Club Associations from Calarasi had developed, quite in the same time, three projects with the same theme, the same EU funding source, the object of activity being different only by the nature of the type of sport promoted, we established that it would be important to create a similar image for all these projects.

The projects `Danube on 2 Wheels`, `Row Adventure` and `Green Tourism Products` share the same type of identity through their logos created, using the same style, the same font type, similar visual elements, so that everyone who sees them knows that behind all these projects are the same entities, as well that they have the same area of action and the same common purpose - to develop tourism in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area, through sports activities.

In the following we present the logos of the projects, as well as the representative images used for all the information and publicity materials made within them:



As for the `Danube on 2 Wheels`, all the information materials and advertising products created within the project were made using this logo.

The logo, as well as the whole brand were created using the principle of K.I.S.S. (*Keep It Short and Simple*). It is fresh, dynamic, and easy to remember and uses symbolic elements for the type of actions carried out within the project.

- **Messages and communication themes**

All the information and promotional materials created and distributed during the project implementation had a series of messages which were repeatedly used on all these materials. These messages respected the communication rules and the visual identity established by INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme:

1. Project`s financing source:

`Danube on 2 Wheels` project is co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund, under the INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria Programme, Priority Axis 2 `A green region`

2. Project`s co-financing value:

The total amount of EU contribution (FERD): 423,056.25 EUR

3. Project`s main objective:

The main objective of the project is to create 3 new integrated tourism products in order to facilitate better utilization of joint tourism potentials. This integrated tourism product is specially designated for active tourists - adventure trips and expeditions with bikes for beginners, advanced, families and also disabled people.

4. Project`s partners:

AISSER Association - lead partner

`Sport for You and Me` Association - partner

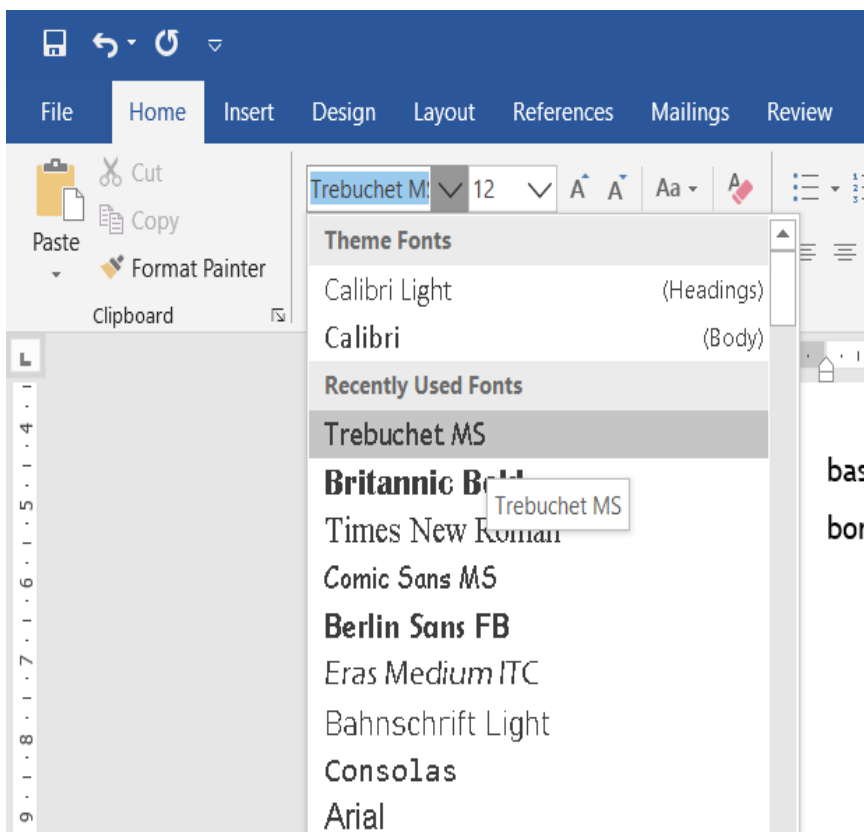
ACTIS Sport Club Association - partner

In general, the communication themes utilised on the information materials envisage promoting the CBC green region, by developing the new tourism packages proposed by the `Danube on 2 Wheels` project, which are based on the development of sports activities, such as cycling in the middle of nature, in areas less known by active and enthusiastic tourists.



○ **Fonts, colours and disclaimer**

All the materials were made using the *Trebuchet MS* font. No other font was and will be used, in order to comply with the visual identity rules imposed by the cross-border financing programme, through which the project is implemented.



According to the Visual Identity Manual of INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme, all the information materials (including press release, invitation, agendas, presentations, attendance list etc.) had to contain the next disclaimer message:

The content of this material does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union.

○ **Programme logos**

According to the Visual Identity Manual of INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme, all the information materials must contain the logos of European Union, INTERREG programme, and Romanian and Bulgarian Governments, in the language in which the material is edited, as follows:



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○ Project`s logo



The identity colours used are 2 types of blue, used in the logo. These colours were used on all the project materials - brochures, leaflets, agendas, roll-up, pop-up display, Start/Finish signage, banners etc.:

RGB dark blue code:

Red - 37

Green - 55

Blue - 143

RGB light blue code:

Red - 73

Green - 111

Blue - 182

Another element of promotion related to project`s branding was given by the name of the pilot actions, which was created in order to be easily retained by the target audience of the project.

All the events created within the project were *for FUN* ... whether we are talking about on-road or off-road cycling events, these being not competitions, we

chose to make them *for FUN*. And this is how the CYCLE for FUN events were born, which enjoyed an increased reputation among the target group of the project.



The communication actions were an important and integral part of the project implementation. The general goal of the activity is to widely promote the project and the tourism products, together with the envisaged results.

Project Target Group

The target group of the project is represented by the general public, basically everyone who is interested in taking part in cycling adventures in the heart of nature, from amateurs to performance athletes, families, groups of friends or adventurous colleagues and even disabled people, who want to participate at outdoor activities, combined with a healthy lifestyle.

Objective of the project`s communication measures and actions

The project partners identified a new type of activities that combine ecological tourism with sports tourism, at low costs. These activities have known a

significant increase in recent years and have the capacity to become a new form of active tourism with a major impact on the cross-border region, especially on the Danube region. The proposed activities are on-road and off-road cycling on the natural and cultural sites offered by the cross-border region.

For a good dissemination of the project and its results, several communication tools were used in order to promote the pilot actions carried out in the period of Mai - September 2019 in both Romania and Bulgaria.

The communication tools used are: print materials, advertising (press releases in local newspapers), website, e-mail, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, promotional materials etc.

Through the 2019 CYCLE for FUN events we have launched a campaign against sedentarism, by promoting a healthy lifestyle and fighting for the sport to become a "compulsory matter" in the people`s lives. We believe in moving the world through sport!

Cycling has a lot of benefits. It provides an important metabolic stimulus, as caloric burning increases for a long time even after the cycling is over. In addition to a higher resting metabolism, a constant cycling routine improves overall endurance. The more you practice the art of cycling, the more exercise you maintain, which in turn allows your muscles to increase their ability to create energy efficiently.

Endurance training can help in all aspects of everyday life, both on the road and outside. Along with endurance, strengthened muscles and increased metabolism, cycling also supports the health of the most vital organs, most importantly, the heart. Lifting heartbeats for constant periods of time, through activities such as cycling, strengthens this major muscle and increases the efficiency to pump oxygen throughout the body. Circulation improves as blood vessels dilate and lung capacity increases. Over time, these auxiliary systems - the lungs, vessels, capillaries and cells - adapt to a higher level of energy consumption and increase efficiency in daily life. This leads to better cardiovascular health as a whole, along with a heart that is less demanded by activities in daily life.

Cycling also contributes to overall health, no matter the intensity. The effects of cycling are mainly on the psychic level, being proven to reduce the main problems



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of the modern man, anxiety and depression, managing to calm and disconnect from the daily stress the participant.

Cycling is often not done by a single person; it is done in a group and the social component is again very important. Participating at the cycling events has a great meaning also at the social level, this type of recreation having the power to bring people together and create long lasting friendships.

After carrying out the study to identify the routes, all the necessary communication tools were created to be accessed by tourists, as follows: print materials, promotional materials, pilot actions, online communication tools, as website, mobile application, interactive maps, video promotion materials, social media promotion, press releases etc.

3.1 Printed materials

Informative promotion is more common in the early stages of the project life cycle. The informative promotion helped the beneficiaries explain what type of project they developed, describe the activities carried out and inform the target audience about all the activities carried out and also how they can take part in the sport events organised in the CBC green region.

This this been said, in order to have a better promotion of the project, the lead beneficiary AISSER Calarasi had printed a series of information materials as follows:

- brochures (1,000)
- address books (307)
- leaflet (2,000)
- roll-up (1)





All the information materials have been inscribed with the project logo and the visual identity elements of the INTERREG V-A programme, respecting the promotion rules imposed by the cross-border financing programme.

3.2 Promotional materials

All the promotional items were realized and inscribed with the visual identity of `Danube on 2 Wheels` project and INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme. The lead partner AISSER Calarasi had the responsibility to realize all the promotional materials, in order to offer them to the participants at the events organized within the project, as follows:

- t-shirts (307);
- caps (307);
- eco-friendly pens (1,000);
- memory sticks USB (307);
- key holders (307);
- cycling backpack (307);
- rain coats (307).



All the promotional materials have been inscribed with the project logo and the visual identity elements of the INTERREG V-A programme, respecting the promotion rules imposed by the cross-border financing programme.



3.3 Events

During the project implementation period, the project partners organized 14 events (2 conferences for launching and ending the project, 12 pilot actions).

Also, for a good dissemination of the project and to make known the pilot activities that had started in May 2019, we participated at tourism fairs organized in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area, to promote our equipment, information materials and to win a large number of participants in the featuring sporting events.

All the organized events and our participation at the fairs had a common purpose: to promote the project and its results at a large number of people from the target audience.

The people invited at the conferences and pilot actions were represented by the partner`s teams, stakeholders, public authorities and the general public, basically everyone who is interested in taking part in cycling adventures in the heart of nature, from amateurs to performance athletes, families, groups of friends or adventurous colleagues, disabled people, who want to participate at outdoor activities, combined with a healthy lifestyle.

In the following, we present the events carried out in the implementation period, and also the participation in other events, in the chronological order in which they took place:

1. Launching Press Conference

Date: March 22nd, 2019

Place: Calarasi, Calarasi county

Participants: 60 people (journalists, project partners, stakeholders)

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, key holders





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2. `Vacation` Tourism Fair

Date: March 28th - 31st, 2019

Place: Constanta, Constanta county

Participants: 241 people (general public, media representatives, project partners, public authorities and Romanian Minister of Tourism representatives, stakeholders)

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, key holders, caps, waist bags, rain coats



3. CYCLE for FUN - Island Tour

Date: May 8th, 2019

Place: Romania, Calarasi, Calarasi county

Participants: 30 people

People accommodated: 30 people x 2 nights = 60 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats





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4. CYCLE for FUN - Techirghiol MTB Tour

Date: May 10th - 12th, 2019

Place: Romania, Constanta county, Techirghiol

Participants: 30 people

People accommodated: 30 people x 2 nights = 60 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats



5. CYCLE for FUN - Techirghiol Lake Special Tour

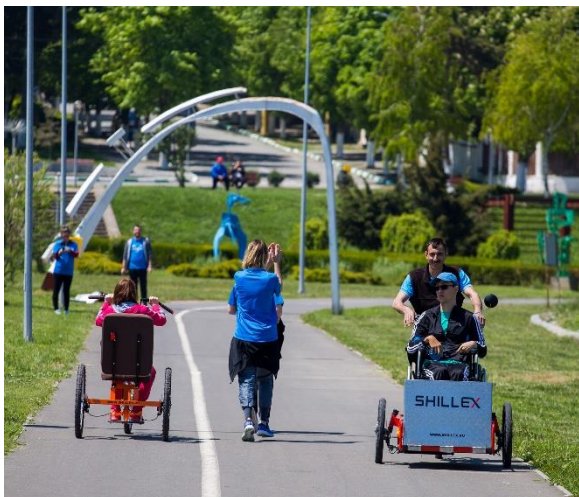
Date: May 10th - 12th, 2019

Place: Romania, Constanta county, Techirghiol

Participants: 19 people

People accommodated: 19 people x 2 nights = 38 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats





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6. CYCLE for FUN - Forest Tour

Date: May 22th -24th, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district, Belogradchik region

Participants: 30 people

People accommodated: 30 people x 2 nights = 60 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats



7. CYCLE for FUN - Forest Tour

Date: May 22th -24th, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district, Belogradchik region

Participants: 17 people

People accommodated: 17 people x 2 nights = 34 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats





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8. CYCLE for FUN - Dunonia Tour

Date: May 24th - 26th, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district, Vidin

Participants: 30 people

People accommodated: 30 people x 2 nights = 60 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats



9. CYCLE for FUN - Bugeac Tour

Date: May 29th - 31st, 2019

Place: Romania, Calarasi - Constanta counties

Participants: 30 people

People accommodated: 30 people x 2 nights = 60 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats





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10. CYCLE for FUN - Family Lake Tour

Date: May 31st - June 2nd, 2019

Place: Romania, Constanta county, Techirghiol

Participants: 47 people

People accommodated: 47 people x 2 nights = 94 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats



11. CYCLE for FUN - Techirghiol Road Tour

Date: May 31st - June 2nd, 2019

Place: Romania, Constanta county, Techirghiol

Participants: 30 people

People accommodated: 30 people x 2 nights = 60 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats





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12. CYCLE for FUN - Vidin Road Tour

Date: September 4th - 6th, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district

Participants: 39 people

People accommodated: 39 people x 2 nights = 78 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats



13. CYCLE for FUN - Belogradchik Road Tour

Date: September 6th - 8th, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district, Belogradchik region

Participants: 39 people

People accommodated: 39 people x 2 nights = 78 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats





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14. CYCLE for FUN - Belogradchik Family Tour

Date: September 6th - 8th, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district, Belogradchik region

Participants: 51 people

People accommodated: 51 people x 2 nights = 102 overnights

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, t-shirts, caps, key holders, backpack, rain coats



15. Winter Tourism Fair

Date: December 21st - 22nd, 2019

Place: Bulgaria, Vidin district

Participants: general public, media representatives, public authorities and Bulgarian Minister of Tourism representatives, stakeholders

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, key holders





16. Final Press Conference

Date: January 14th, 2020

Place: Calarasi, Calarasi county

Participants: 49 people (journalists, project partners, public authority representatives, stakeholders)

Information and promotional materials distributed: brochures, leaflets, agendas, pens, memory-sticks, key holders



3.4 Online promotion

3.4.1 Website

During the project implementation period an interactive web portal was created - www.danubeon2wheels.eu, which supports the new tourist products by containing all the routes and the most important and attractive tourist objectives from CBC region.

The web portal created aims to improve the access to information of both stakeholders and tourists. Its` purpose is to attract young people and foreign tourists, as it helps them into providing information about all the rich natural and historical sites from Romania and Bulgaria shores along the Danube river, much faster and more efficiently than conventional methods, as printed tourist guides and maps.

The site is designed taking in consideration one of the most important communication principal - K.I.S.S. principle - *Keep It Short and Simple*. It is a trilingual website (Romanian, Bulgarian, English), in order to gather as many visitors as possible from all over the two neighbouring countries, but not only from these.



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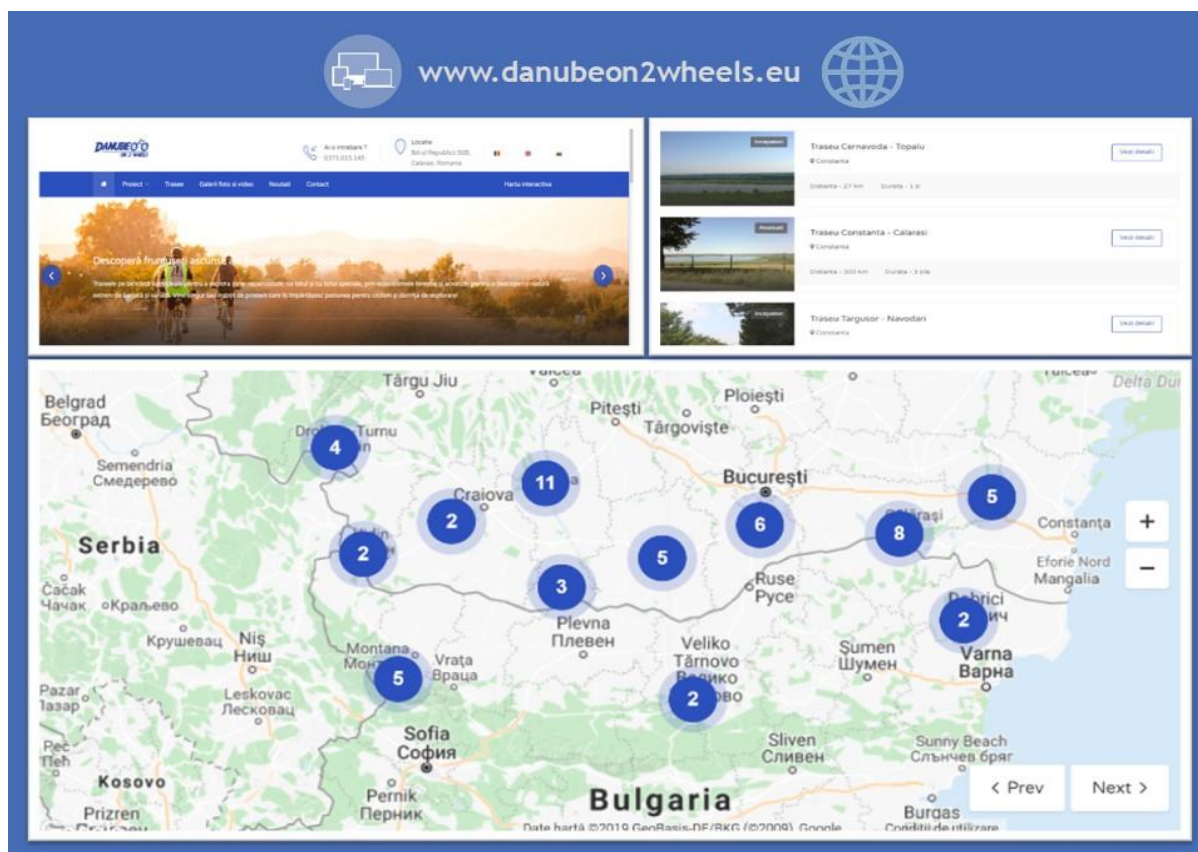
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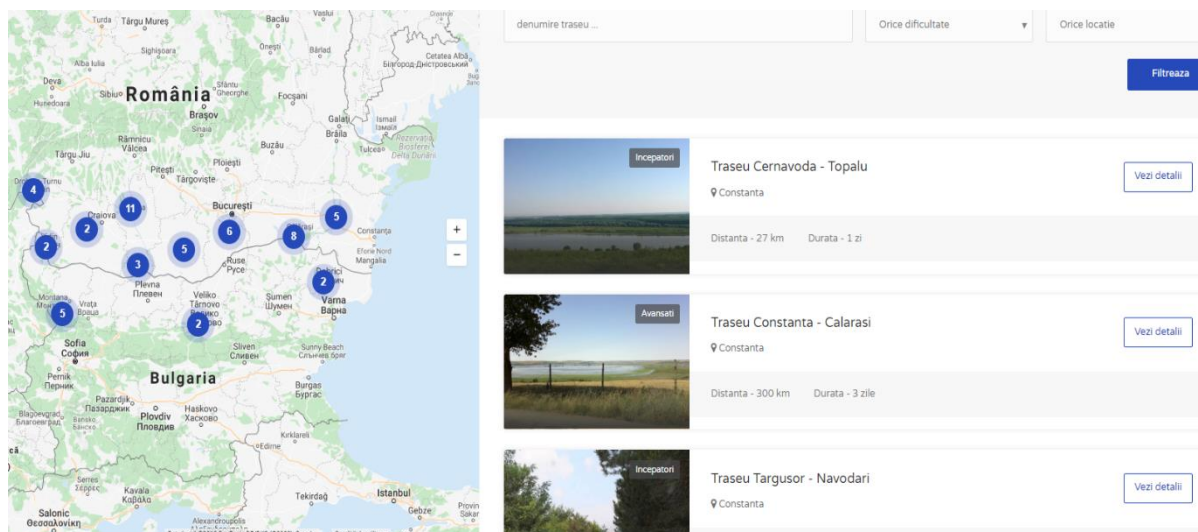
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The website contains information about the project, as well as about the tourist products created and the activities carried out by the members of the project implementation team. It also contains online maps, which reveals all cycling trails identified during the project implementation.



All the pilot actions had been organized on the website, being after promoted repeatedly through the photos tagged and the promotional videos edited in the sections of news and media gallery on the website.



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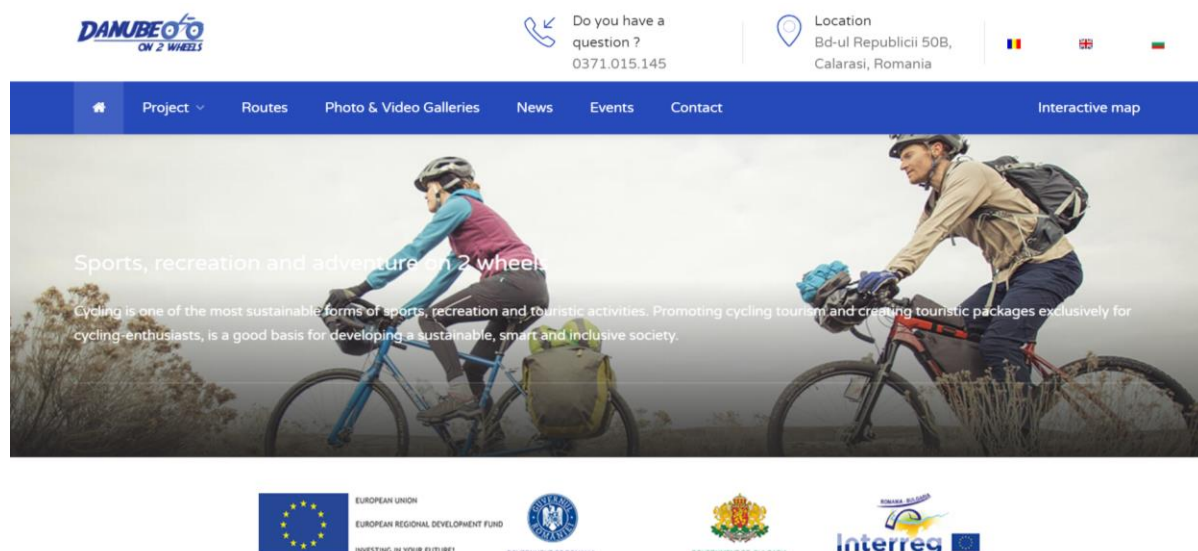
Danubeon2Wheels.eu website it is a modern and complete solution for promoting the picturesque cross-border area on the Danube, from the eligible area of the program, as well as the new integrated tourism products created by the project.

According to the project, the website must have had a reach a minimum of 4,000 visits. Until the end of 2019 the website reached around 20,000 visits, this fact being another eloquent proof of the success of the project.

The web portal benefits from integration with the main social networks: Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, being done according to the SEO rules imposed by the Google search engine. The beneficiaries have the opportunity to update the content of the website at any time, in accordance with their needs for disseminating information online for the general public of the project.

○ Website structure

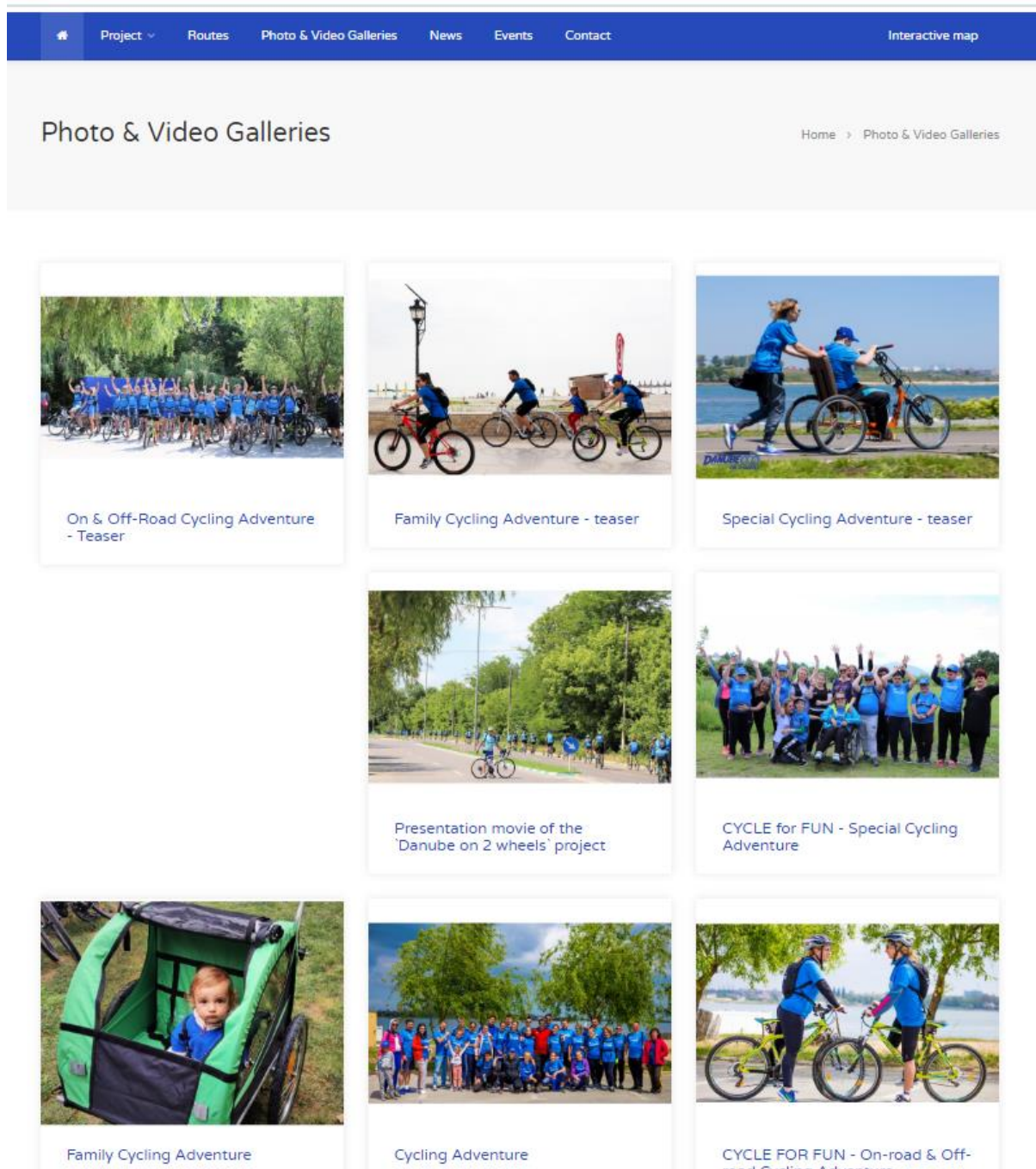
- *Homepage* - contains the main menu, the portal header will consist of an animated slider with representative images, general information about the project, section for news, media elements (photo/ video images), information about the cross-border area, about the Danube area, cycling routes in the project`s eligible area;



- *Section About the project* - contains complete information about the activities carried out within the project (the project consortium, the general objective and the specific objectives of the project, activities, results/ indicators, photo/ video galleries etc.);



- Section *Events calendar* - presents the place/ date/ topic of cycling expeditions along the Danube, in the form of a calendar;
- Section *Photo/ video gallery* - mainly contains the video clips edited from the video material made at the events organized within the project along the Danube. It also contains photos tagged from the routes and from the project implementation area and from all the pilot events carried out within the project implementation phase;





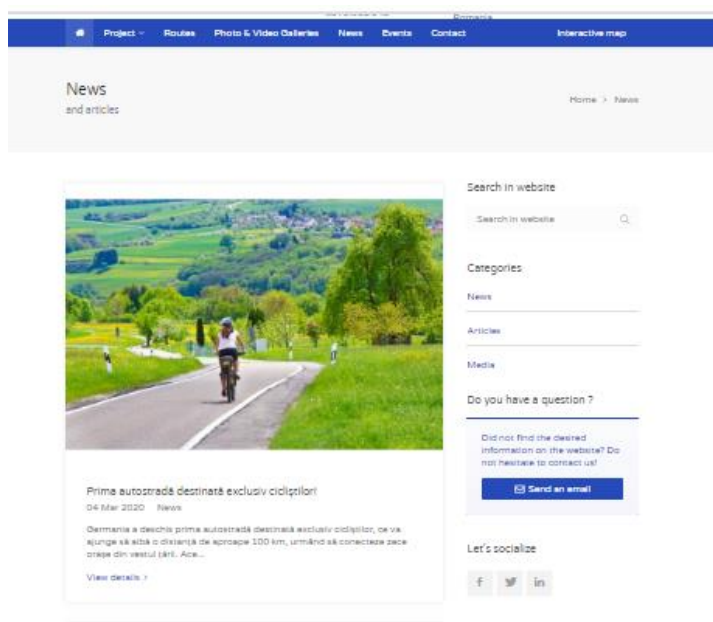
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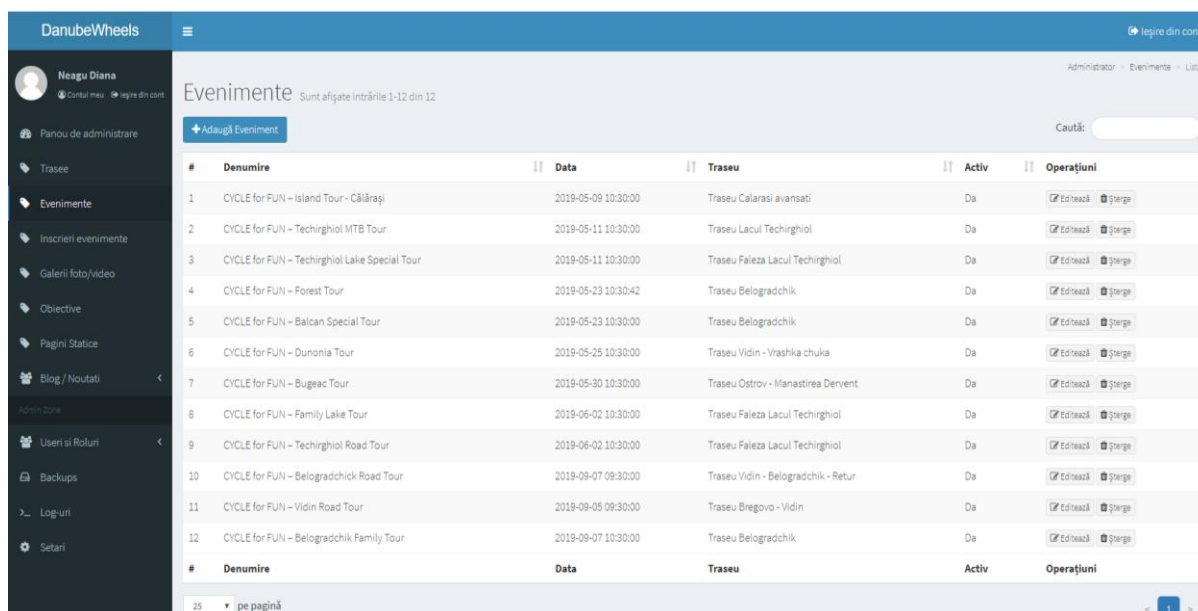
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- Section *News* - contains information about events/ activities about the project, but not only (news relevant to the project and its target group) updated periodically;
- Section *Contact* - contains all contact details and also, for a better and faster interaction with the project`s target group, a quick contact form.

○ The administration sections

The administration module allows editing the content of the web portal, uploading text, files and images, while the public version remains unchanged, it allows beneficiaries add/ delete sections, posts and administrators accounts. The updating and maintenance of the portal is entirely performed by the beneficiaries, through the administration module whenever necessary.



From the section of the presentation web portal, administrators can manage whenever and however intended each section presented in the public parts. In other words, the administrator can add, modify or delete texts, images and video clips



from any section presented. In principle, each section of the public side has a correspondent in its administration section.

The portal also has functionality that allows the beneficiary to verify the number of unique visits/ visitors for metering and performing other statistical data.

The interface of this section is simple and intuitive. There are two main ways:

- Grid (table) - presents, in the form of a table, all the information in the selected section;
- Forms - through them data can be entered into the system. There is a suite of elements here (text boxes, drop-down lists, text editors, calendars etc.), through which information can be added in an easy and intuitive system.

3.4.2 Mobile application



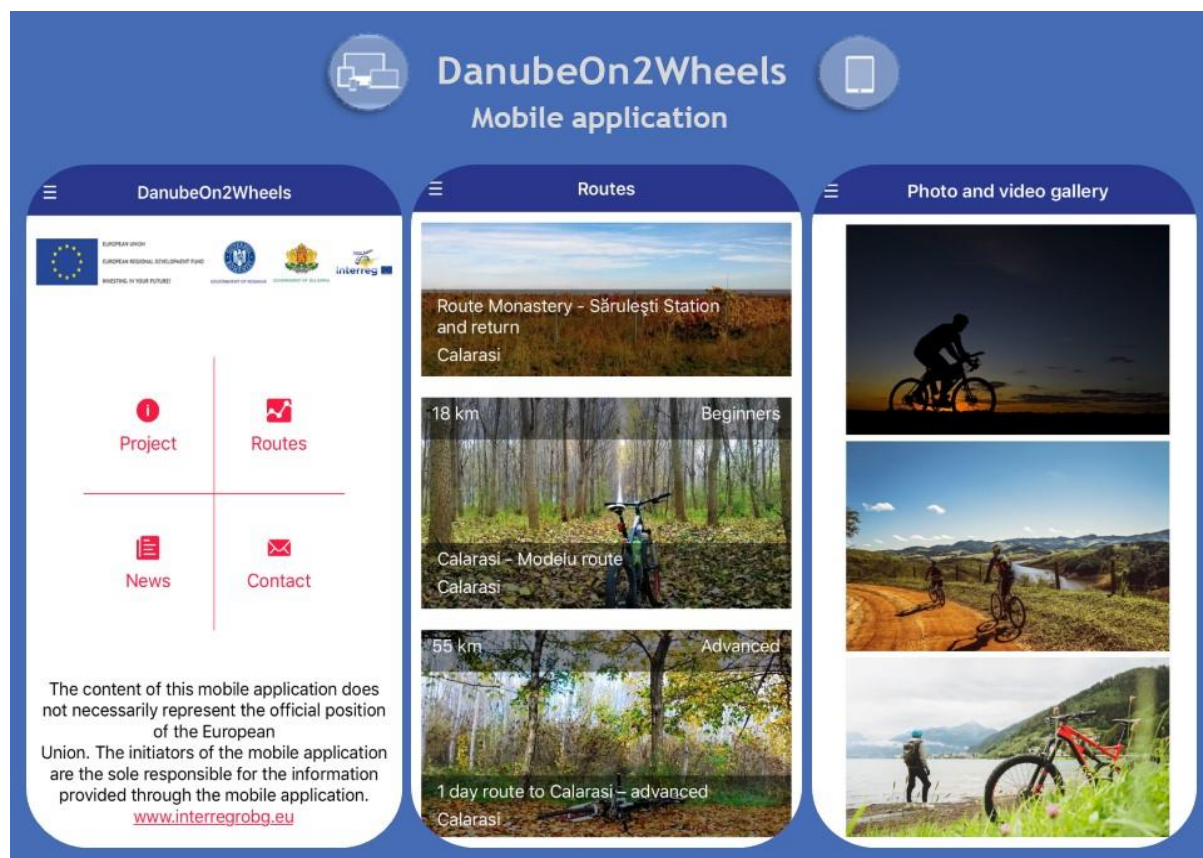
The mobile app DanubeOn-2Wheels is available on both Android and iOS (i-Phone) platforms and it contains integrated tour packages created and available on the project presentation web portal. It also contains the video clip edited from the video materials made to the pilot actions organized on the Danube shores, created to promote the new tourism products created.

The mobile application is the new mechanism used in the project, to attract young people and foreign tourists, as it helps them in to providing information much faster and more efficiently than any existing conventional method.





The main objective of the mobile application is to promote the project's touristic packages among the young people and foreign tourists, offering them all the needed information in a much faster and modern manner, which is much more efficient than other well-known conventional communication channels and tools, as printed tourist guides or maps.



The mobile application has a pleasant, useful, easy-to-use design and good, fast, fluent, bug-free performance (as much as possible).

The application is linked to the main web portal, realized within the same strategy of promoting tourism products, and contains all the information and interactive maps of the identified trails in the CBC green region for enthusiastic cyclists. At the same time, it has redirection to: the social media channels of the project; emergency phone numbers, hospitals etc., for direct dialling.

In addition, it has Review/ Star rating functionality of the application by users and functionality that allows the beneficiary to verify the number of users accessing the application and other statistical details.

The application is, the same as the website, trilingual, in Romanian, Bulgarian and English, in order to attract as many active tourists as possible.



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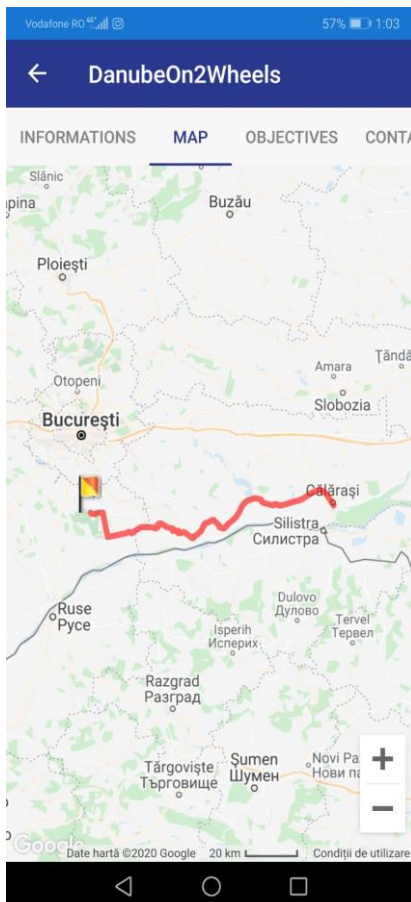
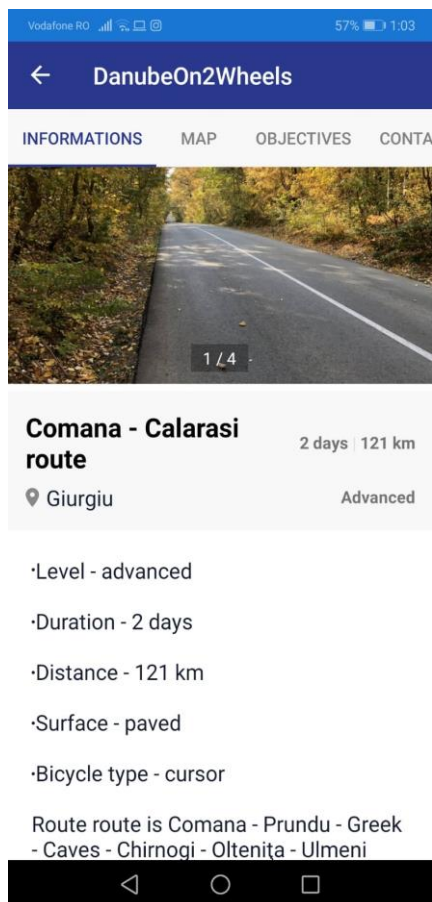
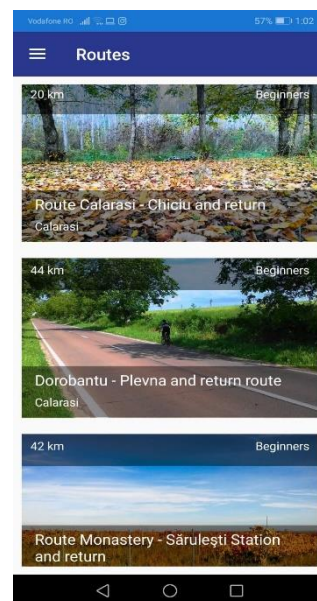
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The mandatory information that the mobile application contains, the font size and type, logos, technical specifications to ensure the visibility of the project complies with the visual identity rules of the INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria programme, available on the website www.interregrobg.eu, at the following link: <http://interregrobg.eu/en/implementation-rules/program-rules/manual-digital-viewer.html>.

○ Sections of the mobile application

- Login;
- User;
- Maps;
- Cycling trails;
- Compass;
- Pictures;
- Video clips to promote integrated tourism products;
- News;
- Contacts.





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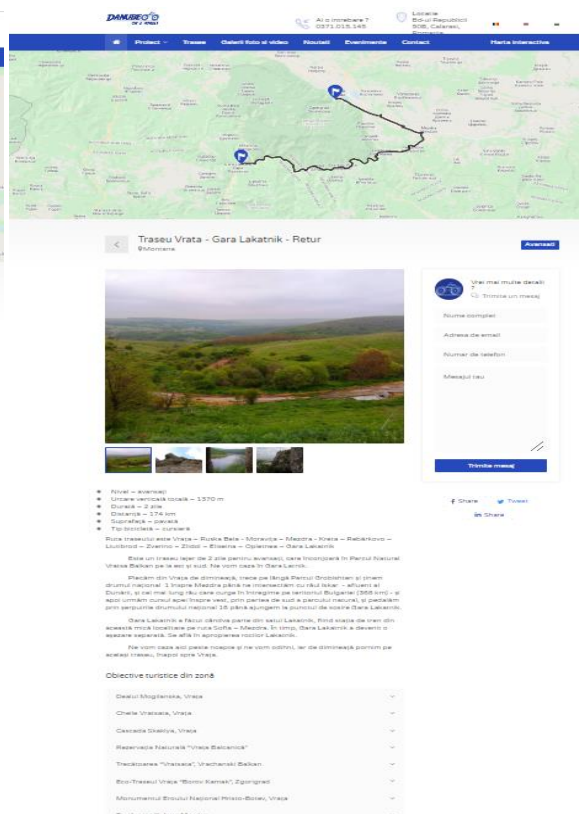
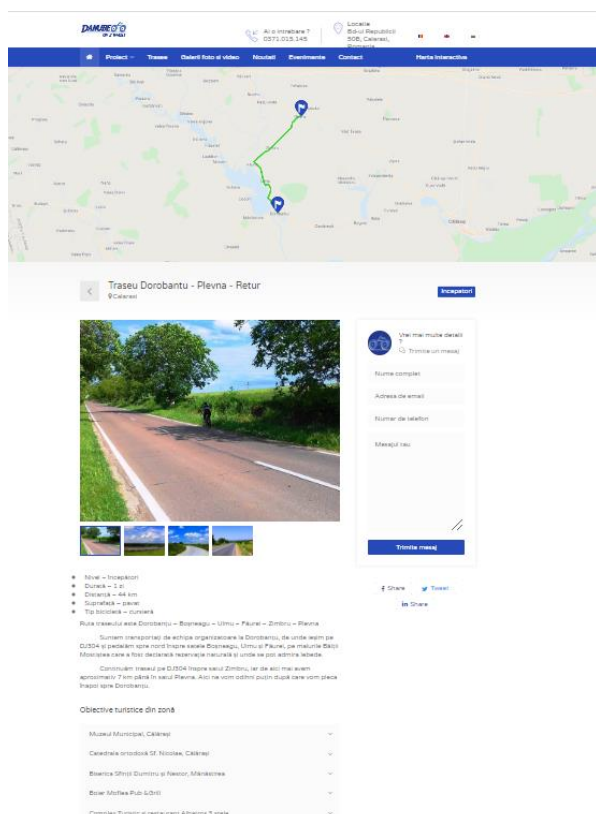


○ Interactive map

The interactive maps reflect the tourist routes in an interactive and easier to understand/ intuitive online option and to be used by the tourist. The information is provided as the app and website, trilingual, in Romanian, Bulgarian and English, thus facilitating the use of the maps and routes described.

When designing interactive maps, the following were taken into account:

- design development and realization with the prior approval of the beneficiary;
- marking on the interactive map of the routes proposed following the study carried out by the beneficiary;
- distance calculator between the touristic objectives marked on the map;
- interactive map valid in printable version;
- full offline support - option to download certain portions of the map on the phone/ other electronic devices;
- option to add intermediate points from the users (for example: to visit a tourist attraction on the route where is located);
- integration into website, mobile applications, specialized software;
- maps used: Google Maps (in accordance with Google approvals).





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3.5 Video editing

During `Danube on 2 Wheels` project implementation, AISSER Association - lead partner - had made a series of video clips to promote the new tourist packages developed in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area.

AISSER has created an account on YouTube, to promote all the projects that it implements along with its partners, in order to develop and promote tourism in the cross-border area through recreational and sporting activities.

The channel includes all the projects co-financed through INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria programme, because they all have a common objective, the same area of implementation, same European financing source, and the same type of actions. Thus, for each project the association created a playlist named symbolically with the name of the project.



In the promotion video clips for `Danube on 2 Wheels` were used all the photographic and video materials collected from all the 12-pilot action carried out both in Romania and Bulgaria, during May - September 2019 period.

The creation of the materials was carried out taking into account the specificity of the target groups, to which the pilot actions were addressed.



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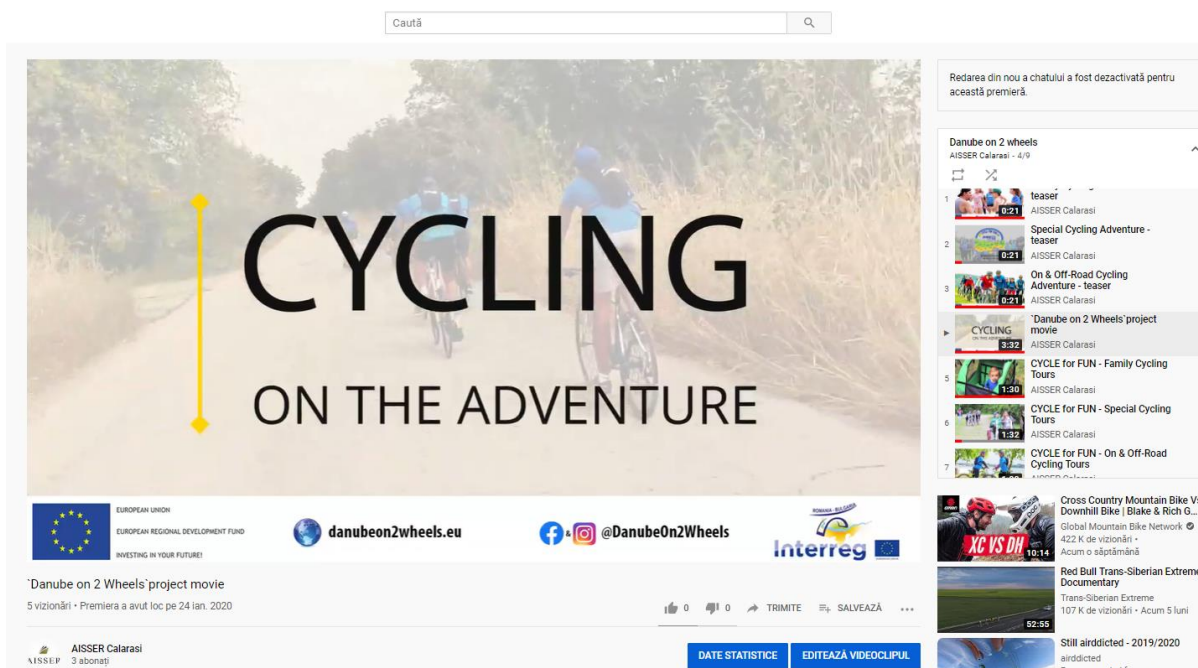


According to the promotion video clips contract, there were made a number of nine video materials, as follows:

- The main promotional video clip

Duration: 3`32``

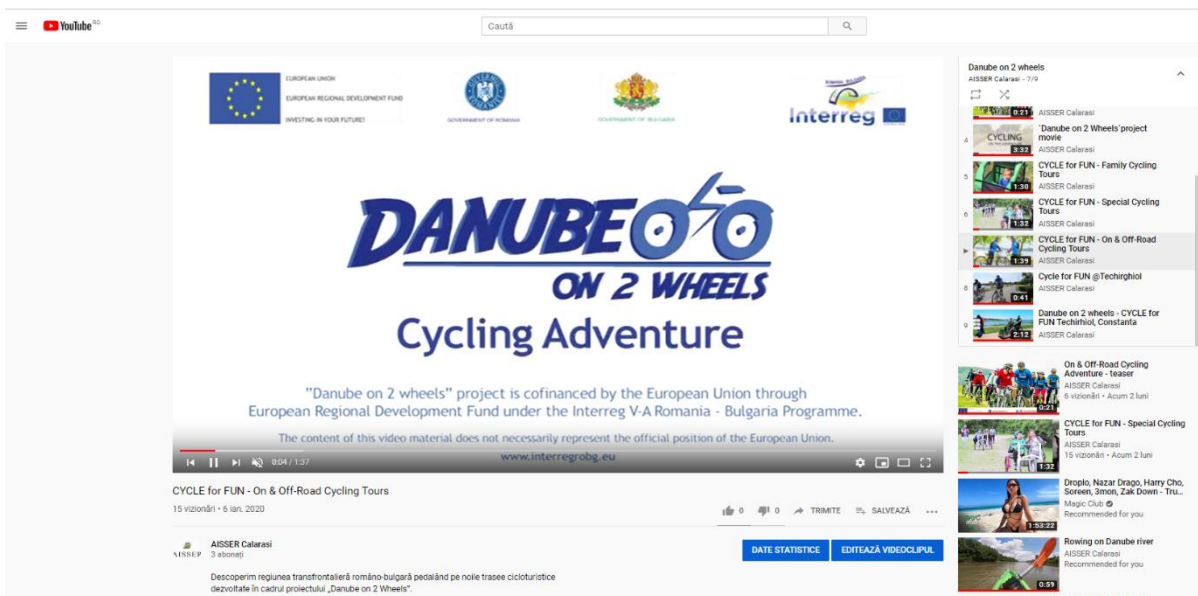
Promo objective: promotion of the project, the pilot actions and its results



- Promotional video clip for on & off-road cycling tours

Duration: 1`39``

Promo objective: promotion of the pilot actions carried out to promote the integrated tourism product - on-road and off-road trails for enthusiast cyclists





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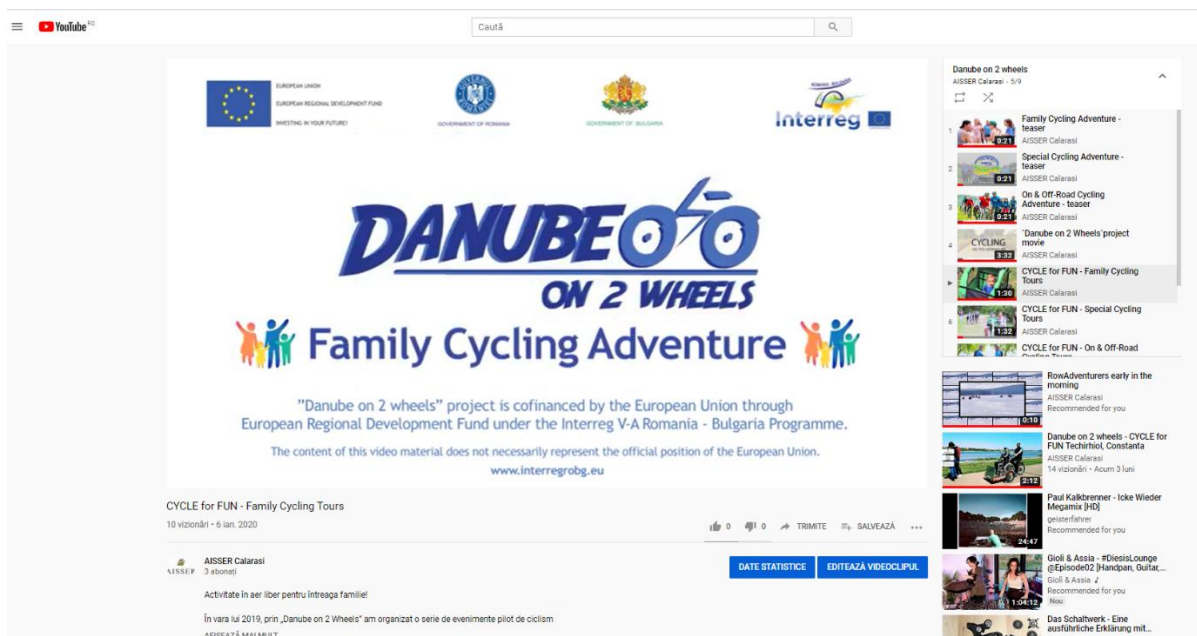
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- Promotional video clip for family cycling tours

Duration: 1`30``

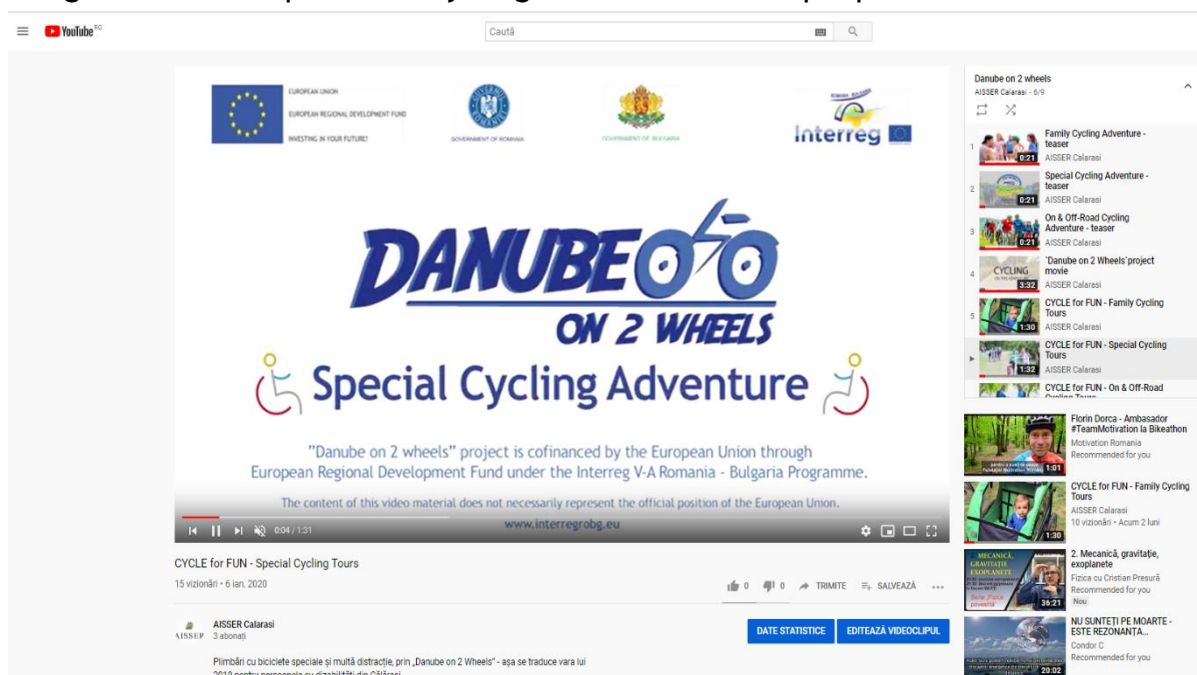
Promo objective: promotion of the pilot actions carried out to promote the integrated tourism product - Cycling trails for families



- Promotional video clip - Special cycling tours

Duration: 1`32``

Promo objective: promotion of the pilot actions carried out to promote the integrated tourism product - Cycling trails for disabled people





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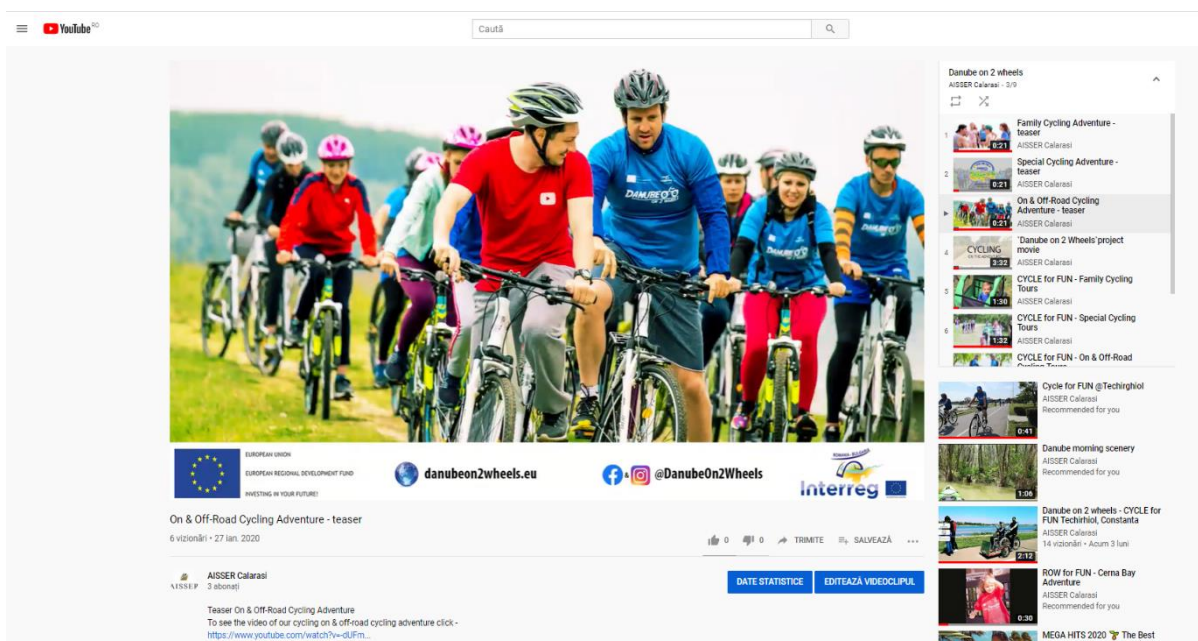
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- Teaser video clip for on & off-road cycling tours

Duration: 21``

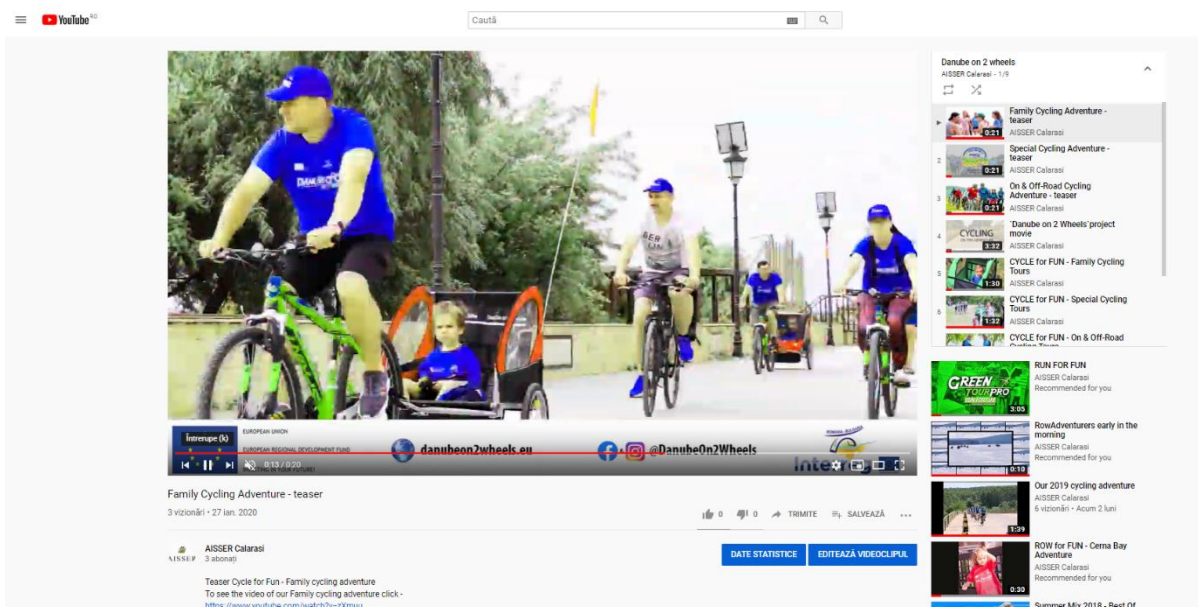
Promo objective: promotion of the cycling pilot actions carried out in Romania and Bulgaria to promote the integrated tourism product - on & off-road cycling trails



- Teaser video clip for family cycling tours

Duration: 21``

Promo objective: promotion of the cycling pilot actions carried out in Romania and Bulgaria to promote the integrated tourism product - Cycling trails for families





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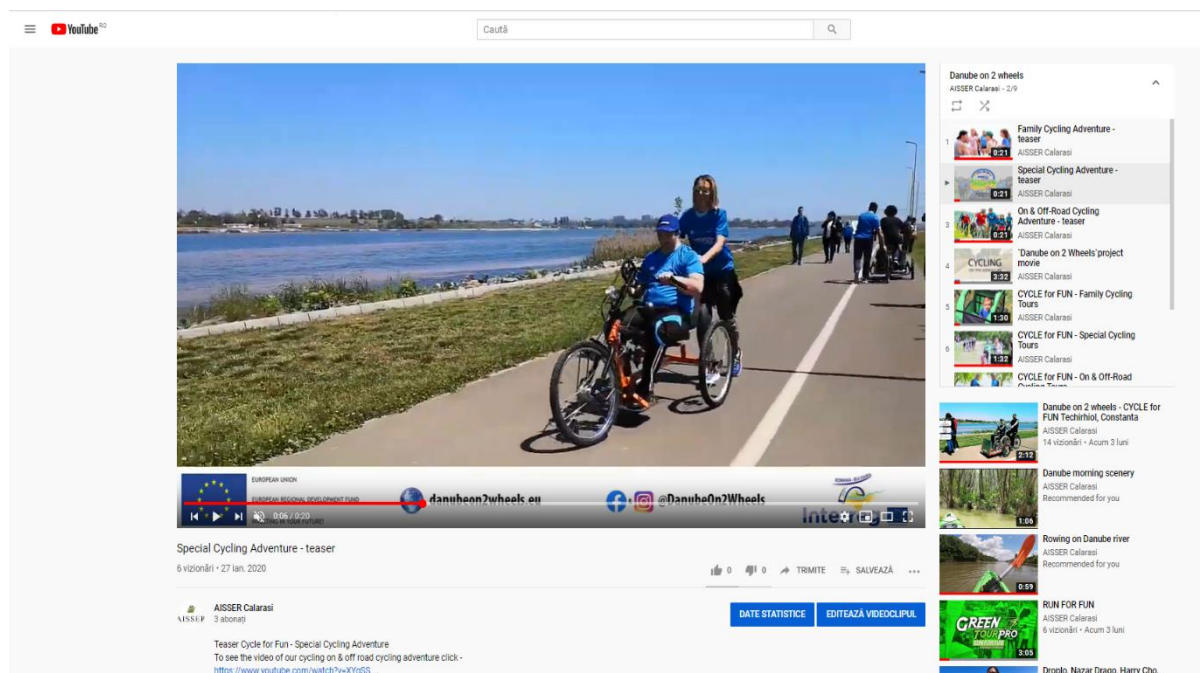
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- Teaser video clip to promote the Special cycling tours

Duration: 21``

Promo objective: promotion of the pilot actions carried out to promote the integrated tourism product - Cycling trails for disabled people



The content of the video clips is made based on the materials provided by the contracting authority and published in accordance with the Visual Identity Manual (MIV) of the INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria Programme.

In total, seven professional videos were made, grouped by target groups (enthusiast cyclists/ families/ disabled people | promotion clip + teaser video clip) and a main short movie promoting the 'Danube on 2 Wheels' project and the results of its implementation.

In the video editing process, the following activities were carried out:

- electronic editing and project logo add;
- processing, post computerized video processing;
- graphic editing of titles, transitions, video effects;
- image editing;
- text input;
- computerized front and final image video editing.



In order to ensure the soundtrack of the video clips, the following activities were carried out:

- soundtrack processing;
- audio effects;
- sound mixing - post sound processing and soundtrack.

3.6 Social media channels

All the activities of the project and its pilot actions have been widely promoted. In this regard, in order to have the best coverage and dissemination of the actions of the project, we considered it mandatory to have a promotion on the most important social networks.



Social networks today play a very important role in society. It is said *that if you are not on Facebook, you do not exist*. Starting from this social principle, in order to increase awareness and transparency about the activities carried out within the project, we have chosen to create accounts on the most used social media channels. In this regard, the project `Danube on 2 Wheels` has today a Facebook page and an Instagram account.



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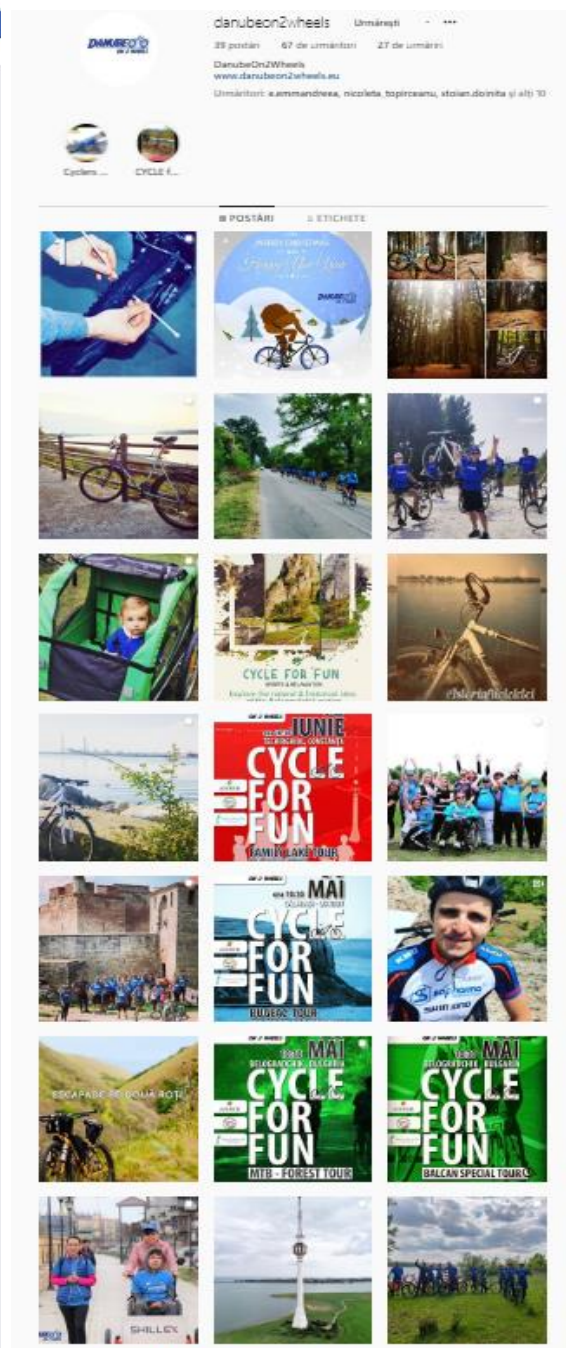
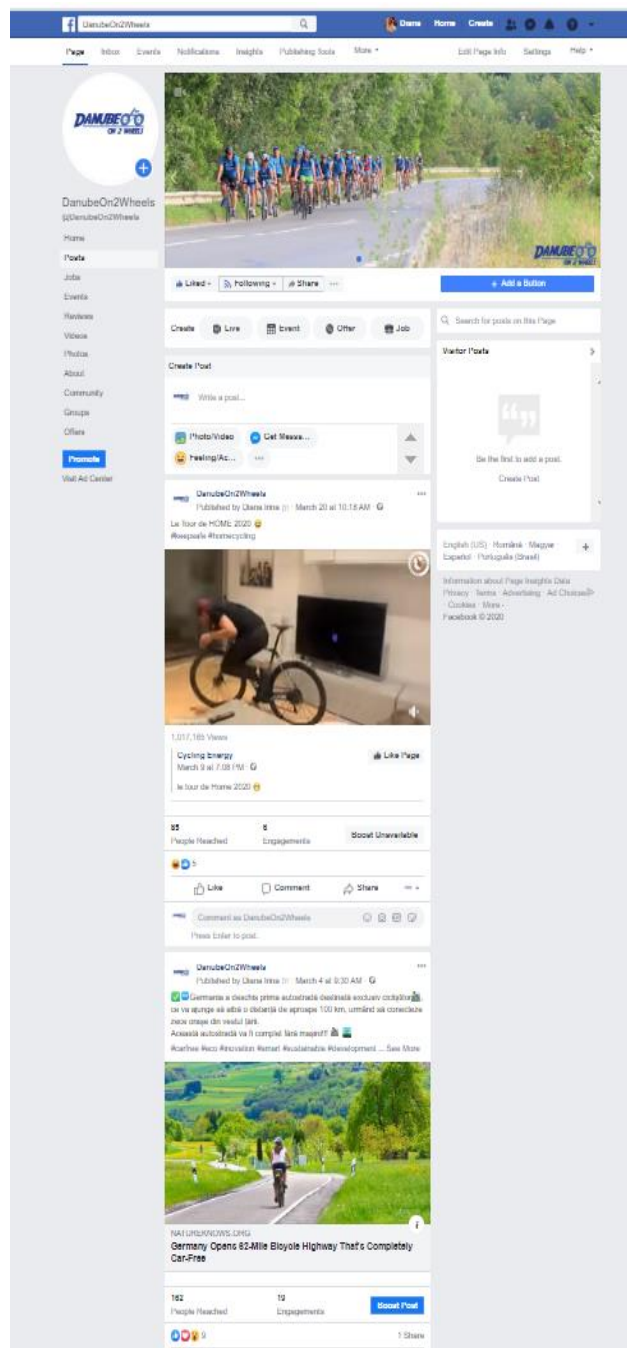
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Through the Facebook page and the Instagram account we managed to attract over time, at our cycling events, a large number of participants. Also, through the two social media accounts we had the chance to interact with many people from the target group of the project and to bring closer the tourist products developed by the project.



The two accounts grew from one posting to another and from one story to another. In the online promotion process, we realized that fresh and constant content are essential in keeping followers and winning new ones.



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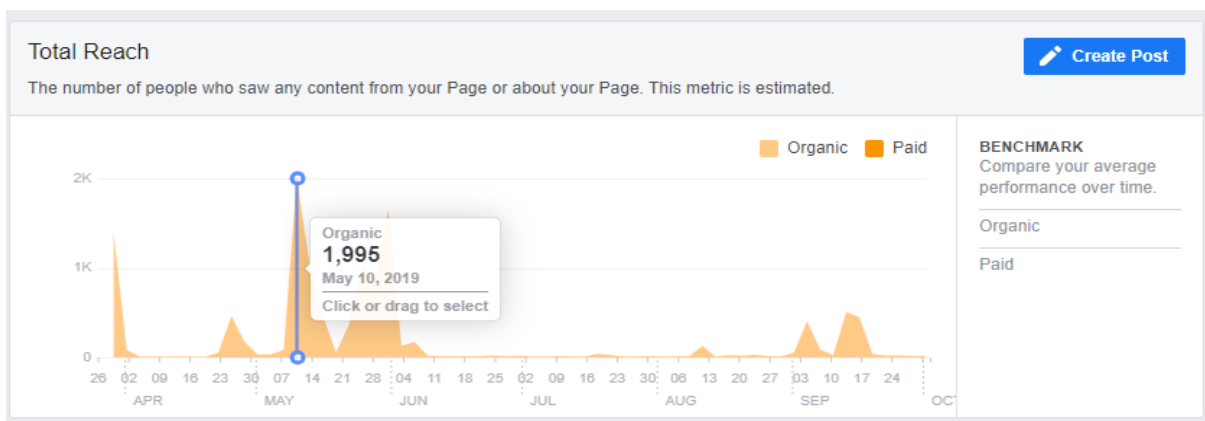
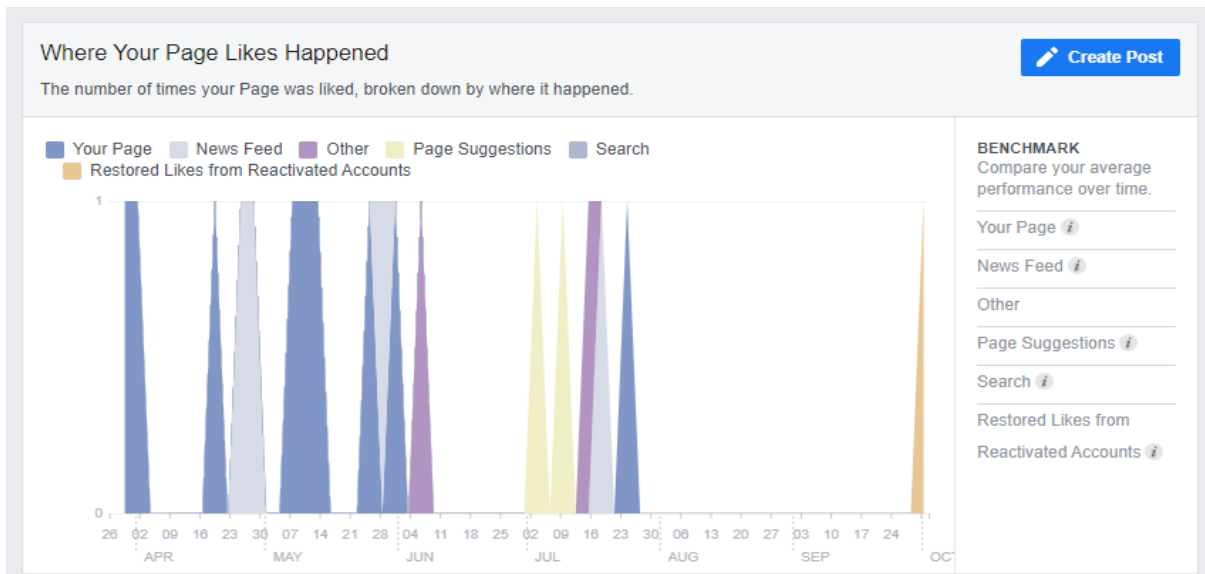
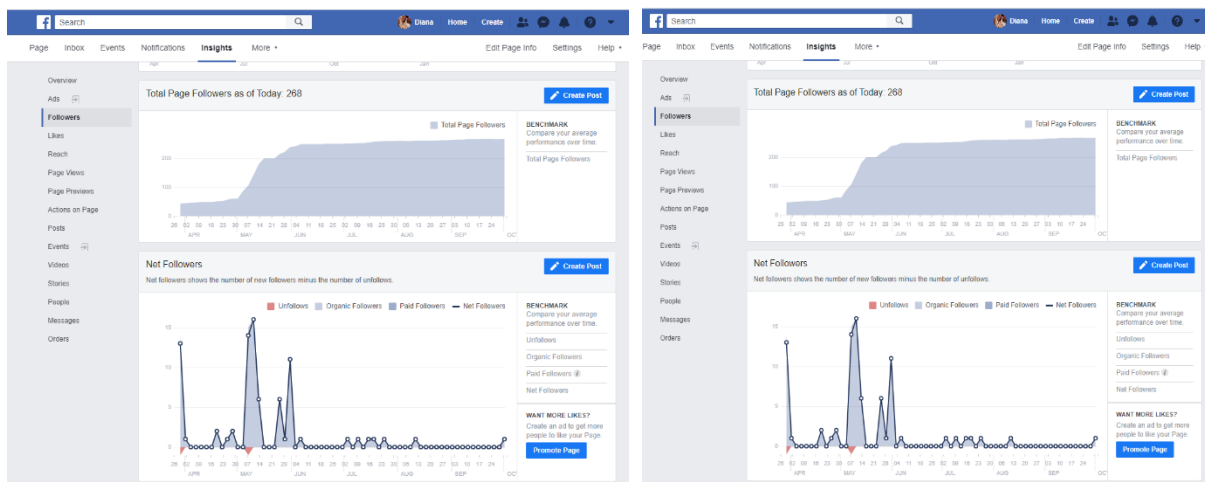


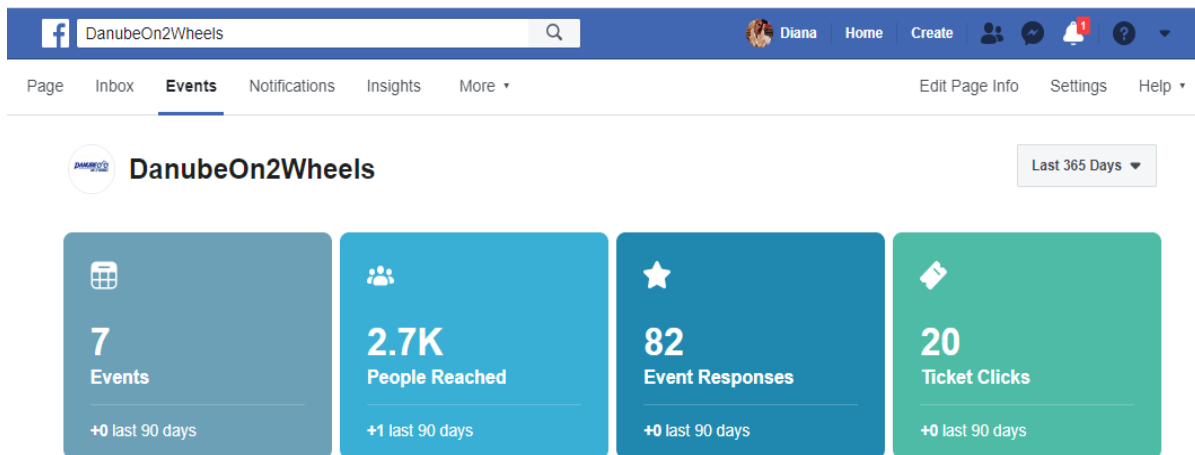
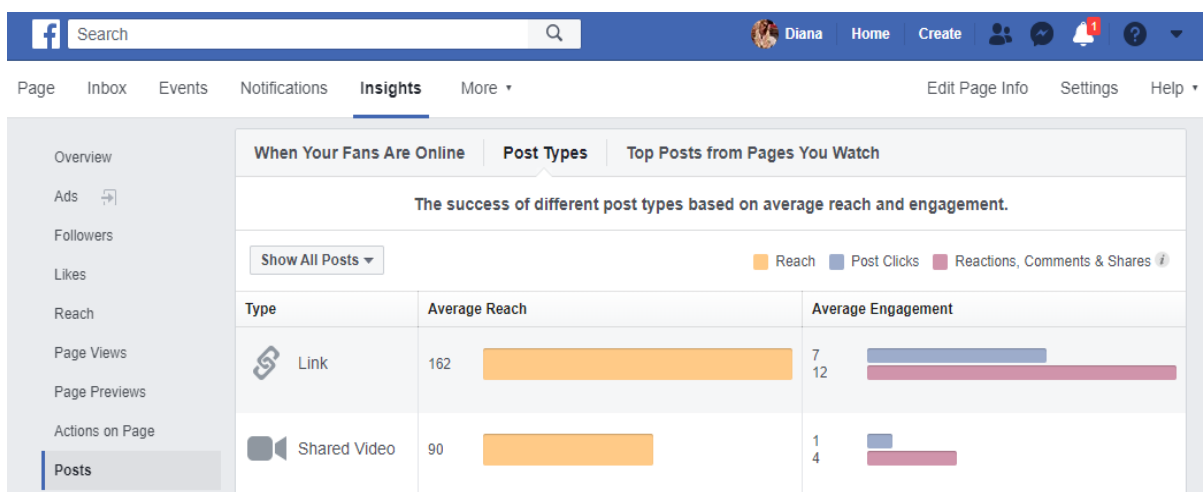
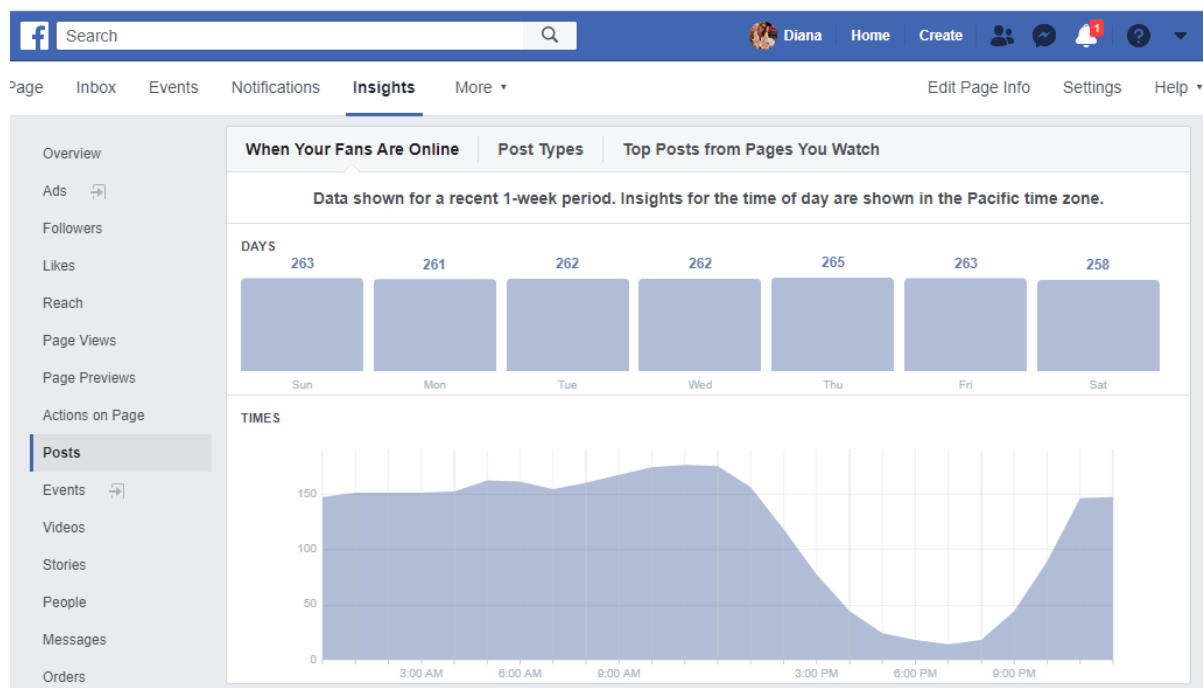
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In the following we present brief statistics on the two media channels used to promote pilot actions, which come to prove the previously stated.

- Facebook page - www.facebook.com/DanubeOn2Wheels
274 people like it | 278 people follows it







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Event Budget Spent Reach Responses Tickets Clicks

Past Events

	CYCLE for FUN – Bugeac Tour Lacul Bugeacului May 30, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	1.8K	52	18
	CYCLE for FUN – Dunonia Tour Vidin, Bulgaria May 25, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	225	4	No data
	CYCLE for FUN – Balcan Special Tour Belogradchik, Bulgaria May 23, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	331	8	2
	CYCLE for FUN – Forest Tour Belogradchik Rocks May 23, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	174	7	No data
	CYCLE for FUN – Lake Special Tour Lacul Techirghiol May 11, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	367	7	No data
	CYCLE for FUN – MTB Tour Lacul Techirghiol May 11, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	474	13	No data
	CYCLE for FUN – Island Tour Insula Mare May 9, 2019, 10:30 AM	Not boosted	386	2	No data

05/14/2019 9:58 AM		CYCLE for FUN – Techirghiol MTB Tour			1.2K		318 294			Boost Post
05/12/2019 10:41 PM		Un weekend de neuitat petrecut alături de oameni minunați!			498		68 44			Boost Post
05/11/2019 10:10 PM		CYCLE for FUN – Techirghiol MTB Tour			149		91 51			Boost Post
05/11/2019 7:50 PM		CYCLE for FUN – Techirghiol Lake Special Tour			283		177 807			Boost Post
05/11/2019 2:30 PM		CYCLE for FUN – Techirghiol Lake Special Tour			638		206 730			Boost Post
05/10/2019 11:57 PM		A 2-a zi de distracție la pedale, pe malul Dunării, alături de oameni			170		120 23			Boost Post
05/10/2019 10:10 AM		CYCLE for FUN - Island Tour			235		79 116			Boost Post
05/09/2019 4:59 PM		Am dat Startul Aventurii pe 2 roți! CYCLE for FUN - Island Tour is la			1.9K		266 97			Boost Post
05/08/2019 9:48 AM		Atenție! Am schimbat ora evenimentului Cycle for Fun - Island			87		6 0			Boost Post
04/25/2019 8:15 AM		A durat ceva până când iarna s-a lăsat depășită, iar acum în sfârșit			904		57 43			Boost Post
04/23/2019 9:30 AM		Primăvara a venit Soarele a răsărit Pe cărări noi am pornit			1.3K		189 60			Boost Post
03/30/2019 1:20 PM		https://web.facebook.com/pg/AisserCalarasi/photos/?			62		14 17			Boost Post
03/28/2019 4:15 PM		Ce faceți weekendul acesta? Vă e dor de mare? Dacă dați o raită-n			1.9K		215 78			Boost Post
03/22/2019 8:22 AM		Ne pregătim de evenimentul de lansare a proiectului sportiv prin			2.4K		140 97			Boost Post



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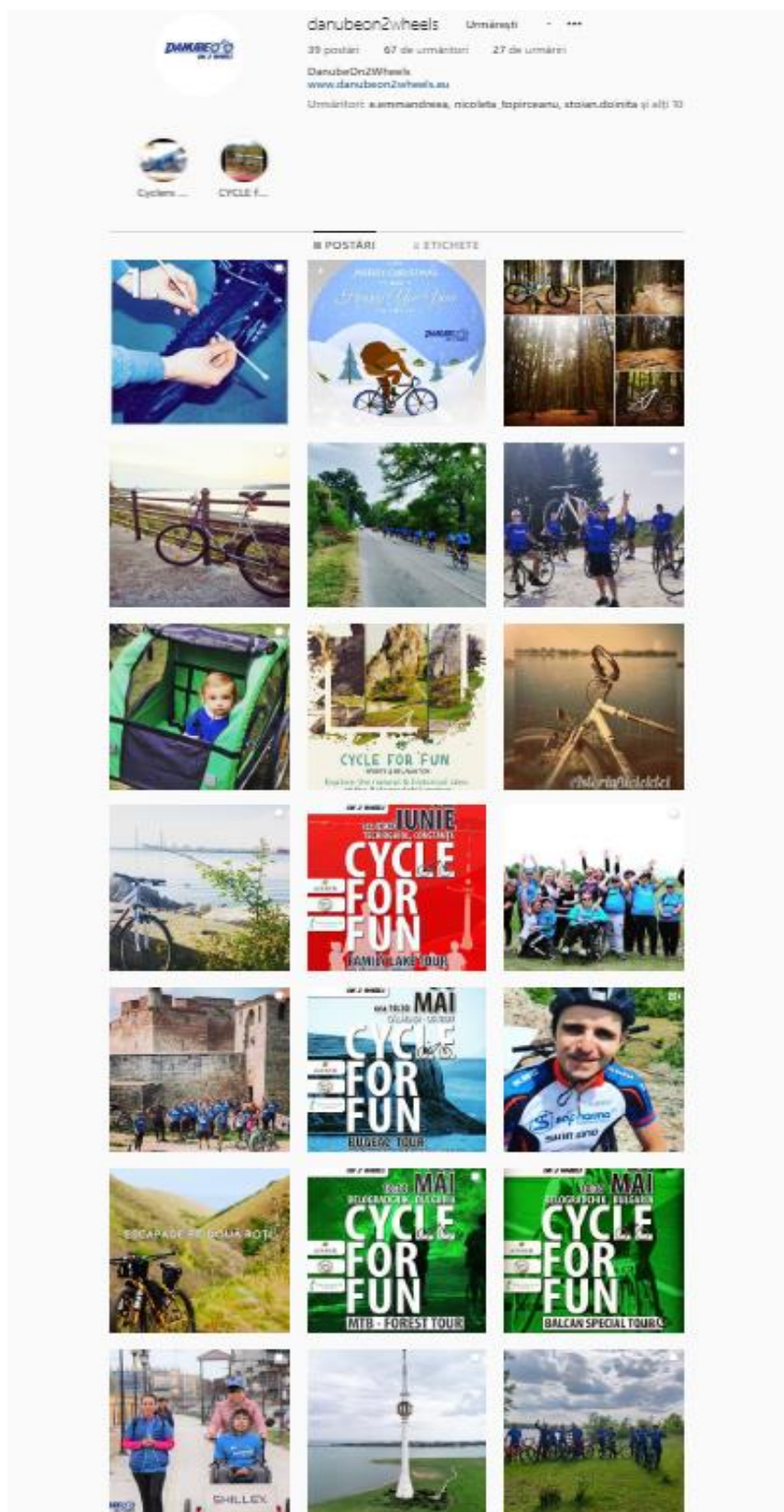


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- Instagram account - www.instagram.com/DanubeOn2Wheels

91 followers | 39 posts | 16 stories | 2 highlights





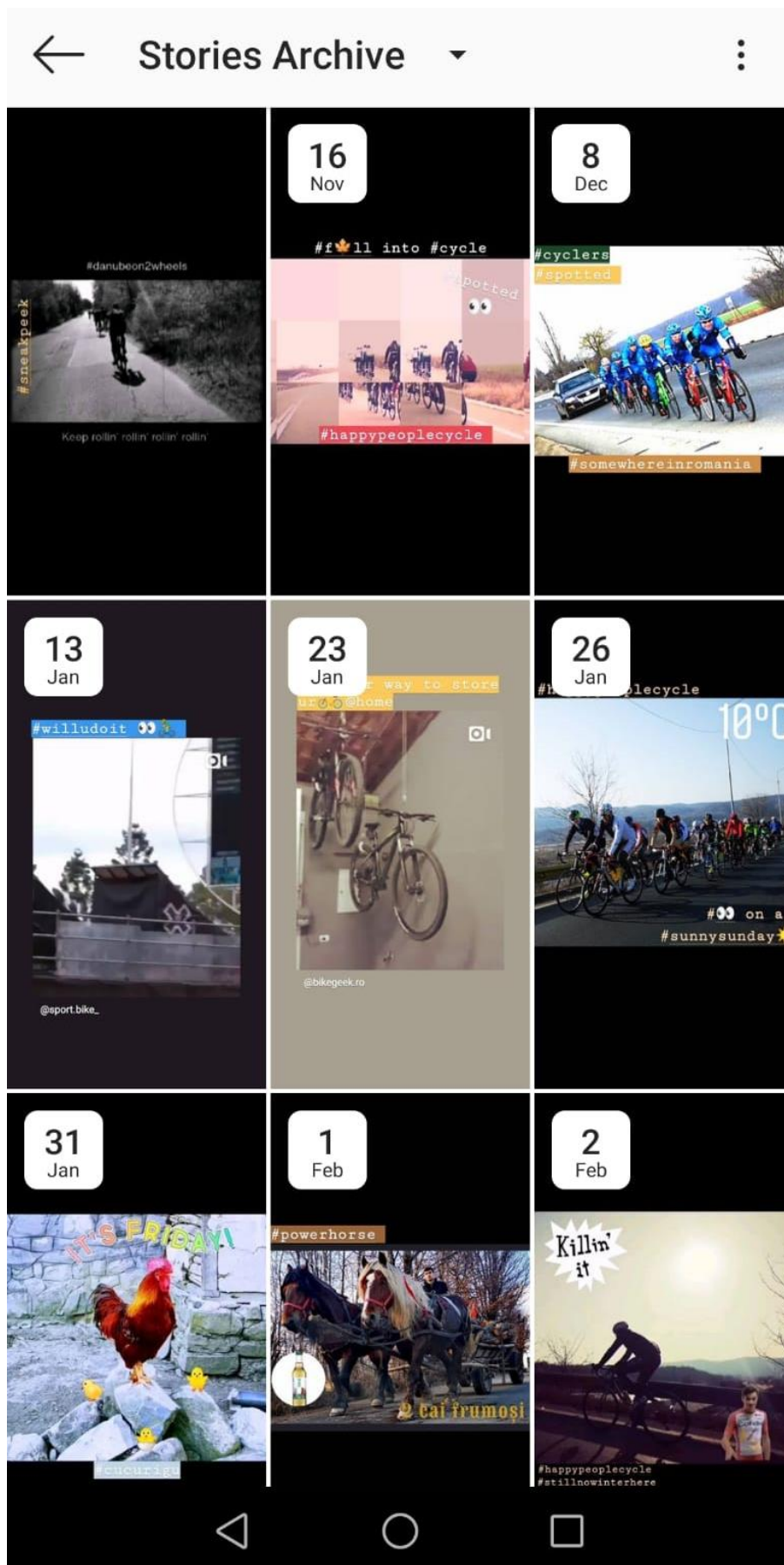
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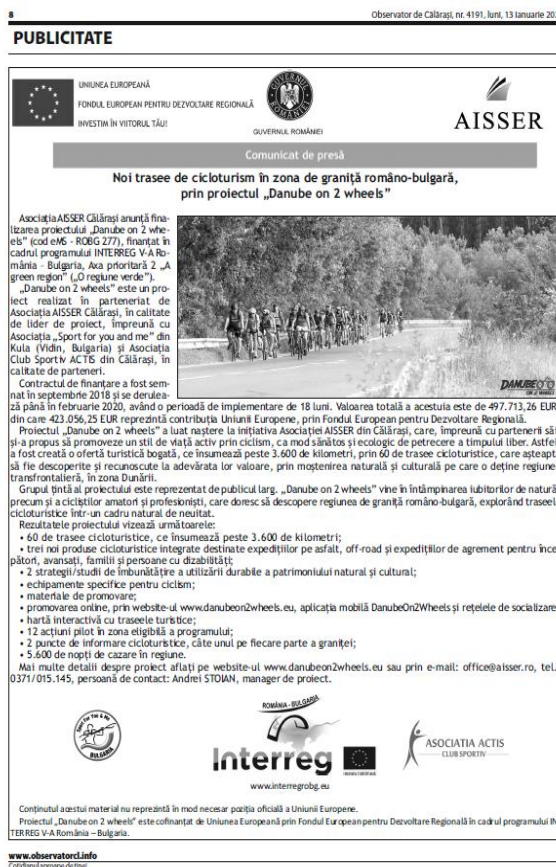


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The total number of online materials and press releases is of 7 information materials concerning the pilot actions carried out during the months of May - September 2019 within the `Danube on 2 Wheels` project and its activities carried out during the financial contract implementation.

In the following we will present the press materials published both within the contract for the promotion of the project, as well as outside it, those free of charge.





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Noi trasee de cicloturism in zona de granita romano-bulgara, prin proiectul "Danube on 2 wheels"

Asociatia AISSE Calarasi anunta finalizarea proiectului "Danube on 2 wheels" (cod EMS - ROBG 277), finantat in cadrul programului INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria, Axa prioritara 2 "A green region" ("O regiune verde").

"Danube on 2 wheels" este un proiect realizat in parteneriat de Asociatia AISSE mai mult

Marti, 14 Ianuarie 2020, ora 10:16



HOME / CATEGORII / ARTICOLE / CONTACT / DESPRE NOI / POLITICA DE CONFIDENTIALITATE / LEGAL / TERMINI SI CONDIȚII DE UTILIZARE

Noi trasee de cicloturism in zona de granita romano-bulgara, pe proiectul "Danube on 2 wheels"

de Asociatia AISSE Calarasi



Articolul 17 din Regulamentul (UE) 2016/679 privind protecția persoanelor fizice în ceea ce privește prelucrarea datelor personale și privind libera circulație a acestor date (GDPR) este aplicabil în România din 25 mai 2018.

Proiectul "Danube on 2 wheels" este un proiect de dezvoltare turistică în zona de frontieră romano-bulgara, finanțat prin intermediul programului INTERREG V-A România - Bulgaria, Axa prioritara 2 "A green region" ("O regiune verde").

Proiectul este realizat în parteneriat de Asociația AISSE Calarasi și mai multe organizații locale, regionale și naționale. Scopul proiectului este de a crea noi trasee de cicloturism în zona de frontieră romano-bulgara, care să atragă turiști și să contribuie la dezvoltarea turistică a regiunii.

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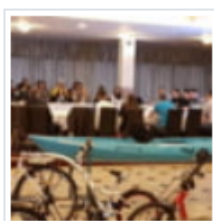
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Conferinta de lansare a proiectului "Danube on 2 wheels", desfasurata la Calarasi

Conferinta de lansare a proiectului "Danube on 2 wheels" a avut loc vineri, 22 martie, in municipiul Calarasi. "Danube on 2 wheels" se doreste a fi un proiect pilot prin crearea pachetelor cicloturistice. Practic, scopul proiectului este se puna bazele dezvoltarii lor pe viitor, prin organizarea de mai mult

Joi, 28 Martie 2019, ora 11:21





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IV. STRATEGY TO PROMOTE THE INTEGRATED TOURISM PRODUCTS

The project partners identified a new tourism product - cycling adventures - that combine ecological tourism with sports tourism, at low costs. This activity had known a significant increase in recent years and have the capacity to become a new form of active tourism with a major impact on the cross-border region, especially on the Danube region. The proposed activities are on-road and off-road cycling on the natural and cultural sites offered by the cross-border region.

The common cycling standards are aimed at developing attractive cycling trails and accommodation conditions to meet the expectations of tourists, while retaining the unique landscape and atmosphere of the cross-border area.

The cycling adventures are one of the newest forms of tourism, which are welcomed by both locals and enthusiastic active tourists, who enjoy outdoor movement. Through this type of touristic product, the project partners managed to promote the region, a healthy lifestyle and attracted tourists to the cross-border area, by organizing joint events in some of the most beautiful and rich natural and cultural areas from Romania and Bulgaria.

These actions will also contribute to the economic growth of both Bulgaria and Romania, through tourism development, creating a closer link between the two neighbouring countries. Tourism is perhaps the most important and offering way of development of the area, Danube being all over the world recognized for its natural multiculturalism, created in centuries of history, multiculturalism that generated from cosmopolitan cities to historical sites, more and more varied than in any basin river in this world. With the help of good and sustainable infrastructure, all this cultural mix can be presented to a much larger number of tourists than it is at the moment.

The green banks of the Danube in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area, the woods, wetlands and islands offer an opportunity for diverse outdoor activities and by networking of different stakeholders, diverse products can be developed.

Cross-border touristic offers allow local tourists to meet neighbouring cultures and nature and give visitors from distant countries the unique opportunity to discover a whole new region consisting of various landscapes, ethnicities and traditions.

4.1 A clear vision on green and sport tourism

Tourism is an economic activity capable of generating growth and employment in the EU, while contributing to development and economic and social integration, particularly of rural and mountain areas, coastal regions and islands, outlying and outermost regions or those undergoing convergence.

Tourism is recognized as strong assets of INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria programme in terms of employment and turnover in services. As well, planning and managing tourism with bilateral cross-border destination approach brings added value to the programme itself. A cross-border approach is highly valuable and coherent in tackling the issue of natural and historical heritage protection and usage.

European tourism faces major challenges, which are at the same time opportunities. On the one hand, the industry must adapt to social developments which will influence tourist demand; on the other, it must face up to the constraints imposed by the sector's current structure, its specific characteristics and its economic and social context.

The political framework for tourism in Europe identified the following constraints linked to climate change, the scarcity of water resources, pressure on biodiversity and the risks to the cultural heritage posed by mass tourism. Therefore, the green or ecotourism remains the first recommendation of EU for a sustainable and performant tourism in Europe.

Tourism in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area is focused on the country's natural landscapes and its history, and forms an important component of the economy of the region. Authentic, *Natural* and *Cultural* are the words that best



capture the essence of cross-border region, a dynamic area rich in history, arts and scenic beauty. It offers countless unique travel experiences that are waiting to be discovered.

Over the past years, Romanian and Bulgarian tourism has been characterized by a high rate of development, which has resulted in pressing the main tourist resorts and the areas unused so far, mostly the sea coast. This has led to management problems in terms of the conditions, amenities and visitors.

The awareness of environmental problems caused by tourists has led to actions in the public as well as the private sector, and their aim is to tackle with the problems encountered as a result of tourism activities. In this sense, the appearance of green tourism as an alternative type of tourism is quite natural.

Tourism is a major economic activity in the European Union with wide-ranging impact on economic growth, employment, and social development. It can be a powerful tool in fighting economic decline and unemployment.

The Danube is the second longest river in Europe with an overall length of 2,880 km. More than 80 million people share the Danube catchment area, making it the world's most international river basin. Nowadays, the Danube links Eastern and Western European countries, cultures, people and ideologies on either side of the former Iron Curtain.

Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area is therefore full of cultural and historical features which make it a beyond belief landscape. However, there are also many other ways of discovering the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area and enjoying the natural and cultural heritage outside the big cities. Several national parks, nature reserves, important wetlands and beautiful islands as well as some UNESCO World Heritage Sites shape the unique natural landscape, ideal for active holidays. Less known, cycling trails lead along the river, but also turn aside revealing beautiful landscapes in the interior of the countries.

The unspoiled small towns and villages in the rural areas keep their authentic way of life, old traditions and customs and offer a great journey through the rich cultural diversity. The Danube river basin also was the site of some of the earliest human cultures and many well-preserved historic sites from different eras and empires are worth visiting.

Being an inspiration for numerous musicians, artists, photographers and writers, the Danube has become a symbol of the pan-European culture and identity. Different sporting events aim to strengthen this identity as well as cultural exchange, being a great opportunity for tourists to feel the Danube spirit.

The rich cultural heritage has developed due to various invaders settling in the region over the centuries. In the Northern part of the Danube cycling infrastructure is already well established. Also, cycling areas exist in the middle Danube countries and lower part has a lot of potential to be developed.

Therefore, there is high potential for connecting the existing cycling areas. Visitors should get the possibility to widen their horizons and encounter a unique cycling experience within a variety of landscapes and regions.

By fostering cycling tourism along the Danube, several marketing benefits for Romania, Bulgaria and other outside organizations arise: networking of existing offers along the Danube, cross-border offers, common cycling standards, cycling competitions, online cycling map, international Danube cycling conferences, cooperation of national, regional and local representatives, cross-border collaboration.

Cycling enables tourists to get to know countries and cultures in a direct way. Therefore, establishing cross-border cycling trails along the Danube should not only support the touristic infrastructure, but also strengthen the bonds between the countries. Bundling forces and working together for a common cycling tourism offer along the Danube does not only contribute to strengthening single countries and regions, but the entire Danube basin economically and socially as well as increasing the understanding for its natural beauty.

Green ways - cycling trails along Danube is the greatest opportunity to develop new integrated tourism products in Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area. Cycling is among the most sustainable forms of sports, recreation and tourist activities.

Therefore, considering the potential of the area, it is a step forward to have integrated tourist products based on cycling. What tourists want is the story, not only pedalling. They have to be allured by nature, the taste, secrets and experience that they might find along the way. They should not be stopped by borders and allow the story be wider.



4.2 Strategy objectives

The main objective of the project is to promote and develop the existing 3 integrated tourism products focused on cycling: one tourism product - on-road cycling adventure trips, one tourism product - off-road cycling adventure trips, connecting, where the border permits the routes from Romania and Bulgaria and one tourism product - leisure cycling trips for families with children and for disabled people.

Specific objectives:

1. Maintaining the 2 tourism centres operational, one on each side of the border, offering information, materials, guidance and bikes;
2. Maintaining and developing the IT products (website, interactive map and mobile application);
3. Organising new events or participating at greater cycling events organized by other entities that gained significant notoriety among local communities and enthusiastic tourists.

The project partners identified a new type of tourism product that combines green tourism with healthy activities whilst with small costs. These activities had a significant growth in the last years and could have a major impact on the cross-border region, especially the Danube region.

Together, the three partners had developed in the implementation period new tourism products by organizing 12 pilot actions consisting in cycling events held in the area of natural and cultural sites of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region, in order to promote and capitalize on the cultural and natural heritage, for the sustainable economic development of the border area.

All the 12 pilot actions organized during the implementation of the project were the followings: 4 on-road cycling adventure trips (3 days each), 4 off-road cycling adventure trips (3 days each), 2 leisure cycling trips for families with children (3 days each) and 2 leisure cycling trips for disabled people (3 days each).



The purpose of this project was to create new tourist products in the form of cycling in the neighbouring districts and counties along Danube shores. This type of adventure will continue to contribute to the popularization of the environmental and cultural resources that Bulgaria and Romania have to offer in the project eligible area. The ultimate goal is to increase the number of overnight stays in the region, in order to sustainably develop the tourism economy.

In many cases, some areas are not quite popular, except for the coast with Constanta county and Dobrich district, they will be accessible to all tourists who want to visit some cultural sights, admire some beautiful landscapes and do all this in a healthy way, without high costs, and for this, cycling is the perfect formula. This type of active tourism allows everyone, at their own pace, to visit and focus on what they find interesting and to enjoy these cultural and natural resources offered by the Danube area.



The routes identified within the study are 58*, half in Romania, half in Bulgaria, divided as following:

- On-road cycling trails in each country (duration: 3 days);
- Off-road cycling trails in each country (duration: 3 days);

*This information, as well as the scheduled events and other information are detailed on the project's website and mobile application, and also you can find more on our social media accounts.



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These new integrated tourism products will promote a new way of making tourism that is green, taking in concern the fact that it doesn't have any negative impact on the environment and also is healthy due to the cycling activities. We believe that the green and healthy tourism is the future and the project will take advantage of the cross-border area that has a lot of historic and cultural sites, very little exploited and the most important thing, the Danube River.

Another fact worthy to be mentioned is that cycling is an activity that is being taken up by an increasing number of people, regardless of age and social position. It is a form of soft recreational tourism that yields many positive results: it is environmentally friendly, promotes a healthy lifestyle and uses a low-cost means of transport. Also, cycling tourism is an ecological form of tourism with minimum impact on the environment and the local community.

✓ **Equipment free of use for the new tourism products**

The three partners - AISSER Association, `Sport for You and Me` Association and ACTIS Sport Club Association - have started the project implementation by purchasing within the European contract specialized equipment necessary for carrying out ecological and sporting tourist activities in complete safety and leisure conditions.



Cycling equipment

140 bicycles

- ❑ 40 MTB bicycles
- ❑ 40 on-road bicycles
- ❑ 40 bicycles for children
- ❑ 20 special bicycles for disabled teenagers





Thereby, they had purchased the following specific cycling equipment to be put on disposition of participants in cycling adventures:

- 40 on-road bicycles; 40 MTB bicycles (off-road); 20 bicycles with stroller for children under 4 years; 20 bicycles for children older than 4 years; 20 bicycles for disabled people (hand-cycles and bicycles with special strollers); safety and technical equipment for the reparation of the bikes.

All the specific equipment purchased serve enthusiastic tourists, nature lovers, from both countries. For this reason, all the equipment is located both in Romania, at the headquarters of the ACTIS Association, in Calarasi, as well as in Bulgaria, at the headquarters of `Sport for You and Me` Association, in Belogradchik, Vidin.

✓ **Increased number of overnights in CBC region through the new tourism products**

The activities developed during and after the project implementation period will increase the number of tourist overnights in the region up to 5,600, covering 1.05% from the programme result indicator for this priority axis.

The project is estimated to increase the number of the overnight stays in the Danube area, during the project implementation stage and its sustainability stage, having as target group a general public, starting from enthusiastic and professional cyclists, to families with children and disabled people, practically all the people who like spending time and have sport activities in the middle of the nature.

The number of overnights will be increased during the sustainability stage, when minimum one cycling event/ cycling adventure per year in Romania/Bulgaria will be organized or when the project partners will join, with all the cycling equipment, other cycling events organized by entities that have gained over time an important notoriety among local communities and enthusiastic tourists.

As previously mentioned, the tourism products that will be promoted by the project can be done through events organized by the project partners or could be done individually or by organized groups. For a cycling event, no matter the duration and distance, there is no need of an authorized guide and can be done by anyone, as long as they respect the indications made available by the project outputs.



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The beneficiaries estimate an increased total number of overnights generated by the project also by making available all the project outputs (equipment, web portal, mobile application, cycling trails identified in the CBC region, pilot actions etc.) during 5 years after the project completion.

✓ IT products for the new tourism products

During the project implementation, an interactive web portal - www.danubeon2wheels.eu - was created to support both tourism products and a mobile application - DanubeOn2Wheels - with cycling routes and other means of online communication (social media accounts - Facebook & Instagram - @DanubeOn2Wheels).

- www.danubeon2wheels.eu



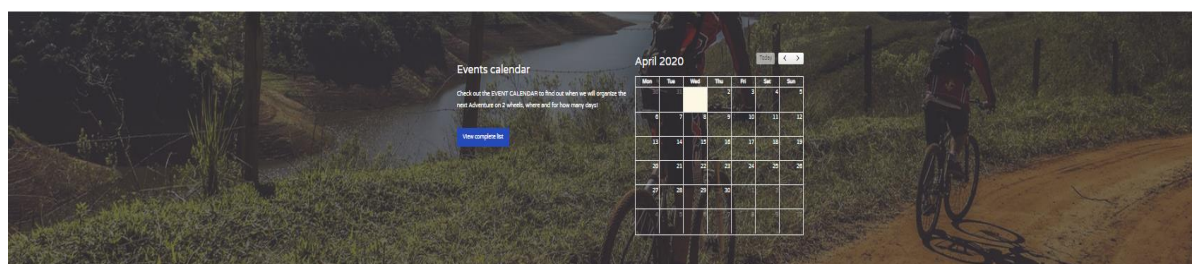
Website launch: February 2019

Website developer: AISSER Association

Website objective: the web portal aims to improve the access to information of both stakeholders and tourists

Website reach: 20k visitors*

* Value reached at the end of the project implementation period





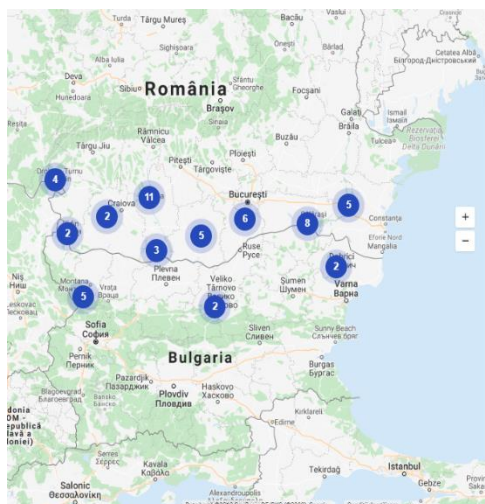
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Search interface for the DanubeOn2Wheels application. It includes a search bar labeled "denumire traseu ..." and filters for "Orice dificultate" and "Orice locatie". A "Filtreaza" button is present. Below the search bar, three travel routes are listed:

- Traseu Cernavoda - Topalu**: Distance - 27 km, Durata - 1 zi. Includes a "Vezi detalii" button.
- Traseu Constanta - Calarasi**: Distance - 300 km, Durata - 3 zile. Includes a "Vezi detalii" button.
- Traseu Targusor - Navodari**: Distance - 300 km, Durata - 3 zile. Includes a "Vezi detalii" button.

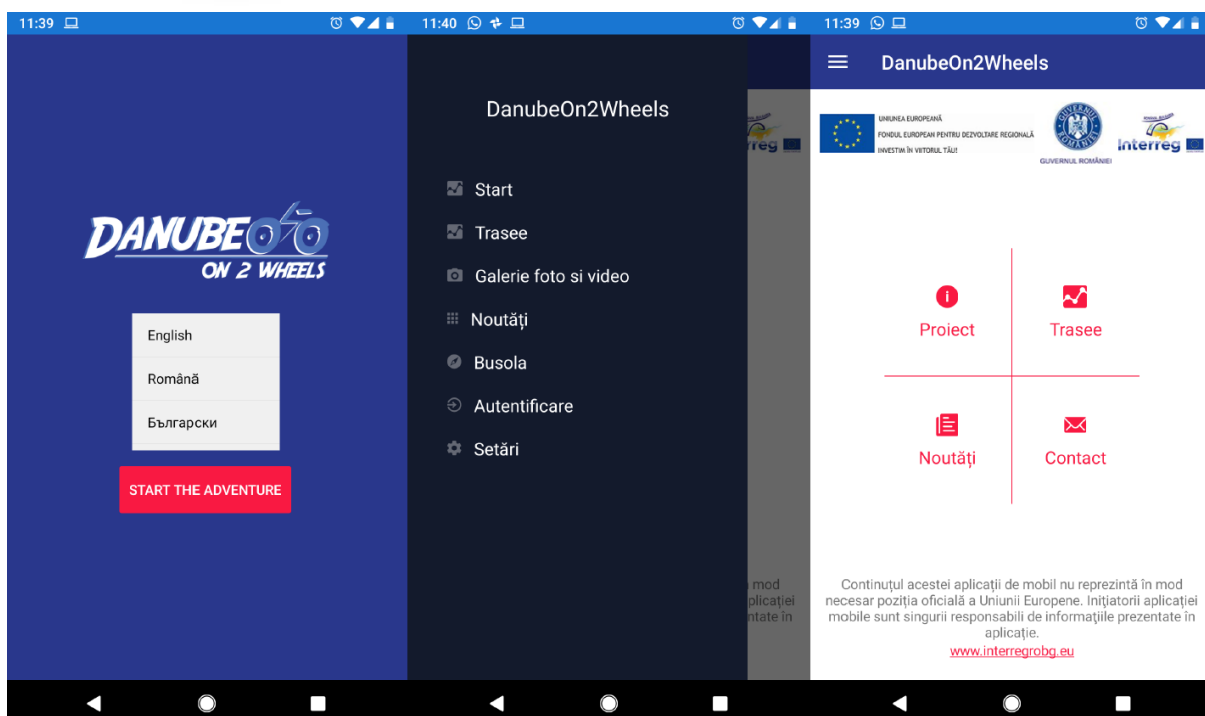
○ DanubeOn2Wheels



Mobile application launch: February 2019

Mobile application developer: AISSER Association

Mobile application objective: the mobile application is the new mechanism used in the project implementation and after, to attract young people and foreign tourists, as it helps them by providing information much faster and more efficiently than conventional methods.





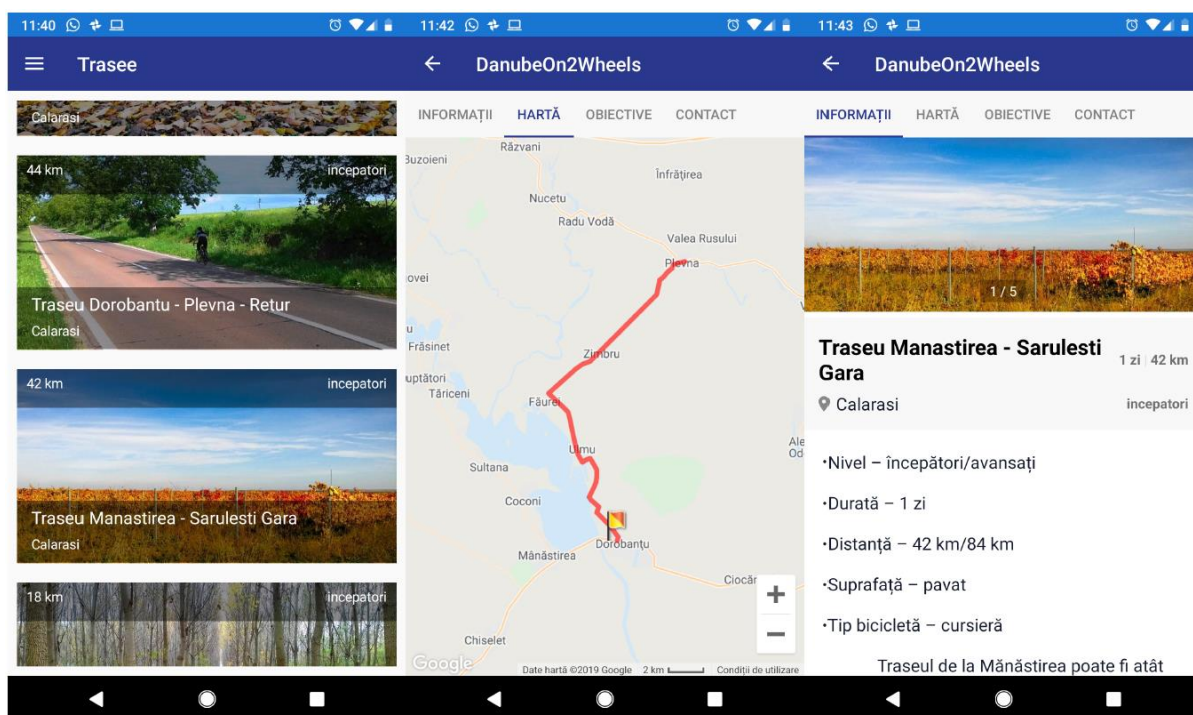
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○ [www.facebook.com/ DanubeOn2Wheels](https://www.facebook.com/DanubeOn2Wheels)



FB page launch: January 2019

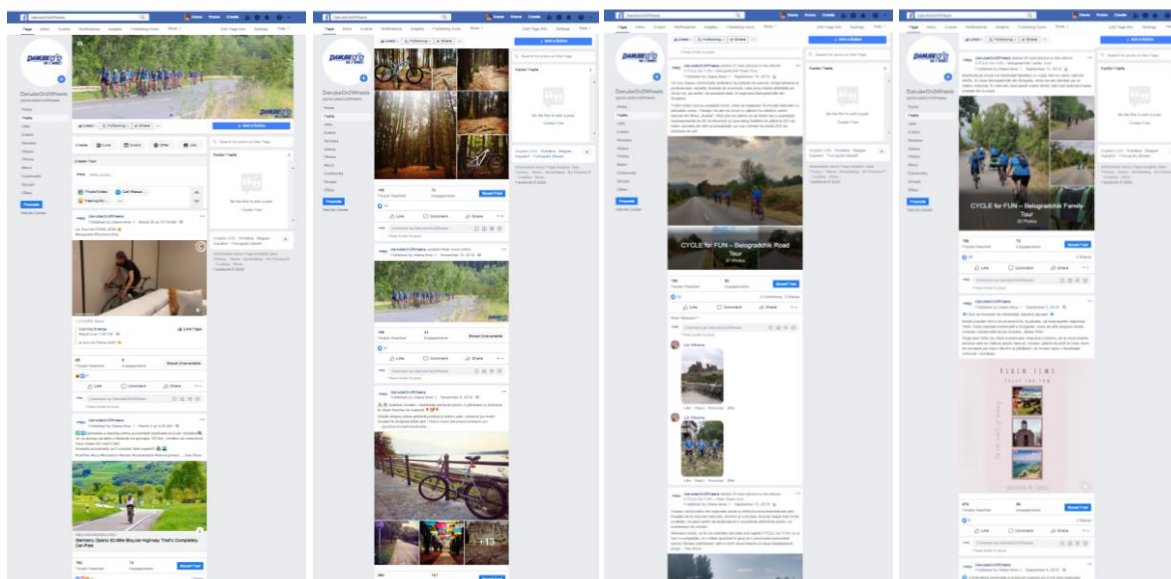
FB page admin: AISSER Association

FB page objective: promote *DanubeOn2Wheels* project and its activities

FB page likes/ followers: 274/278*

FB page biggest post reach: 2,4k*

* Value reached at the end of the project implementation period





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- [www.instagram.com/ DanubeOn2Wheels](https://www.instagram.com/DanubeOn2Wheels)



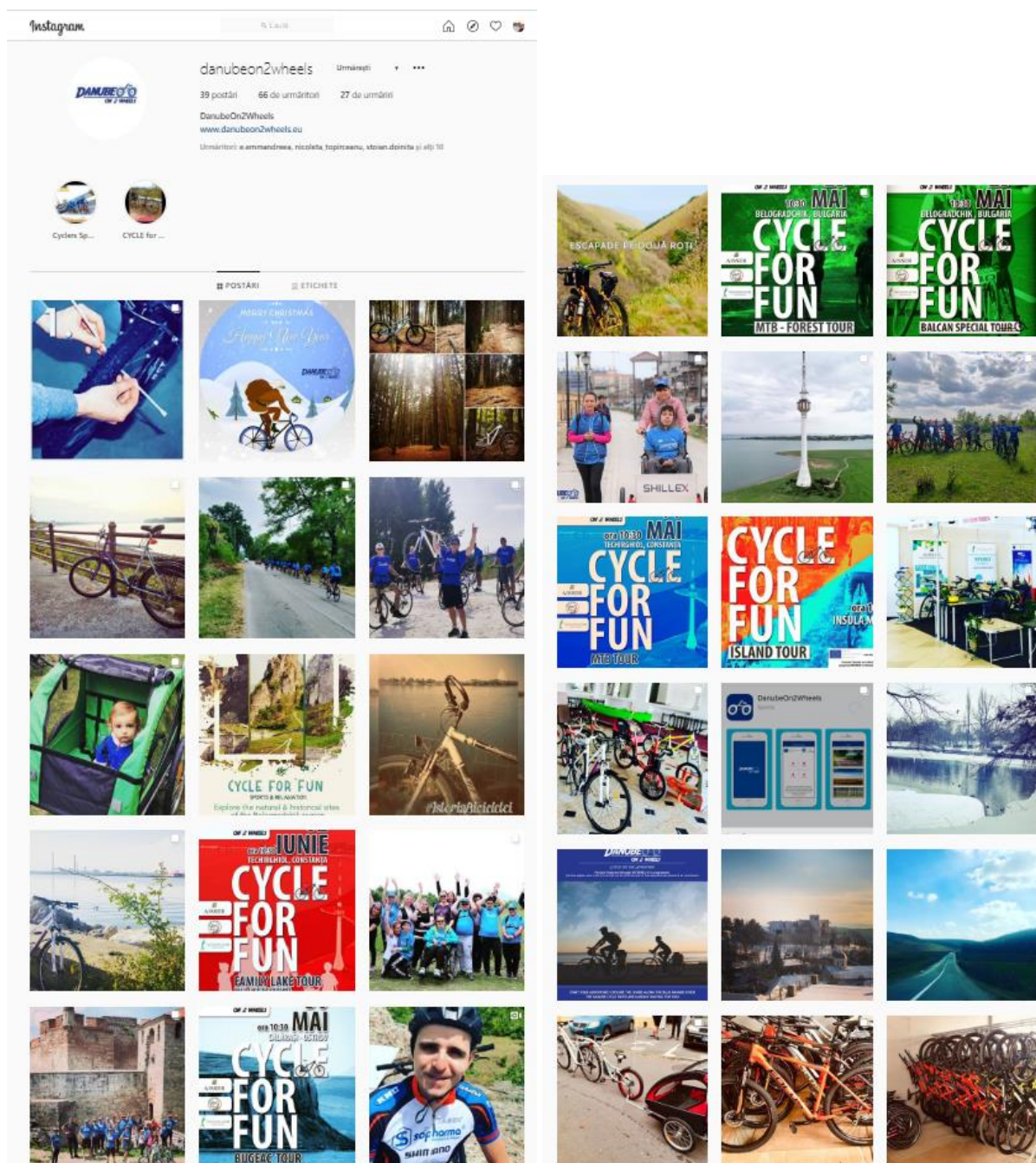
Insta account launch: January 2019

Insta account admin: AISSER Association

Insta account objective: promote *DanubeOn2Wheels* project and its activities

Insta account followers: 66*

* Value reached at the end of the project implementation period





These IT products are the main instrument that will be used by the project team in the sustainability period in order to achieve the indicators. The IT products will be used in as follows:

- news and information in order to promote the CBC region;
- information to promote and raise awareness on maintaining a clean environment;
- news about the activities carried out by the project partners, relevant for the `Danube on 2 Wheels` target group;
- promotion of the future events that will be held by the project partners.

The project beneficiaries will ensure the availability of the new integrated tourism products for at least the next five years after ending the project implementation period. Therefore, it is expected to generate a remarkable number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attraction, consequently, to improve the sustainable use of natural heritage and resources and cultural heritage.

Offering the potential tourist alternative routes to enjoy the nature and to discover the cultural and historical heritage of the eligible area of the programme, through cycling adventures, is to earn a trust and permanent capital as usual tourist activities for those interested in the project area. The variety of natural and cultural heritage along the Danube is immense. There are numerous castles and ruins, beautiful cities that reflect the turbulent historical past or lively cities of urban culture along the river, waiting to be discovered.





All the activities implemented through the project will be developed in the benefit of the communities. The equipment will be available for all the interested participants at our future sports events free of charge; therefore, no costs will be requested by the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries' main aim is to attract tourists in the CBC area, using the touristic products developed during the project implementation period.

4.3 Financing the activities

The team members from all beneficiaries, after organizing during the project implementation period a number of 12 experimental cycling trips, have the knowledge and experience to promote this type of sporting events after the project ends.

All the purchases of technical equipment and promotional materials, which has been realized during the project implementation, are designed to ensure the sustainability for at least five years.

The following events that will be organized by the beneficiaries of the project or in partnerships will be held without generating financial income for the beneficiaries of the project. The equipment will be available for all the interested people free of charge; therefore, no costs will be requested by the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries' main aim is and remains to attract tourists in the area.

The acquisition for the maintenance of the website/ mobile application and interactive map is for a period of 60 months from the end of the contract, as long as it is the period of sustainability of the project.

The portal www.danubeon2wheels.eu is hosted on the contractor's server and it benefits from its back-up during the contract period, the materials from the portal are and still will be archived and delivered to the beneficiary, upon request, on electronic support.

The website for the project, the mobile application and the interactive map of the cycling routes will benefit from free modifications or updates due to the hosting period of 60 months, paid by the Lead Beneficiary.



4.4 Action Plan

1. Specific objective 1:

Maintaining the 2 tourism centres operational

In order to ensure a continuity of this project and to promote after the ending of the financing contract, the beneficiaries ACTIS Sport Club Association and `Sport for You and Me` Association created two operational tourist centres for equipment one in Romania, in Calarasi, and the other in Bulgaria, Belogradchik.

These tourist centres have the role of informing tourists who want to explore the CBC region, with its historical and cultural relevance, as well as the natural areas (parks, nature reserves, forests etc.).



At these touristic centres, all the interested people can come to find out details about the cycling trails identified within `Danube on 2 Wheels` project implementation period.

On these cycling routes from Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area was identified a series of attractive tourist objectives, heritage objectives, spaces of leisure (forests, picnic, camping, long, sandy beaches etc.), structures of accommodation, resorts, as well as restaurants in the area. All this information will be made available to tourists when visiting our centres from Calarasi and Belogradchik.



At the tourist centres will be found in the period of sustainability of the project a series of cycling equipment, with a demonstrative character for tourists who will cross the threshold of the centres.

The entire equipment will be available free of charge for those tourists interested. The headquarters of both beneficiaries will be opened for tourists interested in joining a cycling adventure, to make use of the necessary equipment and for any required details regarding the cycling itineraries from the cross-border area.

2. Specific objective 2:

Maintaining and developing the IT products (website, interactive map and mobile application) and the social networks accounts

For the dissemination of the project as wide as possible, promotional products have been created, which aim to increase the visibility of the project and to inform as much as possible the potential participants regarding the activities carried out, the website - *www.danubeon2wheels.eu* and the mobile application - *Danube On 2 Wheels*.

Also, to promote the featuring activities in the online environment, there will be continuous posts and stories on Facebook and Instagram - *@DanubeOn2Wheels*.

All future events will be promoted on the two social media channels and on the playlist created on the AISSER YouTube account, in order to attract as many participants as possible and to increase awareness and transparency regarding the `Danube on 2 Wheels` project.

The project website will continue to offer information related to the project activities, the touristic objectives of the cross-border region, and cycling sports. Also, it will continue to promote the integrated tourism products and to offer the possibility to the interested people to register online in order to participate at the featuring sporting events.

The IT products are the main instrument used by the project team in the sustainability period in order to achieve the indicators. The IT products will be used in as follows:



1. Periodically news and information will be posted in order to promote the on-road and/or MTB cycling events;
2. The next events that will be organized will be posted on the website and also pictures and videos will be uploaded, adding same photo tag as previously made in the implementation period, to promote the pilot actions carried out;
3. If it's necessary new cycling routes will be uploaded;
4. The IT products will be updated every time it's necessary.

As we mentioned before, the IT products are correlated between each other and usually they contain almost the same information that is distributed on different platforms or in a different format in order to be visible to a biggest target group.

3. Specific objective 3: Organising new events

The number of overnights is the result of the pilot actions/experimental actions organized in the programme coverage area and after the project implementation period, during the sustainability stage.

Several pilot actions are foreseen to be developed using the equipment purchased, cycling events will be organized by the project beneficiaries or third parties the cross-border shore of the Danube River, with the full support and involvement of all project partners.

The cycling events to develop cross-border tourism that will be promoted by the project can be organised by the project partners or could be done individually or by organised groups from other entities that have gained overtime an important notoriety among the local communities and enthusiast tourists. For a cycling trip there is no need of an authorized guide and can be done by anyone, as long as they respect the indications made available by the project outputs.

The activities during the sustainable period will be implemented in observation of the principles of gender equality and prevention of all forms of discrimination, as stipulated in the *acquis Communautaire* and Bulgarian and

Romanian legal acts, such as: Employment Equality Directive and Racial Equality Directive, the Social Security Code, Health and Safety Act at Work and the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence.

The sport is a collective activity, but is also an individual activity, because each person must be willing to undertake the effort to attend. When we talk about tourism and sport together, it is understandable that people participate for fun, no matter the sex, religion etc.

Yearly, the beneficiaries will continue to organize adventure trips to support the promotion of the tourism products in the area. The beneficiaries will make use of all the opportunities to promote the tourism products in the cross-border area by attending (if possible) to events/promotional fares etc. organized in the region (e.g. Danube Day, Festivals, National Days etc.).

All the featuring events will be developed keeping the same name used for the pilot actions, as *CYCLE for FUN*. These sporting events/ cycling adventures are intended to be developed from year to year, in order to support mass sport and increase the awareness of the residents of the counties and districts from the cross-border region and the surrounding areas on the benefits brought by practicing the movement, especially outdoors.

Cycling enables tourists to get to know the two neighbouring countries and cultures in a direct way. Therefore, the established cross-border cycling trails along the Danube should not only support the touristic infrastructure, but also strengthen the bond between the two neighbouring countries.

This type of outdoor healthy activity had become increasingly popular in recent years all over the world, and there by `Danube on 2 Wheels` project aims in the sustainable period to offer an alternative more accessible touristic package both financially, and logistically for the sports enthusiasts who want to spend their weekends or vacations in the middle of nature, along the Danube river, having also the advantage to be close to the main urban centres in Romania and in Bulgaria as well.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Through our project we want the natural border area to become a unique tourist attraction, where the passionate adventurers to enjoy the beautiful wild landscapes on the Danube bank, far from the urban sprawl.

Our cycling trails cover the territory of the entire Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region and are addressed to nature lovers and those who wish to practice recreational activities through outdoor movement.

Cycling trips along the river basin are one of the best ways to get to know Romania and Bulgaria countries discovering their cultural and natural uniqueness and diversity, and also cultural commonality.

The unspoiled small towns and villages in the rural areas keep their authentic way of life, old traditions and customs and offer a great journey through the rich cultural diversity.

Nature-based tourism, as the one promoted by our project, is also associated with longer length of stay, higher average spending and more responsible behaviour towards local communities and biodiversity.

Therefore, offering to the potential tourist some alternatives routes to enjoy nature and discover the cultural and historical heritage from the CBC area, the phenomena of cycling can become an ordinary attractive activity for tourists. The variety of natural, as well as cultural heritage along the Danube is huge, waiting to be discovered.



Visitors should get the possibility to widen their horizons and encounter a unique cycling experience within a variety of landscapes and regions.

The beneficiaries have the capacity to continue the project activities after the project ends. The project will be considered as a pilot because it has a lot of potential, being a green tourism product in the Danube region. It will enhance the Danube region potential and will attract a lot of adventurers to the cultural and natural sites of this region.

By these two strategies developed for the sustainable period of the project, we want to ensure the creation of conditions for meeting the needs of the population of active and cognitive recreation, tourism development and related activities.

The organized events and tourist information centres will contribute in the sustainable period to the improvement of the ecological tourism and also to the formation of a healthy lifestyle by participating in the actions organized within `Danube on 2 Wheels`.

This type of outdoor activity had become increasingly popular in recent years all over the world, and there by `Danube on 2 Wheels` project aims to offer an alternative more accessible touristic package both financially, and logistically for the enthusiast cyclists who want to spend their weekends or vacations in the middle of nature, along the Danube river, having also the advantage to be close to the main urban centres in Romania and in Bulgaria as well.

Together, the three partners had developed in the implementation period new tourism products by organizing 12 pilot actions consisting in cycling events held in the area of natural and cultural sites of the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border region, in order to promote and capitalize on the cultural and natural heritage, for the sustainable economic development of the border area.

All the three beneficiaries - AISSER Calarasi, `Sport for You and Me` and ACTIS Sport Club associations - have the capacity to continue the project activities after its ending. `Danube on 2 Wheels` will be considered as one of the important pilot projects, because it has a lot of potential, being one of the few green tourism products professionally organized in the CBC area, along the Danube river. Through it will enhance the Danube tourism potential and will attract a lot of adventurers to the cultural and natural sites of this region.



Following the implementation of strategies for creating and promoting tourism products, tourism activities can be implemented in a sustainable way in the long term, at which all the interested people will have free access to the created products.

For organizing cycling expeditions, there is no need for an authorized guide and can be done by everyone, as long as they comply with the indications provided by the project results.

All the specific equipment purchased will serve in the next period enthusiastic tourists, nature lovers, from both countries, in all the future events to be organized. For this reason, all the equipment is located both in Romania, at the headquarters of the ACTIS Association, in Calarasi, as well as in Bulgaria, at the headquarters of the `Sport for You and Me` Association, in Belogradchik, Vidin district.

These two tourist centres will be the main tourist information points for the people who want to discover the cycling tours identified in the Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border area.

The number of overnights will be increased during the sustainability stage, when minimum one cycling event per year in Romania/Bulgaria will be organized either by the project partners, or by third parties to whom we will join with our equipment in their events for which they have gained over time important notoriety among local communities and enthusiastic tourists.

These cycling events will follow the methods used in the pilot actions, using the same principles of organizing sports events, which will have the same purpose like the previous ones of promoting the CBC region from a tourist point of view.

The trails identified, the types of actions and all the other tourism products developed in the project implementation period can be further promoted through events organized by the project partners or through the events carried out by other entities sharing same purposes and values as us.

As already mentioned, a cycling event - on-road or off-road -, using the equipment purchased through `Danube on 2 Wheels`, can be realized by anyone, as long as the indications made available by the project outputs are respected.

In the CBC region, more and more sports events are organized every year, which have gained notoriety over time. For this reason, we have proposed that in the period of sustainability we will join other consecrated events that enjoy a massive recognition.

These events already recognized by the locals and not only represent a good opportunity for us to make our project known and promote it widely.

The beneficiaries estimate an increased total number of overnights generated by the project also by making available all the project outputs (equipment, web portal, mobile application, cycling trails identified in the CBC region, pilot actions etc.) during five years after the project completion.

This strategy will be used by the project beneficiaries as a practical guide in the sustainable period of `Danube on 2 Wheels`, which is meant to support the project teams to reach their proposed indicators.

Also, this material will be made public to other NGOs interested in promoting the cultural and natural values of the CBC region, as well as organizing sporting events in order to promote tourism in the Romanian - Bulgarian cross-border area.

The tourism potential represents the essential condition of the development of tourism in a certain perimeter and can be defined as the assembly of the elements that are constituted as tourist attractions and which are suitable for arrangement for visiting and receiving travellers.

The natural tourist fund as a basic element of the tourist potential is generally composed of elements generated by nature, such as: picturesque forms of glacial, karst and volcanic relief; natural and glacial lakes; rivers and especially their shores, seas and oceans; picturesque valleys and valleys with keys; gorges, waterfalls, caves; forests, meadows; nature reserves and nature monuments; climate through the air temperature of the water, precipitation, duration of sun shine; fauna.

There are many castles and ruins, pretty towns reflecting the turbulent historic past or lively urban culture towns along the great river waiting to be discovered.

Although assessing the degree of exploitation of the tourism potential is a difficult problem, requiring to consider, besides the objective elements and some subjective aspects, difficult to quantify and to express quantitatively, a conclusive picture can be obtained compared with the existing attractions with the tourist facilities and with demand intensity. By applying the indicators of characterization of the dimensions and structure of the equipment and, respectively, of the tourist circulation, the degree of capitalization can be determined to a large extent.



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International comparisons are useful, but also elements regarding the diversity of forms of tourism, the structure and the quality of the services offered.

Through this strategy to promote the new developed tourist packages, we set out to create a framework document that we will use to disseminate information about the activities that will be carried out during the sustainability period. Basically, this strategy is intended to be a promotional guide, in which the channels and the communication tools are presented.

At the same time, through this strategy we revealed the communication measures that were made during the project, being successful examples for the featuring events and activities that will be carried out in the next five years, according to the financing contract of the `Danube on 2 Wheels` project.





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Republic of Bulgaria National Statistical Institute: <https://www.nsi.bg/en>

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