

EcoVeloTour

Fostering enhanced ecotourism planning along the
Eurovelo cycle route in the Danube region

Documentation of the Interactive Checklist developed by BOKU-ITS

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Rationale

A key element of work package 3 “Ecotourism planning” was the development of “Guidelines for Sustainable Bicycle Tourism” (Aschauer et al., 2021). The aim of the guidelines was to facilitate the development of regional strategies and planning processes. The guidelines utilize synergies between sustainable multimodal mobility planning, including cycling infrastructure, and cyclist ecotourism related services and ecotourism development (e.g. destination management, marketing, product development) along the EuroVelo routes. The guidelines for sustainable bicycle tourism provide a comprehensive basis for planning and improving all relevant mobility-related infrastructure and services.

In the original plan a simple checklist should be part of the guidelines. During the development of the project EcoVeloTour it became clear that a static checklist would not be suitable to cope with the complexities of planning for sustainable bicycle tourism. Hence an interactive self-assessment tool was developed on the basis of the guidelines. A mock-up of the tool in MS Excel was tested in transnational learning interactions, with students of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna and in a workshop with stakeholders from the Austrian micro-region Schwarzatal. During the project EcoVeloTour the tool was also used as an instrument to collect feedback from project partners and external stakeholders. The final version of the tool is part of the EcoVeloTour e-learning platform.

The interactive tool is organised along the following seven chapters of the guidelines:

1. Bicycle based eco-tourism
2. Infrastructure for high-level bicycle tourism
3. Transport services and intermodality
4. Bicycle rental schemes
5. Accommodation and gastronomy
6. Information, communication and marketing
7. Measuring bicycle based eco-tourism

The main aim of the tool is to support stakeholders in the early strategic phases of the development of strategies and projects. The tool supports the users by asking concrete, practical and detailed questions, e.g.: How easily can tourists travel to your region in an eco-friendly way? How do you assess the maintenance of the bike routes? Is there enough information about bike rental services? Help texts direct users to specific sections of the guidelines if they are in need of support. Nevertheless, this strategic tool is not intended to be a substitute for detailed expert planning and assessment.

Basic structure of the tool

The Excel based tool functions without using macros. The tool consists of 56 individual spreadsheets. Three of the spreadsheet deal with general information. Seven spreadsheets are used for scoring the chapter wise sub-questions by the users. Seven spreadsheets are used for the definition of the weights of the different sub-questions asked in each chapter. The remaining 39 spreadsheets contain help text for individual sub-questions and topics.

The navigation between the spreadsheets is organised via links. E.g. “[→](#)” forward to the next sheet or [← Back to interface](#) back to the sheet “Interface”.

General information

Legal notice

Contains the names of the authors and licence information.



WP3 Ecotourism planning

Interactive checklist for sustainable bicycle tourism

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Version 1.1

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[→](#)

Figure 1: Screenshot spreadsheet “Legal notice”

Interface

There is a home screen which explains the basic principles and functionalities of the tool (sheet “Interface”). From this screen users can navigate directly to one of the seven chapters or start the self assessment in the order of the chapters.



This questionnaire is part of the interactive checklist which was developed in WP3 Ecotourism planning. The purpose of the questionnaire is to enable users to carry out a self-assessment of their region or case study, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to direct them to the relevant parts of the guidelines.




How does this self-assessment work?



Below you have an example question to illustrate the process.

All questions can be answered on a scale from 1 (best option) to 5 (worst option), for every question we created an "Help"-button. By clicking it, you will be navigated to a help page. There we provide a short description of the topic, guidance/examples how to rate this question and links to further material if you are interested in deepening your knowledge. A direct reference to the EcoVeloTour Guidelines is given, if the topic is covered by them. At the end of the help-page you find a button, directing you back to the question which you were trying to answer.

If you can not answer a question even after consulting the help page, please select "Don't know". When selecting "Don't know", a reminder will pop up to consult the "Help"-button, just in case you haven't done so yet.

Example question	  	Don't know	Help
0.1	1 2 3 4 5 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="button" value="?"/>
How is the weather today? (1 = very good; 5 = terrible)			

How is the self assessment structured?



We begin with a brief survey about some characteristics of the region or case study area.

The rest of the questionnaire is structured along the chapters of the "Guidelines for sustainable bicycle tourism".

The "Guidelines for sustainable bicycle tourism" identify the following seven topics as relevant:

1 Eco-tourism	Assess	Weight
2 Cycling Infrastructure	Assess	Weight
3 Public transport	Assess	Weight
4 Bike rental schemes	Assess	Weight
5 Accommodation and gastronomy	Assess	Weight
6 Touristic products	Assess	Weight
7 Monitoring	Assess	Weight

You can click on "Assess" to navigate to the evaluation spreadsheets and assess the different sub-elements for your region. Or click on "Start" below and finish one topic after the other.

Click on "Weight" to define the importance of the sub-topics for the assessment.

If you are using this tool for the first time, we recommend using the preselected weights!

At the end of the questionnaire you will be navigated to a summary page, which provides you with an overview of the results of your assessment. There you can identify your regions strengths and weaknesses and identify topics relevant for improvements.

Beginn with the self assessment

Click on start to beginn the self assessment :

[START!](#)



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[→ Legal notice](#)

Figure 2: Screenshot spreadsheet "Interface"

General data

There is also a screen where the users should give some basic data about the region which they want to assess (sheet "0 General data"). Input should entered in the cells marked in grey colour. A drop down menu is used for the question "How would you categorize the type of the region?". The rest are free text fields.

General data

During this self assessment, many questions will refer to the term "*your region*". The term region should not be seen too strictly as an area of a specific size. It should be understood as the area where you would like to boost eco-tourism by improving the conditions and environment for cycle tourism.

This area can be for example a federal state, a municipality, a larger urban area, a national park, a thematic region (e.g. the Wachau), or a branded bicycle route (e.g. the Neusiedler See Radweg).

Should none of the options given fit to your region, please give a brief description of the region you are assessing.

Opening questions

What is the name of the region, you are applying the EcoVeloTour Guidelines:

How would you categorize the type of the region? If other:

Your institution:

Your position:

[← Back to interface](#) [→ Summary results](#)

[Eco-tourism →](#)

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Figure 3: Screenshot spreadsheet "0 General data"

Data collection for assessment

Seven spreadsheets are used to collect data for the assessment. Figure 4 shows the screenshot for the chapter eco-tourism as an example. Users have to answer chapter wise sub-questions scoring from 1 (very good) to 5 (very bad) or tick the option "Don't know". Radio buttons are used for this purpose. The chapter eco-tourism contains six sub-questions. The number of sub-questions ranges from three (monitoring) to seven (cycling infrastructure and touristic products). Next to the option "Don't know" there is a help button linked to the respective spreadsheet. E.g. for question 1.1 "How familiar is your region with the principles of eco-tourism?" to the spreadsheet "Help 1 Eco-tourism".

In each chapter there is an additional question in which the users should assess their own knowledge about the topic of the chapter on a scale from 1 = I am or consulted an expert; 5 = The topic is new to me. Finally there is free text field to enter comments marked in grey.



Please, define how important the different elements concerning **eco-tourism** are for you in your region. Attention: The weights of the single elements should add up to 100%.

No.	Element	Weight
1.1	How familiar is your region with the principles of eco-tourism?	17%
1.2	How high is the contribution of eco-tourism to the touristic income of your region?	17%
1.3	How important is sustainability in the tourism branch for your region?	17%
1.4	In which environmental state are your national parks, nature reserves, water bodies and landscapes?	17%
1.5	How sustainably are these natural areas used for eco-tourism?	17%
1.6	How important is cycling tourism for tourism strategies in your region?	17%
	← Start assessment	100%
	← Back to interface	

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Figure 5: Screenshot spreadsheet “Weights 1 Eco-tourism”

Results

The spreadsheet “Summary” presents the results of the self assessment in form of a table and a diagram (Figure 6).

Each row of the table includes the results for on chapter. The chapter name is followed by a column showing the number of sub-questions. The next column shows the number of “Don’t knows”. If these is one or more the cell is highlighted in red. The next column shows the number of responses not being “Don’t know”. The fifths column shows the weighted average as calculated in Equation 1. The next three columns show the minimum and maximum score and the standard deviation. A final column shows the level of expertise of the person answering the questions.

$$a_i = \sum_k w_i^k * s_i^k$$

Equation 1: Calculation of the weighted average score a_i

Where, a_i is the weighted average score of chapter i , w_i^k is the weight of sub-question k of chapter i and s_i^k is the score of sub-question k of chapter i .

The diagram shows the weighted average as a dot, the span between minimum and maximum score as whiskers and plus/minus half the standard deviation as box.

Summary

Overview assessment by topic

[Diagram](#)

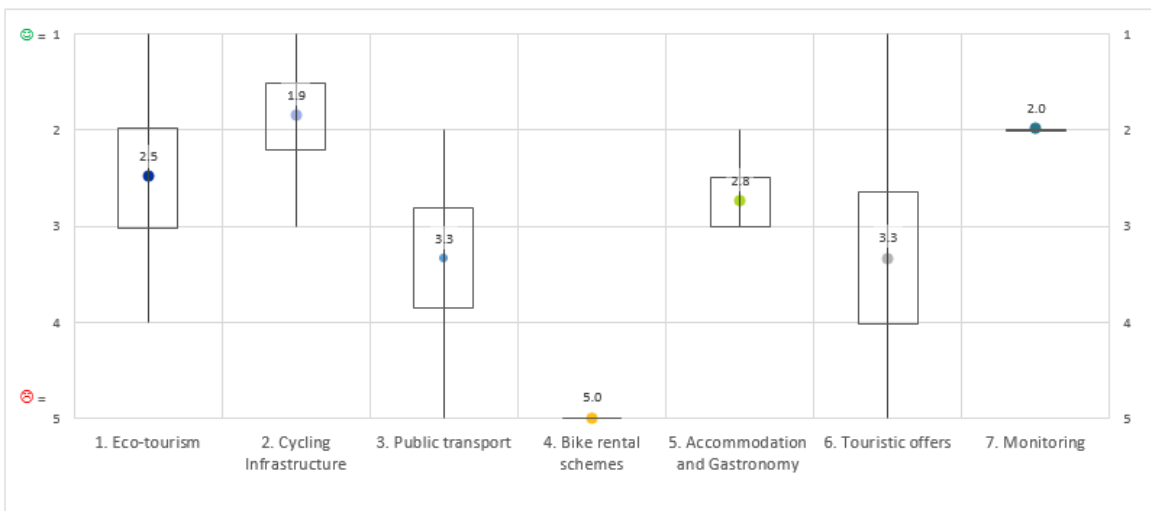
[← Back to interface](#)

Topic	Elements	Don't know	N	Weighted average	Minimum	Maximum	Standard deviation
1 Eco-tourism	6	0	6	2.5	1	4	1.0
2 Cycling Infrastructure	7	0	7	1.9	1	3	0.7
3 Public transport	6	0	6	3.3	2	5	1.0
4 Bike rental schemes	4	0	4	5.0	5	5	0.0
5 Accommodation and gastronomy	4	0	4	2.8	2	3	0.5
6 Touristic products	7	1	6	3.3	1	5	1.4
7 Monitoring	3	0	3	2.0	2	2	0.0

Level of expertise:
4
1
2
1
4
5
2

There is a lack of knowledge (some questions were answered with 'Don't know'). You should try to investigate the topics concerned to close this knowledge gap.

The diagram shows the weighted average of the self assessment by topic (point), the range of the maximum and minimum values for the sub-questions (black line) and the range of +/- the half the standard deviation (box).



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Figure 6: Screenshot spreadsheet "Summary"

Help text

The help spreadsheets include some explanatory text, references to chapters of the projects "Guidelines for sustainable bicycle tourism" and "Guidelines for ESS-based ecotourism strategy" and some additional references and links. The links to the EcoVeloTour Guidelines are the most important ones.



Eco-tourism

Background:

"All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas." (UNWTO, 2002, p.1.)

The main dimensions highlighted there are:

- *Nature but also culture* (if connected): The focus is mainly on intact or rare values to be conserved.
- *Community-based development*: involving local stakeholders in decision-making
- *Low impact*: Small-scale tourism with local control, and the usage of green technologies
- *Education and interpretation is a key issue*: environmental education of locals and tourists are among the key success factors.
- *Supporting local community & conservation*: direct or indirect support of the locals (income, funding, volunteering).
- *Visitor satisfaction*: Ecotourism should be a memorable experience with the sense of place holding values for each niche-segment.

Source: UNWTO (2002) The British Ecotourism Market, cited from: <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/ecotourism-and-protected-areas>
[Link](#)

Guidance for the assessment:

1 = very familiar;

...

5 = not at all;

Reference EcoVeloTour Guidelines:

Title: WP3 Ecotourism planning - Guidelines for ESS-based ecotourism strategy

Version: v2

Chapter: 5. Glossary

Page: 52

Link: [→](#)

[← Back to 1 Eco-tourism](#)

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Figure 7: Screenshot spreadsheet "Help 1 Eco-tourism"

References

Aschauer, F., Gauster, J., Hartwig, L., Klementsitz, R., Meschik, M., Pfaffenbichler, P., & Unbehaun, W. (2021). *Guidelines for sustainable bicycle tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4812801>