



Slovenian Presidency
of the EU Strategy
for the Danube Region

IMPACT STORY

AMAZON OF EUROPE



BACKGROUND

Spanning Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia, the lower courses of the Drava and Mura Rivers and related sections of the Danube are among Europe's most ecologically important riverine areas: the so-called **"Amazon of Europe"**.

The rivers form a 700 kilometres long "green belt" connecting almost 1,000,000 hectares of treasured natural and cultural landscapes from all five countries and have therefore become a symbol of unity by becoming the **world's first five-country Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube" (TBR MDD)**.

Despite numerous man-made changes in the past, this stunning river landscape hosts an amazing biological diversity and is a hotspot of rare natural habitats.



ABOUT THE PROJECT

After decades of nature conservation efforts, **two joint projects** were implemented to boost economic development of the border areas in Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia.

As a socio-economic guiding project for the further development of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve „Mura-Drava-Danube“ (TBR MDD), WWF Austria initiated the idea of establishing a cross-border cycle path, a unique brand for bike tourism, the so-called **"Amazon of Europe" Bike Trail**.

Joining the project to form a joint international long-distance cycling trail was a partnership of 30 regional governments and tourism boards.



THE IMPORTANCE

Amazon of Europe Bike Trail follows the landscape of the world's first UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube.

With 1.250 km of cycling trails following both sides of the rivers in 27 stages through Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia, the Amazon of Europe Bike Trail is an example of a **unique, sustainable tourism product that boosts the local economy and invests in nature conservation**. The cycling trail is fully equipped with signposts and rest stops, and along the route, all cyclists can enjoy local cuisine at the facilities of Amazon of Europe Bike Trail partners.



CONNECTION WITH EUSDR

Amazon of Europe Bike Trail was a Danube Transnational Programme Project running between 2018 and 2021 that joined the efforts of 5 countries (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia) to establish an internationally recognized and sustainable flagship Cycling Tourism Product in the 5-country UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube (TBR MDD).

Danube Transnational Programme co-funding enabled Amazon of Europe Bike Trail to become a **showcase of sustainable regional development**, bringing together biodiversity and sustainable mobility for responsible tourism, positively impacting the border regions' local economies.





Slovenian Presidency
of the EU Strategy
for the Danube Region



For more about the **Amazon of Europe project**, visit: <https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/amazon-of-europe-bike-trail> & <https://visitaoe.com/>