

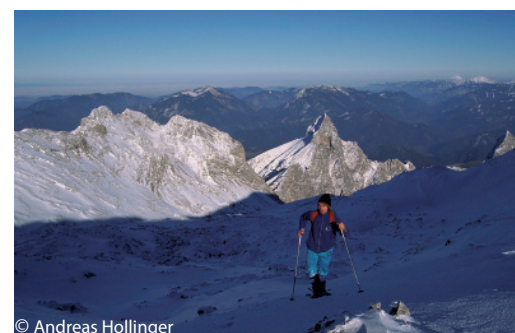
# ACCESS 2 MOUNTAIN Newsletter No.1

## Successful Project Start

The project **Access2Mountain** (fully name: “Sustainable Mobility and Tourism in Sensitive Areas of the Alps and the Carpathians”) started successfully last year. Under the leadership of the Austrian Environment Agency eleven partners from eight countries developed a joint project to strengthen sustainable tourism in the mountain regions of the Alps and the Carpathians, which is now implemented in the framework of the **South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme**.

Underdeveloped and insufficient sustainable transport facilities, resulting in the widespread use of individual cars and significant negative ecological impacts, have given rise to this project which aims to **improve environmentally friendly accessibility** to and within the partner regions. In particular in the mountain areas of South-East Europe there is a lack of sustainable tourist mobility.

For this project the transnational exchange plays an essential role in the successful implementation and development of sustainable touristic infrastructures, especially in the Carpathians. But it is also important to maintain a certain ecological standard at tourist destinations as well as to give guests the opportunity of not having to depend on a car during their holiday. A key element of the project is to transfer experiences and knowledge gained from the Alps to the Carpathians. The development of attractive offers will be a further key element of the project with the objective to increase sustainable mobility, railway and multi-modal connections in tourism with a long term perspective. A multi-level policy dialogue with the (Interim) Secretariats of the **Alpine and Carpathian Conventions**, with the objective of recommendations for the development of a Transport Protocol for the Carpathian Convention, will ensure political and institutional sustainability and a broader dissemination of the results of the project.





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## ACCESS 2 MOUNTAIN Newsletter No.1

### Mostviertel - mild and wild

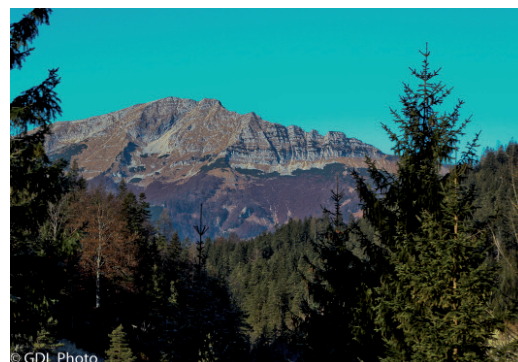
The Mostviertel is Lower Austria's most captivating region. A flourishing, charming hideaway between Salzburg and Vienna, between the River Danube and the summit of the Ötscher mountain, almost 2,000 metres high. The delightful contrast between the gently rolling, fertile land to the north and the wild, romantic alpine country in the south inspires multi-faceted voyages of discovery, mountain adventures and fun-filled family holidays.

In terms of climate the Mostviertel benefits from both Atlantic and Pannonian influences. Fruit, wine and vegetables thrive in the mild climate of the gentle hilly country south of the Danube. In order to maintain nature and landscape, the people in the Mostviertel are highly aware of the issue of sustainability. Therefore, 3 nature parks and a wilderness zone have been established and every year in September, a high-level conference on sustainable tourism takes place in the region.

The Mostviertel has joined **Access2Mountain** in order to identify possibilities for public regional alpine transport systems near the nature park Ötscher-Tormäuer, where there is an eminent need for transport between the two valleys divided by the Ötscher. The narrow-gauge railway Mariazellerbahn, which runs through the nature park, plays a crucial role here. Possible improvements of the railway line, which is not only the longest, but also the oldest electrified narrow-gauge railway line in Austria, are to be evaluated. Such improvements will include the installation of a bicycle and/or e-bike rental system at the train stations in the Pielachtal valley as well as at the main train stations of Mariazell and St.Pölten in order to improve the offer at the well known cycle route Traisentalradweg.



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### Communication Activities

The very first focus of the project has been on communication activities. For coherent internal and external project presentation, a **logo** has been designed for all communication materials to demonstrate the partnership's **corporate identity**. Further the project **website** has been designed and launched.

First arrangements and preparation work have also started for the organisation of the **mid-term conference**, which will take place in autumn in Slovakia.



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### Success factors of regional and narrow gauge railways

The objective of the **work package 'Regional and narrow gauge railways'** is to strengthen small and narrow gauge railways through modal shift by introducing sustainable tourist mobility in regions with natural assets. The tourism market can contribute considerably to the revenues of regional railways, in some cases together with every day mobility and freight transport. To obtain information on how successful small and narrow gauge railways in mountain areas deal with the challenges of the tourism market, a **good practice study** on organizational and economic issues, as well as traffic planning and tourism is being elaborated by the project partner **bmvit** as a first step. With associated partners and external experts, the partnership will then develop plans for "railway tourist regions", while fine-tuning already envisaged pilot activities and supporting their implementation.

The core question of the study is how regional railways can win tourists as passengers, for example how they work together with stakeholders in tourism and what their successful advertising strategies are. Moreover, a lot of background information is collected on regional and traffic data and schemes, as well as on organization, financing and decision-making processes to identify success factors and associated risks.



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### Partner Meetings

In June a **kick-off meeting** was held in **Vienna** by the lead project partner. The partners had a first chance to meet each other personally and discuss the first tasks.

In November the second **partner meeting** was organized in the **Mostviertel**, where first results and experiences were discussed and exchanged. Apart from reports on ongoing communication activities and data collected on a traffic model, first results were presented e.g. of a good practice study on regional railways.

Besides the hard work, the meeting was characterized by the region's generous hospitality and a memorable trip on the regional narrow-gauge railway, the **"Mariazellerbahn"**. The landscape and views of this trip proved to be an unforgettable experience in an area which was considered to be worth visiting again.



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### Project Partner

Lead partner

U-AT - Environment Agency Austria, AT

ERDF partner

bmvit- Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, AT

ERDF partner

Gesäuse - National Park Gesäuse, AT

ERDF partner

Mostviertel - Mostviertel-Tourism Ltd., AT

ERDF partner

NORDA Regional Development Agency of North Hungary Nonprofit Ltd., HUN

ERDF partner

UNICAM - University of Camerino, IT

ERDF partner

EURAC research – European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano, IT

ERDF partner

CJIT Maramures - County Center for Tourism Information, RO

ERDF partner

ARR-KE - Agency for the Support of Regional Development Kosice, SK

20% ERDF partner

RARR-PL - Rzeszow Regional Development Agency, PL

10% partner

TIMOK -Timok Club, RS

10% partner

CFUA - Carpathian Foundation Ukraine, UA

The project enjoys widespread support at transnational, national and regional level: the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, Focal Points of the Carpathian Convention, European Federation of Museum and Tourist Railways, Ministries of Environment (AT, IT), Ministries of Transport(SI, PL) and other observers at the regional level of the project partners.

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### Upcoming Highlights

April 2012:

3rd partner meeting  
in Hungary

All about ACCESS 2 MOUNTAIN at  
[www.access2mountain.eu](http://www.access2mountain.eu)



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