



Credit: Shutterstock

„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

From the Alps to the Pannonian plain along the largest natural river system in Central Europe.



EURONATUR



Credit: Shutterstock



Credit: G. Sofarek



Credit: Shutterstock

Implementation concept

Content

1. General information	4
2. Story telling	8
3. Trail scouting	12
4. Corporate design	30
5. Valorisation concept	36
6. Next steps	38

Impressum

Editor:

WWF Austria
Ottakringer Straße 114 - 116, A-1160 Vienna
wwf@wwf.at
Project-coordinator: Arno Mohl

Editing

EuroNatur - Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe
Konstanzer Straße 22, D-78315 Radolfzell
www.euronatur.org

REVITAL Integrative Naturraumplanung GmbH
Nußdorf 71, A-9990 Nußdorf-Debant
www.revital-ib.at

Project team (in alphabetical order)

Christian Anfang
Mario Lumasegger
Klara Kerpely
Klaus Michor
Arno Mohl
Vesna Maksimovic
Günter Mussnig
Andreas Nemmert
Michaela Reichard
Alexandra Rieger
Branka Španiček
Theresa Schiller
Marian Unterlercher

Translation:

Michaela Reichard

August 2016



This project was financially supported by the MAVA Foundation and Asamer Baustoffe AG.



Preface



Dear readers, dear cycling enthusiasts,

The Mura, Drava and Danube together with their floodplains are one of the most beautiful riverine areas on our continent. 700 kilometres long, the „Amazon of Europe“ connects Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. Travellers shall soon have the opportunity to experience this fascinating region with its diverse nature, culture and history and I am pleased to present herewith the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail Concept.

I first visited the Lower Drava, which meanders as flowing border between Hungary and Croatia, back in 1992. At that time, this landscape was internationally largely unknown. With its numerous gravel banks, dreamy backwaters, powerful lowland forests and its unique wildlife the Drava immediately drew me into her spell.

A quarter century later, conservationists have fought that this unique European natural heritage is protected for future generations as Europe’s largest riverine protected area and as the world’s first five-country biosphere reserve.

Biosphere reserves are model regions where conservation goes hand in hand with sustainable regional development for the benefit of the local people. As an eco-tourism flagship project for the planned Mura-Drava-Danube biosphere reserve, WWF and EuroNatur have, together with international trail and tourism experts, as well as local partners, developed the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail. This umbrella brand aims to combine existing bike initiatives in the region, generate economic benefits for local people and thereby increase the acceptance of the biosphere reserve.

The itinerary, which is in total around 1000 km long, starts at the Mura River on the Austrian-Slovenian border, continues along the Drava and eventually leads to the stunning Danube wetlands on the border triangle Croatia, Hungary and Serbia.

I’d like to thank everyone, who has contributed to the successful development of this concept and I look forward to continue along the path and to jointly implement this pioneering initiative.

Arno Mohl, WWF

1. General information

Background

For the future Transboundary Biosphere Reserve „Mura-Drava-Danube“ (TBR MDD), also called the „Amazon of Europe“ (AoE), which covers an area of about 1 million hectares, connects 700 km of the rivers of Mura, Drava and Danube and five countries (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia), sustainable tourism shall be established to set noticeable incentives for the regional economy. The aim is to derive economic benefits from the protected area and, as a result, simultaneously increase the identification of the local population with the reserve.

Overall objective

As a socio-economic guiding project for the further development of the biosphere reserve, WWF in cooperation with EuroNatur, is interested in supporting the establishment of a cross-border cycle path, a unique brand for bike tourism, the so-called „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail, by building on and enhancing existing routes in the region. As a first step, this implementation concept was created in cooperation with local stakeholders. This concept shall form the basis for the implementation of the trail in future EU funded projects.

Project area

The bike trail will be developed within the area of the planned Transboundary Biosphere Reserve „Mura-Drava-Danube“ between Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. The TBR MDD combines a cluster of 12 major single protected areas across the 5 countries.

Unique selling point

The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail lies within the planned

- > **largest river protected area in Europe**
(700 km, 1 million hectares)
- > **first 5-country biosphere reserve worldwide** and in an area with **diverse cultures, ethnos and cuisines**



- Proposed bike trail
- Rivers
- Planned 5-country Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube"; core and buffer zones (existing protected areas)

Stakeholder involvement

In order to ensure cooperation and involvement of relevant stakeholders from all five countries (e.g. tourism organisations, regional development agencies, planning organisations, protected area authorities, NGOs, interested people, etc.) in the development of a concept, an international working group was established. Within three reflection workshops, stakeholders accompany the and contribute to the planning process, from the generation of ideas/brainstorming and trail scouting, right up to the conception of the trail. Stakeholders furthermore helped to define the general conditions for the bike trail planning in the various countries. The intention is to have stakeholders who maintain the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail after implementation.

Implementation concept

In 2015, WWF in cooperation with EuroNatur, assigned REVITAL Integrative Environmental Planning GmbH to carry out the task of developing a concept of a possible trail. The key points of the bike trail project, which was coordinated independently of national boundaries and interests, are summarised in the present implementation concept. It includes the necessary implementation steps, cost planning and the bike route with a suitable scale.

For further information about the “Amazon of Europe” visit:
www.amazon-of-europe.com

Contacts

WWF Austria
Mr Arno Mohl
Ottakringer Straße 114-116
A-1160 Vienna
Tel.: +43 676 83488 300
Email: arno.mohl@wwf.at

EuroNatur
Ms Theresa Schiller
Konstanzer Str. 22
D-78315 Radolfzell
Tel: +49 7732 - 92 72 - 0
Email: theresa.schiller@euronatur.org

REVITAL GmbH
Mr Andreas Nemmert
Nußdorf 71
A-9990 Nußdorf-Debant
Tel.: +43 4852 67499-0
Email: a.nemmert@revital-ib.at



▲ International stakeholder workshops: 15.10.2015 in Koprivnica (left), 11.02.2016 in Velika Polana (upper right), 07.06.2016 in Sombor (lower right) | 7

2. Story telling

Brand

Successful brand development for outdoor tourism products combines the quality of the landscape with the longings of holidaymakers.

These aspirations can be very different, but they influence the decision as to which holiday destination someone is going to choose. While for some people the prospect of reaching the peak of the highest mountain is decisive, for others the prospect of relaxing, going shopping, experiencing culture, celebrating parties or proving themselves in sports is more appealing. Still others love to discover new things and to explore the unknown when on holiday.

The latter group is the one that the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail addresses in particular. While all aspects of the Alpine landscape is already very well known to Central European travellers, the wide Pannonian plain which is dominated by large rivers, still hides a lot of unknown treasures and there is, practically on their doorstep, so much more to be discovered.

Brand promise

The combination of largely natural river landscapes in the Pannonian Plain and the holiday longings of many Central Europeans to explore new and unknown places result in the following emotional message for the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail:

(see pages 10-11)



Credit: Revital

▲ Different motivations to travel



Credit: Shutterstock



Credit: G. Safarek



Credit: Shutterstock



Credit: G. Safarek



Credit: Shutterstock



Credit: M. Romulic

Brand, brand promise and emotional message

„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

Von den Alpen in die Weite Pannoniens - entlang des größten naturnahen Flusssysteme Mitteleuropas.

Unterwegs im größten Biosphärenpark Europas entlang von Mur, Drau und Donau. Landschaft, Kulturen und Kulinarik sind außergewöhnlich vielfältig und geprägt von den 5 Staaten, die der Radweg durchquert. Hier liegen attraktive historische Städte inmitten herrlicher Kultur- und Flusslandschaften. Entdecke die außergewöhnliche biologische Vielfalt im größten naturnahen Flusssystem Mitteleuropas. Natur beobachten, sich im Fluss abkühlen, easy biking - einfach dem Kreislauf des Wassers folgen. Den Alltag vergessen, Wandel und Erneuerung zulassen, die uralte Kraft der Flüsse spüren.



„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

Na poti v največjem rezervatu biosfere v Evropi, ki je predlagan vzdolž Mure, Drave in Donave.

Raznolikost pokrajin, kultur in kulinarike je značilnost 5 držav, skozi katere bo potekala kolesarska pot. Ob poti so privlačna zgodovinska mesta, ki so umeščena v čudovite pokrajine. Odkrijte izredno biotsko raznovrstnost v najdaljšem naravnem rečnem sistemu v Srednji Evropi. Opazujte naravo, ohladite se v reki - le sledite vodnemu krogu. Pozabite na življenje iz dneva v dan. Dovolite spremembo in obnovo. Občutite starodavno moč rek.



„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

Provozaj se največim Rezervatom biosfere u Evropi koji je predložen duž Mure, Drave i Dunava.

Raznolikost krajolika, kultura i kuhinje karakterizira 5 zemalja duž kojih biciklistička staza prolazi. Uz stazu postoje atraktivni povijesni gradovi smješteni u prekrasnom kulturnom i riječnom krajoliku. Otkrij izuzetnu biološku raznolikost najdužeg riječnog sustava u Srednjoj Evropi. Promatraj prirodu, ohladi se u rijeci - samo slijedi ciklus vode. Zaboravi svakodnevicu. Prepusti se promjeni i obnovi. Osjeti drevnu moć rijeka.



„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

Járja be Európa legnagyobb, a Mura, Dráva és Duna folyók mentén létrejövő bioszféra rezervátumát.

Lenyűgöző a táj a kultúra és a gasztronómia sokfélesége az öt országot érintő kerékpárúton. Érdekes történelmi városok és kulturális kincsek várják a folyók mentén, a gyönyörű, vidéki tájban.

Fedezze fel a rendkívül gazdag élővilágot Közép-Európa legnagyobb, természetes folyók alkotta ártéri rendszerében.

Lesse meg a természetet, hűsöljön a folyók vizében – kövesse a víz körforgását.

Feledje el a hétköznapi fáradalmait. Engedjen a felfrissítő élményeknek.

Érezze a folyók ősi erejét.



„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

Provoжайte se najvećim Rezervatom biosfere u Evropi, predloženog duž reka Dunav, Drava i Mura.

Raznovrsnost predela, kulturnog nasleđa i kuhinje karakterisana je uticajima 5 zemalja kroz koje prolazi biciklistička ruta.

Duž rute postoje atraktivni istorijski gradovi smešteni u prekrasnim kulturnim i rečnim predelima.

Otkrijte izuzetnu biološku raznovrsnost u najvećem prirodnom rečnom sistemu u Centralnoj Evropi.

Posmatrajte prirodu, rashladite se u reci – samo pratite ciklus vode.

Zaboravite na svakodnevicu.

Prepustite se promeni i obnovi.

Osetite drevnu moć reka.



„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

From the Alps to the Pannonian Plain along the largest natural river system in Central Europe

Out and about in the largest biosphere reserve in Europe, travelling along the Mura, Drava and Danube.

The variety of landscapes, cultures and cuisines are characterised by the 5 countries the bike trail runs through. Along the trail, there are attractive historical towns set in beautiful cultural and riverine landscapes.

Discover the extraordinary biodiversity in the longest natural river system in Central Europe.

Observe nature, cool off in the river - just follow the water cycle.

Forget about day-to-day life.

Allow change and renewal.

Feel the ancient power of the rivers.

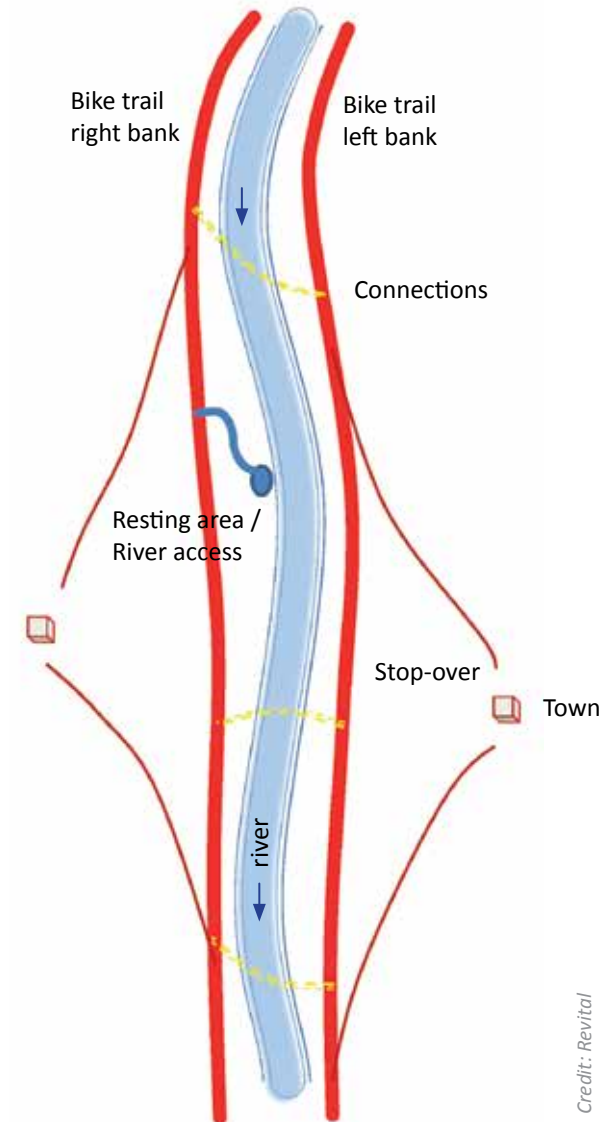


3. Trail scouting

Planning principles

The routing of the „Amazon of Europa“ Bike Trail follows exact guidelines:

- > **General requirements:** The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail connects the five countries Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. It leads along three big lowland rivers: Mura, Drava and Danube – from the Alps into the Pannonian Plain. On route, it combines a “five star nature experience” with cultural offerings and an existing touristic infrastructure.
- > **Course on both sides:** The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail constantly runs on both sides of the river. Time and again, bridges connect the various routes. Possible detours provide further scenic and cultural highlights.
- > **Every stage** leads along a defined route, which can be travelled on both sides. All stages can be used on its own or in combination with other stages.
- > **Fitness requirements:** along the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail, enjoyable biking is paramount. The length of the stages varies between 60 and 140 km with a maximum travelling time of 6 hours. Furthermore, every stage has at least 2 resting sites.
- > **Quality of cycling paths:** The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail exclusively uses existing paths which are wider than 2m in order to avoid any dangerous locations.



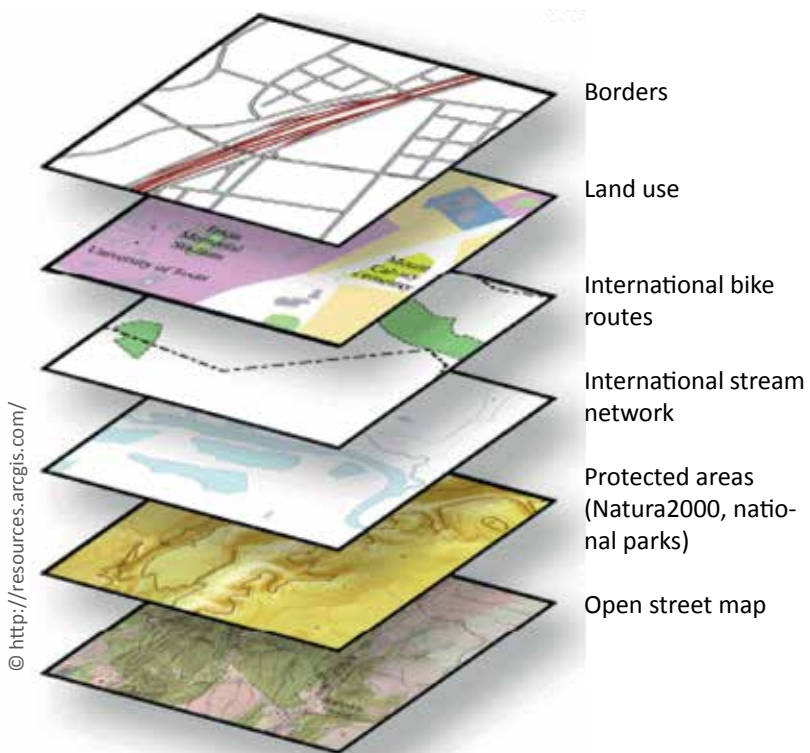
Credit: Revital

▲ Basic scheme for the routing

- > **The total length of the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail** is 1822 km (both sides of the rivers).
- > **The „Amazon of Europe Bike“ Trail is developed on existing roads**, no new roads have to be built! 43 % of the trail leads along existing international bike trails.
- > **Attractiveness and scenic variety:** the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail combines attractive places and scenic variety, while the route runs as close to the rivers as possible.
- > **Avoidance of disturbances:** the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail avoids visual, acoustic and olfactory disturbances, while avoiding ecologically sensitive areas.
- > **Facilities along the route:** the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail offers access points to the rivers, picnic areas and facilities for nature observation.

Routing

The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail route is based on geographical base data, which has been analysed with a Geographic Information System (GIS) beforehand. The resulting draft route was then discussed with participants on three international workshops, which took place in October 2015, February and June 2016, so a preliminary route could be specified. This preliminary route serves as a first guideline; the exact route will be defined in the frame of the implementation process, which will again include regional stakeholders (e.g. tourism organisations, municipalities, protected area authorities, lodging establishments etc.).



▲ GIS-Data forms the basis for the definition of the bike trail

Stage 1: Mureck – Mursko Središće



Start:

Mureck

Stopover:

Bad Radkersburg

Ljutomer

Velika Polana

Lendava

End:

Mursko Središće

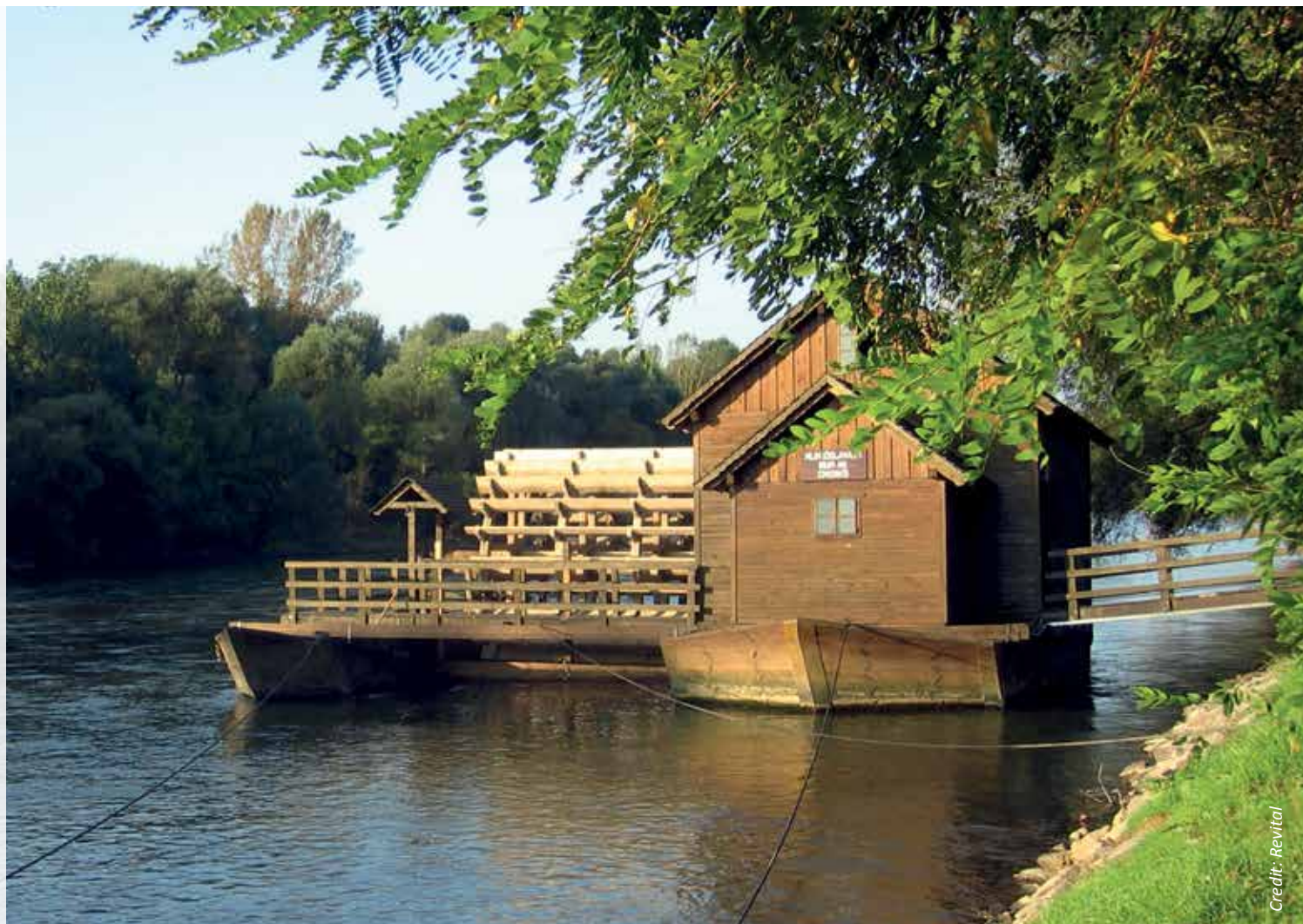
Length:

96 km (right side)

117 km (left side)

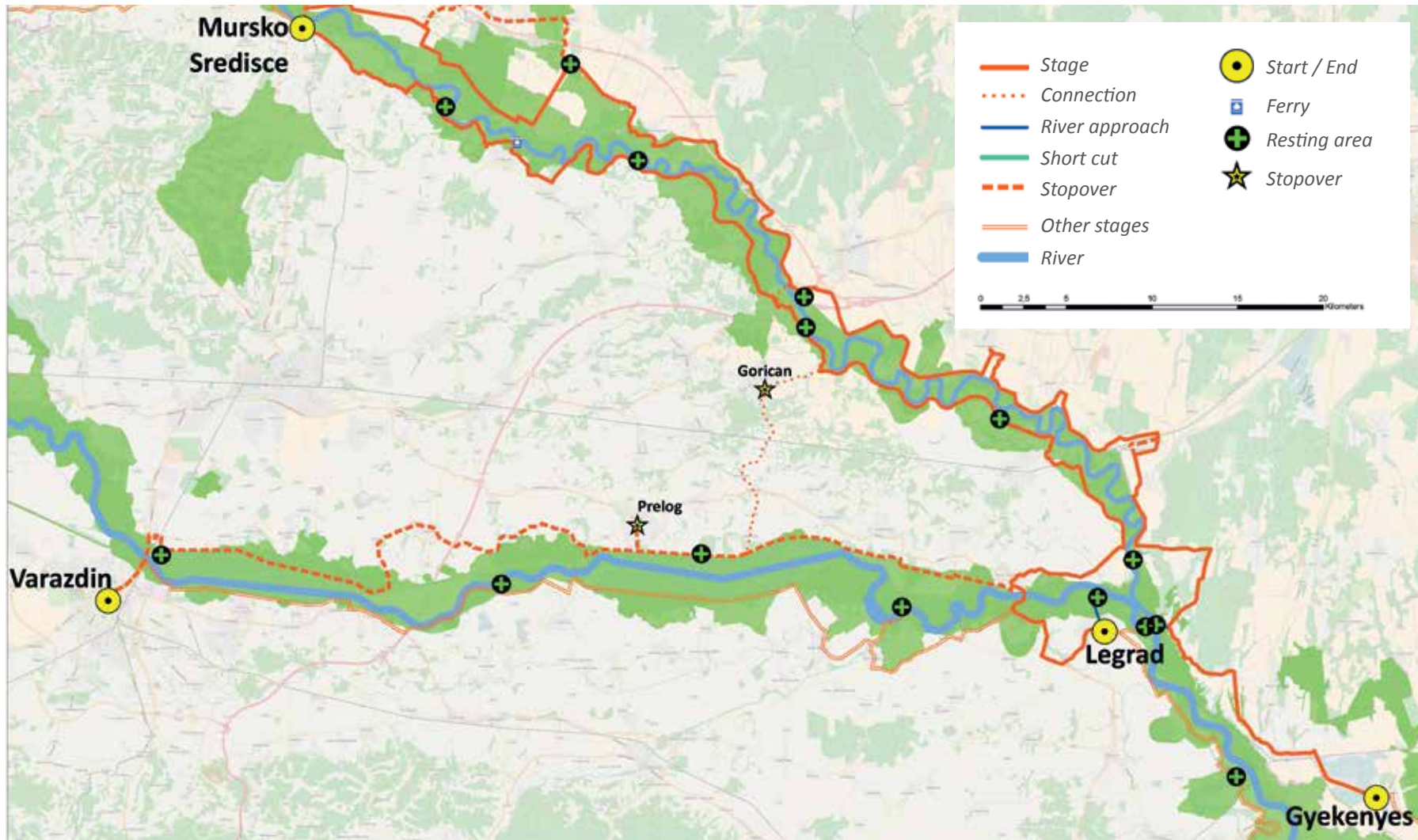
Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 7 resting areas proposed
- > Natura 2000 sites
- > Large floodplain forests
- > River restoration sites
- > Info Center Biomura
- > European stork village
- > Observation tower
- > Nature trail Mureck
- > 3 water mills and ferries
- > Millers educational path
- > 4 thermal springs
- > Historical town Bad Radkersburg
- > St. Martin the Bishop church
- > Family Trstenjak etno collection
- > St. Mary the Queen church and St. Ladislav church
- > Memorial house of mining copper



Credit: Revital

Stage 2: Mursko Središće - Varaždin / Legrad / Gyékényes



Start:

Mursko Središće

Stoppover:

Goričan
Prelog
Varaždin

End:

Varaždin / Legrad / Gyékényes

Length:

95 km (Mursko Središće - Legrad)
162 km (Mursko Središće - Varaždin)

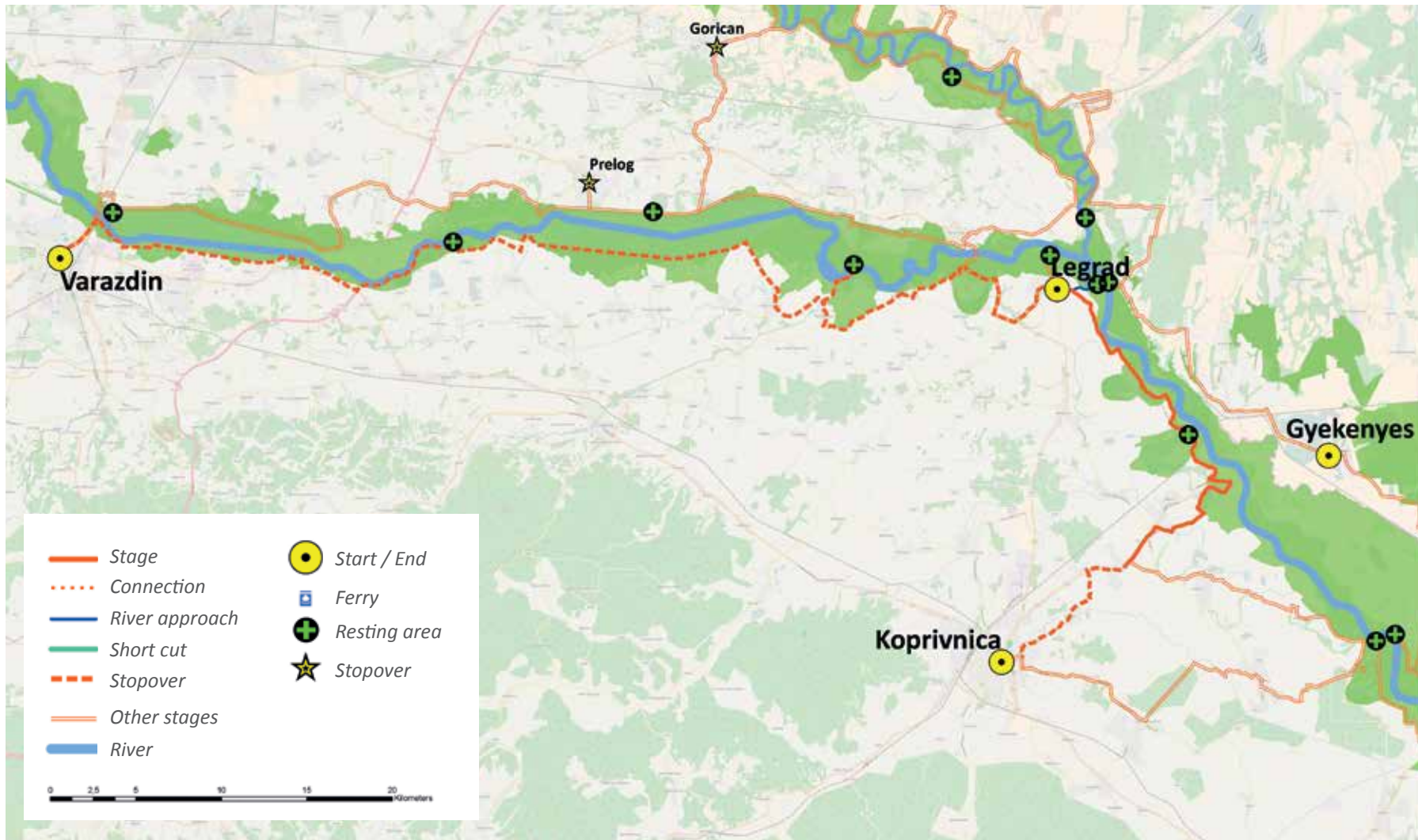
Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 10 resting areas proposed
- > Regional park "Drava-Mura"
- > Special Zoological Reserve Veliki Pažut
- > Mura-Drava confluence (Halászcásárda)
- > Pannonian grey cattle
- > Cold war bunkers
- > Water school near Legrad (under construction)
- > Nature educational path Murščak
- > Muškatljin farm
- > Historical town and castle Varaždin
- > Memorial obelisk of Nikola Zrinski
- > Local ethnographic collection of lacework
- > Churches: St. Jacob, St. Vid, Seven Sorrows of Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Cross



Credit: G. Sofarek

Stage 3: Varaždin / Legrad - Koprivnica



Start:

Varaždin / Legrad

Stoppover:

Varaždin

End:

Koprivnica

Length:

48 km (Legrad - Koprivnica)

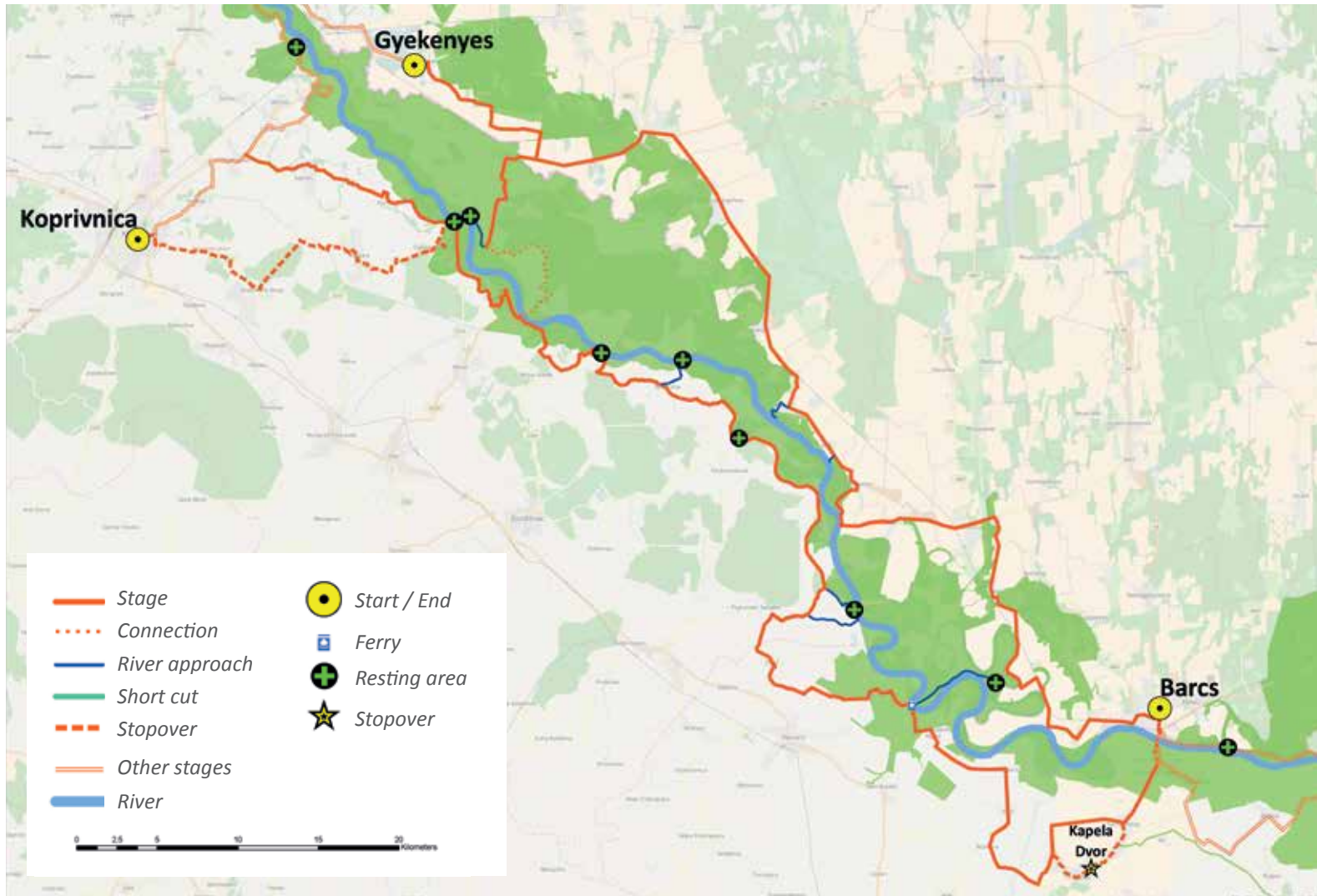
117 km (Varaždin - Koprivnica)

Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 5 resting areas proposed
- > Regional park "Drava-Mura"
- > Special Zoological Reserve Veliki Pažut
- > Beautiful Drava river landscape
- > Mura-Drava confluence (Halászcserda)
- > Bird watching (little tern)
- > Largest sand martin colony
- > Adventure parks / festivals
- > Lake Šoderica (swimming)
- > Lake in Gyékényes (fishing, swimming)
- > Celebration of St. Michaels Day
- > Parish church of St. Nicholas
- > Franciscan monastery / St. Anthony
- > Jewish synagogue
- > Orthodox church of the Holy Trinity
- > Chapel: Mother of God of Grantula
- > Museum of nutrition „Podravka“
- > Monument to cycling on main square
- > Koprivnica city museum



Stage 4: Koprivnica – Barcs



Start:

Koprivnica / Gyékényes

Stoppover:

Kapela Dvor

End:

Barcs

Length:

125 km (right side)

106 km (left side)

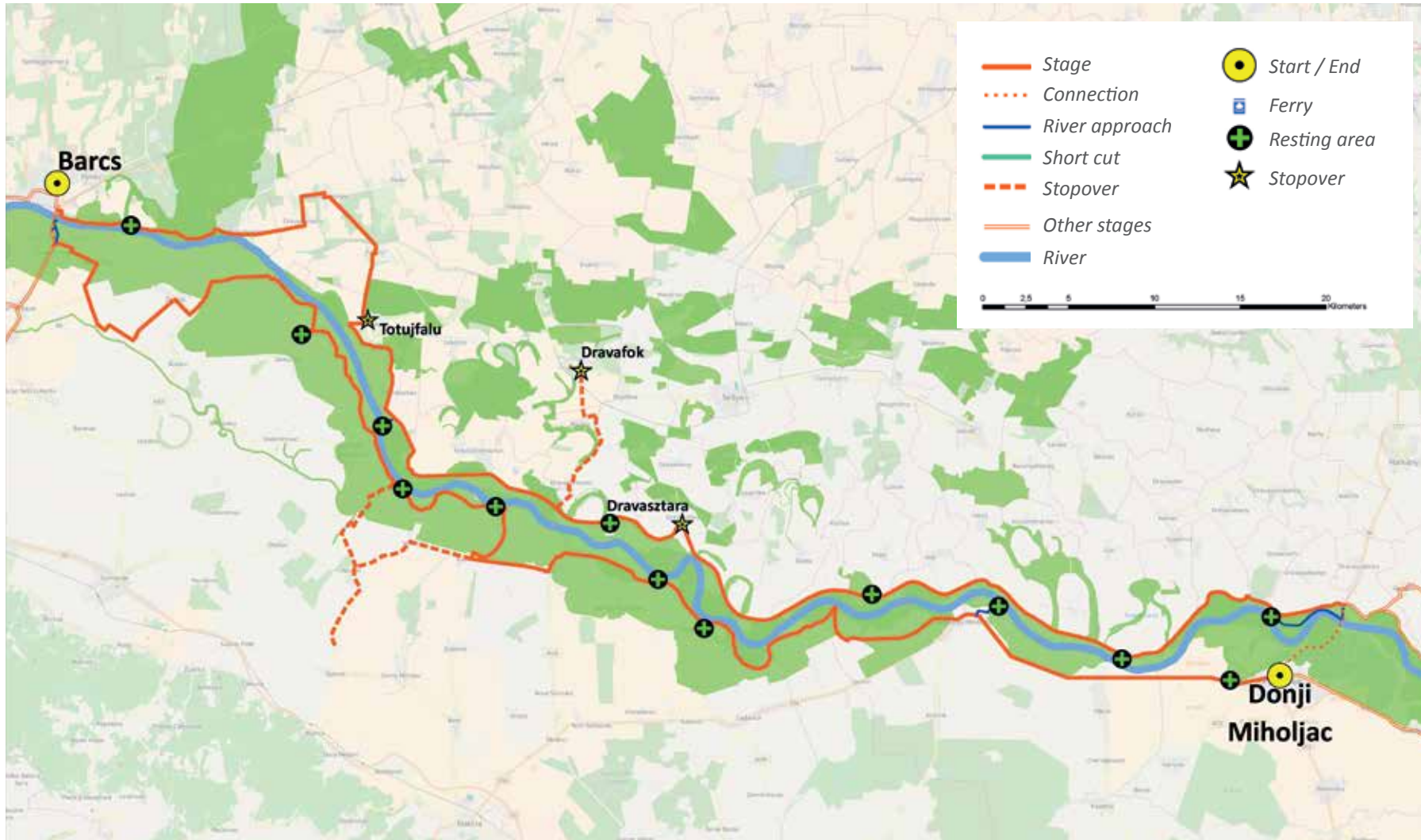
Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 9 resting areas proposed
- > Regional park "Drava-Mura"
- > Duna-Drava National Park centre
- > Drava viewpoints
- > Bird watching (Bee-eater)
- > Molve cultural landscape
- > Protected area Čambina
- > Ješkovo (Drava oxbow)
- > Repaš oak forest
- > Traditional grazing
- > LIFE Project „Old Drava“
- > Lake swimming
- > 1000 year old borderline
- > River ferries
- > Molve pilgrimage church
- > Art Museum
- > Gallery of sculptor Ivan Sabolic
- > Naive art gallery
- > Josip Generalic Gallery
- > Private naive gallery Vecenaj



Credit: G. Safarek

Stage 5: Barcs – Donji Miholjac



Start:

Barcs

Stoppover:

Tótújfalu

Dravafok

Dravasztara

End:

Donji Miholjac

Length:

116 km (right side)

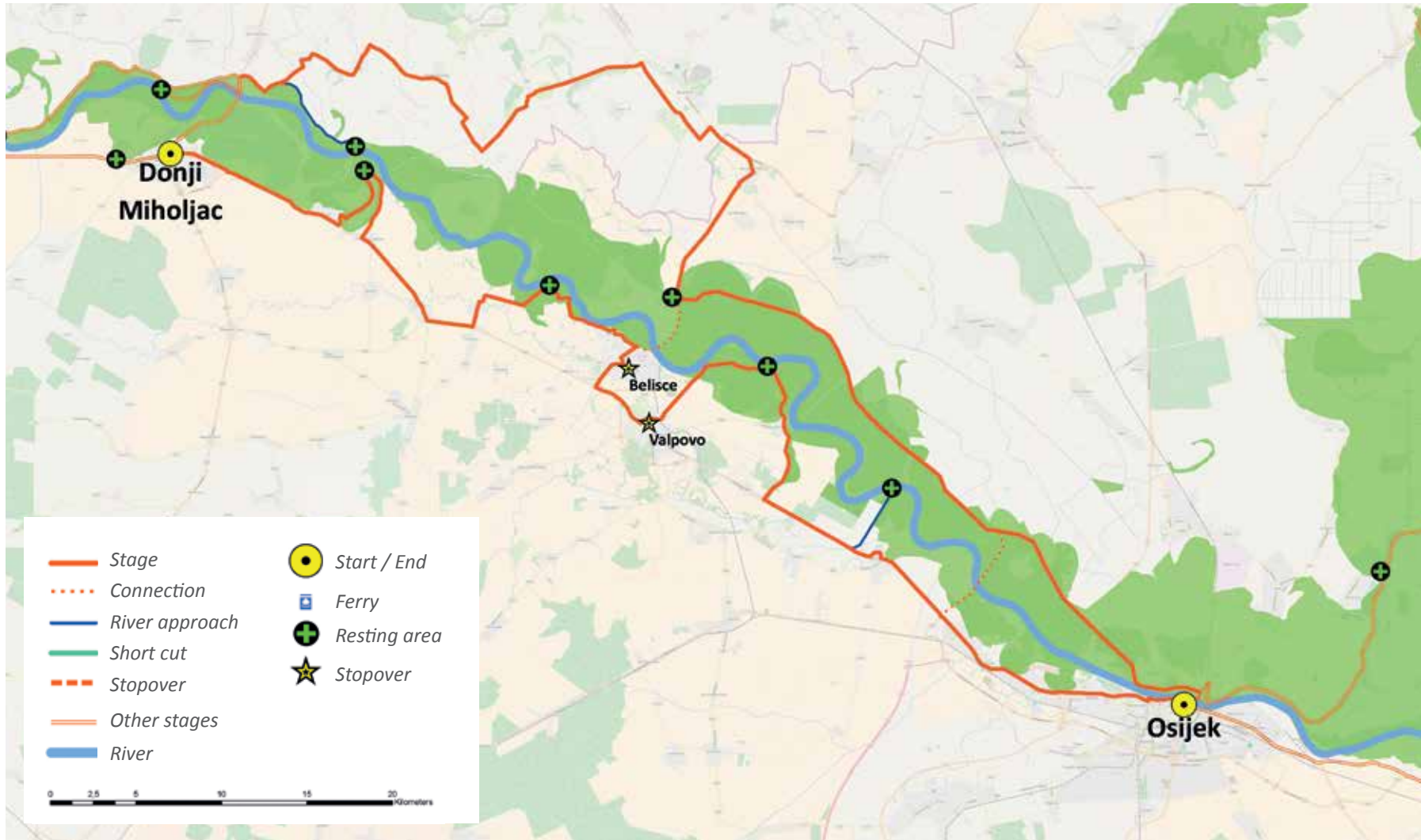
114 km (left side)

Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 13 resting areas proposed
- > Regional park "Drava-Mura"
- > National park Duna-Drava
- > Bird watching
- > Protected area Donji Miholjac Park
- > Donji Miholjac fishponds
- > Drava oxbows
- > Sand dunes
- > Drava islands
- > Cold war watchtower
- > Ancient Drava Ecotourism Visitor Center
- > St. Michael church
- > Prandau castle
- > Mailath castle



Stage 6: Donji Miholjac - Osijek



Start:

Donji Miholjac

Stoppover:

Belišće

Valpovo

End:

Osijek

Length:

99 km (right side)

93 km (left side)

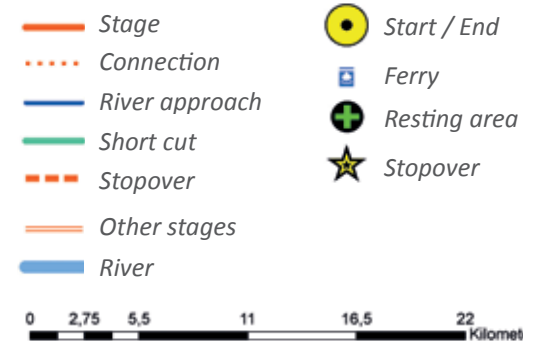
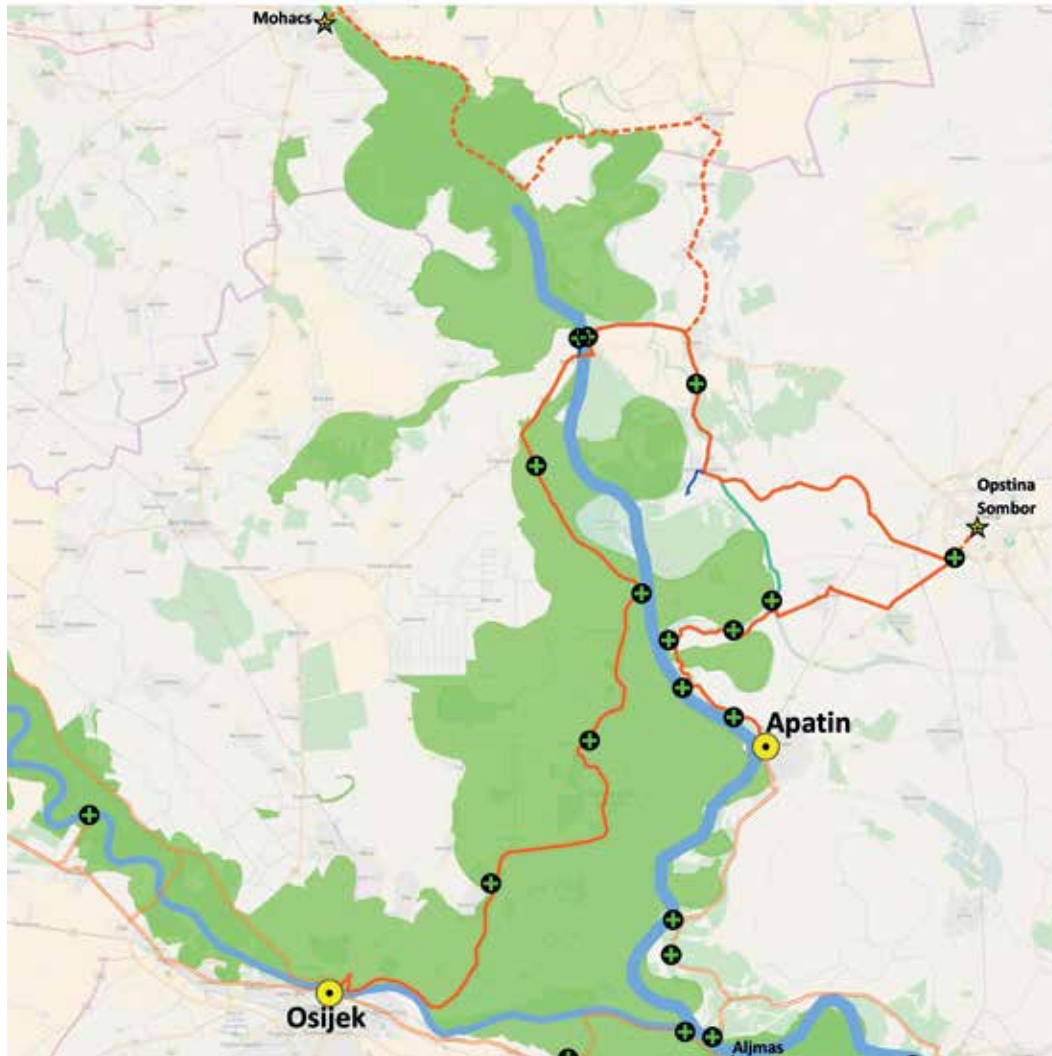
Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 6 resting areas proposed
- > Regional park "Drava-Mura"
- > Special Reserve Podpanj
- > Bird watching
- > Largest floodplain forest Drava
- > Beautiful Drava river landscape
- > Protected area Donji Miholjac Park
- > Protected steppe area (only example in HR)
- > Historical town Osijek
- > Protected area Cemetery in Bilje
- > Castles: Gutmann palace, Normann castle, Eugene of Savoy's hunting castle, Tvrđa (Fort)
- > Valpovo Summer Festival
- > Churches: St. Michael, St. Peter and Paul's cathedral
- > Pannonian Challenge – Festival of extreme bike sports



Credit: K. Dapra

Stage 7: Osijek – Apatin



Start:

Osijek

Stoppover:

Mohács, Opština Sombor

End:

Apatin

Length:

227 km (total)

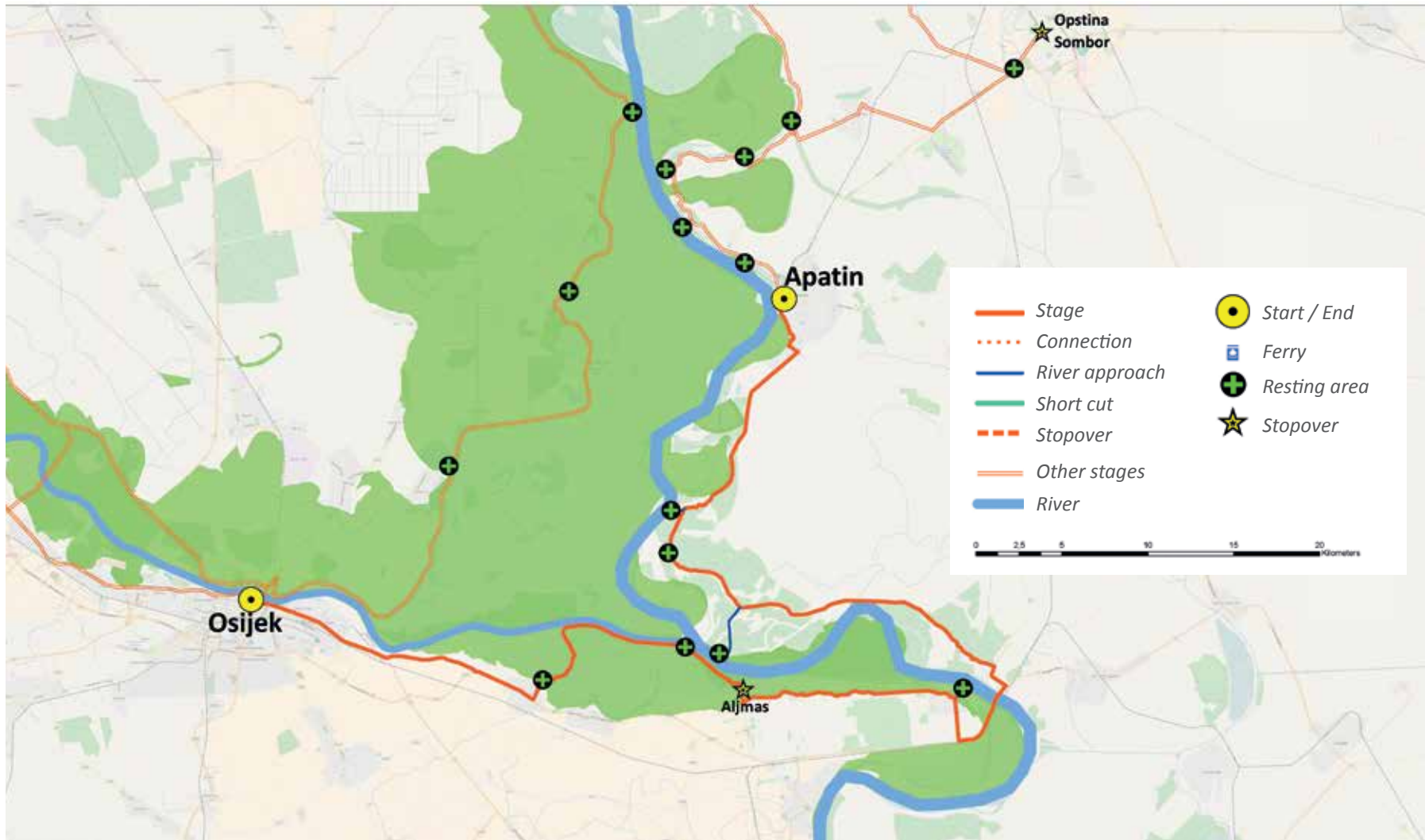
Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 12 Resting areas proposed
- > Nature Park Kopački rit & Duna-Drava
- > Boat tours, Podunavlje fishponds
- > Traditional Fish paprikas
- > Pannonian grey cattle grazing
- > Old fisher village Kopacevo
- > Bird watching (herons, eagles, cormorants)
- > Viewpoint Danube
- > Mohács: Ferry & Old Town
- > Ethno Village Karanac
- > Zlatna Greda Eco Centre
- > Baranja wine cellars
- > Djola lake
- > Bezdán Spa
- > The Šokac House/Museum
- > Kolar Ethno Collection - Pearls of Baranja
- > Castles: Tikveš, Kneževo
- > Batina Battle Memorial
- > Canal locks projected by Eiffel
- > Old city center of Sombor
- > Fisherman's house Lavač



Credit: M. Romulic

Stage 8: Apatin –Osijek



Start:

Apatin

Stopover:

Aljmaš

End:

Osijek

Length:

104 km (total)

Natural & cultural highlights (selection):

- > 5 Resting areas proposed
- > Beautiful Danube river landscape
- > Special nature Reserve Gornje Podunavlje
- > Wetland restoration Strbac
- > Drava - Danube mouth
- > Forestry Museum
- > Liska hiking trail
- > Baroque town center, Castle Eltz
- > Apatin brewery
- > Vučedol Culture Museum, Ilok wine cellars
- > Museum/Castle Odescalchi
- > Shrine of Our Lady of Refuge
- > German culture museum
- > German city house of Maleš family
- > Catholic church with Black Madonna
- > Orthodox church of the Holy Apostles
- > Synagogue



Credit: M. Romulic

4. Corporate design

The development and application of a corporate design strengthens the “Amazon of Europe” Bike Trail’s visual identity and the recognition value across borders and cultures.

The corporate design’s main features for the “Amazon of Europe” Bike Trail are reflected in the following elements:

„Amazon of Europe“ Logo

The three rivers Mura, Drava and Danube, are integrated into the text of the logo as a “subtitle”. Subtle waves flow through the logo, separate it into three stripes and confer on it the character of a flag.

Colours

The main colours of the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail are the logo’s two different shades of green. The greens symbolise opulence and vitality, which are characteristic for the riverscape of the Biosphere Reserve „Mura-Drava-Danube“. The furthermore refer to the ecological backgrounds of the bike trail, in context with the protected area. The natural colour scheme furthermore allows the harmonious and discreet embedding of signposts in the area.



▲ “Amazon of Europe“ Logo



C 70 M 20 Y 40 K 25



C 45 M 0 Y 75 K 0



„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail Logo

The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail requires a logo, which is closely connected to the „Amazon of Europe“, but moreover enables easy extension and flexible application.

In order to do so, the new „Amazon of Europe“ logo will be amended with a flag or bike, which can be adapted in terms of text and colour according to the purpose. In doing so, the logo remains extendable, flexible and it has a high recognition value.



▲ „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail Logo (proposals)

▲ Possible logo versions



C 20 M100 Y100 K 0



C 70 M 0 Y 0 K 0



C 0 M 35 Y 90 K 0

Guiding system / signposting

A uniform guiding system will be applied along the whole „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail. The following possibilities for signposting are available:

- > Usage of **labels** on existing signposts
- > Production of **new signposts**: affixing can be done on new posts (which have to be erected), or on existing ones.

All signposts will have the following basic information:

- Logo** (main logo or logo variations in line with the corporate design)
- Direction**
- Village name**
- Distance**



▲ Example for possible signage by using labels on an existing signpost (photomontage)



▲ Example for possible signage by using newly produced signposts (photomontage)

Information- and resting facilities

Recognisable infrastructural facilities enable visitors to gain some information about the area and/or rest for a while. Also, visitor guidance and the visual identity of the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail will be ensured along the whole stage. Information facilities along the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail rely on a clear, reduced scheme and modular design. Basic elements allow to assemble info elements according to the various requirements.

Examples for possible facilities:

- > Simple **platforms** to rest or to have a picnic
- > **Info walls**: contain information about the route or special places on site, in particular information about the stages' start and end points
- > **Roofed, water-proof info points** along the bike trail
- > **„Bike ports“**: stopping points, where visitors have access to the river

The surface design, as well as the selection and dimension of module parts need to be adjusted according to the situation on-site.

In this respect, the following basic conditions are important:

- > Simple maintenance and service
- > Production done by local/regional businesses on-site.
- > Low production costs if possible

Showcasing examples can be found on the following pages.



▲ „Amazon of Europe“ Platform – basic element of info-facility (photomontage)

Concept sketch info wall

The „Amazon of Europe“ Info Wall consists of two basic elements: **flooring** and **wall**. The wall element will be used to display information. The flooring element will be embedded in the bike path and can be crossed by bikers. Info walls are particularly suited to inform bikers about the area, start and end points.



Credit: Revital

▲ „Amazon of Europe“ Info Wall (photomontage)

Concept sketch info-box

The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail Info-Box only uses a small amount of space, is weather-proof and offers bikers to read up on some information or to take a short break in villages or at info-hotspots.

Info boxes consist of the following basic elements:

- > Flooring
- > 2 walls
- > Roof
- > Adjusted bench
- > Bike racks

Side panels can be used to display information;
2 sides of the info box are open, i.e. do not have walls.



Credit: Revital

▲ „Amazon of Europe“ Info-Box (concept sketch)



Credit: Revital

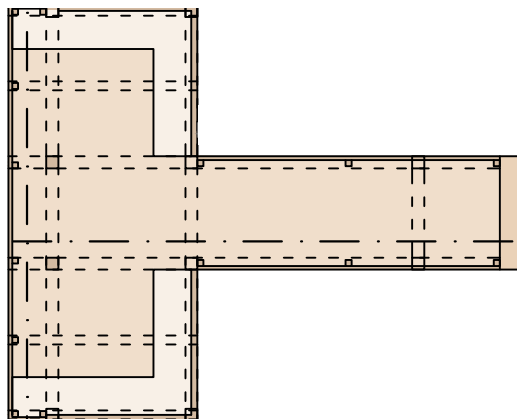
▲ „bike port“ (photomontage)

Concept sketch resting area / bike port

The „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Port consists of two info-boxes which will be roofed and mirrored to one another. The bike ports will contain a corner seat, a connecting bridge to the bike trail and (optional) a stairway into the river. The bike port combines information with nature observation and direct river experience.

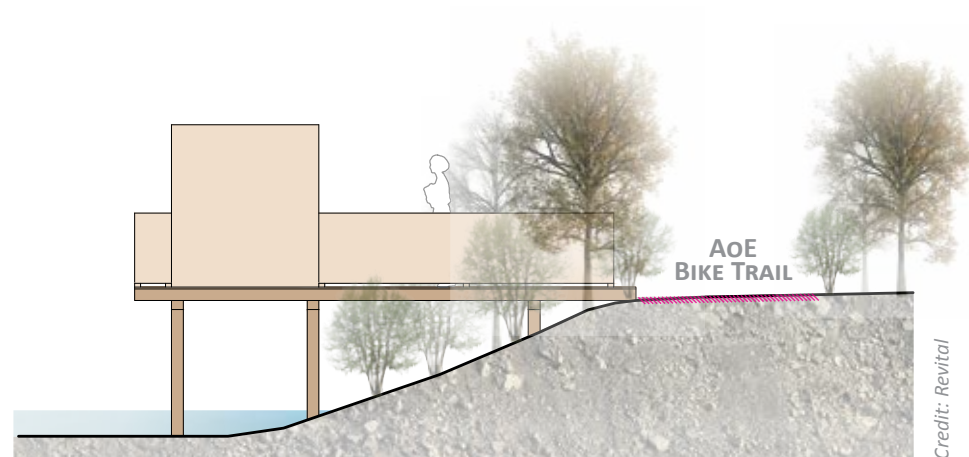
The surfaces of the info-boxes' side- and back walls can be imprinted completely. The platform will be aligned the river, windows on the back will allow viewing of the nearby floodplains.

Constructive details and safety aspects always need to be adjusted individually according to the circumstances on site.



Credit: Revital

▲ „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Port (concept sketch)



Credit: Revital

5. Valorisation concept

Background

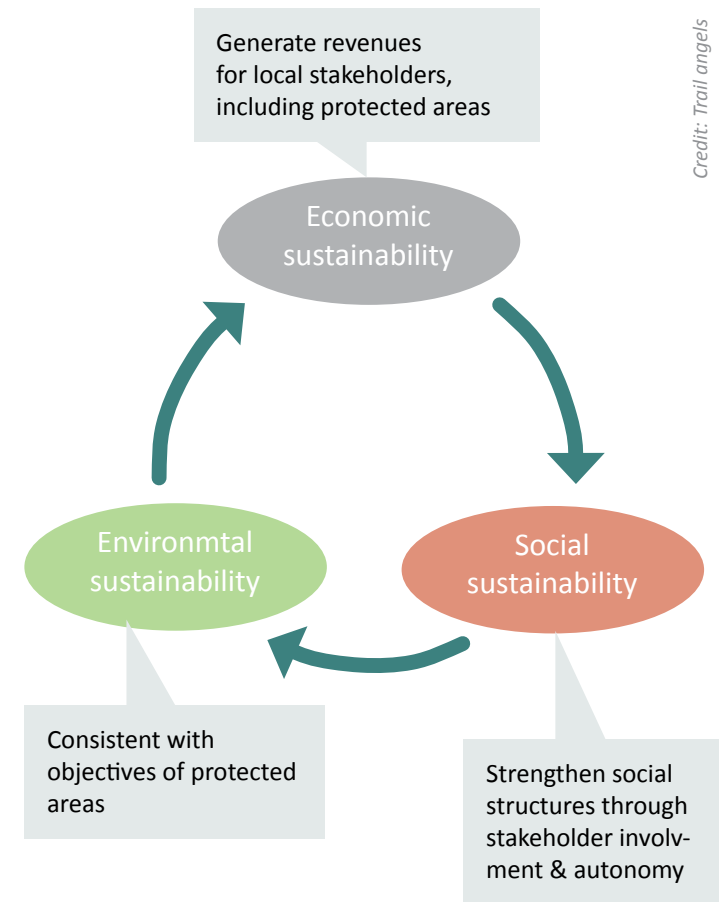
One aim of the “Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail is to use sustainable tourism to set noticeable incentives for the regional economy to gain economic benefits for local people and protected areas involved (►). This shall in turn heighten the local population’s identification with the nature reserve.

The valorisation concept drafts how the Bike Trail can bring financial benefits to local people, protected areas and tourism, especially focusing on the integration of protected areas within the TBR MDD area.

Organizational structure

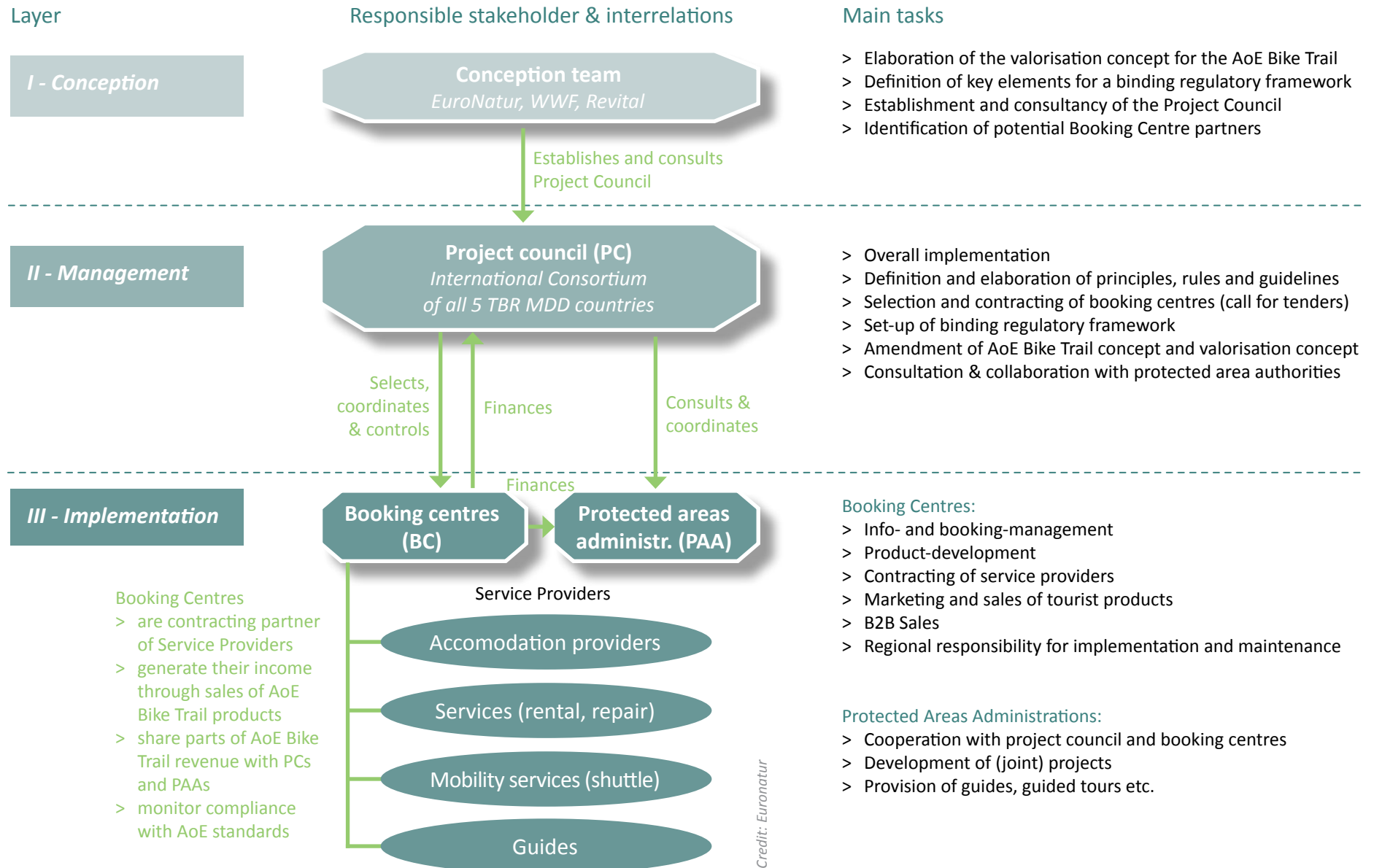
The “Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail valorisation concept envisages three implementation layers, each characterized by different stakeholders with different responsibilities and interrelations (►►).

- I. The **conception layer** refers to the conception phase of the valorisation concept before its implementation. Responsible is the conception team.
- II. The **management layer** relates to the overall management of the bike trail. The members of the project council (PC) still need to be defined. It will be financially supported through AoE BT revenues of the booking centres (BCs). The exact share will have to be defined based on economic analyses.
- III. The **implementation layer** refers to the local and regional implementation of the AoE BT. Responsible stakeholders are booking centres (BC), protected areas administrations (PAA) and service providers (SP). PAAs will receive revenue shares from the BCs. The exact share will have to be defined.



Credit: Trail angels

▲ Pillars of sustainable tourism and their benefits



Booking Centres

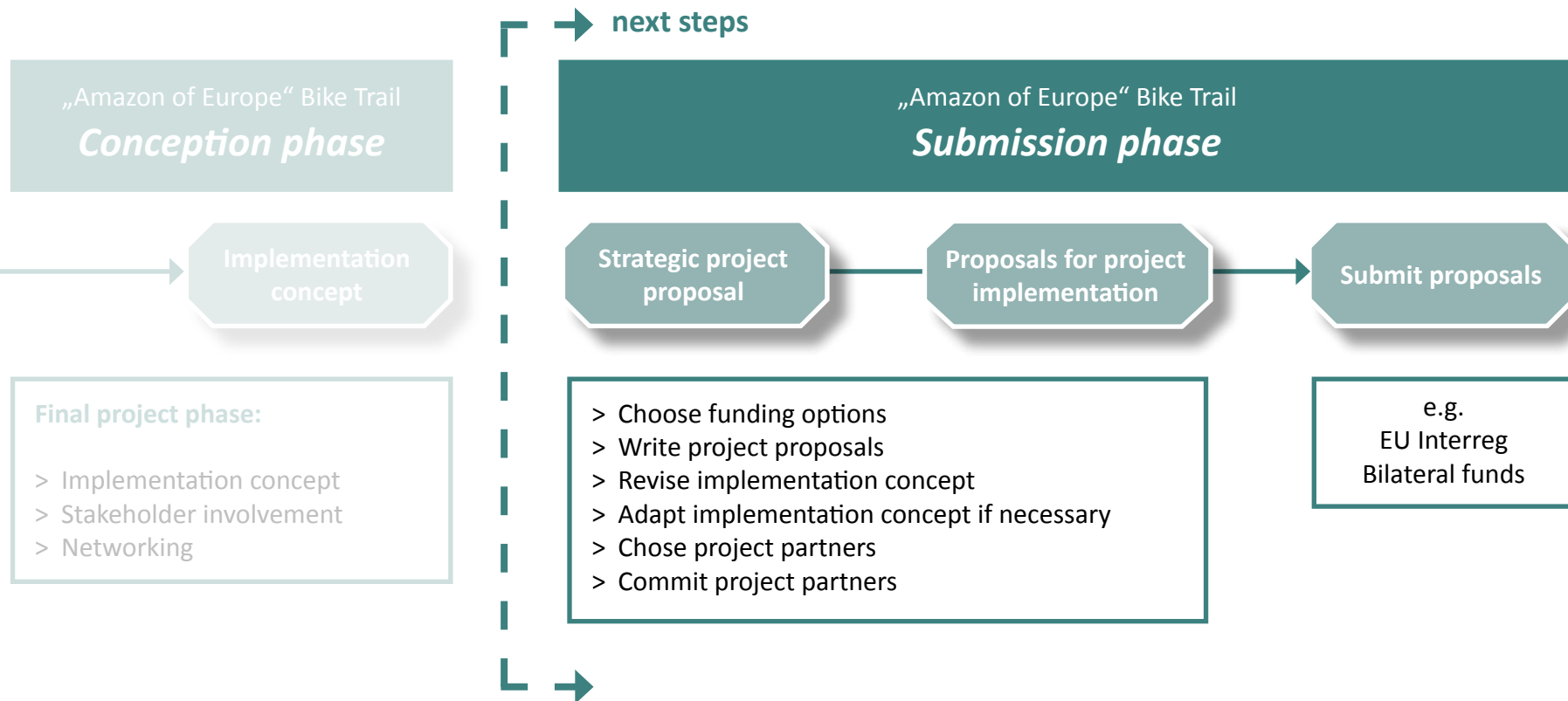
- > are contracting partner of Service Providers
- > generate their income through sales of AoE Bike Trail products
- > share parts of AoE Bike Trail revenue with PCs and PAAs
- > monitor compliance with AoE standards

Credit: Euronatur

6. Next steps

Grant applications

On the basis of the implementation concept, the next steps include choosing of project partners and finding funding sources. EU funds (e.g. Interreg, bilateral funding programmes) are particularly suitable for this. Grant applications have to be submitted accordingly. It might be necessary to adapt the implementation



concept in accordance with the available technical, organisational and financial possibilities.

Implementation

Implementation can start after the approval of grant applications and the securing of financing. Already a year after, the „Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail would be ready for adventurous cycling tourists from all over the world.



Project participants in alphabetical order

Milan Bajramović	Tourist Organisation of Sombor	Mojca Makovec Haložan	Municipality Velika Polana
Predrag Bandin	Bike & Bed Cyclist Camp LongTour	Vesna Maksimović	WWF Adria
Andrea Bedo	West Pannon Regional and Economic Development Non-profit Ltd.	Robert Mandl	Flexima Naturradreisen
Jadranka Bjelica	Cycling union of Vojvodina	Boris Masić	Apatin Tourism Cluster
Mateja Cah	Regional Development Agency of Virovitičko-podravaska County	Duško Medić	Green Network of Vojvodina
Marko Cmrečak	Varaždin County Tourism Board	Petra Medjimurec	Town of Ludbreg
Christian Contola	Tourismusverband Bad Radkersburg	Csaba Megyer	Balaton-felvidéki National Park Directorate
Anna Czigány	Balaton-felvidéki National Park Directorate	Klaus Michor	Revital
Jovan Eraković	Ciklonaut cycling association	Matjea Mihalić	Regional Development Agency of Međimurje County
Helena Hečimović	Development Agency Sjever	Dejan Mitić	NGO "Podunav" Backi Monostor
Martina Horvat	Municipality Velika Polana	Arno Mohl	WWF Austria
Éva Horváth	National Park Directorate Duna-Drava	Günter Mussnig	Trails Angels
Damian Jaklin	Municipality Velika Polana	Andreas Nemmert	Revital
Ivana Jurić	Regional Development Agency of Osijek-Baranja County	Ivanka Ognjanov	Bike & Bed Cyclist Camp LongTour
Klara Kerpely	WWF Hungary	Srdjan Omaković	Biciklarnik bike shop and CikloCOOLtura
Branko Korać	Apatin Tourism Cluster	Ivana Ožbolt	Tourist Organisation of Sombor
Tünde Kovács	Lenti and Area Rural Development Association	Zsolt Pálmai	South-Transdanubian Regional Development Agency
Luka Lakić	Outdoor Serbia	Zoltán Pámer	South-Transdanubian Regional Development Agency
Biljana Latić	JP „Vojvodinašume“	Strahinja Pekez	Tourism Department of Sombor City
András Lelkes	Balaton-felvidéki National Park Directorate	Ljubislav Počuča	Adrenaline Cyclo Sombor
Darko Levačić	Varaždin County	Tibor Polgar	West Pannon Regional and Economic Development Non-profit Ltd.
Monika Lovas	Crossbike and Environmental Club Association Pecs		

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the project and supported us with their knowledge and collaboration!

Antonio	Ratković	NGO Natura
Michaela	Reichard	WWF Austria
Ana-Maria	Reider Petrić	Regional Development Agency of Virovitica-Podravina County
Dragan	Ružić	Tourist Organisation of Sombor
Theresa	Schiller	EuroNatur
Dragana	Siljanović Kozoderović	CikloCOOLtura, PE for urban development of Sombor and BK Sombor (bike klub)
Branka	Španiček	WWF Adria
Ivana	Starčević	Regional Development Agency of Slavonia and Baranja
Milica	Stefanović	The Coca-Cola Company
Aleksandra	Stojkov	Ciklocooltura Zelena Prica
Nebojša	Subić	Cycling union of Vojvodina
Marko	Sudarić	S team
Balázs	Szóllósy	Hungarian Cycling Alliance (HCA)
Milovan	Topić	NGO Natura
Zoltán	Tóth	South-Transdanubian Regional Development Agency
Romeo	Varga	Institute for Tourism and Development Lendava
Saša	Velebit	Tourism Department of Sombor City
Iva	Vurušić Mađarić	Tourism board of Međimurje County
Szilvia	Wodtke	National Park Directorate Duna-Drava
Slobodan	Zarković	Ciklocooltura Biciklarnik







A GOLDEN HEART OF PANNONIA

Pannonia – a geographical term? A region? A plain? A little bit of everything, but Pannonia is honestly something else. Its blood is blue - its water. Its capillaries are the rivers, the wetlands and the backwaters. It has lush willow forests, aged oak trees, rich birdlife, sunny glades and mysterious hills looking over endless fields of wheat and sunflowers. And most of all - it has a soul. Generous and warm, lazy and sluggish at times, like the dormant waters surrounding a river island or an estuary, and wavy and turbulent at times, like a brief summer storm.

If you pass through the gates of the Pannonian soul open wide, you will find yourself on a trail allowing you to feel the smells and the tastes of traditional dishes and drinks, to touch the fluttering wings of startled wading birds, and to hear the playful glistening fish in the reed. Light, melancholy music from the river taverns will overwhelm you, the morning sunlight shining through the treetops will cheer you up.

The journey that you will experience has no beginning, no end. It is the journey through an enchanted circle of imagination, emotion and a long-forgotten feeling of timelessness and unity with the earth, water, the sun... This is the trail that leads you through the magic Pannonian soul to the golden heart of Pannonia.

Branko Korac



euRONATUR



Credit: G. Safarek

„Amazon of Europe“ Bike Trail

From the Alps to the Pannonian plain along the largest natural river system in Central Europe.



Credit: Shutterstock



Credit: Shutterstock



Credit: Shutterstock