

## Output Factsheet

**Output title: Output 3.2: Regional Stakeholder Empowering Workshops of PP8-Regional Development Agency with Business Support Centre for Small and medium-sized Enterprises Plovdiv Bulgaria**

### Summary of the output (max. 2500 characters)

The Regional Stakeholder Empowering Workshop was organized by RDA with BSC for SMEs Plovdiv on 17 December 2018 in Haskovo.

The invited participants included all members of the Council of Regional Development of South Central Region of Bulgaria NUTS 2: representatives from ministries, all 5 regional governors, mayors of 8 municipalities; representatives of employers' associations, members of trade unions, members of all 5 district administrations, NGOs, media and general public. All these participants can influence national, regional and local policies on tourism sustainable development and implementation of INSiGHTS project. Total number of participants - 39 persons.

The aim of the Empowering Workshops was continuing the discussion on elaborated and approved regional vision of Plovdiv region and work on elaborating of the Integrated strategy on slow, green and healthy tourism, Concept of a tourist routes for slow, green and healthy tourism implementing the pilot actions and capacity building,

Velizar Petrov introduced the project INSiGHTS (Integrated, Slow, Green and Healthy Tourism Strategies) to the stakeholders and provided some basic information about the project results, He stressed upon the developed and accepted regional vision- "Tourism in all its forms is an integrated part in the strategic development of Plovdiv District as a region with a balanced and sustainable economy, with high living standard of the population and a restored, preserved and healthy living environment" and the followed activities on development of the regional integrated strategy of sustainable tourism. He presented the project progress and implementation: Development of 4 eco-training routes - in process; Development of training materials for the routes – forthcoming next semester; Guidance training sessions; Development and printing of information materials.

Aleksandar Tonkov presented the Tourist Route Concept for slow, green and healthy tourism. Slogan: We are not for one day; The routes are aimed at Bulgarian and foreign individual tourists and / or small groups of up to 10 people (usually they are family, colleagues and / or good friends who want to share and enjoy their free time together). The duration should be between 4-5 days, not less than two; Driving - by bicycle and / or on foot.

The mayors and the governors that attended the workshop expressed their support

and expect its successful implementation regarding the strategy and the functioning of the information tourist centre and pilot actions.

**Contribution to the project and Programme objectives (max. 1500 characters)**

The main objective of the project is to foster the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources. The Empowering workshop organized in South Central Region of Bulgaria contributed to the Programme objectives - to the Environment and Culture Responsible Danube Region, the fast growing recreational trend of slow, green and healthy tourism, to make them more attractive destinations for visitors.

The main topic is the slow, green and healthy tourism which contributes to the sustainable development of the natural and cultural heritage. The application contains all these aspects and connects all the existing services and programmes in a joint platform accessible for all.

The Empowering Workshop resulted in an extensive knowledge increase and stronger links across public, private and civic actors linked to local pilot actions. Improved capacities of stakeholders will enable to implement pilots in a more efficient way, as well as to jointly generate and run follow-up actions.

The participants and the stakeholders gained knowledge that will be used within INSiGHTS project in pilot actions development and implementation, in development of the integrated regional strategy in the end-phase of the project, strategies on integrated slow, green & healthy tourism development, in tourism development and implementation of the activities and application form of Plovdiv as European Capital of Culture 2019.

**Transnational impact (max. 1500 characters)**

Green and sustainable tourism can offer an opportunity for several less developed rural areas in a Danube region with unique heritage assets but with considerably low innovative capacity on behalf of the public and private sector. Therefore, transnational cooperation, the exchange of expertise between the partners, good practices and creative ideas can build such a knowledge pool that otherwise would not be available for the partners. The project partners shared their capacities and tested different solutions that might be ideal for laying the ground of a new green tourism policy framework during the partnership, meetings throughout the project.

RDA with BSC for SMEs is engaged with developing an eco-tourism model including mapping and designing a network of eco-educational hiking trails and cycling routes in protected areas in urban environment (hills of Plovdiv – the green lungs of the city), preparing a training material for guides also incorporating hints for eco-conscious lifestyle, establishing an eco-tourism information (visitor) centre offering various services like organizing wildlife and habitat observation (e.g. bird watching) guided

tours with audio devices.

Pilot testing includes slow and eco-tourism services promoting eco-conscious and healthy lifestyle.

**Contribution to EUSDR actions and/or targets (max. 1500 characters)**

INSiGHTS project contributes to Europe 2020 Strategy's targets, most importantly to the flagship initiatives of Resource efficient Europe and Agenda for new skills and jobs. Sustainable tourism development has the potential to fundamentally enhance two of the priority pillars: sustainable and inclusive growth, by attracting new green investments and generating local jobs. The project is fully in line with the Priority Area 3 "To Promote Culture, Tourism and People to People Contacts" of the EUSDR. It significantly contributes to the achievement of the 4th target of PA3 on "Developing green tourist products along the Danube Region" by offering a set of novel tools and methods for expanding and improving the green, slow and healthy tourism and testing a range of them through pilot actions.

Our pilot activity under INSiGHTS will perfectly match with the following PA3 actions: "Promoting sustainable tourism" like cycle options combined with tourism attractions at natural and cultural sites in urban area, "Further developing and intensifying Activity Tourism" targeting establishing travel chains e.g. for biking or hiking with tourist itinerary offers, and "Improving planning and infrastructure for tourism", including walking paths, cycling routes, info centres in protected areas and heritage sites.

Regional Stakeholder Empowering workshop will contribute to the actions of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, through the rich cultural heritage and tourism potential sustainable development.

**Performed testing, if applicable (max. 1000 characters)**

The aim of the workshop was to present to the wider public the Development of 4 eco-training routes - in process; Development of training materials for the routes - forthcoming next semester; Guidance training sessions; Development and printing of information materials; the Tourist Route Concept for slow, green and healthy tourism. Slogan: We are not for one day; The routes are aimed at Bulgarian and foreign individual tourists and / or small groups of up to 10 people (usually they are family, colleagues and / or good friends who want to share and enjoy their free time together). The duration should be between 4-5 days, not less than two; Driving - by bicycle and / or on foot.

The testing phase will last until May/June 2019.

**Integration and use of the output by the target group (max. 2000 characters)**

The Empowering workshop was attended by members of the Council of Regional Development of South Central Region of Bulgaria NUTS 2: representatives from ministries, all 5 regional governors, mayors of 8 municipalities; representatives of employers' associations, members of trade unions, members of all 5 district administrations, NGOs, media and general public. All these participants can influence national, regional and local policies on tourism sustainable development and implementation of INSiGHTS project. Total number of participants - 39 persons. The event provided them a direct learning possibility since the core stakeholders participate at implementation of the pilot activity.

The implementation of the pilot activities in Plovdiv Region (NUTS 3) can be used in the other four NUTS 3 regions in South Central Region of Bulgaria (NUTS 2).

**Geographical coverage and transferability (max. 1500 characters)**

The Empowering workshop was attended by members of the Council of Regional Development of South Central Region of Bulgaria NUTS 2: representatives from ministries, all 5 regional governors, mayors of 8 municipalities; representatives of employers' associations, members of trade unions, members of all 5 district administrations, NGOs, media and general public. All these participants can influence national, regional and local policies on tourism sustainable development and implementation of INSiGHTS project. Total number of participants - 39 persons. The event provided them a direct learning possibility since the core stakeholders participate at implementation of the pilot activity.

The implementation of the pilot activities in Plovdiv Region (NUTS 3) can be used in the other four NUTS 3 regions in South Central Region of Bulgaria (NUTS 2).

The Integrated strategy on Slow, green and healthy tourism will be first presented and accepted by the Council of Regional Development of Plovdiv region NUTS 3 and then approved by Council of Regional Development of South Central Region of Bulgaria NUTS 2. Both

**Durability (max. 1500 characters)**

The Empowering workshop of RDA with BSC for SMEs will be a direct benefit of the participating members, mainly the core stakeholders for Plovdiv Region and South Central Region of Bulgaria (individual learning). The knowledge gained will be utilized for development of regional strategies, as a part of the pilot activity to be realized in Plovdiv region.

The outputs of INSiGHTS project will contribute to the programme and events dedicated and organized during 2019 in Plovdiv as European Capital of Culture 2019.

**Synergies with other projects/ initiatives and / or alignment with current EU policies/ directives/ regulations, if applicable (max. 1500 characters)**

The outputs of INSiGHTS project will contribute to the programme and events dedicated and organized during 2019 in Plovdiv as European Capital of Culture 2019.

**Output integration in the current political/ economic/ social/ technological/ environmental/ legal/ regulatory framework (max. 2000 characters)**

The output of Regional Stakeholder Empowering Workshops together with the Integrated strategy on Slow, green and healthy tourism can be directly integrated in the current political/ economic/ social/technological/ environmental / legal/ regulatory framework. This strategy will be a part of the Strategy for the Development of Plovdiv region.

These outputs can be used for these purposes in the other 4 regions of South Central Region of Bulgaria.