



AMAZON OF EUROPE BIKE TRAIL

Valorization Programme

Project co-funded by the European Union funds (ERDF, IPA)
DTP2-002-2.2 AoE Bike Trail

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Amazon of Europe Bike Trail” is a project¹ funded by the EU “Danube Transnational Interreg Programme” that joins the efforts of actors from 5 countries (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia) to establish an internationally recognized and sustainable flagship Cycling Tourism Product in the future 5-country UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD).

The aim is to support the sustainable economic development of the region via the valorization of natural and cultural resources, through a joint integrated solution for sustainable cycling tourism, while preserving the Environment.

The main goal of the TBR MDD is maintaining ecosystems by the preservation of natural habitats, species and processes as well as the restoration of already degraded areas, and developing the region in socio-economic and ecologically sustainable terms and encouraging education, research and environmental monitoring.

The innovative aspect is the valorization one, defining how a share of booking revenues will finance protected areas (PAs), resulting in fair distribution of benefits between the locals, visitors and nature. Thus, the project will implement the joint vision of living rivers for people and nature and establish the Amazon of Europe as a top destination in Europe for sustainable eco-tourism.

The current document is the main output of the Work Package 6 “Valorization Programme” which is subdivided in two main areas of activities:

- Act. 6.1: the Valorization Programme is based on the bike trail international organizational structure (defined in another work package - act. 3.2.); it describes possible methodologies on how to support nature protection projects within the TBR MDD, as well as the responsible and participants to such methods; the main aim is to define how and which nature protection projects are supported with the revenues from bookings.
- Act. 6.2: the Valorization Programme is harmonized with all protected areas, responsible management authorities and nature protection-oriented NGOs within the TBR MDD: the aim is to get additional input and a common agreement with the protected areas and nature protection NGOs, within the TBR MDD, having the greatest benefit of this programme.

The current document has been developed by WWF Adria (WP6 Coordinator) with expert support from Mr. Luca Santarossa and in close collaboration with WWF Austria (PP n. 10) and the project LP (ISKRIVA – Slovenian Institute for development of local potentials) while including inputs from project partners.

¹ <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/amazon-of-europe-bike-trail>

1.1. Methodology

The methodology followed to prepare the current Valorization Programme can be described in the following steps:

- desk analysis of existing best practices about similar experiences (e.g. a sustainable tourism offer involving territories with high values environmental assets, a transnational cooperation undergoing, etc.) and description of the most innovative ones
- based on the desk analysis, drafting of a first structure of Valorization Programme, identifying which kind of activities to be financed, the most likely implementing actors, and the procedures for appointing the available funds
- submission of this first structure to the project partnership in order to receive feedbacks from project partners for an improved Valorization Programme
- drafting of the second version of the Valorization Programme and its presentation, through national workshops, to the Protected Areas and environmental NGOs of the TBR MDD-related territories, and collection of their inputs
- implementation of an online survey (addressed mainly to the Protected Areas and environmental NGOs of the TBR MDD-related territories) on specific aspects of the Valorization Programme in order to rank the favorite themes/projects typologies/eligible costs/funding mechanisms
- drafting of third version of the Valorization Programme in order to be submitted to the project partnership for its adoption
- eventual final version of the Valorization Programme, if the project partnership has requested slight improvements.

The current version of the Valorization Programme is the final one.

1.2. Abbreviations list

- 5-country TBR MDD = planned UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube
- PA = Protected Area
- DDO = Destination Development Organization
- DMC = Destination Marketing Company
- PP(s) = Project Partner(s)

2. CASE STUDIES

From the desk analysis carried out at worldwide level, while prioritizing Europe, four case studies were identified as best practices, i.e. where a national/transnational cooperation had as main goal the promotion of tourism products to be sold in the international market, in order to generate income for financing nature conservation actions in the same destination; of course priority was given to European cases, due to similar legislation and organization, but some non-EU cases were estimated as well useful for specific solutions that were developed.

The four case studies have been selected because the similarities with the AoE Bike Trail objectives, but each of them has specific features: the 1st case is based on a product which is “tailored” and managed mainly by public actors; the 2nd one tested many interesting pay-back mechanisms in an EU protected area; the 3rd one is completely private-run; the 4th one is a public-private partnership.

2.1. »Mediterranean Experience of Eco-Tourism – MEET«

2.1.1. Where and who

The “MEET Network” Association² has been created in 2018 by former project partners of the “MEET” project³, namely the IUCN Med, the MedPAN network and the Global Footprint Network. At the time being also 10 Mediterranean Protected Areas are members, but others Med-based bodies are also applying to become a member.

MEET is a conservation project at its core, designed to support parks in the Mediterranean which play a critical role in protecting the region’s threatened biodiversity. The MEET Network is actively transforming ecotourism into a viable alternative for the Mediterranean region, supporting protected areas to develop high quality conservation focused ecotourism products while shifting the market perception of the Mediterranean offer toward a “4C” (Conservation, Compassion, Connection, and Community) tourism model.

MEET has developed a complex and detailed **standard for developing ecotourism packages having a protected area (and therefore nature conservation) as the fundamental pillar, and for measuring the socio-economic-environmental sustainability of such products**. Each package must be developed in a participatory way and the final responsible is the Protected Area managing body where it takes place.

MEET is setting up a Catalogue of such packages in order to create a **unique ecotourism destination called “Mediterranean”**, including both northern and southern shores; therefore MEET Association wants to become the DDO of such a vast destination, and have appointed an international Tour Operator (BookGreen) as DMC of the offer. Such process is under development through DestiMED⁴ and DestiMED Plus⁵ projects.

² <https://www.meetnetwork.org/>

³ <http://www.medecotourism.org/>

⁴ <https://destimed.interreg-med.eu/>

⁵ <https://destimed-plus.interreg-med.eu/>

2.1.2. What and how

MEET Association decided to offset 5% of the total income of each package to finance the network and some on field actions: 50% of this amount will be used by MEET Secretariat for activities of common interest (enlargement of the network, promotion of the Catalogue, training to the Parks, etc.), while the other 50% will be distributed through calls opened to member Parks and their local stakeholders (package service providers, NGOs, etc.). The main goal of these grants will be the natural and cultural assets conservation, and also the improvement of capacities of such actors in better planning and managing the tourism development within the Park.

A principle of “solidarity” will apply, i.e. the calls will be open to anyone, not having any “country-based earmarking”, since the big differences in generating incomes between northern and southern shores (also for the security-related problem of the southern countries); southern-based Parks/Applicant will be supported in the proposal preparation, too.

The project funding has not started yet – because the MEET Catalogue is going to enter the commercialization phase only in 2020 – but a business plan has been already developed and selection criteria are under preparation; not yet defined the procedure nor the selecting “architecture”.

2.2. »Lake District Foundation«

2.2.1. Where and who

Originally launched as the Lake District Tourism and Conservation Partnership in 1994, the Lake District Foundation⁶ was established as a charity in August 2017. Prior to this, under the name Nurture Lakeland, the organization had been working for 23 years to raise funds from visitors and the tourism industry. Foundation also delivers sustainable tourism programmes and messages across Cumbria region, gaining national recognition.

The Foundation aims to Lake District National Park (UK) becomes an inspirational example of sustainable development in action, and a place where a prosperous economy, world-class visitor experiences and vibrant communities come together to sustain its spectacular landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, by raising funds and distributing them to effective projects that share Foundation’s goals.

Funds are raised from tourism businesses as well as visitors for maintenance and ecological integrity – based on a Visitor-Pay-Back approach where the tourist is encouraged to donate money for conservation purposes. Tourists can add a one-pound donation to their overall bill – working under the opt-out and opt-in scheme. Similarly, tourism businesses adapt this scheme incorporating a voluntary conservation donation in their revenue. Businesses also encourage visitors to contribute to the construction of trails among others which can be visited in the meantime. This is a form of awareness raising, as people see where their money is being invested.

They can also become a volunteer to help with conservation projects for one day of their stay. Other fundraising ideas are collection boxes, merchandising or fundraising events. Members of the Lake District pay annual fees and obligate to voluntary levies.

⁶ <https://www.lakedistrictfoundation.org/>

An innovative approach that tourists can do is taking part in a lottery: per entry (1 £), 50% directly go to the fund whereas the other 50% are reserved for the prize and overhead costs.

The Lake District has created its own currency to create a new customer experience but more importantly to enhance visitor spending in local businesses. After the holidays, the currency can be exchanged back – however, often people like to keep the bills which means, the rest is profit and can be invested in conservation. Also, a passport of this currency has been developed, where people receive stamps of businesses who take part, such as a journey through the Lake District.

2.2.2. What and how

The Lake District Foundation collects the funds and re-distributes these towards projects after an application process for grants.

Funds are directed towards 3 areas: Environment, Wildlife, Cultural Heritage.

Grant Application process for 2019 foresaw grants of up to £ 2.500, for projects up to 2 years.

Main eligible and selection criteria are the following:

- ✓ creative and innovative ideas that have a measurable and sustainable impact
- ✓ particular focus on projects that are led by or involve young people
- ✓ opportunity to match fund other income.

Non-eligible proposals/actors are:

- Work that has already taken place.
- Projects which do not demonstrate sufficient public benefit and in which private benefit is more than incidental
- Individuals
- Religious bodies where the funding will be for religious purposes
- Political organizations where the funding will be used for political purposes
- For Profit Organizations who cannot evidence social/environmental value.

Some of the projects that have been funded in the last years⁷:

- “Tree planting at Mardale Common”: 400 tree planting at Haweswater Nature Reserve
- “Improve Dash Beck at Bassenthwaite”: enhance the habitat of Dash Beck and surrounding land
- “Osprey project”: support to the Osprey nest protection, and to develop the project’s educational facilities
- “Red squirrels Northern England”: support to networks of volunteers and contractors to carry out grey squirrel control and monitoring
- “Experience the river”: local education programme aimed at giving the both the local population and visitors an appreciation of our waters and an improved environmental awareness ‘Experience the River’ days give children from local schools.

⁷ see <https://www.lakedistrictfoundation.org/recently-funded/>

2.3. »Sandals Foundation environment programme«

2.3.1. Where and who

Sandals Foundation⁸ is a non-profit organization launched in March 2009 by Sandals Resorts International for contributing to nature and culture conservation in the Caribbean.

Sandals Resorts International manages 15 Luxury Resorts located in Jamaica, Bahamas, Grenada, Barbados, Antigua and Saint Lucia.

The Sandals Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Sandals Resorts International, and was created as a natural extension of the nearly three decades of the company's lasting commitment to the Caribbean.

As an independent non-profit organization, the Sandals Foundation has assumed the existing activities of Sandals and Beaches Resorts with the aim of expanding their reach to create a positive and sustainable impact on people's lives and the environment. Working with their neighbors, civic leaders, employees and partners, they have identified programs in the areas of education, environment and community to achieve their promise.

All costs associated with administration and management is supported by Sandals International so that 100% of every dollar donated goes directly towards funding impactful and meaningful initiatives within the key areas of Education, Community and Environment.

2.3.2. What and how

With hits important budget (1,5 million US\$ only from donations, but 6,5 million US\$ with in-kind and other contributions⁹), the Foundation financed projects in the Caribbean and primarily in the countries in which Sandals Resorts operate: Jamaica, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Antigua, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Barbados. They fund projects in three focal areas: education, community, and environment.

The eligibility criteria for projects submission the Sandals Foundation considers are:

- ✓ Project name, description and purpose (i.e. scope and goals etc.)
- ✓ Number of persons who will benefit from the project and how the project will impact them
- ✓ Total sum requested and breakdown of budget
- ✓ Timeline for start and completion of the project
- ✓ Proof of additional funding or funding already received
- ✓ If any, plans to maintain the project in the long term.

Some proposals are also strengthened by the inclusion of photographs and illustrations but these are not compulsory. There is also no required length or format once the above mentioned information is included to a satisfactory level.

Selection criteria vary a lot and are decided during the selection stage: it can depend on the amount of funding being requested and the amount Foundation has available at that time, the focus/theme for the year, the success of the organization's previous projects, regional priorities and many other things.

For new programs/project all these must be sent in to the Sandals Foundation by the end of August of each year so that these can be presented to the Board of Directors when it meets in October of each year.

⁸ <https://sandalsfoundation.org>

⁹ 2016 fiscal year

In the three decade of activity, as far as Environment is concerned, Foundation has funded¹⁰:

- 2 fully operational marine sanctuaries
- 15% increase on coral coverage in Boscobel (Jamaica)
- 333% increase in fish biomass in Boscobel (Jamaica)
- 27.804 turtles safety hatched
- 15.874 lbs. of waste collected
- 10.758 trees planted
- 21.834 people received marine awareness training.

2.4. »South Africa tourism conservation fund«

2.4.1. Where and who

The South Africa Tourism Conservation Fund¹¹ is a non-profit company established by Peace Parks Foundation and the Southern Africa Tourism Services Association in May 2018.

Fund's mission is to protect biodiversity and enhance the conservation of South Africa's wildlife areas through effective economic and social development programmes which contribute to sustainable poverty reduction, economic opportunity and broad-based economic growth in communities suffering from or at a high risk of wildlife crime.

Fund is capitalized by the Peace Parks Foundation and receive extensive in-kind support from the Southern Africa Tourism Services Association. In addition, it receives numerous small grants from individual tourism enterprises operating in South Africa.

The Fund invests in the communities living adjacent to South Africa's national parks, private and community conservancies -creating viable local enterprises, training and employment opportunities for poor households and entrepreneurs who have been historically excluded from commercial opportunities linked to these parks. Its investments aim to facilitate, finance and enable the establishment of more inclusive local economies around the country's parks and protected areas, in which the opportunities and benefits that derive from them are more widely shared.

This Fund is a public-private partnership and operates as both a funder and a development facilitator. It works with existing commercial players who have the experience, networks and commitment to create, replicate and scale commercial partnerships of all kinds with historically disadvantaged communities close to the wildlife-tourism value chain. It wants to achieve its development goals by leveraging the market links, resources and expertise of established commercial players to create new enterprise, training and employment opportunities in historically excluded communities. The Fund is opportunity-driven: it responds proactively to good ideas and fresh thinking which contribute to the development and expansion of a more inclusive wildlife-tourism economy.

¹⁰ see https://sandalsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/SandalsFoundationAnnualRepor2016_4.pdf

¹¹ <https://tourismconservationfund.org/>

2.4.2. What and how

To realize its conservation goals the Fund implements a number of development programmes, and one of them is the Inclusive Business Linkage Fund. It is dedicated to supporting partnerships rooted in community homestay and related cultural experiences. It focuses on activities and experiences that attract safari travelers to experience, participate in and enjoy life and traditional activities in the villages around our game parks.

It finances partnerships and business linkages between formal and informal sector entities across the wildlife economy and only supports initiatives which will succeed commercially after Fund support ceases, it does not support charities or start-ups. Call looks for partnerships between commercial players, community enterprises and NGOs, all of whom underpin strong partnerships and the design and operation of viable businesses. Applications submitted by consortia must be led by established businesses that have a vested interest in the commercial success of the partnerships they wish to invest in.

Applicants must be established businesses that have a vested interest in the commercial success of the partnerships they wish to invest in, therefore a co-investment from the applicant is required.

Grants are provided to establish or extend community homestay and experience partnerships with small and emerging community entrepreneurs. The aim is to achieve sustainability within a period of 2 years; grants of usually not more than R200k (€ 12,6k) will be made to qualifying applicants on a 1:1 matched funding basis (whether measured in cash or kind).

Eligibility criteria are:

- ✓ commercial applicant must be an established enterprise, legally registered, able to provide a tax clearance certificate and at least two years audited financial statements
- ✓ applicant(s) must expect and demonstrate a lasting and mutually beneficial business relationship will continue between the parties after funding ceases
- ✓ applicant should have demonstrable prior experience in the relevant field of activity and/or a prior operating relationship with the targeted community
- ✓ applicant must show grounds to expect stability, continuity, and acceptance within the partner community
- ✓ not just benefit to the partner community but benefit that actively and demonstrably moves community thinking to the position: “We need the nearby park. It underpins our livelihood prospects. We want to protect this park”
- ✓ applicant to invest resources of its own into the proposed venture, thereby giving it a vested interest in its success
- ✓ community partner must demonstrate a willingness to invest its own resources (e.g. in-kind) in the venture

Impact (i.e. selection) criteria are:

- project benefits the partner community in terms of enterprise opportunities, revenue-sharing arrangements, incomes and jobs – immediately and over time
- clearly additional to what might already be happening between the parties to the application
- project likely to lead to a sustainable partnership that will endure after funding ceases
- cost of the proposed funding in terms of jobs created, products developed, enterprises supported, people trained etc.

- commitment to protecting wildlife, conserving their environment and acting against wildlife crime in areas over which they operate.

Inclusive Business Linkage Fund started in late 2018, and unfortunately funded projects have not yet been published on the web.

3. VALORIZATION PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

The **main aim of the Valorization Programme** is to develop a transboundary valorization scheme, which ensures that a certain percentage of the income from the Amazon of Europe Bike Trail will be available for nature protection, i.e. that directly or indirectly contribute to the restoration, sustainable management or protection of ecosystems of the planned 5-country TBR MDD.

Therefore the current Valorization Programme is designed on the basis of the post-project end predictable situation, i.e. when the commercialization of services/products will actually start¹² and an organization for such business-oriented activity will be created¹³.

3.1. What to finance

The main focus here is on “what” to finance, taking in account the large area of the planned 5-country TBR MDD (and therefore high number of potential applicants – see next para) and the small amount of available funds (for the time being the 5% of income from sold AoE Bike Trail services/products).

The first general principle must be the “consistency” of the Valorization Programme with the general objectives to contribute to the planned 5-country TBR MDD-related goals with a particular focus on nature conservation, which is the scope of the Valorization Programme; specific criteria to assure the achievement of such a scope have been developed below.

Another important principle is that, due to the scope of the Valorization Programme, the activities to be funded cannot generate profit, at least as direct effect.

This does not mean that profit-making actors (e.g. SMEs) can not apply for funding, but that any proposal – regardless the proponent’s juridical nature – must avoid to show any potential profit-making effect, i.e. funded project’s outputs cannot have an immediate commercial value (e.g. a tourism-related SME – an hotel - asking funds for installing an informative panel about a wetland close to its business can be accepted; at the contrary, the same hotel asking to have funded a book on the wetland that will be sold to the customers cannot be accepted).

The eligibility criteria concerning the proposal components that have been developed in the next paras are:

- ✓ topics
- ✓ project typologies
- ✓ eligible costs
- ✓ geographical scope.

These issues have been also submitted to the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders (Protected areas authorities and environmental NGOs) during the national workshops that have been carried out in 2020,

¹² since during the project life commercial activities are allowed but any income deriving from them decreases the public funding, it has been decided that commercial activities will start after the project conclusion

¹³ the “AoE Bike Trail Organization”

using an ad hoc online survey. The feedback of such a survey has been taken in account in the current document.

3.1.1. Topics

Submitted projects must contribute to the achievement of the conservation goals set for the TBR MDD¹⁴, i.e. to preserve and restore a dynamic river system:

- where the rivers can change the river bed freely between the limits
- where the hydro-morphological dynamics is preserved, restored or improved, with adequate compensation for private land
- where the natural resources are used sustainably, adapted to the river
- where the whole region, including local people and stakeholders, is included in all processes
- where the biodiversity and geodiversity is preserved and restored.

Therefore the scope of the funding mechanism should be restricted to the following Focus Areas:

- A. Wetlands and rivers restoration implementing / planning
- B. Species and habitat management / protection
- C. Floodplain forest management / protection
- D. Meadows management / protection¹⁵
- E. Nature-related education and capacity building
- F. Nature-related visitor management¹⁶.

Specific activities to be funded can vary a lot, an indicative but not exhaustive list of examples follows:

- Wetland and river restoration implementing / planning
 - Removal of embankments
 - Reconnecting side-arms
 - Dislocation/ enlargement of area between dykes
 - Land purchase by NGO/research or education organization for restoration purposes (meadows, forest, arable land to re-store as grazing area, etc.)
 - Land purchase to undo drainage and restore lateral connectivity of wetlands
 - Reintroduction of location-specific endangered or disappeared species (flora)
 - On-field research with different mowing methods on meadows to check reptile/bird/insect effects or similar projects
- Species and habitat management / protection
 - Neophyte/ alien species removal
- Floodplain forest management / protection
 - reforestation
 - reintroduction of endemic species

¹⁴ see “Guidelines for a dynamic river corridor. Part of the Transboundary Cooperation programme for the future 5-Country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube”, coop MDD, 2018

¹⁵ esp. in relation with agriculture and grazing

¹⁶ including carbon emissions and wastes reduction, plastic free programmes, local food supply, etc.

- Meadow management / protection
 - On-field research with different mowing methods on meadows to check reptile/bird/insect effects or similar projects
 - Fish protection
- Nature-related education and capacity building
 - Capacity building for e.g. sustainable meadow management in Natura 2000 area
 - Education for fishermen on protected species and sustainable fishing options
 - Capacity building for fishermen to be certified rangers and fly fishing guides
 - Project for school children (e.g. 2-day summer camp for nature-friendly camping as foreseen in the “transboundary learning network of RIVER’SCHOOLS” in the framework of MDD project)
- Nature-related visitor management
 - Tourism facilities (exclusively nature visitor guidance-related implementation)
 - Capacity building by NGO for local service providers to set up a new eco-tourism offer (e.g. support to build up a “scattered” hotel – a village with many small B&Bs managed by one unique body – where nature interpretation is the main attractor)
 - support to tourism-related SME (e.g. a kayak renting company) to develop a nature-conservation based activity for tourists (e.g. involvement of kayakers in plastic waste collection).

The results of the survey with the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders has shown that for a low budget (up to 5.000 €) project, the most favorite topics are “Nature-related education and capacity building” and “Species and habitat management / protection”, whereas if the budget is higher (up to 50.000 €) preferences go to “Wetlands and rivers restoration implementing / planning” and again to “Species and habitat management / protection”. Moreover, several comments pointed out that for effective wetland/river restoration interventions even a budget of 50.000 € is not enough.

In general, projects proposals focusing on the following areas should to be considered and are out of the scope of this funding mechanism:

- tourism (except nature-related one – see above)
- game management and hunting
- spatial planning and regional development (except forest sustainable management and sustainable agriculture and grazing in meadows – see above)
- any cost for allowing the business-related actors to achieve the compliance with legal requirements as requested for their business in any of the above focus areas.

3.1.2. project typologies

The typology of the submitted project can show different features, where the main ones are:

- a “mono-partner” project, i.e. with only one implementing body
- a “multi-partners” project, but to be implemented only in one country
- a “multi-partners cross-border” project, which involve territories of two bordering countries

- a “multi-partners transnational” project, which involve territories of more than two (up to five) bordering countries.

The results of the survey with the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders has showed that for a low budget (up to 5.000 €) project, the most favorite typologies are a “mono-partner project” and a “multi-partners project, only in one country”, whereas if the budget is higher (up to 50.000 €) preferences go to “multi-partners project, only in one country” and to “multi-partners cross-border project”.

3.1.3. eligible costs

When deciding “what” to finance, also the costs typologies show a great importance, esp. if available budget forces to “focus” on what is considered extremely important and impacting in relation with the scope of the funding mechanism.

Therefore it has commonly agreed that the following costs should not being considered eligible:

- internal staff costs
- administration (overheads)
- project proposing only communication-related activities
- infrastructures building/restoration.

The costs typologies that in general terms can be considered eligible are:

- ✓ external experts/services
- ✓ consumables
- ✓ equipment
- ✓ training and education
- ✓ comms-related costs (if directly related to and completing an actual conservation-related action).

The results of the survey with the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders has showed that for a low budget (up to 5.000 €) project, the most favorite costs typologies are “training and education” and “consumables”, whereas if the budget is higher (up to 50.000 €) preferences go to “external experts/service” and to “equipment”.

3.1.4. Geographical scope

There are different issues linked to a “geographical” scope of any distribution of grants, to be exploited in the development of the selection scoring system.

First main criterion concerning the geographical scope should be: any submitted project has to be implemented within the TBR MDD.

More detailed geographical scopes can be further defined in the eligibility criteria, the main ones are:

- ✓ geographical focus is defined yearly so eligible territories can rotate in time
- ✓ in alternative, in the short-term (e.g. in the first 3 years of the funding mechanism), funding could be restricted to certain sub-areas (e.g. TBR MDD core zone), while in the long-term submitted projects can be located in both core and buffer zone of the TBR MDD

- ✓ Another kind of “geographical” scope is linked to the ecology, i.e. the species and the habitats that deserve more attention: Key species (flora and fauna)
- ✓ Key habitats (i.e. very valuable and highly fragile biocoenosis).

The results of the survey with the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders has shown a substantial balance in the preferences between “key species” and to “key habitats”, thus meaning that both options must be foreseen in the financing mechanism.

3.2. Who to finance

In principle any legally established actor in one of the 5 countries involved in the AoE Bike Trail project could apply for funding; but since the scope of the Valorization Programme and the limited available resources, an additional eligibility criterion is added: any applicant must demonstrate to have at least one previous experience of actual working in the TBR MDD area in the 10 years previously the proposed project.

The eligible applicants can be divided per legal status, i.e. public and private¹⁷ one.

Eligible bodies usually should be “juridical” persons, i.e. formally established bodies, not just individuals. An option to be foreseen is to give the possibility also to “physical” persons – (e.g. a committed ecologist, who owns several hectares of wetland along the river and wants a very small grant to restore an arable land/a wet-meadow with original flora) or informal groups to apply for funding: since usually a grant should be appointed only to a body that must be formally established, i.e. must demonstrate to have a financial System of Management and Control and a proportionate financial capacity (i.e. previous experiences) to manage grants, one possibility could be that the proposed project partnership can include an actor having juridical personality (which will be responsible of the use of the money) and another one being “informal”, i.e. a “physical” person or informal group, which will receive a share of the funding, from the partner having the juridical personality, for developing his tasks within the project managed by the other partner¹⁸.

A “rotation” principle could also be applied: the same applicant cannot receive more than a certain amount/number of grants, and then he is not anymore eligible; or it is eligible only for a short period (e.g. 2 years) and then it goes out from the list of eligible actors and others similar actors substitute him in the list. Since this point can have a great variety of possibilities, it must be developed into a later stage by the Selecting Committee.

¹⁷ the ones that are mixed (public/private) have to be appointed to one of the 2 groups depending their “public equivalence” nature or not (see Directive 2004/18/CE).

¹⁸ see South Africa case study, §2.4

3.2.1. Public actors

Public bodies (or “bodies ruled by public law”, or “public equivalent bodies”) are those organizations legally established as public institutions or with private juridical status but created for public goals and being managed/controlled by other public bodies. Of course they are in principle eligible for the funding mechanism, except the case where they’re part of the selecting body (e.g. a Park managing body): in this case there could be a conflict of interest, depending on the selected funding mechanism: if a competitive one, the conflict of interest is clearly existing; if the mechanism is not a competitive one (see below: e.g. “top-down grants”) such a conflict of interest is not relevant.

Public and “public equivalent” actors having legal headquarter/branch office located in the 5 project-related countries can be:

- PAs managing bodies (see below for their participation in the donor selecting committee)
- local administrations
- Research/education institutions
- local agencies for tourism/agricultural/etc. development.

3.2.2. Private actors

Private bodies are the non-public entities, which can be divided into profit-making (e.g. SMEs) and not-for-profit (e.g. NGOs, cooperatives, etc.) ones.

Private actors having legal headquarter/branch premises located in the 5 project-related countries can be (in a decreasing order of priority):

- local conservation and/or educational NGOs/associations
- international NGOs active in the area
- research/education organizations (e.g. for capacity building)
- local tourism-related SMEs, associations of tourism-related SMEs, non-local tourism-related companies (e.g. international Tour Operators)¹⁹
- private persons or informal groups, in partnership with formally established actors²⁰.

3.3. How to finance

The most known mechanism for funds distribution is usually a competitive one, i.e. a fully-open or restricted-to-some-typologies Calls for Proposals (or for “Small Grants”), where any eligible body can apply a proposal requesting some funds and the Donor select the ones more fitting in the Call for Proposals selection criteria. Another system is the one that allocate a certain % of the budget for “top-down” grants – i.e. projects/actions decided yearly by the Donor (for instance the funding scheme selecting body – for its composition see below). A third possibility is to earmark another share of available funds for “aids” to pre-selected areas/actors. Of course all of the three mechanisms can be simultaneously used, earmarking some amounts for each of them and focusing each mechanism on different topics/areas/actors/etc.

¹⁹ respecting all project eligibility criteria esp. that the proposal does not bring direct profits

²⁰ respecting all project eligibility criteria esp. that the proposal does not bring direct profits

For the application and selection procedure, see next chapter.

Another component to be developed – following the definition of the previous ones – is the “financial flows” one, i.e. who manages the available funding, and distributes them to the selected applicants and monitors the use of these funds; again, this is detailed in the next chapter.

3.3.1. Top-down grants

A so called “top-down” granting system is when the donor does not ask for proposals but develops by itself the main components of an action/project and appoints another actor (or the donor itself) to further detail and/or implement the action/project.

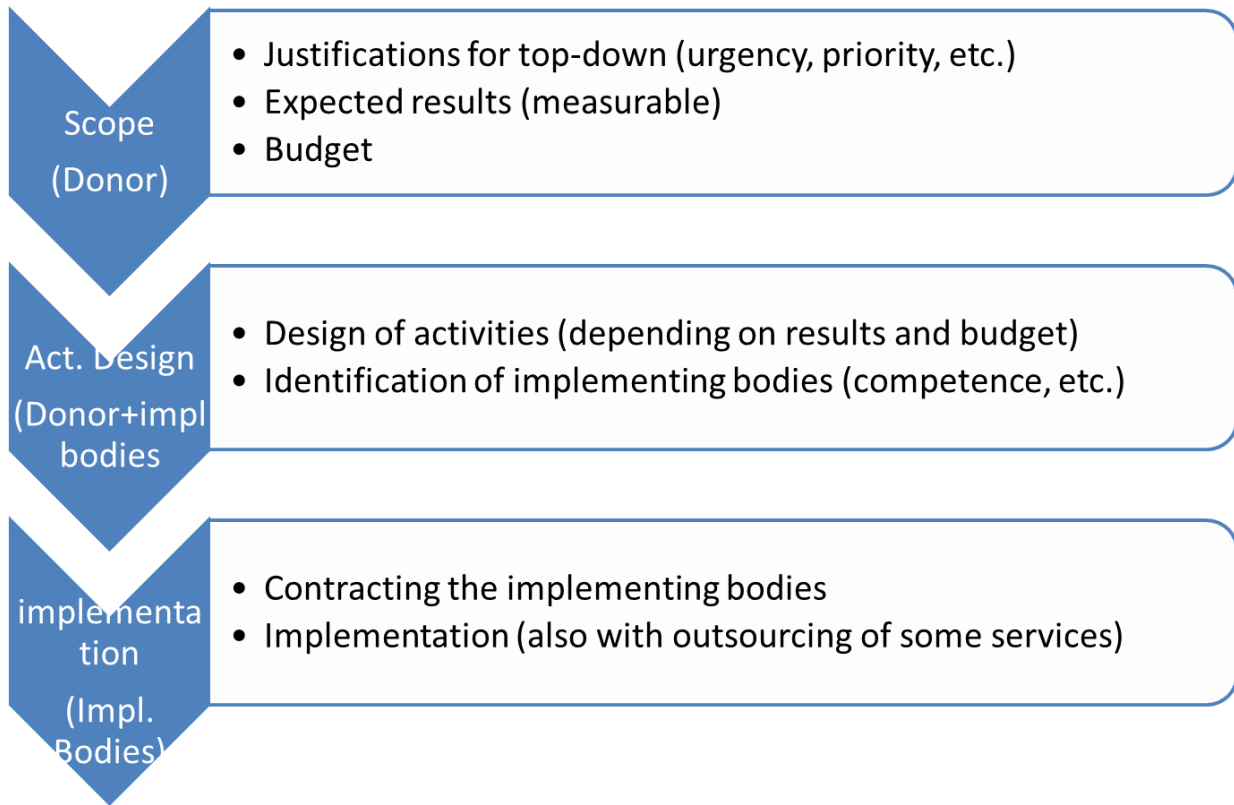
Added values of such non-competitive scheme are the focus on what is considered “priority” by the donor itself, and on selecting what is considered the most competent body for implementing the activity in the most effective way; another advantage is the shortness of the process, since a competition is avoided.

In summary the main components of such approach are:

- a yearly predefined budget, with agreed and publicized specific topic(s) and expected results
- procedure of the funding process:
 - definition of needs in relation with selected topic(s) and of available budget;
 - identification of most effective solutions (with a value-for-money approach) for identified needs;
 - design of project(s) to be funded, including timeline and implementing actor(s);
 - contracting the identified implementing actor(s);
- bodies implementing the different procedural steps:
 - the “donor”, i.e. the legal responsible of the whole funding process; in order to assure the highest possible accountability and fairness, this body must be a public one or “ruled by public law”, i.e. proving to be created mainly for public goals and to be controlled in its activities mainly (e.g. its composition is made in majority by public bodies) by public/public equivalent bodies;
 - the “selecting committee”, i.e. the internal conservation advisory body responsible of the funding mechanism (can be within the Legally Responsible Body of the whole AoE Bike Trail, or can be an external one, mandated by the first one); it must identify the needs, design the project and identify the implementing actor(s);
 - the “Secretariat” (can be a department of the donor), i.e. the operational responsible of the supervision of the use of funds; it must prepare the funding-related contract with the identified implementing actor(s), monitor the project implementation and manage all the contract-related requirements (monitoring, reporting, publicity, etc.) and manage the financial flow between the donor and the beneficiary/ies of the funding
- shortlist of implementing actors: they can be identified because of their nature (e.g. Protected Areas) or created through a Call for Interest (for setting up the shortlist); the results of the survey with the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders has showed a preference for a shortlist set up through a Call for Interest;

- a strong monitoring system – managed by the donor – to check the effectiveness of the implementation against the expected results.

Below a visual description of the different steps of the process of a “top-down grant”



3.3.2. Earmarked aids

Another option, complementary to the two other ones, is to decide priori to allocate a certain % to some specific actors (non-profit actors, in order to avoid any “State aid” related issue) and topics (among the eligible ones), based on objective (and arithmetic) criterion, as for these 2 options:

- “who generates the value”: i.e. a certain amount of the available budget is “offset” to some pre-identified actors (PA managing bodies, environmental NGOs) which support effectively their related AoE bike trail stage to generate significant amounts of income on a yearly base; in this way stakeholders (not directly the service providers but the conservation-related actors) are stimulated to perform their best
- or on the contrary a “solidarity” principle can be applied, i.e. within the less performing AoE bike trail stages the financial support is provided to those actors (PA managing bodies, environmental NGOs) that have to increase their contribution to AoE bike trail stage’s commercial performance.
- or a rotation principle can be adopted, involving all the 5 TBR MDD countries: each year some pre-identified actors (NGOs and PAs) from one country are the sole beneficiaries of this financial support.

The results of the survey carried out with the main TBR MDD-related stakeholders has not shown a preferred option, so all of them can be taken into account.

The funds are appointed once per year (for instance at the end of a AoE Bike Trail financial year) to the pre-identified actors and topic(s), without the need of developing a project proposals; as soon as the amount per each beneficiary is fixed, the latter must draft a short description of the use of such funds, complying with the Valorization Programme eligibility rules.

This approach allows that funds are addressed directly into nature protection (which is the main attractor of AoE Bike Trail offer) in the quickest possible way (i.e. without waiting for a project design), through the automatic appointment of some pre-selected beneficiaries (e.g. the 12 PAs managing bodies and the about 20 active conservation-related NGOs about), following the “distribution” formula that must be defined and agreed by for instance the DDO General Assembly/AoE Bike Trail partnership, in order to be fair.

In summary the main components of such approach are:

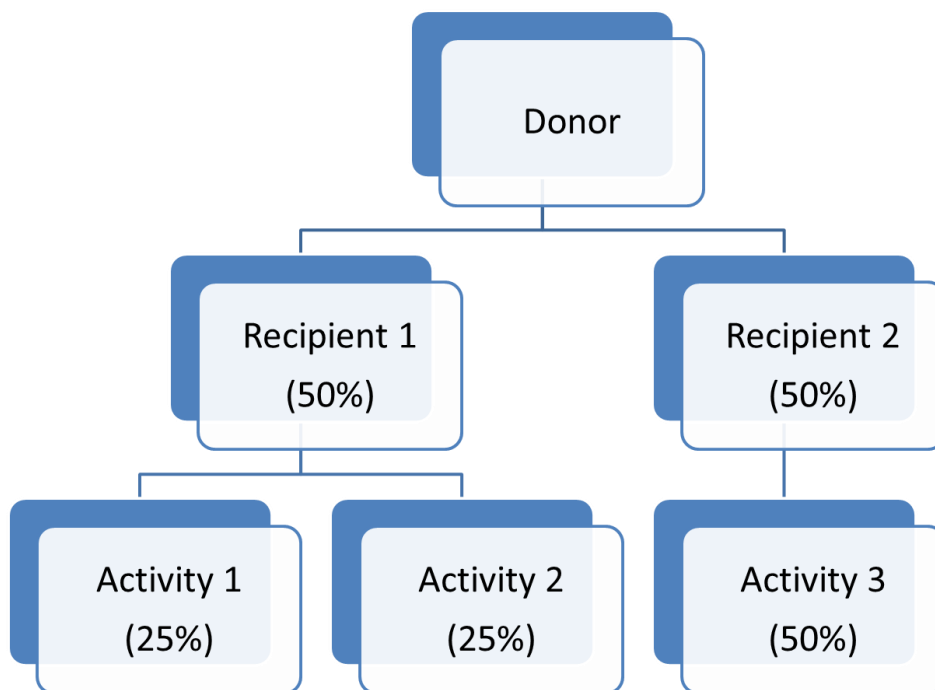
- the Donor decides an yearly predefined budget, with agreed and publicized specific topic(s) and expected results
- procedure of the funding process:
 - definition of year topic(s) and of available budget;
 - definition of funds amount per each Beneficiary
 - short description (Concept Note) of the use of such amount by each Beneficiary, including timeline (not overpassing 12 months);
 - contracting each Beneficiary;
- bodies implementing the different procedural steps:
 - the “donor”, i.e. the legal responsible of the whole funding process; in order to ensure the highest possible accountability and fairness, this body must be a public one or “ruled by public law”, i.e. proving to be created mainly for public goals and to be controlled in its activities mainly (e.g. its composition is made in majority by public bodies) by public/public equivalent bodies;
 - the “Selecting Committee”, i.e. the internal conservation advisory body responsible of the funding mechanism (can be within the Legally Responsible Body of the whole AoE Bike Trail, or can be an external one, mandated by the first one) in this case must check only the compliance of the short description of the use of such funds with the eligibility rules
 - the “Secretariat” (can be a department of the donor), i.e. the operational responsible of the supervision of the use of funds; must prepare the funding-related contract with the pre-selected Beneficiary, monitor the activities implementation and manage all the contract-related requirements (monitoring, reporting, publicity, etc.) and must manage the financial flow between the donor and the beneficiary/ies of the funding.

Concerning the role of PAs managing bodies, there are at least two different options:

- they are – together with the environmental NGOs – the potential beneficiaries of such “Earmarked funds”
- they receive the earmarked funds but they re-distribute them among the NGOs working in their territories, because it is assumed that these earmarked funds can be more effective if used by NGOs (and also because they can be a little but important support for NGO existence).

This system has some weaknesses, of course: for instance available funds can be too small to divide among so many actors (PAs managing bodies, conservation-related NGOs); or the control of actual earmarking and avoidance of double-financing could be difficult (more partners to control; large and complex budgets; partially centrally state body managed) and it would mobilize too small amounts to “communicate” in an effective way).

Below a visual description of the different steps of the process of an “earmarked fund”



3.3.3. Open calls

In a situation where there are available funds to be devoted to tackle some problems perceived of common interest, the competitive mechanism of an open “Call for Proposals” is the most popular (and fair) way of distributing funds for public purposes.

To set a public call (even when “restricted” to a certain number/typology of eligible proponents, or focusing on a specific geographical area/topic) the following elements are needed:

- eligibility criteria, split in:
 - “personal” (i.e. related to the Applicant/partnership features – see above “who”) and
 - “objective” (i.e. related to the minimum required features of the proposal – see above “what”)
- selection criteria, split in
 - content-related
 - financial-related

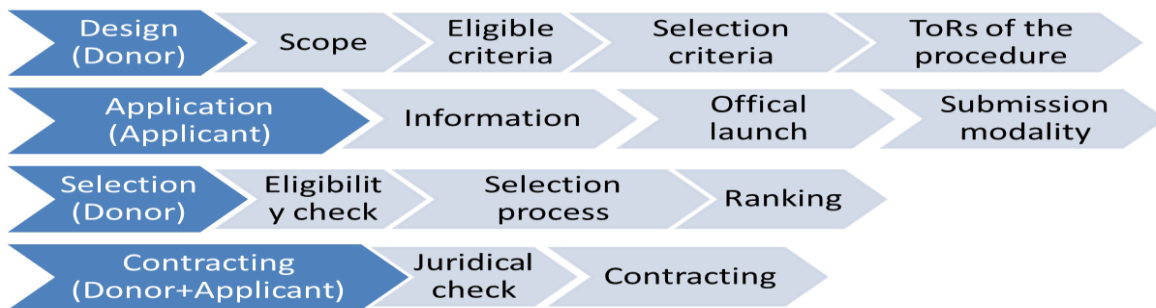
- each criterion must have a “scoring system” (i.e. min/max points for each selection criteria) able to issue a final list (ranking) where all the eligible proposals are included in a decreasing order, and the funded are those having highest ranking in relation with available Call’s funds;
- concerning scoring system, additional points can be given for instance if the proposal is receiving a co-funding from another donor, or through “crowd-based” mechanisms (e.g. votes from customers, or local communities, or donations received by individuals, after putting online a “Bank of ideas” made of pre-selected proposals), occurring post “internal” selection process
- procedure of the selection process:
 - launch of the Call for Proposals
 - application period
 - selection period
 - contracting period
 - deadline for end of implementation (see below flowchart)
- bodies implementing the different procedural steps:
 - the “donor”, i.e. the legal responsible of the whole funding process; in order to assure the highest possible accountability and fairness, this body must be a public one or “ruled by public law”, i.e. proving to be created mainly for public goals and to be controlled in its activities mainly (e.g. its composition is made in majority by public bodies) by public/public equivalent bodies; it supervises the overall procedures and is responsible of the communication of results of different selection steps on website (Call’s accountability)
 - the “selecting committee”, i.e. the internal conservation advisory body responsible of the funding mechanism (can be within the Legally Responsible Body of the whole AoE Bike Trail, or can be an external one, mandated by the first one) must be the technical responsible of the selection process, i.e. must carry out the technical work of the funding mechanism, i.e. to apply the eligible and selection criteria to the received proposals
 - the “Secretariat” (can be a department of the donor), i.e. the operational responsible of the supervision of the use of funds; it must prepare the funding-related contract with the Lead Applicant of the selected proposal, monitor the proposal implementation and manage all the contract-related requirements (monitoring, reporting, publicity, etc.) and must manage the financial flow between the donor and the beneficiary/ies of the funding.

Taking in account all the above components, to distribute funds through an open call, must take in account the costs/benefits ratio in term of efficiency that can lead to the following options:

- if the available funds to be distributed are significant (in relation with their expected impact on identified problems) and the “governance architecture” of the Call for Proposal is already in place (or close to be established), the “feasibility degree” seems enough for setting up a competitive mechanism
- if the available funds to be distributed are not so significant (in relation with their expected impact on identified problems) and the “governance architecture” of the Call for Proposal is not yet in place (or is close to be established but not yet clear in all its components), the “feasibility degree” could be not

enough for setting up a competitive mechanism and there is the need to wait some years, in order to increase the available funds and set up the governance system.

Below a visual description of the different steps of the process of an “open call”



4. PLAN OF ACTION

4.1. Process' components

4.1.1. The governance of the process

At the end of the AoE Bike Trail project the first main task will be to identify/set up the governing bodies.

As already pointed out above, the “Donor” is the Legal Responsible for the whole process, and must assure the highest possible degree of accountability and fairness.

This is the reason why this body must be a public one or “ruled by public law”, i.e. proving to be created mainly for public goals and to be controlled in its activities mainly (e.g. its composition is made in majority by public bodies) by public/public equivalent bodies.

The “Selection Committee” is the internal conservation advisory body responsible for the selection process, i.e. must carry out the technical work of the identified funding mechanism, applying the eligible and selection criteria to the received proposals, and then submits its decisions to the Donor, which takes the final decision. It can be established within the Legal Responsible body of the whole process (the Donor), as a technical working group whose decisions are adopted by the Donor, or can be an external body (already existing or newly established), i.e. seconded by the Donor in implementing the selecting task.

In any of these cases (internal working group or external body) it can be composed of different bodies and also individual experts²¹, but it is worth mentioning that such a Committee must be able to demonstrate clear capacities in assessing conservation measures and that the majority of its composition is made of public/public equivalent bodies.

Of course its composition can build on the AoE Bike Trail former project partnership but can be open to other actors (Protected Areas managing bodies and nature-oriented NGOs) of the TBR MDD territory: it will be defined by the AoE Bike Trail DDO as far as the project will end.

The “Secretariat” is the operational responsible of the supervision of the use of funds, i.e. must prepare the funding-related contract with the Lead Applicant of the selected proposal, monitor the proposal implementation and manage all the contract-related requirements (monitoring, reporting, publicity, etc.).

Moreover, it must manage the financial flow between the Donor and the beneficiary/ies of the funding; it can be a department of the Donor or an external body (already existing or newly established), i.e. seconded by the Donor in implementing these tasks.

²¹ although this last option is not the most effective ones, both in terms of justification of each individual expert appointment, and because the individual expert can resign anytime

4.1.2. The financial flow

The financial-related components of the whole process should be as follows:

- at the end of each financial year, the Donor (i.e. the AoE Bike Trail DDO) settles the available amount for the funding mechanism, based on actual income of the just expired financial year of the AoE Bike Trail commercialization
- the available amount is set aside into an ad hoc Donor financial item, to be used for the forthcoming “funding distribution” process
- based on the available amount, the funding mechanism to be used is identified, as for instance:
 - if available funds are below 5.000 €, the mechanism should be only the “Top-Down Grants”
 - if available funds are between 5.000 and 15.000 €, the mechanisms could be the “Top-Down Grants” and the “Earmarked aids”
 - if available funds are between 15.000 and 30.000 €, the mechanisms could be the “Top-Down Grants” and/or the “Open Calls”
 - if available funds are above 30.000 €, the mechanisms could be the “Top-Down Grants”, the “Earmarked aids” and the “Open Calls”
- as soon as the beneficiary/ies of the funding mechanism/s has/have been identified, a “Grant Contract” must be signed between the Donor and the Lead Partner of the appointed project proposal
- the actual transfer of the allocated funds should be split in at least two payments, i.e. a 50% after the implementation of half of the foreseen activities and the remaining 50% after the closure of the project and the approval of its final reporting
- a pre-financing system can be also envisaged, i.e. a share of the total amount (no exceeding the 30% of the total) can be transferred before the kick off of the activities, in order to provide fresh money to the Beneficiary/ies for easing the starting of the activities.

4.2. Process' stages

4.2.1. By the end of the AoE Bike Trail project

In order to have the funding mechanism(s) in place when there will be reasonably some funds to distribute – i.e. at the end of the 1st year of commercialization of the AoE Bike Trail, phase that will start after the end of project activities – it is useful to define the things to carry out.

Some of them are already foreseen in the project Application Form, some have already been decided in past PSC meetings²².

For this phase that can be considered as preparatory for the starting-up of the Valorization Programme implementation, the main activities (with related timeframes) already/to be deployed by the end of AoE project are:

²² e.g. Croatia, 12-13 February 2020

- collection of inputs from national workshops in the TBR MDD (March-April 2020, already done) and from PPs via Skype/email exchanges (June-October 2020, done)
- upgraded version of Valorization Programme, taking into account the results of national workshops (December 2020, done)
- discussion and approval of final Valorization Programme by AoE Bike Trail PPs (February 2021)
- definition/establishment of AoE Bike Trail funding mechanism legal responsible body - e.g. DDO - AoE Bike Trail organization (by the end of the AoE Bike Trail project)
- definition/setting up of the AoE Bike Trail funding mechanism Selecting Committee - e.g. a Committee involving actors from conservation sector: NGOs, PAs managing bodies, AoE Bike Trail PPs, etc. (by the end of the AoE Bike Trail project).

4.2.2. After the end of the AoE Bike Trail project – first 3-5 years

AoE Bike Trail project will end in October 2021, therefore the commercialization phase of AoE Bike Trail will start in Autumn 2021 and AoE Bike Trail DDO will define for the first fiscal year the available budget for funding, depending on the total collected income from commercialization activity; as a consequence the first available budget for the “Valorization Programme” implementation will be known only in late stage of 2022 (and presumably it will be very low).

Next years’ funding budgets will depend on the success of the AoE Bike Trail commercial performance, and a “Business Plan” is expected by the end of the project, but supposedly the first 3-5 years won’t issue a large amount of money for the Valorization Programme, taking in account that 5% of total income will be allocated to this funding mechanism.

Therefore there is the need to distinguish two main phases that are:

- A. “Starting-up” phase (first 3-5 years after the project end)
- B. “ordinary” phase (after the first 3-5 years and in any case as soon as the available budget for the funding mechanism will approximate at least around 50.000 €.

For the “starting up phase”, also the results of the survey carried out with the main TBR MDD related stakeholders has shown that with a low budget available for the funding mechanism, it is wiser to use only “Top-down” and/or “Earmarked aids” mechanisms, in order not to waste too much time (and money) with a long procedure – as an open Call for Proposal is – for a low amount of resources.

One approach could be for example to use only “Top-down grants” funding mechanism, targeting each year on one of the five TBR MDD countries and just two out of the six eligible topics.

In this case the “Donor” (AoE BT DDO, building on the scoping carried out by the Selecting Committee) – should select the year’s country and topics, based on the main needs as come out from the identified territory, identify the most performing solutions (taken in account the available budget), and finally appoint the most effective (in relation with the solution) implementing body/ies.

In this way the funded project will be the results of a shared analysis of the most urgent needs as expressed by the most relevant representatives of the identified territory in relation with the selected topics, and will assure the highest effectiveness in relation with the available funds.

Also the process of drafting the proposals should be pretty quick and efficient, because expected results and best solutions have been already identified by the Selecting Committee; therefore a bilateral negotiation between the Donor (supported by the Selecting Committee) and the identified beneficiary/ies should drive to a quick agreement and a prompt startup of the project implementation.

For the starting phase WWF Adria collected different project ideas from participants of the workshops organized in the scope of the WP6. As the result multiple project ideas from 10 different stakeholders who are actively implementing conservation projects in the TBR MDD were gathered. Amazon of Europe Bike Trail project partners were invited to share their opinion on the project ideas and raise their voice about the projects which should be given a chance to be financed in the first following years after the project ends. Partners who contributed shared the opinion that the DDO should first finance projects which have both nature conservation and marketing value. Out of the proposed projects, partners liked the “Sand Martin (River bank clean up)” project the best since it has a conservation impact for a population of Sand Martins, while also being very good for communication and marketing purposes. Second project which had majority of “votes” was the “Protection of amphibians from road casualties” and the Sand Martin project is proposed to be the first to be financed in the following first years of the AoE Bike Trail implementation, after official end of the AoE Bike Trail project.

4.2.3. After the first 3-5 years

After the end of the “starting up” phase – and with a more consistent budget, ideally around 50.000 € at least per year – the Donor (AoE BT DDO) will define for every fiscal year the available budget for funding, depending as usual on the total collected income from the commercialization activity.

Therefore in addition to “Top-down grants” and Earmarked aids also an open Call for Proposals can be activated where the “Donor” (AoE BT DDO) designs for every fiscal year at least 1 “Call for small scale projects” with regional impact and clear visibility in the region, defining projects’ size, topics, eligibility and selection criteria.

In this “ordinary” regime all the different possibilities (described in the previous chapter) can be implemented but the hints received from the national seminars seem to suggest to concentrate the funds into small scale projects having a regional impact and clear visibility (e.g. tourists awareness raising) preferably involving more than one TBR MDD countries and tackling most sensitive and “flagship” species (e.g. kingfisher, sand martin, black stork).

5. CONCLUSIONS

It seems worth mentioning that the AoE Bike Trail funding mechanism is not just the traditional process (e.g. the donations from big tourism corporations - like the German Tour Operator “TUI” for instance – to some foundations/NGOs devoted to nature conservation) where an »impacting« activity (as tourism is) has to pay back a little % of its revenues for »partially compensate« the damages created by its business-related activities. In the case of AoE Bike Trail project (and the current Valorization Programme is the instrument for it) is concerned, there is a sort of pre-DDO (i.e. the project partnerships) that has created a “destination” for bike tourism (roughly corresponding to the TBR MDD) who generates new incomes for the local economic operators and in last instance for local communities: therefore it seems pretty fair that a % of such incomes has to be re-invested by the foreseen AoE BT DDO for improving the product also through the protection of the main natural assets, that are actually the main tourism attractors of this destination for the tourism target group that has been selected (i.e. the bikers).

This is typically an entrepreneurial-based approach, and it’s very innovative that a mainly public conservation based partnership applies such a complicated system in its operation, taking a strong commitment well beyond the end of the funded project.

6. APPENDIX: PAY BACK MECHANISMS

Sustainable tourism can effectively benefit conservation either directly, indirectly or financially, as follows:

- ✓ Directly, where suitable activities can be developed involving the tourists in contributing to protected area monitoring activities, and carrying on hands-on works (e.g. cleaning a beach) to enhance nature conservation; also the reduction of the ecological footprint of the packages and direct sustainability-related spending (e.g. buying organic food) at local level can contribute for a small extent
- ✓ Indirectly, when for instance the parks want to increase their “recognition” (i.e. ownership from local communities) on a local level throughout the ecotourism development process; their educational strategies and actions to raise the awareness and increase Park popularity – as well as the mutual understanding between tourists and locals, can support the effectiveness of park’s mission; Protected Areas lack of, usually, thorough eco-tourist participation in conservation action or volunteer activities, or standardized measurement tools to quantify and document direct and indirect conservation outcomes
- ✓ Financially, especially if the nature conservation-related bodies (e.g. the Parks managing bodies) experience significant limitations in public funding and need to capitalize the opportunity of financial benefits that can come from the ecotourism packages.

Therefore, beside the AoE Bike Trail funding mechanisms that have been described in the current document, there are other ways – instead than selling products for generating conservation-targeted financial resources from tourism – that could be explored as “visitors pay-back tools”, as:

- visitor-donation mechanisms (e.g. money collection boxes, online donations, etc.) set up explicitly for financing Protected Area activities as wildlife (e.g. flagship species) protection or habitats restoration
- lotteries (where tickets can be sold through the accommodation structures) for financing tourism facilities construction/renovation
- merchandising (i.e. selling of low-price goods strictly related to the natural attractors)
- incentives to private business (e.g. stimulating film producers to choose the area as location, and in turn provide monetary contributions to the park)
- eco-taxes (e.g. fees for accessing special places, or issuing new permits for building tourism facilities but receiving a fee for the concession)
- bio-prospecting fees (e.g. for the right to collect biochemical or genetic materials)
- resource extraction-related fees (for instance if within the protected area there is a mining/oil extraction activity that cannot be stopped)
- payments for ecosystem services (e.g. on hydropower-based incomes if the Park is protecting the concerned watershed)
- corporate partnerships (i.e. financial or in-kind support from private companies to specific protected area’s programme, thus gaining visibility in their consumers’ market because of their support to)
- sponsorships (i.e. financial support from public or private actors to the protected area, thus gaining fiscal benefits).
- Crowd-funding mechanisms (i.e. raising funds from a large number of people via internet for a protection of a specific species or a habitat)