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Pedalling Progress:

Advancing Cycling Tourism Along
the EuroVelo Baltic Sea Cycle Route



Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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SMART GREEN MOBILITY



BAB

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Contents

Introduction	4
EuroVelo Cycle Route Network	5
Background on the EuroVelo 10 Route	7
Previous Projects Paving the Way for the Bike across the Baltic Project	8
Implementation of the Bike across the Baltic Project	9
Joint outcomes	11
Development of Cycling Tourism in different Countries	14
Estonia	14
Finland	17
Poland	20
Sweden	21
New Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Cycling Tourism in Europe	24
Conclusions	26
More information	28

Introduction

Interest in cycling is on the rise, and its promoting is increasingly seen as important on various administrative levels and sectors. Cycling supports decarbonisation, energy efficiency and congestion reduction goals, as well as health promotion, sustainable tourism and rural development objectives.

The aim of this report is to:

- Describe the development of the [EuroVelo10](#) Baltic Sea Cycle Route in the recent years, in particular during the [Bike across the Baltic](#) (BAB) project 1.8.2023 – 30.7.2025, co-funded by Interreg Baltic Sea Region,
- illustrate the status of cycling tourism development and the BAB project measures and results in Estonia, Finland, Poland and Sweden that mainly target authorities, NGOs working with cycling and sustainable mobility, service providers in tourism and transport sectors, but also cyclists,
- highlight some general drivers and strategic guidelines for the development of cycling routes and cycling tourism and
- draw conclusions about the further development needs of the EuroVelo10 route.



EuroVelo Cycle Route Network

The idea of the international long-distance EuroVelo cycle routes, which traverse Europe, was conceived in 1997 by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF). These routes serve both international and domestic tourists as well as everyday cyclists on shorter sections. (European Cyclists' Federation 2024c.)

The EuroVelo brand is well-known among cyclists, with a planned network of approximately 90,000 kilometres across 17 routes. Development projects are ongoing as some parts of the network are still under development or in the planning stage. Approximately 61,000 km of the network has been assessed, falling into the categories 1, 2 or 3 on the list below (European Cyclists' Federation 2024b):

1. Certified EuroVelo route: a section of at least 300 km that has successfully undergone the certification process in line with ECF's European Certification Standard. This is the highest quality level of EuroVelo routes.
2. Developed with EuroVelo signs: a developed route with signage along the route.

3. Developed with signage in line with the respective national standard (i.e. the EuroVelo route is part of a local, regional or national route). There must also be a website providing information to users.
4. Under development: a route containing sections that require further development (e.g. sections on highways with high levels of traffic), but there is information available on the Internet.
5. At the planning stage: undeveloped route with no detailed information available on the Internet.

The first category routes, certified EuroVelo routes, are well suited for different types of cycle tourists and different types of bikes, while the second and third category routes have differences in terms of route continuity, surface, service provision, connections to public transport and attractiveness, which is why the suitability of the routes for different target groups varies. On the EuroVelo website maps, these categories of routes are marked differently. As there is not enough information available on the route sections in categories 4 and 5, a bicycle traveller can try to avoid those route sections by, for example, using public transport.



Picture 1. EuroVelo 10 sign and the sign for the local Archipelago Trail side by side. Photo: Telle Tuominen.

EuroVelo routes typically cross national borders, connect cities to rural areas and sometimes cross bodies of water. They are seen as backbones to which national, regional, and local routes connect, forming networks supported by other sustainable transport modes. The vision for EuroVelo 2030 is to create a high-quality network that promotes and increases cycling across Europe (EuroVelo 2020).

The highest standard EuroVelo route is [EV15](#), the approximately 2,300 km long route following the Rhine River, of which 76% belongs to the highest quality category mentioned above. This is so far the only route section that is certified according to the standards of the European Cyclists' Federation regarding infrastructure,

service offerings and marketing communications. Another example is the approximately 10,700 km long [EV1](#) route from northern Norway to the southern tip of Portugal, following the Atlantic coast, 61% of which belongs to the second quality category, i.e. is signposted with EuroVelo signs. 37% belongs to the third quality category, leaving only a couple of hundred kilometers of the entire planned route still under development or in the planning stage. (European Cyclists' Federation 2024b.)

Background on the EuroVelo 10 Route

The EV10 route circles the Baltic Sea, traversing nine countries: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, and Russia. However, due to the political situation, the route is practically interrupted in the Russian sections at the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland and in the Kaliningrad region.

The EV10 route spans over 9,000 kilometres but is unevenly developed. There are significant differences in infrastructure, route information, and marketing communication across its sections. Some parts have well-maintained routes, signage and ample services, while others, such as the northern parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, often run along busy roads or lack adequate services for cyclists. According to the EuroVelo Route Development Status Report (2024), 30% of the EV10 route is marked with EuroVelo signage, and 24% with national signage, leaving nearly half of the route at underdeveloped or planning stage.

Nevertheless, the EV10 route has significant tourism potential, featuring stunning coastal, archipelago, and rural landscapes, bridges and ferry connections, picturesque villages and small towns, five capitals (Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn, and Riga), and numerous UNESCO World Heritage cultural and natural sites.



Picture 2. EuroVelo 10, Baltic Sea Cycle Route, [Screenshot of the EuroVelo map](#).

Previous Projects Paving the Way for the Bike across the Baltic Project

Sections of the EV10 route have been developed in previous projects, such as the [Biking South Baltic](#) project (2017–2019), co-financed by the Interreg South Baltic Programme. Partners from Poland, Germany, and Denmark, along with the ECF, developed the southern part of the EV10 between Copenhagen, Denmark, and Gdansk, Poland. Key outputs of the project included the Development Strategy 2020–2030 for EV10, highlighting priorities such as:

- Improving and maintaining high-quality cycle route infrastructure and public transport accessibility.
- Developing cyclist-friendly services along the route.
- Providing effective route marketing and communication.
- Establishing a permanent stakeholder cooperation network for route management, monitoring, and financing across the Baltic Sea Region.

A smaller project, The [Trans-Baltic Sea Bicycle Route](#) (2021–2023), addressed the need for a west-east cycling connection since the Euro Velo network in the Nordics stretches in a north-south direction. Secondly, there was the assumption that cyclists would only travel parts of the EV10 route during one holiday. Therefore, the project explored the potential for combining existing sections of the EV10 route and developing some new sections using ferry connections from Stockholm Sweden by ferry to the Åland archipelago, from there by another ferry to the southern coast of Finland and further across the sea to the northern coast of Estonia.

The project concluded that developing and maintaining high-quality cycle route infrastructure requires the expertise and commitment of regional and local public sector actors, in addition to cycling and tourism experts and service providers. One outcome of this project was the idea for the Bike across the Baltic (BAB) project.

Implementation of the Bike across the Baltic Project

The Bike across the Baltic (BAB) project has largely built on the work of the above-mentioned projects. The four countries represented in the BAB project partnership – Sweden, Finland, Estonia, and Poland – are at different stages of EV10 route development in general, as well as on the route sections chosen to be developed during BAB project.

Also the partner organisations represent different types of stakeholders: the project is led by an experienced higher education institution in RDI activities (Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland), with partners including two national non-governmental cycling tourism development organisations (Swedish Cycling Advocacy Organisation and The Finnish Center for Cycling Tourism / Finnish Cyclists' Federation), an experienced and widely networked cycling tourism company offering bike rentals and tours (CityBike Ltd, Estonia), and two tourism destination marketing organisations (Pomorskie Tourist Board, Poland, and Visit Turku Archipelago Ltd, Finland). Associated partners in the project include national and regional tourism and transport authorities, regional development agencies, tourism marketing organizations and the European Cyclists' Federation.

The BAB project supports the development of cycling tourism as part of The European Green Deal by accelerating the shift to smart green mobility. Its objectives and actions can be divided into the following areas that contribute to cycling tourism development:

- Developing the expertise of regional and local authorities.
- Benchmarking and sharing knowledge and best practices.
- Assessing selected sections of the EuroVelo 10 route from the saddle and involving coastal municipalities along those sections.
- Creating route section descriptions for selected routes and daily section suggestions for marketing purposes for both locals and tourists.
- Drafting policy recommendations for developing cycling tourism.



Picture 3. Route benchmarking from the bike saddle. Henna from the Cycling Tourism Centre, Finland, Toomas from CityBike Ltd, Estonia and Anna from the Swedish Cycling Advocacy Organisation. Photo: Telle Tuominen.

To achieve these objectives, the project targets multiple groups: regional and local authorities responsible for regional development, mobility services or tourism development, key non-governmental organisations related to cycling tourism, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises working with sustainable mobility, cycling, and tourism.

Joint outcomes

1. Cycling tourism: opportunities for regional development in Baltic Sea Region

A publication aimed, for example, at local or regional authorities tasked with developing a cycling tourism route or customer experience for cyclists. The publication is based on the premise that developing a cycling tourism route is a process with various stages. The process can start from the very beginning with a baseline study that identifies, for example, existing cycle paths and routes, public and private sector services and landowners, and public transport available to potential cycling tourists. It is also important to investigate potential partner organisations and their resources, both financial and in terms of skills, for planning, establishing, maintaining and marketing the cycle route.

The publication additionally includes an excel tool that enables an authority, a project manager or similar with no previous experience in developing a cycling tourism route to easily assess their knowledge and gaps in cycling development in one's own region, for example in terms of infrastructure, service supply, attractiveness, cooperation network or marketing communication required for cycling tourism.

The output also presents the EuroVelo route certification criteria and thus provides a basis for developing existing routes to a higher quality category. The guide, moreover, includes best practices from Estonia, Poland, Sweden and Finland on how to develop a cycle route or sustainable cycling tourism.

2. Policy recommendations of the project consortium include

Integration of cycling tourism into relevant national strategies and action plans, as well the development of a separate national strategy for cycling tourism.

During the project, it has become clear many times that the development of cycling tourism requires long-term investments and is linked to many administrative sectors, for example transport, tourism, infrastructure and land use, as well as regional development. The coordinated and effective development of cycling tourism usually requires the integration of cycling tourism development into strategies in several sectors. In addition, a national cycling tourism strategy is needed to indicate the measures in more detail. A national process for cycling tourism strategy development involving relevant actors is a good way to determine

common goals and, on the other hand, the roles and responsibilities of different actors.

At least nine European countries (Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland) have a cycling strategy approved by the country's government or parliament, and several others have a cycling strategy approved by a ministry. At least the cycling strategies of Spain, Germany, France, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Hungary also include guidelines for the development of cycling tourism. (European Cyclists' Federation 2024a.) In many countries, the promotion of cycling or cycling tourism has been included in several other strategies and action plans, for example in tourism, climate or health promotion strategies or action plans.

Development of a national cycling route network

BAB recommends that EuroVelo routes as well as national, regional and local cycling routes create a route network ensuring a high-quality, easily accessible and uninterrupted cycling experience for both domestic and international cyclists. The route network allows not only point-to-point cycling, but also various circular routes of different lengths suitable for different target groups. A EuroVelo route can follow a pre-existing national route or form a backbone to which other routes connect. Creating a route network requires cooperation on different levels of governance when planning and implementing bicycle tourism development projects.

Cross-departmental and international cooperation

When assessing the quality of a cycling route, the key points of observation are the built infrastructure, service

provision and route marketing. Cycle path planning, signage, public transport connections to the route, business advice and writing route descriptions, for example, require cooperation between administrative sectors on the municipal level. In practice, this means joint planning, sharing of responsibilities, coordination and effective communication.

Cooperation must also be fluid on different levels of administration. For example, the development of local cycle paths should be cost-efficiently integrated into wider road projects. International cooperation is needed to ensure cross-border EuroVelo continuity. To achieve this goal, it would be important for each country to have a National EuroVelo Coordination Centre to carry out cross-border cooperation.

3. Digital Brochure for Cross-Country Cycling and Ferry Trips

The project has produced a digital brochure that maps out the routes of passenger ferry companies between Estonia, Finland, Sweden, and Poland connecting to EV10. The map allows travellers to see

- which sections of the EV10 route are the most developed, marked with EV10 signs and offer daily route descriptions
- which sections are currently still less developed or not marked at all, classified as underdeveloped or at planning stage according to the EuroVelo classification.

The brochure also includes QR codes with links to the EuroVelo10 websites of the mentioned countries, where detailed descriptions of the assessed route, daily itinerary suggestions and information about services and public transport services along the route can be found. The brochure helps cycling tourists plan and execute trips across two or more countries, alternating

between cycling and ferry trips across the Baltic Sea. Some ferries operate overnight, offering cabin accommodation, while other routes are shorter day trips. The PDF brochure is available on national and/or regional EV10 pages and will also be distributed for use by regional tourism marketing organizations and SMEs along the route.

Picture 4. Public transport connections are important for getting to the route, but also, for example, if the bike breaks down. Photo: Mikko-Pekka Karlin.



Development of Cycling Tourism in different Countries

Estonia

The State of Cycling Tourism in Estonia

The EuroVelo network was established in Estonia in 2001, and both EV10 and EV13 (the Iron Curtain Trail) follow the same route along the coast. However, Estonia does not have a National EuroVelo Coordination Centre (NECC), and the development of cycling tourism does not clearly fall under the responsibility of any organisation. The nature tourism coordinator of the Estonian Business and Innovation Agency (EIS) is somewhat involved in the development of cycling tourism.

The EuroVelo signs were updated by a contractor commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of Transport until 2022, but budget cuts and the transfer of road administration to the Ministry of Climate stopped the renewal of signs. The Estonian Transport Administration has prepared a national cycling strategy for 2035 during the first half of 2025. It considers EU guidelines and describes forms of cooperation between the public sector and other stakeholders. The EuroVelo routes are mentioned in the strategy, however the renewal of signage or the establishment of the NECC, for

example, are not mentioned. The importance of the EuroVelo routes and international cycling tourism is not recognized.

At the time of writing this report, the cycling strategy was still in the draft stage and a commentary round was underway. The Estonian partner has commented on the insufficient information and map in the strategy on the EuroVelo routes and emphasized, among other things, the need to begin collecting statistics related to international cycling tourists systematically, to create a data base for EuroVelo signage and, in general, to draw up a concrete action plan for the development of the EuroVelo routes.

The tourism strategy for Estonia for the years 2025–2032 is also under preparation. BAB's Estonian partner, CityBike Ltd, is involved also in this process. In the tourism strategy, cycling is mentioned under recreational and nature tourism.

Estonia's strength as a cycling tourism destination is its relatively small size, which allows for extensive exploration of the country even on a single cycling holiday. Cyclists arrive in the country, bike rental companies operate, and cycling routes are planned



Picture 5. Angla windmills in Saarenmaa, Estonia. Photo: Toomas Leelov.

around larger residential centres. However, the challenge is that cycling tourism is not considered on higher administrative levels as something that needs to be led, coordinated, and promoted nationally.

Improvements Made by the BAB Project in Estonia

During the course of the BAB project communication with the associated organizations (e.g. EIS and destination marketing organizations) was regular, but gradually the project and its results were communicated more broadly. For example, the Cyclist Welcome seminar held at the end of the project succeeded in bringing

more businesses offering cycling-friendly services into the network. The Cyclist Welcome program was launched voluntarily in 2024 by the Cyclest Community Club. The Cyclist Welcome Centre was also opened in Tallinn, largely thanks to the initiative and activity of the BAB partner.

In Estonia, the EuroVelo10/EuroVelo13 section from Tallinn to Paldiski (about 50 km) was assessed as suitable for a day trip. As many signs are lacking, the assessment was laborious. Many signs are also old and mossy, especially in Tallinn along the old route, even though new safer roads and bike paths have been built. The National Tourist Board and the Tallinn City

Tourist department were informed about the results of the assessment. With the support of the BAB project, EuroVelo information and alignment in digital format was updated on the [Visit Estonia](#) website, however the organisation does not so far have any plans for future marketing of cycling tourism.

Toomas Leelov

Picture 6. Due to construction work, the EuroVelo 10 route cannot be ridden according to the signs in Tallinn, Estonia. Photo: Telle Tuominen.



Finland

The State of Cycling Tourism in Finland

The Cycling Tourism Centre / Finnish Cyclists' Federation was established in 2020 as a national development organisation that coordinates the development of cycling tourism, builds and maintains a collaborative network, and manages the Welcome Cyclist programme for cycling-friendly services. A significant task is also to increase Finland's awareness as a cycling tourism destination by communicating about Finland's cycling routes and cycling-friendly services on the [Bikeland's website](#) and social media channels.

To support development activities, the Cycling Tourism Centre has conducted a national cycling tourism survey for domestic cyclists over the past two years.

The Centre has also played an active role in planning and implementing the national database for outdoor activities, from which cycling routes, along with map and content information, are integrated through APIs into the national [Bikeland](#) and [Luontoon](#) websites in Finnish, Swedish, and English. The Cycling Tourism Centre is a valuable asset in the development of Finnish cycling tourism as it produces diverse guidelines and best practices in Finnish for cycling tourism developers on the Bikeland PRO website.

Picture 7. Peaceful rural landscapes are typical of Finland's EuroVelo10 route, but the challenge is often the limited accommodation and food options. Photo: Henna Palosaari.



The Cycling Tourism Centre is also the National EuroVelo Coordination Centre and is responsible for the development plans and updates of route information for the EuroVelo routes crossing Finland (EV10, EV11, EV13) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders when necessary.

Finland does not have an active national cycling or cycling tourism strategy. To ensure the long-term development of cycling tourism and to realise its full potential, cycling tourism development should be included in a strategy or action programme approved by a ministry. In the Finnish tourism strategy 2022–2028, coordinated by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, cycling tourism is only briefly addressed.

The challenges faced by the Cycling Tourism Centre include limited personnel resources and budget uncertainty. In Finland, the development of cycling or cycling tourism at the municipal or regional level is rarely the primary task of any authority; instead, cycling may be related to job descriptions focusing on traffic planning, land use and zoning, environmental issues, or technical operations. The marketing of cycling tourism or the development of service offerings may fall under the remit of business consultancy or tourism marketing organisations. Additionally, municipalities often commission signage planning from consultancies, which form a newer target group whose representatives have participated in BAB events to gain additional expertise.

From the perspective of a cycling tourist, challenges in Finland include the lack of up-to-date route information and limited accommodation, food, bicycle maintenance, e-bike charging, and other services, especially in



Picture 8. The attractiveness of the route is often an important criterion when choosing a route. The old town of Naantali on the Finnish EuroVelo route is a great place to explore. Photo: Mikko-Pekka Karlin.

sparsely populated areas. Public transport challenges include insufficient bicycle transport capacity during peak seasons, the absence of a comprehensive national digital route planner covering all transport services, and safety issues related to bicycle storage and routes running along road shoulders (Bikeland 2024).

Improvements Made by the BAB Project in Finland

BAB's measures have reached numerous Finnish authorities, associations and SMEs at the local, regional and national levels. Concrete actions of the BAB project include the assessment of the EV10 route sections between Turku – Helsinki, totally 260 km. In addition, the route from Turku to Pori will be assessed in the final phase of the project. The assessment is made by two individuals who have completed the EuroVelo Route Inspectors' Training. These sections were marked with EV10 signs a few years ago. Route GPX files, route descriptions, daily section descriptions, and accessibility information are added for these sections. Additionally, a professional photographer has photographed the route. It would be possible to request a certification process according to the European Certification Standard for the Helsinki-Turku-Pori section, but funding is currently unavailable. New route information will be provided by BAB in Finnish, Swedish, and English on the national Bikeland and Luontoon websites, and this new information will also be offered to tourism marketing organisations.

The project route evaluation led to at least one route change. A project member who evaluated the route from the saddle contacted the city of Espoo and proposed a new alignment closer to the Gulf of Finland shoreline. She participated in the city's traffic planning process, resulting in the relocation of route signs.

Henna Palosaari

Poland

The State of Cycling Tourism in Poland

Poland supports cycling tourism through national mobility, health, and climate policies. In the Pomorskie region, cycling development is embedded in regional strategies, with a focus on active mobility and sustainable tourism. In Poland, various regions have long worked to promote cycle tourism, and in June 2025, the Polish National Tourism Organization submitted an application to the ECF to establish a National Coordination Center, NECC, in Poland. Regionally, key actors such as the Pomorskie Tourist Board and the Marshal Office of the Pomorskie Region play vital roles, along with local NGOs and municipalities.

Strengths of Polish cycling tourism include well-serviced coastal towns like Ustka and Łeba, growing multimodality (e.g. ferry access from Gdynia and Gdańsk), and increasing engagement via local campaigns such as “Cycling May”. Route marketing and development benefit from structured cooperation and long-standing experience with EU projects.

Challenges include fragmented national coordination, inconsistent signage (especially in rural or forested areas), limited cyclist-friendly services in remote zones, and a need for dedicated cycling infrastructure in places where cyclists share roads with other modes of transport.

Picture 9. Nice rest areas for cyclists have been built in previous projects on the Polish EuroVelo 10 route. Photo: S.Nitka-Znajkraj, pomorskie.travel.



Improvements Made by the BAB Project in Poland

Thanks to BAB, Pomorskie Tourism Board conducted a detailed EV10 route assessment in Pomorskie, Warmia and Masuria, totally 420 km. Key strengths and critical areas were identified – especially near Słowiński National Park – that require safety improvements, clearer signage, and additional rest stops.

BAB also initiated new cooperation formats across tourism, transport, and environmental departments in local municipalities, and raised the awareness of tourism experts on cycling tourism developments. Outputs include the Polish version of the benchmarking tool, regional workshops, a high-profile international webinar, and increased engagement in Baltic Sea wide tourism

forums. These actions are already improving EV10's attractiveness for foreign tourists and guiding future policy on regional and (soon) national levels.

Magda Leszczyna-Rzucidło

Picture 10. The Pomorskie Tourist Board has actively developed the cycling tourism on the Polish Baltic Sea Coast. Photo: S.Nitka-Znajkraj, pomorskie.travel.



Sweden

The State of Cycling Tourism in Sweden

BAB partner Cykelfrämjandet, the Swedish Cycling Advocacy Organisation, has been involved in cycling tourism for many years. However, only since 2021 has this work expanded to neighbouring countries around the Baltic Sea. Historically, a few long-distance routes were developed through Sweden, one of which later became EuroVelo 10. Despite the adoption of official guidelines for developing routes for cycling tourism,

efforts in this field have declined in many parts of the country in recent years. While cycling remains important, most municipalities and regions focus primarily on commuting.

Today, the situation varies significantly from north to south. The Skåne region in the south leads the way with award-winning routes for cycling tourism, whereas the Stockholm region is predominantly focused on commuting. The vast distances in northern Sweden make it challenging to meet the required standards of services.

Picture 11. Motor vehicle traffic, surface and width are examples of criteria used when assessing a cycle route. Photo: Hugo Röjgård.



From the cyclist's perspective, the interest in cycling tourism is higher than ever in Sweden. SMEs are witnessing an increase in bookings, and national surveys indicate that many cyclists wish to see more developed routes and bike-friendly services.

Improvements Made by BAB in Sweden

The efforts of Cykelfrämjandet within the BAB project and other cycling tourism related projects are making a difference. Although Cykelfrämjandet is not a national EuroVelo coordinator, it has good relations with the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF). A key aspect of the BAB work involves spreading knowledge in Sweden about the EuroVelo network of cycling routes throughout Europe. There are still no signposted EuroVelo routes in Sweden, making the network a novelty to many people. Currently, EuroVelo signs are not included in the Swedish signage system, so they cannot be used.

One of the most important steps has been to help municipalities and other stakeholders realise the potential and free marketing opportunities offered by the EuroVelo websites and resources. Cykelfrämjandet is working towards becoming an EuroVelo Coordination Centre, however no long-term solution for funding has yet been found.

The BAB project has fostered new connections between Cykelfrämjandet and stakeholders across regions. The Swedish Transport Administration has published guidelines on quality criteria and signage for local, regional and national routes in 2021. The report only briefly mentions EuroVelo routes, stating that they

cannot be marked with EuroVelo signs under current legislation. According to Cykelfrämjandet, there is still no roadmap detailing the steps from an idea to a ready-to-cycle route. One major issue is land ownership in Sweden, as much of the land and smaller roads are privately owned, requiring separate agreements for routing cyclists over each property. The BAB project has been valuable in demonstrating good examples of steps towards creating a roadmap from other countries.

In Sweden, a total of about 630 km was assessed mainly in the Stockholm region, but also in the Sundsvall area and some sections in Skåne, Blekinge, Östergötland and Småland regions. The assessment serves as a perfect starting point for discussions and a way to draw attention to cycling tourism. Often, this type of "field work" is not included in the stakeholders' processes.

Hugo Röjgård



Picture 12. Anna from the Swedish Cycling Advocacy Organisation estimating the width of the cycling path during the route assessment, Hugo Röjgård.

New Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Cycling Tourism in Europe

During the BAB project, the development of cycling and cycling tourism has been increasingly highlighted on the level of the European Union, in many of its member states, as well as in several international and national organizations responsible for promoting cycling. The European Parliament, the Commission and the Council of the European Union issued a joint European Declaration on Cycling in 2023. The Declaration does not constitute legislation in the EU but is intended to guide policy makers. The measures in the Declaration are planned to contribute to the achievement of the EU's climate and environmental objectives in accordance with the European Green Deal, particularly concerning the EU's Zero Pollution Action Plan, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, and the EU's new Urban Mobility Framework. (European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission 2023.)

The European Declaration on Cycling serves as a strategic compass for policy decisions promoting cycling in the EU and its member states. The Declaration commits to eight sets of measures with sub-goals, focusing on the following areas:

- Development, implementation, and strengthening of cycling policies and strategies at all relevant levels of governance
- Promotion of inclusive, affordable, and healthy mobility
- Improvement of the quality, quantity, continuity, and attractiveness of cycling infrastructure
- Increasing investments and creating favourable conditions for cycling
- Enhancing traffic safety
- Supporting multimodal travel chains and bicycle tourism
- Collecting cycling-related data and improving its quality to support decision-making
- Development of high-quality green jobs and the European cycling industry.

To promote cycling and cycling tourism and to increase the quality and impact of development projects, organizations such as the European Cyclists' Federation have published several concrete recommendations and guides in English over the past few years. The [Development Guide](#), published in 2024, provides instructions for evaluating EuroVelo routes and making necessary changes to the route alignments. In the same year, the ECF also published a review of best practices in projects promoting cycling ([Using EU funds to promote cycling: Lessons learned from good practice examples](#)). In 2023, separate guides were published for the planning and maintenance of rest areas on cycling routes ([Transnational Guidance Document on Rest Areas](#)) and for route signage ([EuroVelo Transnational Signing Manual](#)).



Conclusions

Cycling Tourism Development according to EU Declarations and Strategies

The [European Declaration on Cycling](#) is based on the premise that current modes of transport support the economy and employment, and their purpose is to enable access to work, school, health services, etc. However, current transportation also causes many challenges, such as emissions, noise, congestion, water pollution, and a deterioration of the living quality of urban centres. The goals and action proposals of the Declaration are grounded on the reality that strengthening cycling is a crucial factor in achieving the EU's climate and energy efficiency targets.

The EU's [European Tourism Agenda 2030](#) was approved at the end of 2022, when the tourism industry and employment in the sector were still somewhat affected by COVID-19. The programme aims to support the recovery of the tourism sector while simultaneously transforming it to become greener, more sustainable, resilient, and digitalized. The Agenda emphasizes that this renewal requires cooperation between stakeholders from various sectors and both public and private actors at EU, national, regional, and local levels, including transportation, regional policy, environmental protection, and health promotion.

The programme encourages tourism operators to innovatively leverage the increasing willingness of people to change their travel and tourism habits to become more sustainable and responsible, strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. The programme highlights that this transformation requires adoption of new technologies, strengthening the conditions for multimodal travel, increasing the attractiveness of sustainable modes of transport, and improving the accessibility of the most remote areas. Additionally, it mentions the importance of promoting active modes of movement, such as cycling and hiking, and the need to extend the duration of tourists' stays.

It can be stated that the EU's guidelines regarding the development of cycling and tourism are aligned and support the EU's Green Deal. It is essential to bring together developers of tourism, cycling, and mobility services at various administrative levels in the future to allow for cross-border cooperation in this renewal process. The development needs and policy recommendations identified during the BAB project are in line with the above-mentioned European Union guidelines regarding the development of cycling and sustainable tourism.

Key Future Development Needs of EV10

The fact remains that even after the BAB project's route assessments and new route descriptions, over 3000 kilometres of the EuroVelo10 route are still classified as "underdeveloped" or "at planning stage" according to the ECF categories, with the longest of these sections in the central and northern Baltic Sea coast in Finland and Sweden.

A different major challenge is the interruption of the route in two sections in Russia, for which alternative routes should be sought. In Finland, awareness of EuroVelo is growing, thanks to the activities of The Finnish Center for Cycling Tourism functioning also as the National EuroVelo Coordination Centre. In Sweden, the best way to increase awareness of EuroVelo would probably be to change the law on road signs to accept EuroVelo signs. This would require sustained efforts towards political parties.

In all BAB countries, there is a need to develop national level strategic plans for cycling and cycling tourism, and for NECCs to more precisely guide actions towards higher quality, safer, and more attractive cycling. Cycling should also be made accessible to broader segments of the population by increasing the accessibility and inclusivity of cycling and integrating cycling with other low-emission modes of mobility. In sparsely populated areas, service offerings are scarce, but rural service providers should be supported in networking, developing, and marketing their services to a wider range of target groups, including not only locals but also various tourism target groups.

With continued collaboration, innovation, and strategic investment in infrastructure and services, the Baltic Sea region is poised to become an outstanding destination for sustainable cycling tourism. Every turn of the pedal can help unlock economic, environmental, and community benefits - bringing us closer to a greener, healthier future.

More information

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