

Greenways

| Hungary |



CONVERGE

OVERVIEW

The first greenway initiative dates back to 1990 when a group of Czech-Americans began to promote the idea of a Vienna-Prague Greenway. Since then, the initiative has spread across the CEE region and has been active in Hungary since around 2000. Initially, the Hungarian Greenways program was coordinated by the Hungarian Environmental Partnership Association but then shifted to the Greenways Methodology Association (GMA) as an independent umbrella non-governmental organization. The initiative aims at creating multi-functional de-motorised ways (or ‘natural corridors’) that combine sustainable tourism, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, promotion of green corridors, historical and trade routes, natural paths or tow paths, etc. They are maintained where possible by local communities. Greenways are designed to contribute to sustainable rural development by helping locals re-discover their surroundings and their local knowledge and abilities and facilitate a more environmentally friendly way to travel.



CONTEXT: THE PERCEIVED PROBLEM

Greenways are implemented in line with a shared set of criteria which include supporting and mobilizing local communities, conserving natural and cultural heritage, using local resources, promoting non-motorized transport (bikes, walking, horse-riding, etc.) and environmentally friendly tourism. They offer an alternative to carbon intensive forms of motorised travel and have multiple spinoff benefits for the environment, local communities and the tourists who use them.

INITIATIVE SOLUTION AND PROCESS

Different criteria exist for the different types of Greenways (‘long-distance’, ‘urban’ or ‘local’) but all Greenways should be signposted trails with information about the Greenway concept available in the form of leaflets/maps/guidebooks, web sites and information systems along the trails. Greenways should meet safety criteria for cyclists and pedestrians and be continuously managed by a designated Greenways coordinator. They should be integrated with public transport systems where possible. Long distance Greenways are specifically geared towards sustainable tourism (especially cycle tourism) and criteria include the existence of designated rest stops, availability of local food and a low-traffic environment. Hungarian routes include the Greenways of Duna-Ipoly, Pilis, Drégelypalánk, Zsámbék, Cserhát, Kiskunmajsa and Sopron as well as some short urban routes (e.g. in the town of Vác).

CONTRACTION AND CONVERGENCE ELEMENTS

CONTRACTION:

The primary aim of this initiative is to promote the existence of communication routes reserved exclusively for non-motorised, low-carbon journeys. In doing so Greenways facilitates more sustainable ways of travelling, places the focus on local resource consumption and raises awareness of the cultural and environmental values of the region. The Greenways concept offers travellers a way to travel in a less resource intense, locally integrated and environmentally benign way of travelling.

CONVERGENCE:

Although working towards ‘justice’ and ‘equity’ are not stated to be specific goals of the Hungarian initiative, the Greenways approach lays stress on supporting and mobilizing local communities through encouraging local enterprises (such as local hostelry), creating jobs and additional revenue streams and supporting traditional vocations. International Greenways help facilitate communication and cooperation between countries, regions, towns, villages and their inhabitants. They have the additional benefit of supporting active and healthy lifestyles of residents and visitors for a diversity of user groups.

STATUS AND IMPACT

The Hungarian Greenways programme is now facilitated by a new organisation (The Greenways Methodology Association) which is helping to disseminate and facilitate the Greenways concept. It is part of The European Greenways Association (EGWA) which consists of 35 national level organizations committed to creating and promoting Greenways. EGWA works with European institutions to develop and contribute to EU policies related to sustainable development, nature conservation, regional development and employment promotion. EGWA is also involved in organizing and promoting European Mobility Week.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

1. Initiative website: <http://www.okotars.hu/en> and <http://zoldutak.hu/eng/eurovelo/>
2. The European Greenways Association: http://www.aevv-egwa.org/site/hp_en.asp

Scale of activities



Primary theme

OTHER

