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CYROS

INTERREG ITALY-CROATIA PROGRAMME 2021–2027

D.1.1.1 Mapping the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route in the Programme area

(Final Version – 05-2025)

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REGIONE AUTONOMA FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

CYROS

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Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and crosspillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism

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Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

The CYROS project (Implementation, in the Programme area, of the EUSAIR flagship and cross-pillar project idea Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute for Sustainable tourism) is funded under the Interreg Italy-Croatia 2021-2027 Programme, and its main aim is to enhance sea-mobility solutions and promote the "green transition" by developing a strategic cycling route along the Adriatic coast in Italy and Croatia.

As expressed by the name itself, it is meant to contribute to the implementation of Adriatic Ionian CYcle ROute, a flagship and cross-pillar initiative of the EUSAIR macro-regional strategy, promoting the development of sustainable mobility and tourism and boosting multimodality at national, regional and local level, improving the availability of cross-border and sea-mobility solutions.

In fact, the Adriatic–Ionian cycling route is to be considered the backbone of a network of sustainable mobility solutions, with the dual function of tourist cycle path and infrastructure for urban-interurban mobility, integrated with the local and regional public transport system by sea, rail and road.

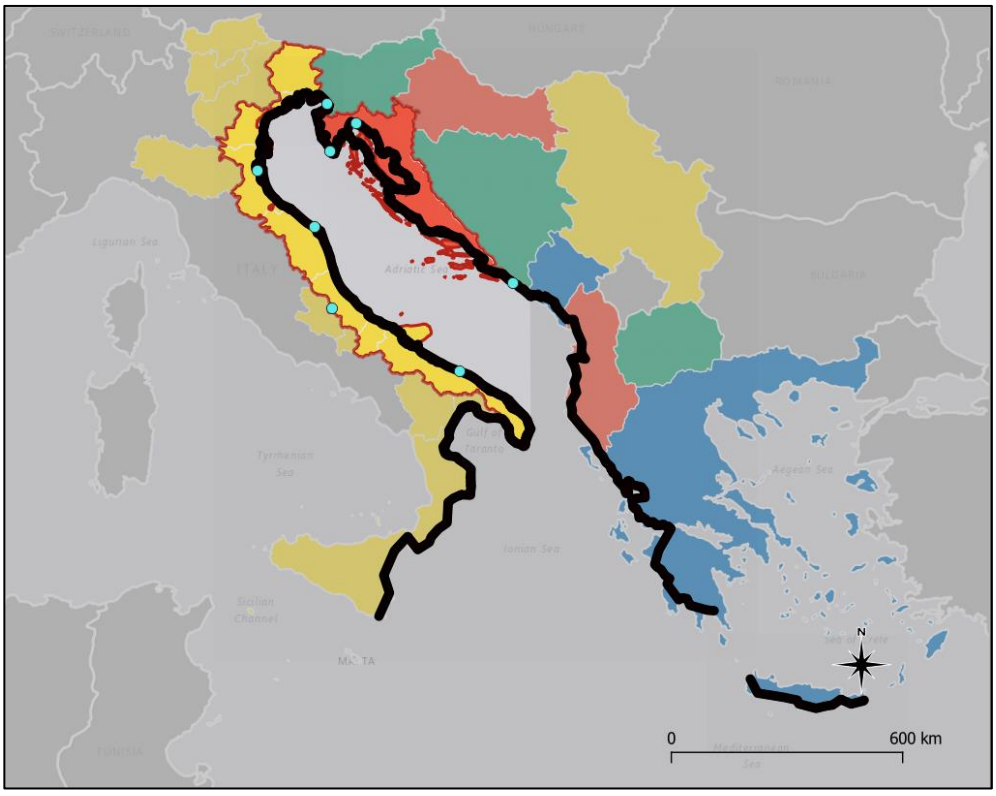


Figure 1 – The ADRIONCYCLETOUR and the Italy – Croatia Programme Area.

In particular, it addresses the promotion of sustainable tourism related to cycling, helping to define the bicycle route along the Adriatic Sea coast in Italy and Croatia (coastal network, represented in black colour in Figure 1), including the main bicycle connections with the hinterland (inland network).

As evident from Figure 1, though being a cross-border project, thanks to the sheer dimension of the Italy-Croatia Programme Area as well as of the territorial distribution of project partners (light blue dots), CYROS covers and addresses a significant portion of the whole territorial scope of the whole ADRIONCYCLETOUR initiative.

More specifically, CYROS actively contribute to the ADRIONCYCLETOUR goals through:

- *(WP1) Contributing to the upgrade of the cross-border cycling network and the improvement of multimodality by mapping the overall route as well as designing specific links, as a backbone of a cross-border and internal network of multimodal services to support the cyclists' journeys;*
- *(WP2) promoting sustainable mobility and tourism in the Programme area linked to the ADRIATIC-IONIAN Cycle Route, exploiting ICT technologies and sharing expertise and knowledge throughout joint training schemes;*
- *(WP3) Establishing cross-border strategies and governance for permanent institutional cooperation on sustainable mobility and tourism, and on maritime passenger transport, thus ensuring capitalisation, durability and sustainability.*

1.1. Deliverable objectives and relations with the other activities

As a first step in WP1, D.1.1.1 has aimed at mapping the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route in the Programme area, including its coastal network and its main cycle connections to the hinterland, thus identifying missing sections, investments and related initiatives by various actors.

In doing this, data related to long-distance cycle routes, belonging to different levels (ranging from the European to regional ones), have been gathered and integrated. The data to be collected are mainly referred to the Italy-Croatia programme area. Anyway, as the CYROS project is also addressing and promoting linkages to inner regions, data related to connections extending outside the Programme area have been gathered as well.

This result has been achieved through an iterative data collection process with contributions from all the project partners. This process was carried out synergically with the data collection activities being carried out in parallel within WP2 (see D2.1.1), which addresses other complementary themes related to cycle tourism (such as Points of Interest and services along the cycling routes). Together, all the collected datasets are jointly feeding the development of specific ICT tools being developed in further steps of WP2 implementation, encompassing a webGIS supporting the dialogue between stakeholders and an app for end-users, as cyclists.

More in general, the resulting picture of the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route and of the network in which it is framed provides an overall common background in which are framed the specific pilot activities in WP 1 and WP 2, as well as the technical discussions being held in WP3. Hence, it has a unifying role in developing a shared vision at the overall CYROS project level.

2. Overview of governance and planning in the IT-HR Cross-border area

The key objective of the present document is to provide an overall mapping of the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route, including the coastal arc as well as the main hinterland connections, with particular reference to the Italy-Croatia Program Area (IT-HR area in the following). To this end, the following paragraphs are meant to provide some context by briefly describing the governance together with different administrative bodies and competent authorities that are relevant to the planning activities. Then, in the last paragraph, a review of the planning documents related to the cycle routes and cycle tourism will be presented.

2.1. The multilevel governance framework

The development of cycleways and cycle tourism calls for the involvement of various stakeholders across multiple levels of governance. The resulting framework includes local, regional, and national ones. Each stakeholder brings unique perspectives, specific regulations, and priorities, which must be harmonised to ensure cohesive planning and implementation. In a cross-border region, this complexity is heightened due to differing legal frameworks, administrative practices, and cultural contexts. Effective collaboration and communication among stakeholders are essential to overcoming these challenges and creating an integrated and efficient cycling infrastructure that serves the needs of all users. To this end, the first step is to have a clear and effective picture of the roles and competencies of different stakeholders, starting from the different administrative bodies in the regions of the IT-HR cross-border area.

In this regard, first of all, it is to recall a fundamental difference between Italy, which is characterised by regions with legislative powers, and Croatia, where there are no bodies with legislative powers at the sub-national level.

In general, each Country is endowed with different levels of administrative bodies. However, they can be compared by making reference to the European NUTS (acronym from the French "Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques", meaning Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) level and LAU[1] (Local Administrative Units) European classification:

- *NUTS 2- Regions*
- *NUTS 3 – Provinces, Counties and Metropolitan Cities (e.g. Metropolitan City of Venice)*
- *LAU - municipalities*

[1] Local Administrative Units (LAU). For more details, see also https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units .

With reference to the European NUTS classification of administrative areas, the following remarks can be made with reference to the different NUTS 2 and 3 regions making up the IT-HR area.

In Italy, the NUTS2 level corresponds to the administrative Regions that are endowed with relevant decisional and legislative powers, also as far as cycle tourism-related themes are concerned.

The IT-HR includes 7 of the Italian Regions: 2 are covered completely (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Marche), while the other 5 are covered only partly (Veneto, Emilia–Romagna, Abruzzo, Molise and Puglia). Among them, Friuli Venezia Giulia is an Autonomous Region, with specific decisional powers also in terms of planning and financing cross-border connections. Given the decisional relevance of this level, the CYROS partnership has been built to represent 5 of these regions (one for each Italian partner).

Regarding the NUTS3 level in Italy, it corresponds to either Provinces or Metropolitan Cities, as in the case of Venice and Bari. The regions of the CYROS partners cover 21 out of 25 Italian NUTS3 of the IT-HR area.

In Croatia, the NUTS2 level does not correspond to regions that are endowed with relevant decisional and legislative powers, though they have a role of coordinative territorial bodies grouping together different NUTS3 level regions. This coordinative layer was created in 2007 (and then, revised twice) ad hoc by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics within the definition of the NUTS of Croatia in the Accession process to the European Union. The IT-HR programme includes both the two Croatian NUTS2 statistical regions: Adriatic Croatia (fully) and Continental Croatia (only partly).

The NUTS3 level, instead, corresponds to the (already existing previously) Croatian Counties ("županija"), which have a relatively large degree of autonomy in terms of decision-making but (differently from the Italian regions) no legislative power (which is held at the Croatian national level only). Correspondingly, this is the level directly addressed through the CYROS partnership. More specifically, the Croatian partners correspond to 3 (out of a total of 7) NUTS 3 of Adriatic Croatia.

Moreover, at the municipal level, a relevant distinction is to be made between those municipalities having the status of municipality ("općina") and the others acknowledged with the town status ("grad").

SYNOPSIS OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS

In correspondence with the different governance structures, a diverse set of planning activities is carried out in Italy and Croatia. With particular reference to the scope of cycle-tourism and, especially, of cycle-routes development, the following list of relevant planning documents has been outlined. A more complete version (including links and further comments) is provided as an annexe to the present document.

In the following chapters (one for each Country), the main documents are briefly reviewed to provide an overview of key sources for understanding planned interventions and investments.

REFERENCE AREA	LEVEL	NAME IT/HR	YEAR
ITALY	NATIONAL	Piano Generale della Mobilità Ciclistica	2022
CROATIA	NATIONAL	Nacionalni plan razvoja biciklističkog prometa za razdoblje od 2023. do 2027[2]	2024
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA	REGION	Piano Regionale della Mobilità Ciclistica (PREMOCI)	2022
VENETO	REGION	PRMC	2023
EMILIA ROMAGNA	REGION	PRIT	2021
MARCHE	REGION	Piano Regionale delle Infrastrutture - Marche 2032	2023
ABRUZZO	REGION	Not available	
MOLISE	REGION		
PUGLIA	REGION	Piano Regionale della Mobilità Ciclistica	2023
ISTRIA REGION	COUNTY	OPERATIVNI PLAN RAZVOJA CIKLOTURIZMA ISTARSKE ŽUPANIJE ZA RAZDOBLJE OD 2019. DO 2025. GODINE	2019
PRIMORJE GORSKI KOTAR	COUNTY	OPERATIVNI PLAN RAZVOJA CIKLOTURIZMA PRIMORSKO-GORANSKE ŽUPANIJE SA STANDARDIMA 2019.-2020.	2019
KARLOVAC	COUNTY	OPERATIVNI PLAN RAZVOJA CIKLOTURIZMA KARLOVAČKE ŽUPANIJE	2017
LIKA-SENJ	COUNTY	OPERATIVNI PLAN RAZVOJA CIKLOTURIZMA LIČKO-SENJSKE ŽUPANIJE 2017.-2020	2017
ZADAR	COUNTY		
ŠIBENIK-KNIN	COUNTY	OPERATIVNI PLAN RAZVOJA CIKLOTURIZMA ŠIBENSKO-KNINSKE ŽUPANIJE ZA RAZDOBLJE 2018. – 2020.	2018
SPLIT-DALMATIA	COUNTY		
DUBROVNIK NERETVA	COUNTY	OPERATIVNI PLAN RAZVOJA CIKLOTURIZMA NA PODRUČJU DUBROVAČKO-NERETVANSKE ŽUPANIJE SA STANDARDIMA	2021

Table 1 – Planning documents on cycle mobility and tourism at the national as well as regional level in the IT-HR area

[2] Previously there was a National Action Plan for the development of cycle tourism, issued in 2015 (see https://mint.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/151014_akcijski_cikloturizam.pdf). The Operational Plans by counties (see below) were written according to this Action Plan.

3. The EU level – EUROVELO

Figure 2 – The EUROVELO network routes

At the European level, a key reference is represented by EuroVelo, a comprehensive network of long-distance cycling routes. Established by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), it currently features 17 routes spanning over 56,000 kilometres, with plans for expansion to nearly 60,875 kilometres. The network incorporates existing national bike routes and low-traffic roads, facilitating seamless travel across 40 countries. EuroVelo routes cater to both long-distance cyclists and local commuters, promoting sustainable mobility and tourism.

For the purpose of the ADRIONCYCLETOUR initiative, it is essential to highlight the importance of EUROVELO 8 "Mediterranean Route", which overlaps significantly with the ADRION CYCLE ROUTE within the IT-HR area (esp. in

Croatia). Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the ADRION CYCLE ROUTE is also intersected by Eurovelo 5 "Via Romea Francigena" in Apulia and by Eurovelo 9 "Baltic Adriatic" in the Trieste and Istrian area.

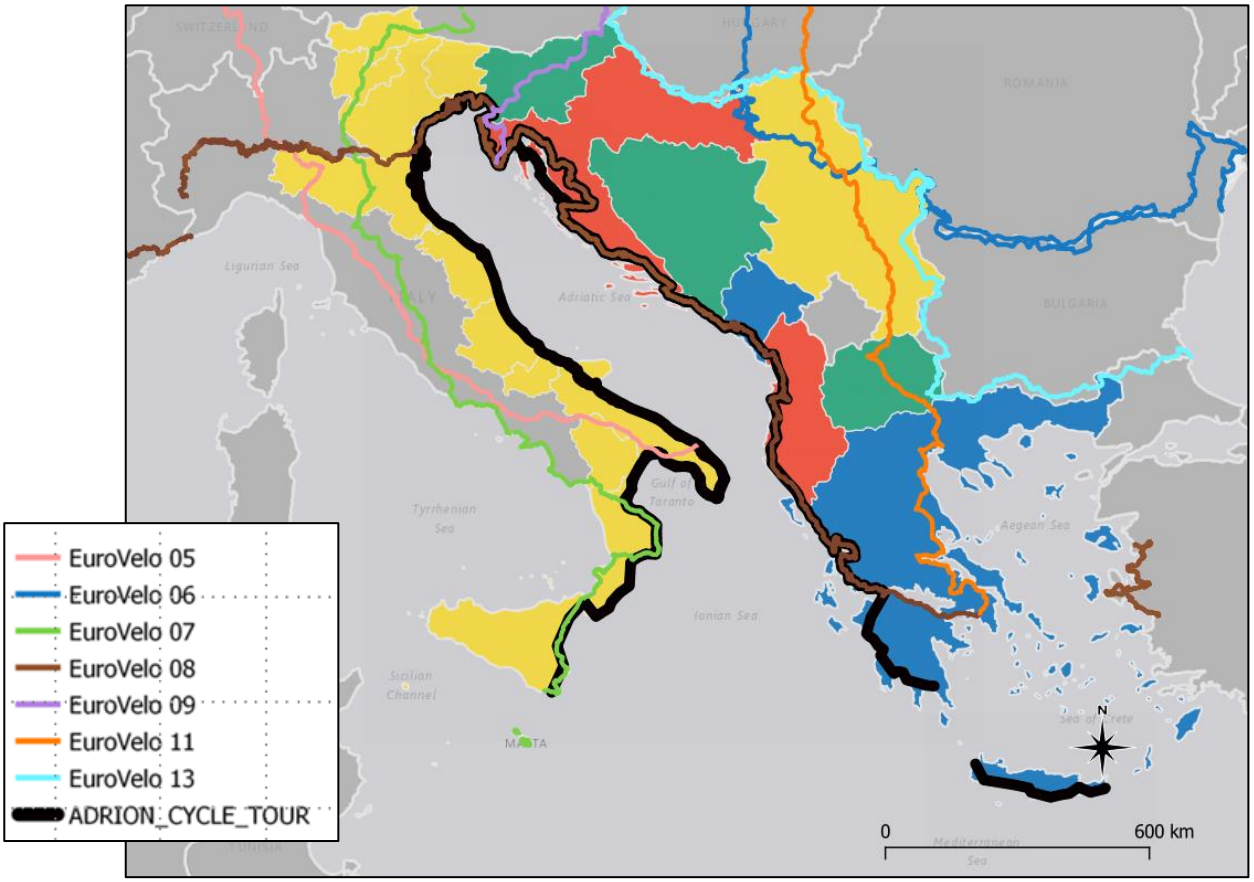


Figure 3 – The ADRIONCYCLETOUR initiative and the EUROVELO routes.

In particular, the EUROVELO 8, according to the EuroVelo Route Development Status Report (2024),[3] is at an advanced level of realisation in the Croatian part.

[3] https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/EuroVelo-2024-Route-development-final.pdf

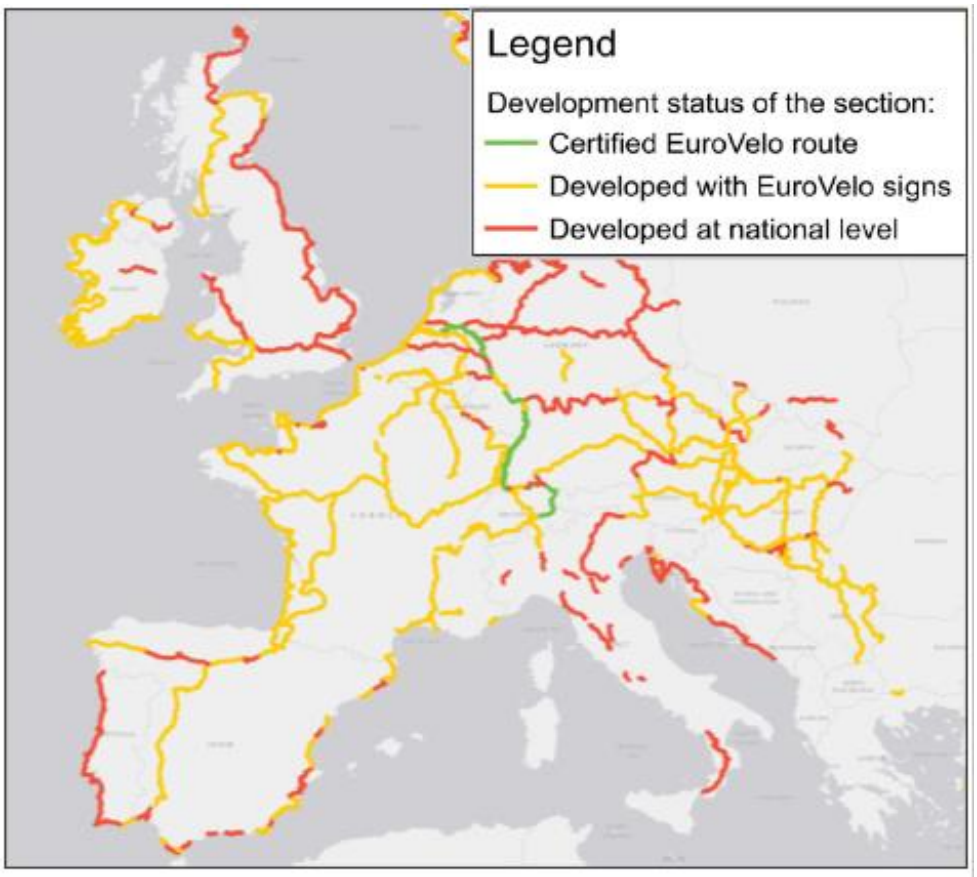


Figure 4 – The Level of completion of the EUROVELO network. Source: EuroVelo Route Development Status Report (2024)

More specifically, with reference to the EUROVELO 8, the following statistics can be mentioned:

- *Croatia: 77% «Developed» and 23% «Developed with Eurovelo Signs»*
- *EUROVELO 8: 26% «Developed» and 26% «Developed with Eurovelo Signs»*

Besides, the level of completion of the EUROVELO 8, as well as of other linked and relevant cycle routes, is also visible from OpenCycleMap (https://www.opencyclemap.org/).

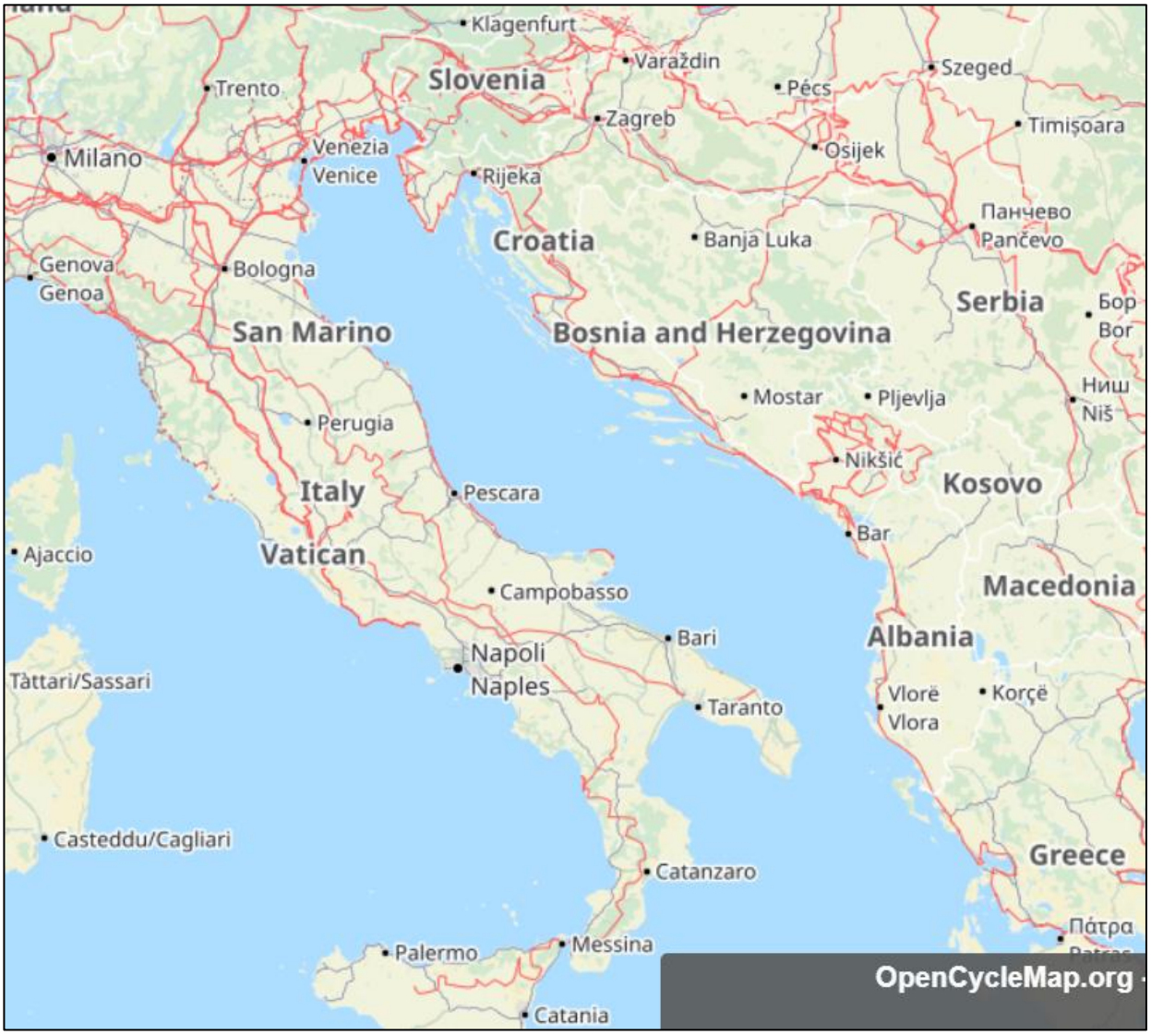


Figure 5 – The Cycle routes as shown in OpenCycleMap. Source: OpenCycleMap.org

In this regard, it is also worth noting that the same Route Development Status Report provide an assessment of the potential of OpenStreetMap (OSM) to collect more detailed data on cycling infrastructure. As reported in the document, "Despite not reflecting necessarily the official data, OSM gives access to a unique and uniform source of information on cycling infrastructure and EuroVelo". In fact, while EuroVelo is well represented on OSM, the available information is incomplete (especially for specific attributes such as surface quality), and its level of detail varies a lot.

4. State-of-play of planning activities in the Italian Context

In this chapter, a brief review of the main planning activities and documents developed at the national and regional levels in Italy is presented. The aim is to provide a brief overview for the purposes of the identification of relevant cycle routes at different levels and the envisaged further developments and investments. The reader is invited to refer to the full documents and official links for a more comprehensive coverage of the planning documents.

4.1. The Italian national level

The Italian National Cycling Network (RCN-Bicitalia), as outlined by Law No. 2/2018 and the General Plan for Cycling Mobility (PGMC – "Piano Generale della Mobilità Ciclistica") approved by Ministerial Decree on August 23, 2022, plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable transport across Italy.

This network encompasses two key components.

- *The National System of Tourist Cycle Routes (SNCT), which is an initiative jointly coordinated by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT) and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Activities, and Tourism (Mibact). It is based on the provision of the Decree of the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, number 517 of 2018 (Design and implementation of a national system of tourist cycle paths). It aims to accomplish 10 high-quality national cycle routes, totalling around 6,000 kilometres and partly inspired by the EuroVelo network. This initiative is part of Italy's broader strategy for soft mobility and aligns with the new Tourism Mobility Plan as a strategic national development asset.*
- *Additional routes within the Bicitalia network, which was initially proposed by the Italian Federation of Friends of the Bicycle (FIAB). This network serves as a reference framework, developed on the basis of the practical experiences of cyclists; it is meant and designed to be adaptable with various improvements and modifications in alignment with regional plans (as specified in Annexe C of the PGMC).*

As reported in Figure 7, the Italian part of the Adriatic Ionian Cycle Route corresponds to the directions of five routes of the SNCT. The following ones (4 out of 5) are located, at least partly, in the IT-HR Programme Area:

- *"Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice" cycle route*
- *"VEN-TO" (Venice-Turin) cycle route*
- *Adriatic ("Adriatica") cycle route*
- *Apulian Aqueduct ("Acquedotto Pugliese") cycle route.*

Figure 6 – The Bicitalia network. Source: FIAB

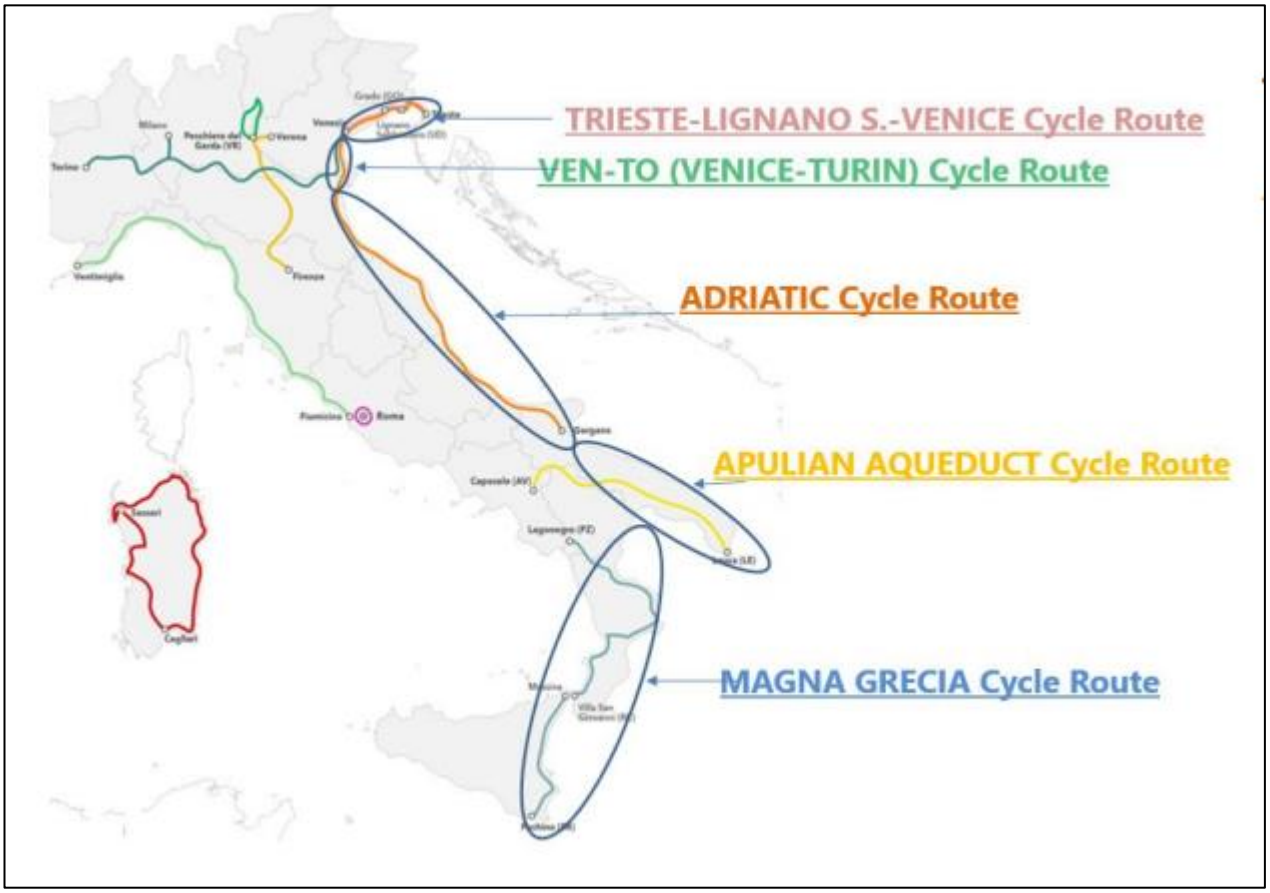


Figure 7 – The Bicitalia network. Source: Marche Region

In the following paragraphs, a brief description is provided for each one of them.

4.1.1. The "Ciclovia Adriatica"

The Adriatic Cycle Route spans approximately 987 kilometres through diverse urban and environmental landscapes, encompassing areas with a high concentration of resident population and tourists.

Along its path from Rosolina (in the province of Rovigo) to the Gargano Promontory in the Apulia Region, the cycle route crosses 6 regions, 17 provinces, and 98 municipalities. The regions involved, including Marche (the leader), Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, Abruzzo, Molise, and Apulia, collaborate through an agreement and a technical table due to the project's complexity.

Region	N. of Provinces	N. of Municipalities	Length [km]
Veneto	2	5	84,3
Emilia-Romagna	4	15	181,8
Marche	5	33	232,2
Abruzzo	3	19	132
Molise	1	4	40
Apulia	2	21	316,7
TOTAL	17	97	987

Table 2 – The region involved in the "Ciclovia Adriatica"

The route is mostly flat and runs through urban areas, including large, medium, and small centres, as well as natural and scenic areas of significant environmental value, such as the Po Delta Park, the Comacchio Valleys, the Conero Regional Park, and the Gargano National Park.

Figure 8 – The "Ciclovia turistica nazionale Adriatica". Source: Marche Region

In terms of functional characterisation, the Adriatic Cycle Route serves as both a tourist cycle path and an infrastructure for sustainable urban-interurban mobility. It is adjacent to the Adriatic railway, facilitating bike-train integration, and is accessible via airports and major international ports. The Adriatic cycle route is flanked by the Adriatic railway, which allows a perfect intermodal bike train integration and is served by several airports (Rimini, Ancona, Pescara and Foggia), by large ports with international connections (Ravenna, Rimini, Ancona, Pescara, Termoli) and by numerous other minor ports.

As far as developments and funding are concerned, the cycle route realisation is currently ongoing, and its accomplishment is foreseen in 2026.

The aforementioned Decree of the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, number 517 of 2018 has allocated a budget of about 16 million euros to the Adriatic national cycle route, of which 1 million euro for the drafting of the technical and economic feasibility project and the remaining part for the implementation of the first functional tract of cycle route one for each Region.

Looking at the next realisation stages, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport is in the process of issuing a decree that will assign to the Adriatic tourist cycle route 74 million euros on the plan of recovery and resilience, and 27 million euros of state funds will be allocated to the Marche Region. With these funds, the regions will be able to complete a large part of their cycle routes. In this regard, further details are also provided in the following paragraphs, addressing specifically each regional context

4.1.2. The VEN-TO (Venice-Turin) cycle route

The Ven-To (Venezia-Torino) cycle route forms a key section of the Italian national cycling network, running from Venice to Turin along an approximately 700 km long path primarily following the Po River. Moreover, a relevant spur is also providing a link to Milan. The overall cycle route mainly corresponds to part of the Italian Section of the EUROVELO 8 and crosses four regions (Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, and Piedmont), linking hinterland areas with the Adriatic Sea Coast.

The related itinerary brings together different landscapes and cultural landmarks, including lagoon ecosystems, Renaissance cities, rice paddies, and Alpine foothills, Venetian villas, UNESCO sites, and industrial heritage monuments.

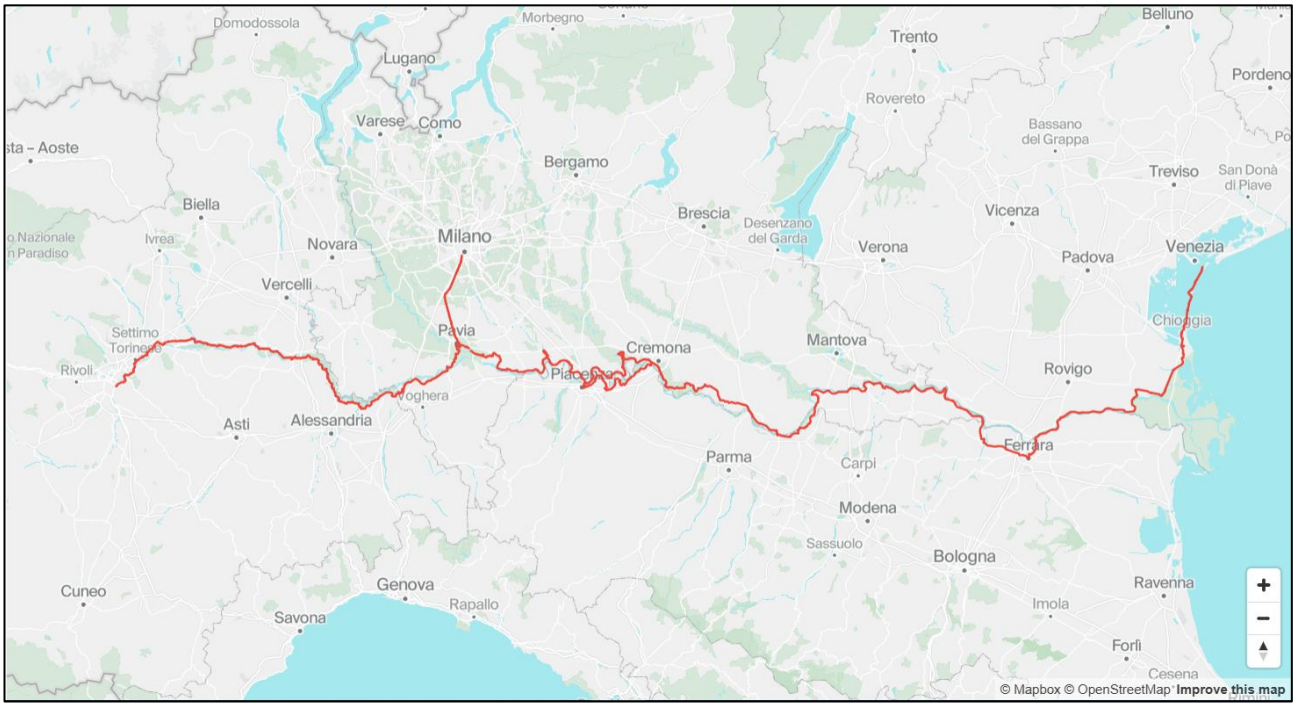


Figure 9 – The VEN-TO (Venice-Turin) National Cycle Route. Source: Politecnico di Milano

Once accomplished, the cycle route will primarily consist of dedicated infrastructure (80% ex-railway tracks, flood embankment service roads, and purpose-built paths) along a predominantly flat corridor (<200m total elevation gain), capitalising on the Po Valley regulated embankments and reclaimed agricultural plains.

After becoming part of the National System of Tourist Cycle Routes in 2016, the definitive and executive design process of the first four functional sections of the cycle route (one for each of the four involved regions) began in 2020.

Regarding the current progress, it is estimated that over 300 km have been completed. Within the IT-HR Programme Area, specifically in the Veneto Region, the recent opening of a 14.4 km section (Loreo-Cavanella d'Adige) near the Adriatic Sea and the Adriatic Cycle Route should be noted (see the blue oval in Figure 10). A further slot, including the passage through the islands bordering the Venice lagoon, is under realisation (with expected completion by the end of 2025). For other parts, more in the hinterland area of the Rovigo Province, the design phase is ongoing.

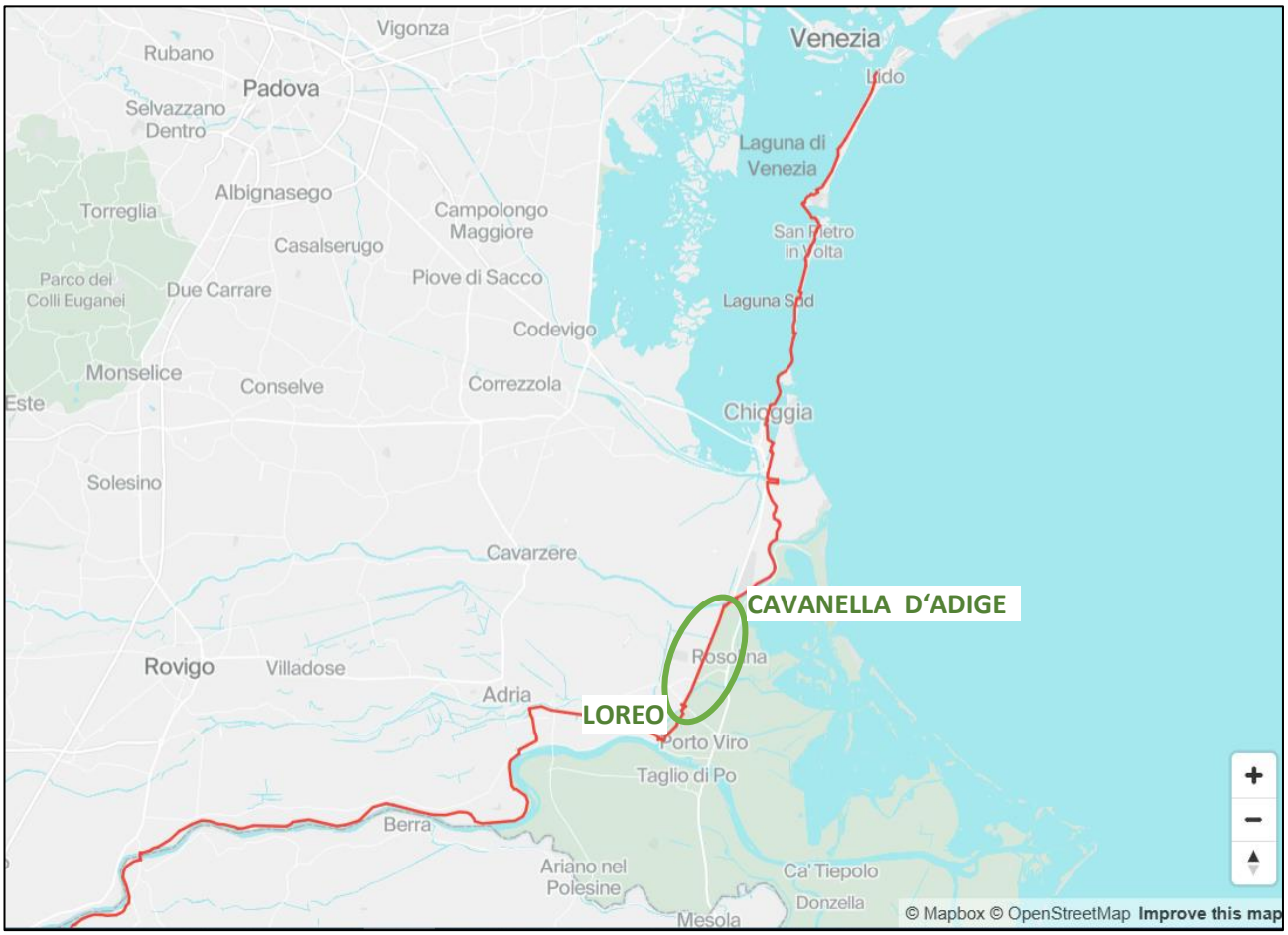


Figure 10 – The VEN-TO (Venice-Turin) National Cycle Route sections that are being completed. Source: own elaborations on map representation by the Polytechnic University of Milan

4.1.3. The Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice

The Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice National Cycle Route spans approximately 278 km, connecting Venice and Trieste through 32 municipalities in the regions of Veneto (118 km) and Friuli Venezia Giulia (160 km). The itinerary is also part of the Mediterranean Route - Eurovelo 8, the international AdriaBike cycle path, and the Adriatic Cycle Path BI6 of the Bicitalia network, as well as other cycle routes identified in the respective regional planning, such as the FVG2 cycle route in Friuli Venezia Giulia (see the following paragraphs).

Along its path, the cycleway traverses diverse landscapes, including coastal areas, lagoons, reclaimed agricultural land, and urban centres, while connecting key cultural and natural landmarks. In particular, the route passes

through an area characterised by remarkable seaside and tourist destination towns like Jesolo, Caorle, Lignano Sabbiadoro, and Grado, as well as UNESCO heritage sites such as Aquileia.

The project integrates existing paths with new infrastructure to meet national technical standards, ensuring accessibility for all users. The route features a maximum gradient of 5%, compact and smooth surfaces, and a minimum curve radius of 7 meters, allowing for safe and comfortable cycling.

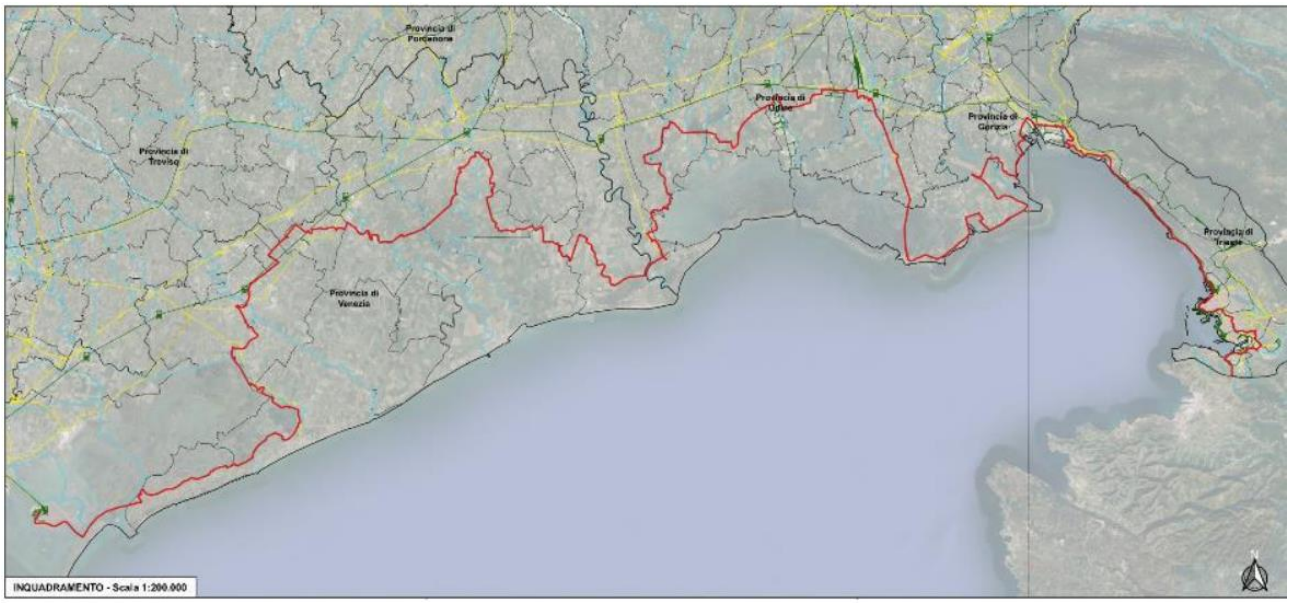


Figure 11 – The Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice National Cycle Route. Source: Vegal

On August 30, 2021, the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, as the lead entity, submitted the Technical and Economic Feasibility Design (PFTE) for the entire Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venezia cycle path to the National Ministry. Subsequently, the Friuli Venezia Giulia region transmitted the (reviewed) PFTE, receiving a positive opinion with requirements in March 2022. Subsequently, the design process proceeded with the Definitive/Final Design in FVG of the two sections ("Tronco 2" and "Tronco 3", respectively in orange and red colour in the following figures) covering the portion from the border with Veneto in Lignano Sabbiadoro to the westernmost part of the Trieste NUTS3 area in Duino.

More in detail, different priority functional sections have been identified, which represent specific sections being accomplished. Their representation is provided in Figure 13, where each functional section is represented through a specific colour, to which is associated a detailed specification in the subsequent table.

Figure 12 – The first parts being realised in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region of the Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice National Cycle Route. Source: Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

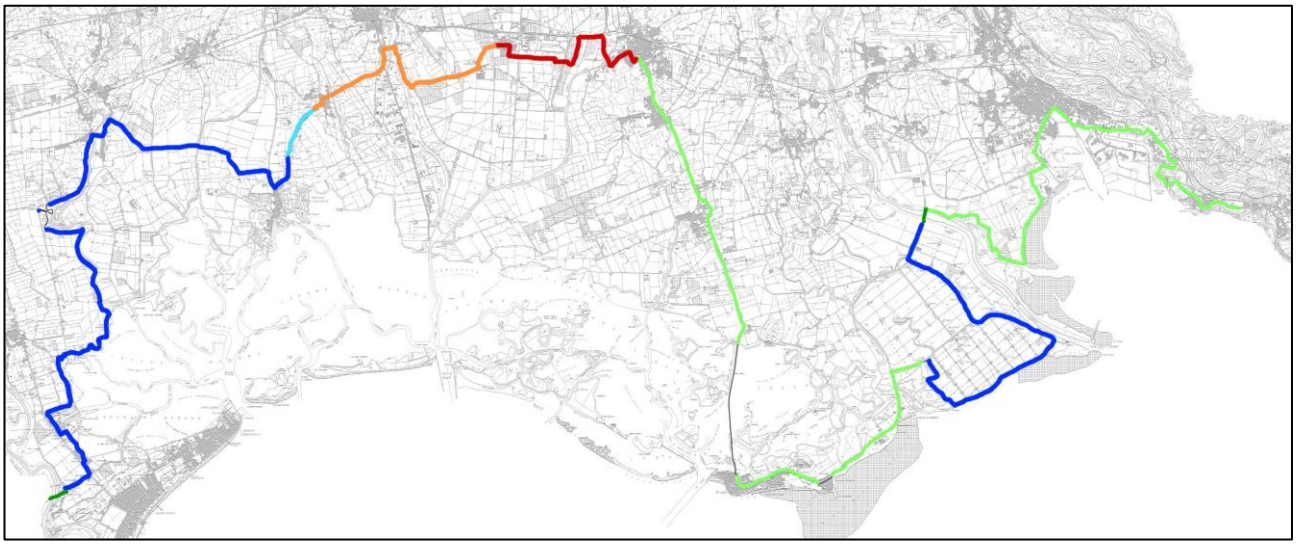


Figure 13 – Functional sections ("lotti funzionali") being realised within the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region of the Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice National Cycle Route. Source: Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

FUNCTIONAL SECTION		COST	FUNDING SOURCE
	1A	12.000.000,00 €	FSC 2021-2027
	1B	8.061.256,20 €	D.M. n. 517/2018
		180.694,82 €	Regional Funds
	2	20.009.088,80 €	D.M. n. 4/2022 (PNRR)
		4.893.766,73 €	Regional Funds
	3	–	
	Carlino-Colomba	1.985.000,00 €	Regional Funds
	Other functional sections (bridges on the Isonzo and Tagliamento rivers)		
	Existing infrastructure that does not require upgrading or sections already under construction		

Table 3 – The functional sections being realised within the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region of the Trieste-Lignano Sabbiadoro-Venice National Cycle Route. Source: Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

4.1.4. The "Acquedotto Pugliese" cycle route

The Apulian Aqueduct ("Acquedotto Pugliese") Cycle Route leverages the service roads of the historic Apulian Aqueduct, built in the early 20th century to transport water from Campania to Apulia. This aqueduct was a significant engineering realisation, constructed starting in 1906.

The cycle route, however, is a modern and ongoing initiative designed to promote sustainable tourism by utilising the aqueduct's service roads. It spans approximately 500 km from Caposele in Campania to Santa Maria di Leuca in Apulia.

The route integrates with national cycling networks, including the "Ciclovia degli Appennini" and the "Ciclovia Adriatica". It offers a unique blend of history, nature, and scenic views, passing through diverse landscapes.

Overall, the Apulian Aqueduct Cycle Path represents a significant step towards sustainable development in the region. It fosters economic growth in rural areas by attracting tourists interested in local traditions and landscapes.

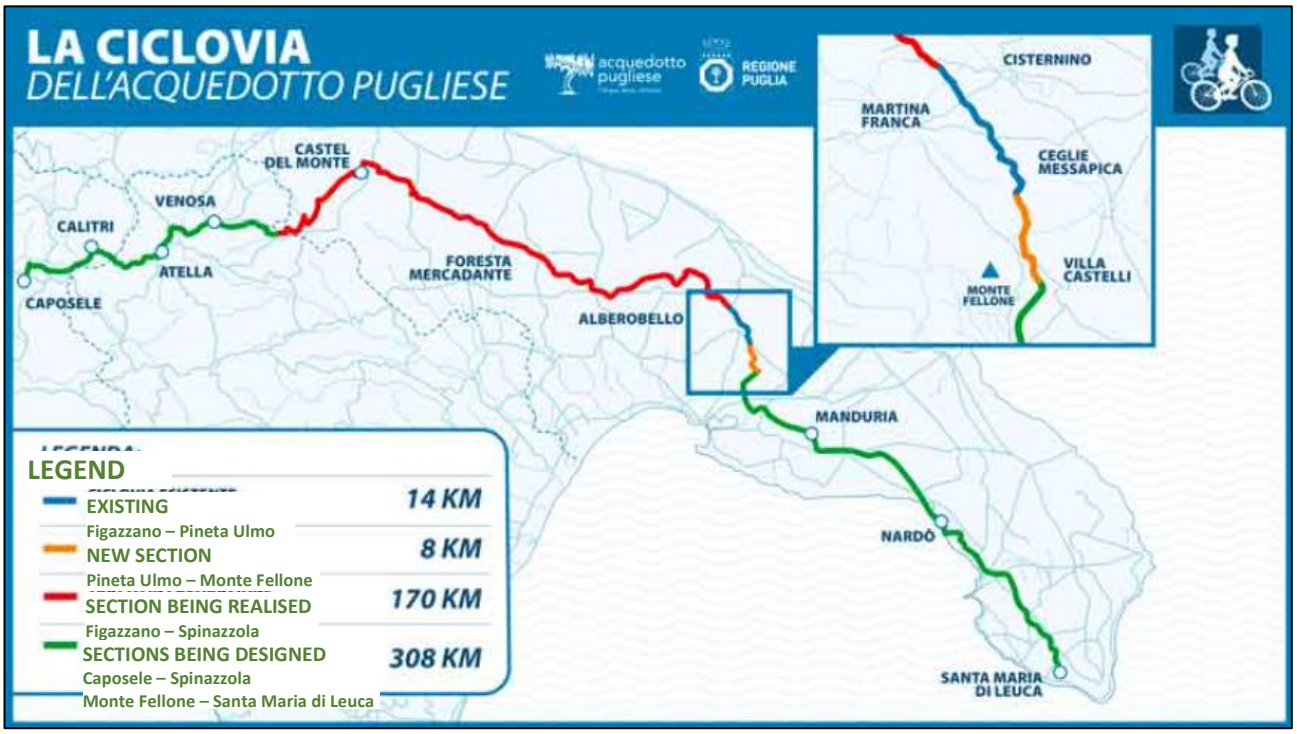


Figure 14 – Different sections according to the development stages of the "Acquedotto Pugliese" cycle route. Source: Apulia Region

As of late 2024, the cycle path has seen notable advancements. Namely, a new 8 km section (in yellow colour in Figure 14) was inaugurated between Pineta Ulmo and Monte Fellone, adding to the existing 22 km stretch (in blue colour in Figure 14). This advancement contributes to the realisation of the whole cycleway, whose path covers nearly 500 km (from Caposele to Santa Maria di Leuca).

The project is funded by the Apulia Region (through regional funds and PNRR allocations) and the European Union. The recently realised 8-km section between Pineta Ulmo and Monte Fellone required an investment of 1.6 million euros from regional funds. For the accomplishment of the other four sections within the Apulia Region (Bitonto-Gioia del Colle, Gioia del Colle-Cisternino, Castel del Monte-Bitonto, and Spinazzola-Castel del Monte), envisaged in 2026, approximately 39 million euros (still from regional funds and PNRR allocations) have been committed.

4.2. Planning activities in the Italian Regions of the IT-HR Programme Area

In the following paragraphs, the state of play of planning in the different Italian regions belonging to the IT-HR area is provided.

The importance of regional-level planning is further underscored by the provisions of Article 5 of Italian National Law No. 2 of January 11, 2018, which mandates that regions prepare and approve a regional cycling mobility plan every three years. This plan aims to promote the use of bicycles for both everyday transportation and tourism or recreational activities.

4.2.1. Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region - PREMOCI

The Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region promotes urban and extra-urban cycling mobility through the development of the Regional Cycling System, referred to as SICID ("SIstema della CIclabilità Diffusa"). SICID integrates cycling infrastructure and services, ensuring safety and continuity across the entire region.

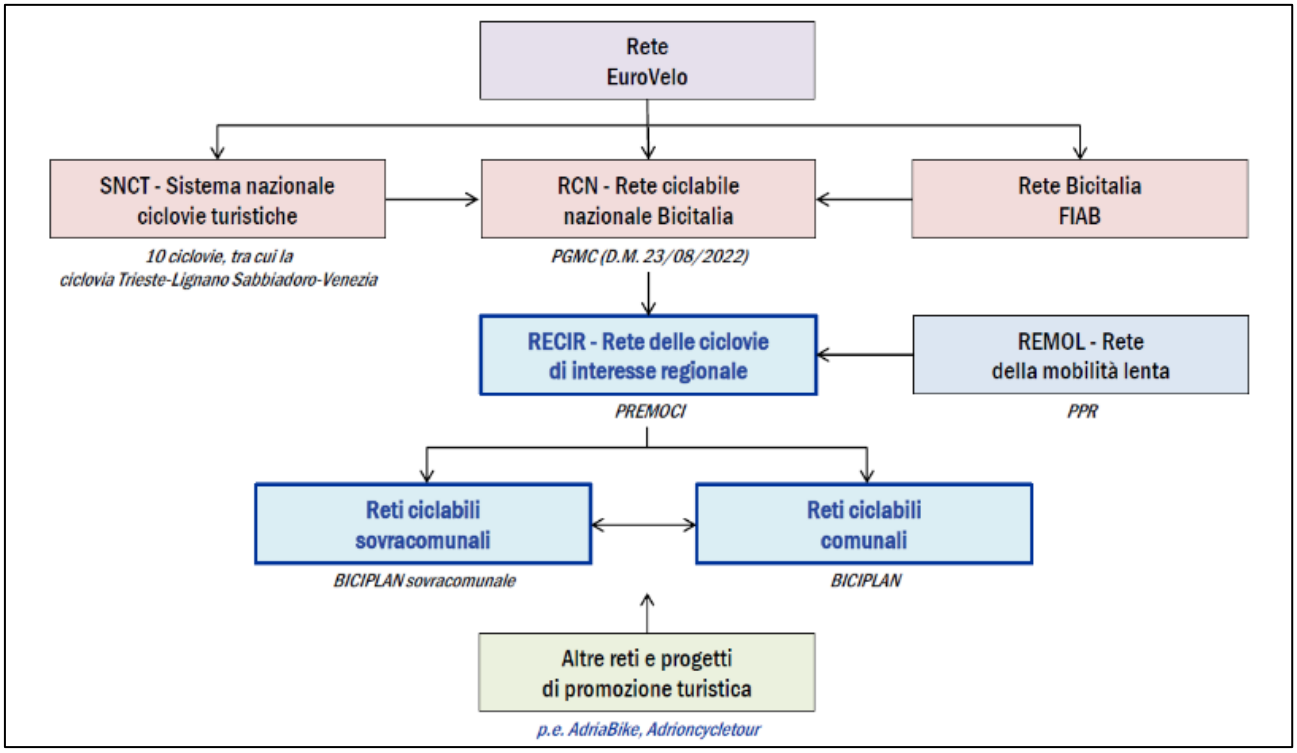


Figure 15 – The different levels involved in the FVG cycle route network and planning. Source: Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

The goal is to increase bicycle usage both by boosting cycle tourism and by encouraging the shift of commuter travels to bicycles. To this end, it provides a well-connected network, which integrates the following layers:

- *RECIR ("REte delle Ciclovie di Interesse Regionale") – the regional level cycle routes;*
- *RSC ("Rete delle ciclabili SovraComunali") – the local network connections going beyond the municipal level;*
- *RECIC ("REte delle CIclabili Comunali") – the network of municipal-level cycle routes.*

These layers, making up the regional dimension, are represented by the light blue boxes in Figure 15, and are also related to the REMOL ("REte della MObilità Lenta") slow-mobility network.

Moreover, they are linked to the national and European level networks, represented by the red and violet boxes on the upper side of the same figure. Furthermore, the green box at the bottom of the representation underlines the synergic contribution of different initiatives, including INTERREG projects.

According to the Regional Law n.8/2018, each one of the aforementioned layers corresponds to a specific planning instrument, as represented by the following Figure 16.

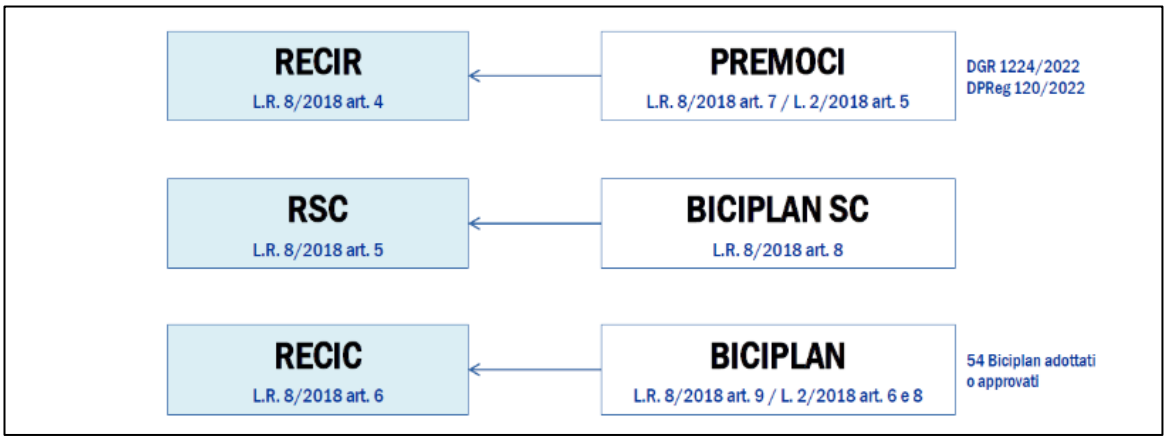


Figure 16 – The different layers in the regional and local cycle route network (on the left) and the corresponding planning documents (on the right). Source: Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

In particular, the key planning document is the Regional Plan on Cycle Mobility, PREMOCI ("Piano REgionale della Mobilità CIclistica"), which is in force starting from 2022. In fact, it envisages the whole set of interventions at the regional scale, thus providing the key reference for local-level plans (i.e. BICIPLAN).

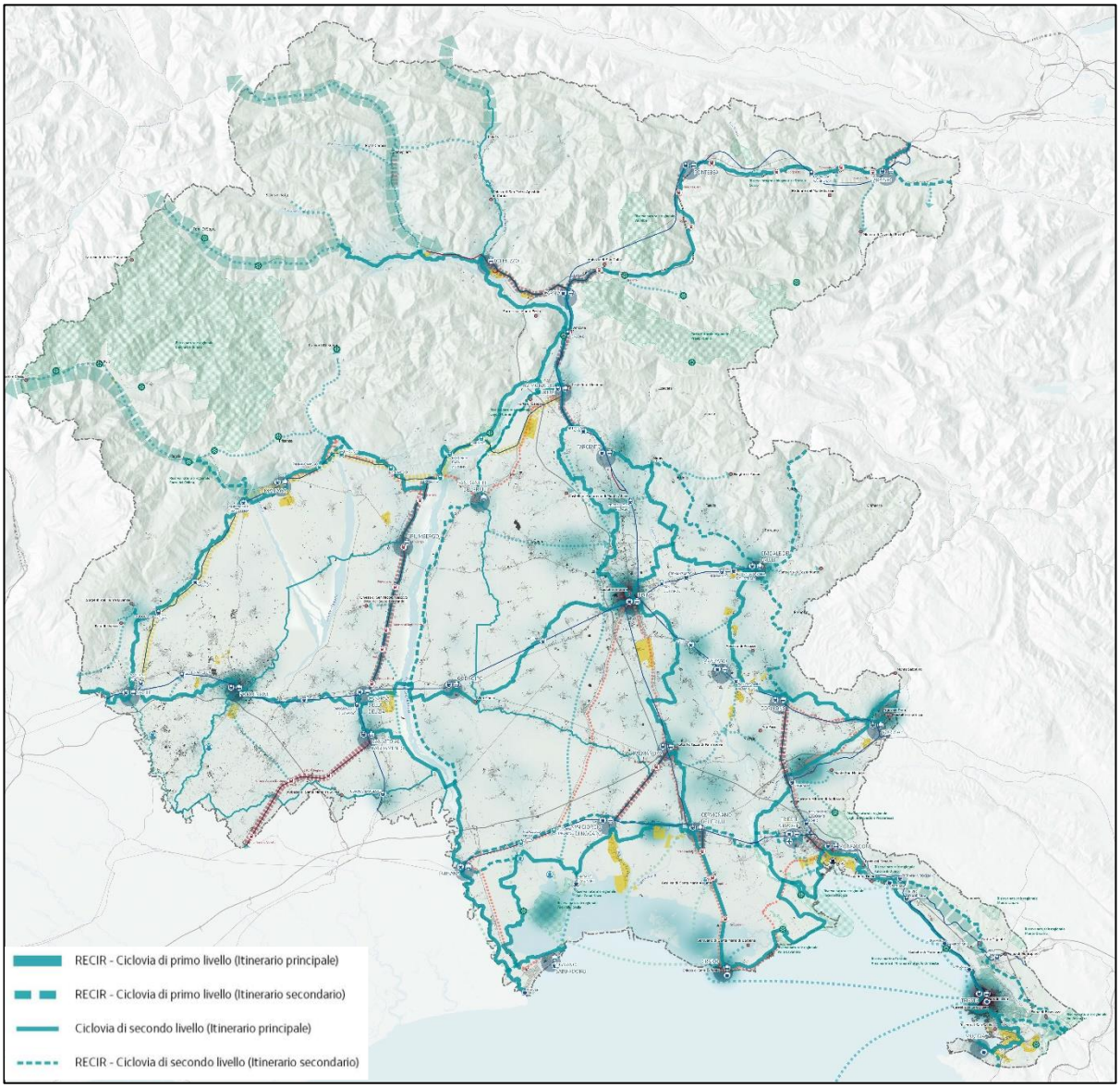


Figure 17 – The strategic scheme of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Cycle Mobility Plan (PREMOCI). Source: Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

4.2.2. Veneto Region Plan PRMC (2023)

The Veneto Region has recently adopted (in 2023) the Regional Cycling Mobility Plan (PRMC), aiming to create a comprehensive cycling network spanning nearly 2,000 kilometres. The envisaged routes are integrated with the national "Bicitalia[4]" cycling network.

The plan's primary goals are to establish medium to long-distance cycling routes (over 100-150 km). To this end, a coordinated management framework is promoted, thus supporting sustainable local development and fostering a cultural shift towards cycling.

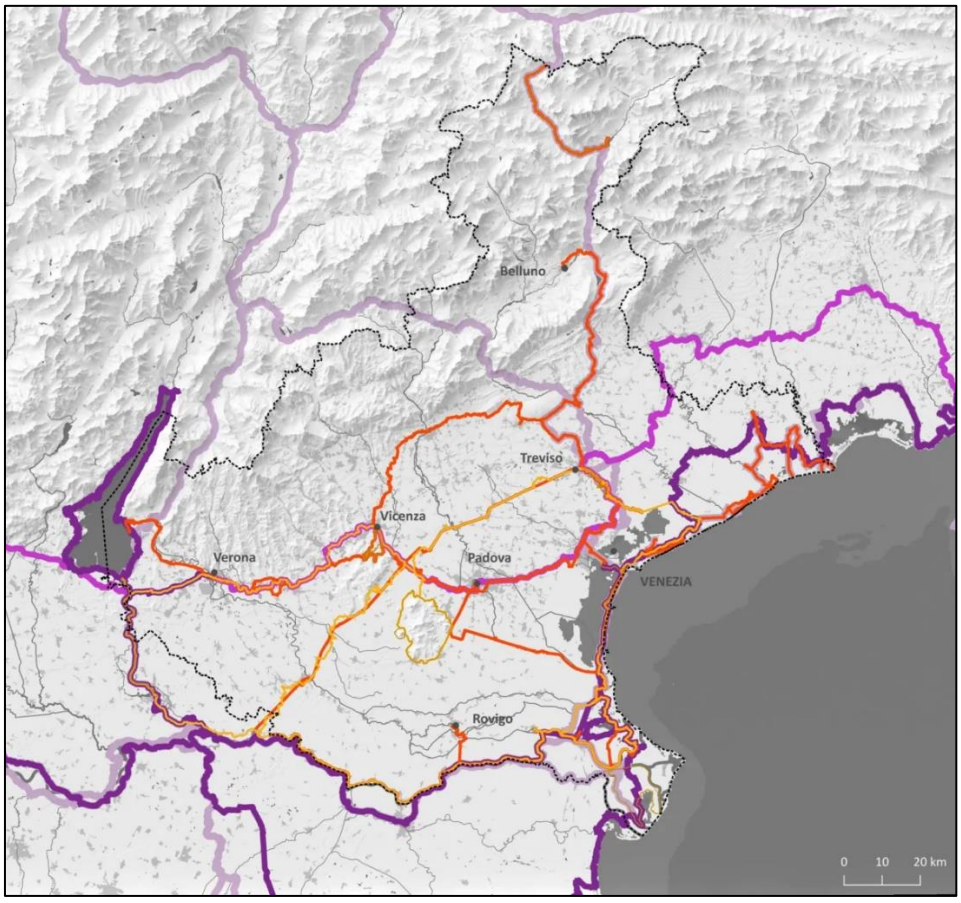


Figure 18 – The main Cycle Routes in the Veneto Regional Cycling Mobility Plan

[4] https://www.bicitalia.org. See also the previous paragraphs.

The PRMC is closely aligned with the Regional Transport Plan (PRT), which emphasises environmental protection and sustainable mobility (https://www.prtveneto2030.it). One specific action of the PRMC is the development of long-distance cycling infrastructure, which directly supports the PRT's objective of creating an eco-friendly transportation system. This alignment ensures that the cycling network not only enhances local economies and tourism but also contributes to broader environmental and mobility goals.

4.2.3. Emilia-Romagna Region PRIT2025 (2021)

Emilia-Romagna's key planning document, PRIT 2025 (issued in 2021), also fulfils the role of the regional cycling mobility plan required by law. It promotes cycling and pedestrian mobility as strategic modes to enhance overall transport sustainability and connectivity. The plan emphasises the development of a high-quality, safe, and recognisable network of cycling routes beyond isolated bike paths, aligned with regional guidelines (Regional Law 10/2017). Accordingly, the Regional Cycling Network (see Figure 19) represents a system of corridors connecting cultural, natural, and urban centres, integrated with national and European routes such as Eurovelo and Bicitalia. In particular, it includes the Ven-To and Adriatic Cycle Routes previously described. The network serves as a framework for regional and local planning, resource allocation, and promotion, including a unified logo for clear recognition. Moreover, the regional plan calls for monitoring mechanisms to ensure ongoing assessment and prioritisation of interventions to advance the network's implementation.

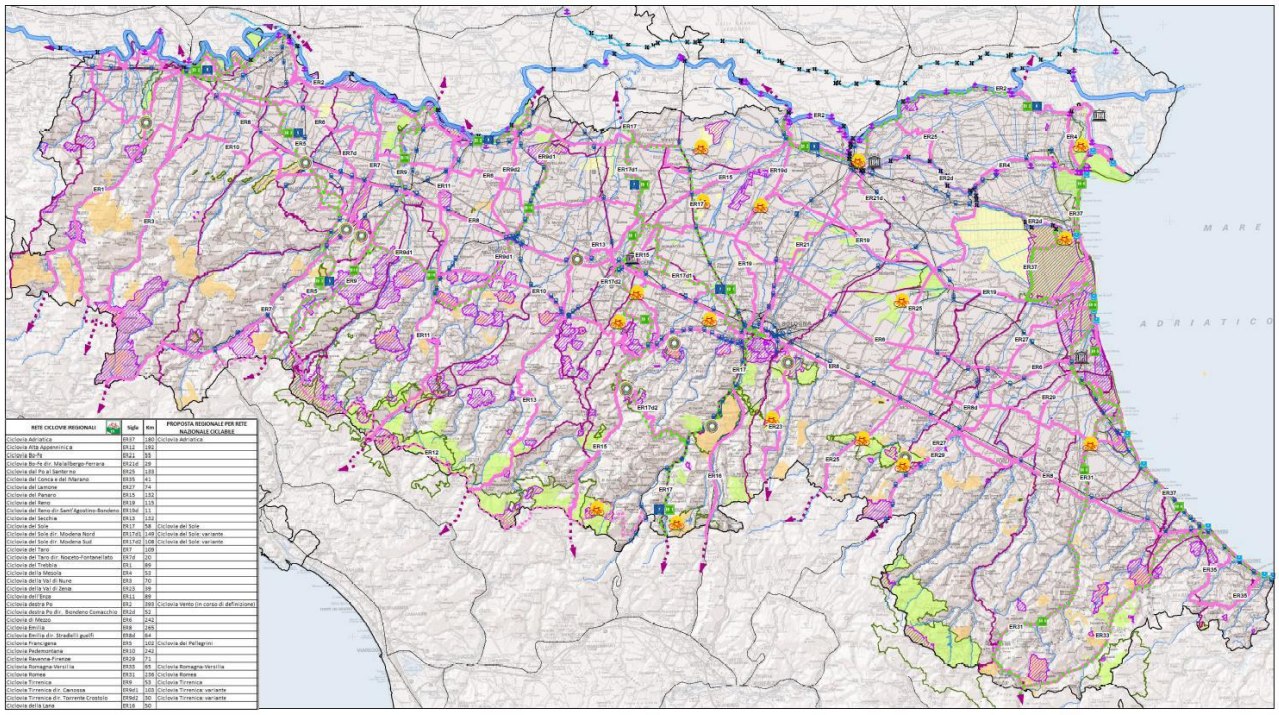


Figure 19 – The planned network regional cycle routes in the Emilia-Romagna region according to the PRIT2025 – "Carta E – Rete delle Ciclovie Regionali"

4.2.4. Marche Region Infrastructure Plan 2032

The key reference document is the Regional Infrastructure Plan "Piano Infrastrutture Marche Region 2032", a comprehensive plan on infrastructure development which includes relevant measures dedicated to cycle mobility. In this regard, it aims to fully develop, both in urban and extra-urban contexts, a "regional network of cycle routes" connected to the national network and other inter-regional routes (see Figure 20).

Figure 20 – The planned network of regional cycle routes in the Marche region according to the Marche Region Infrastructure Plan 2032. Source: Marche Region

The Adriatic Cycle Route (approximately going in the North-South direction), being part of the National Cycle Route, represents the backbone of the system. As explained previously, it runs along the coast, which is also characterised by major residential and productive urbanisation. Moreover, various regional cycle routes running along the Apennine valleys (in the East-West direction) connect this main route with the inland areas and the main parks and reserves.

In the Marche section, the Adriatic Cycle Route is partly built, partly under construction and partly in the planning/design phase. The overall length of the itinerary in the Marche region extends to 297 km. The completion of the itinerary is expected in 2026. Since 2020, several projects have been approved and construction has commenced on a total of 80 km of cycle paths in the region, with an investment of €33 million. Key ongoing works include the construction of significant bridges over the riverbeds of Apennine watercourses such as the Cesano, Chienti, and Tronto rivers, which are critical to ensuring continuity along the entire route. In particular, the southernmost one (see Figure 21), along the Tronto River, is linking the Marche region with the Abruzzo region. In addition to relevant bridges, in October 2024, the construction work began on 4 sections of the cycle route within the regional territory (in the municipalities of Massignano, Campofilone, Altidona and Fermo).

Figure 21 – The planned realisation of the Cycling bridge over the river Tronto in the interregional link between Marche and Abruzzo of the Adriatic Cycle Route. Source: Marche Region

4.2.5. Abruzzo Region

Also in the case of the Abruzzo Region, the Adriatic Cycle route provides a remarkable backbone, from which different connections and itineraries linking to local destinations and the hinterland through the Apennine valleys can be ascertained. In this regard, even though a full-fledged planning document has not been issued yet, a relevant set of interventions, it is already possible to identify a set of already envisaged intervention/priority connections by the regional administration.

More specifically, the Abruzzo Region is participating in the development of the aforementioned Adriatic Cycle Route along its coastal stretch of approximately 131 km, of which 90 km have been completed (see green links in the following Figure 22)[5] .

[5] The sections created can be consulted through an interactive map periodically updated at the URL https://umap.openstreetmap.fr/it/map/ciclovia-adriatica_916184#9/42.2102/14.6530

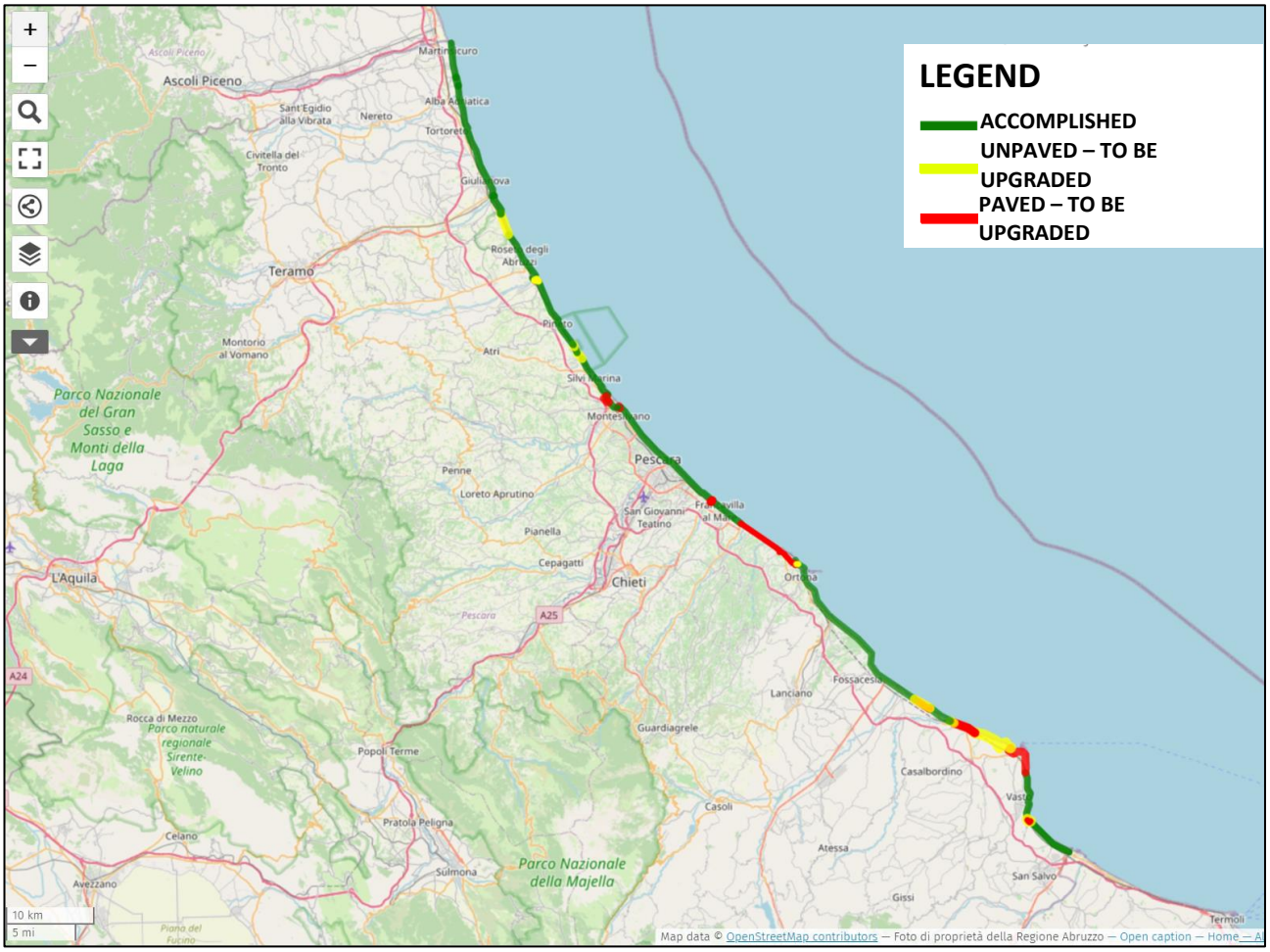


Figure 22 – The state of advancement of different sections of the Adriatic Cycle Route in the Abruzzo Region. Source: Abruzzo Region

Regional investments for the construction of the Adriatic Cycle Route, launched over 15 years ago, are continuing towards completion (as previously described), which is scheduled for 2026. This is made possible by a €2.5 million investment funded by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MIT) as part of the National System of Tourist Cycle Routes (Ministerial Decree 517/2018).

In particular, works involving the construction of new sections of cycle path and extraordinary maintenance are currently underway for over 7 km, across 9 construction sites, most of which are nearing completion. Among others, a project of significant impact is the already mentioned cycle-pedestrian bridge over the Tronto River, connecting the two regions, with an investment of €3.5 million under the coordination of the Marche Region.

Moreover, in view of the finalisation of the cycle route scheduled for 30/06/2026, interventions are envisaged in different sections, resulting in an overall cost of 24 M€, as from the following table.

Implementing body	*Total Amount*
Marche Region - Ponte sul Tronto	*1.750.000,00 €* *(50% of the overall bridge)*
Municipality of Martinsicuro	*€ 1.090.695,36*
Municipality of Roseto degli Abruzzi	*1.642.184,71*
Municipality of Pineto	*€ 79.803,29*
Municipality of Silvi	*€ 221.906,22*
Municipality of Francavilla al mare	*€ 3.381.107,08*
Municipality of Ortona	*€ 6.498.363,66*
Municipality of Torino di Sangro	*€ 3.963.217,09*
Municipality of Casalbordino	*€ 853.302,76*
Province of Chieti - Vasto	*€ 3.957.404,77*
Municipality of San Salvo	*€ 569.768,74*
GRAND TOTAL	*24.007.753,68 €*

Table 4 – The sections being realised within the Abruzzo Region of the Adriatic National Cycle Route. Source: Abruzzo Region

Moreover, various cycle routes link the coastal route (also known as "Via Verde") to the hinterland, as those elaborated by the GAL "Costa dei Trabocchi" (one of the key regional stakeholders in the area), shown in Figure 23.

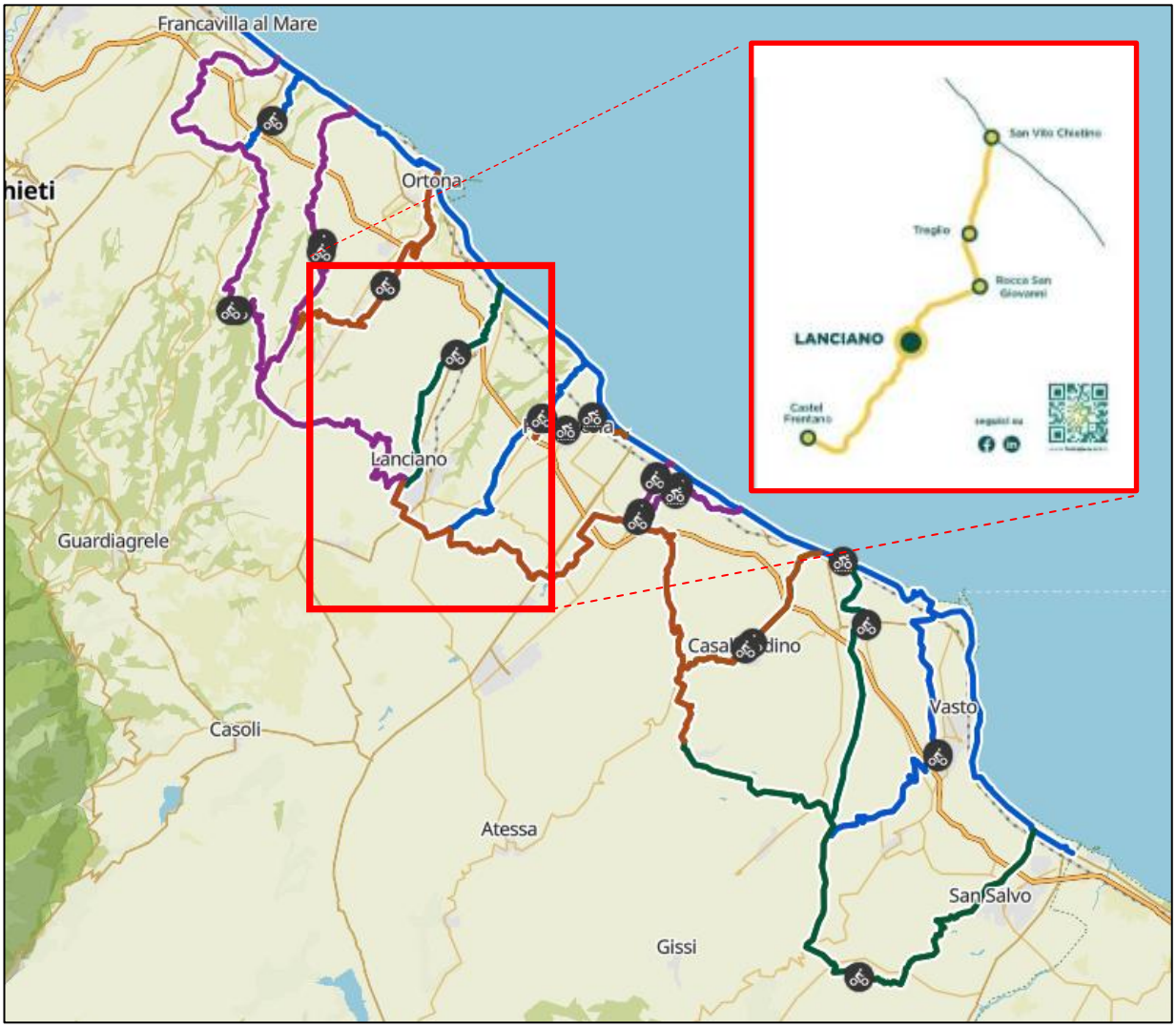


Figure 23 – Cycle routes linked to the coastal cycle route "Via Verde" elaborated by the GAL "Costa dei Trabocchi" in the Southern part of the Abruzzo Region. Source: Abruzzo Region

In this same territorial context, the "Binaria" project is underway, which involves the creation of a 23-kilometre cycle route along the disused railway line connecting the municipalities of San Vito Chietino, Treglio, Rocca San Giovanni, Lanciano, and Castel Frentano. This initiative, funded by the Abruzzo Region and the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security (MASE) with a total investment of €7.5 million, is scheduled for completion in 2026

In conclusion, there are numerous ongoing investments in cycle routes in the inland areas, including within the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park, along the Aterno River, near the city of L'Aquila, and on the "Cammino dei

Briganti" in the Marsica area. For these projects, a €19.8 million budget has been allocated, and implementation agreements have been signed, with completion scheduled for 2029.

Additionally, the Abruzzo Region has co-financed, together with the Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security (MASE), several sections along the routes of certain rivers: the "Val di Foro Cycle Path" in the province of Chieti (€2,100,000) and the "Val Vibrata Cycle Path" in the Teramo area (€1,374,644). The expected completion date for these interventions is 31/12/2026.

4.2.6. Molise Region

The Molise Region has not yet developed a comprehensive planning document specifically dedicated to cycle mobility. However, it is important to highlight the significance of the Adriatic Tourist Cycle Route, which runs along the entire Molise coastline from the border with Abruzzo to that with Puglia. This route is currently under development with funding from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), with the Municipality of Termoli acting as the implementing body. Upon completion, the project will connect the entire Molise coast from one regional border to the other.

Additionally, the Bicitalia network[6] envisions connections between the inland axis represented by the Apennine Cycle Route (BI8 – "Ciclovia degli Appennini") and the Adriatic coast. These links would connect the two provincial capitals to the coast: Campobasso to the Apulian section of the Adriatic Cycle Route and Isernia to the Abruzzo coast near Vasto. However, it should be noted that at present these envisaged connections have not been the subject of actual design and funds have not been allocated for their realisation.

4.2.7. Apulia Regional Plan for Cycling Mobility

In the case of the Apulia Region, the key reference is represented by the recently approved (2023) Regional Plan for Cycling Mobility. The plan aims to promote cycling for both daily travel and tourism, also by integrating cycling with public transport to improve urban mobility. The plan was developed with the involvement of stakeholders and focuses on integrating cycling into both urban and extra-urban areas. In particular, it outlined 16 Regional Cycle routes reported in the following Figure 24, taking up the routes already present in the 2015-2019 Implementation Plan of the Regional Transport Plan, based on the network of European (EuroVelo), national (Bicitalia) and regional (project Cy.Ro.N.Med.).

[6] See also the Bicitalia network (https://www.bicitalia.org/it/bicitalia/la-rete-ciclabile-nazionale-bicitalia) and the Appennino Bike Tour initiative, also considering the Ministerial Decree 232/2022 (Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility) which authorized the installation of signage along the 3,100 km Apennine route from Liguria to Sicily, crossing 14 regions. Decree link: https://www.mit.gov.it/nfsmitgov/files/media/progetti/2023-01/Decreto%20prot.%200000232.22-07-2022.pdf

The planned itineraries make it possible to obtain an almost uniform density of cycle routes throughout the regional territory, favouring low-traffic roads, for a total of 2,300 km planned.

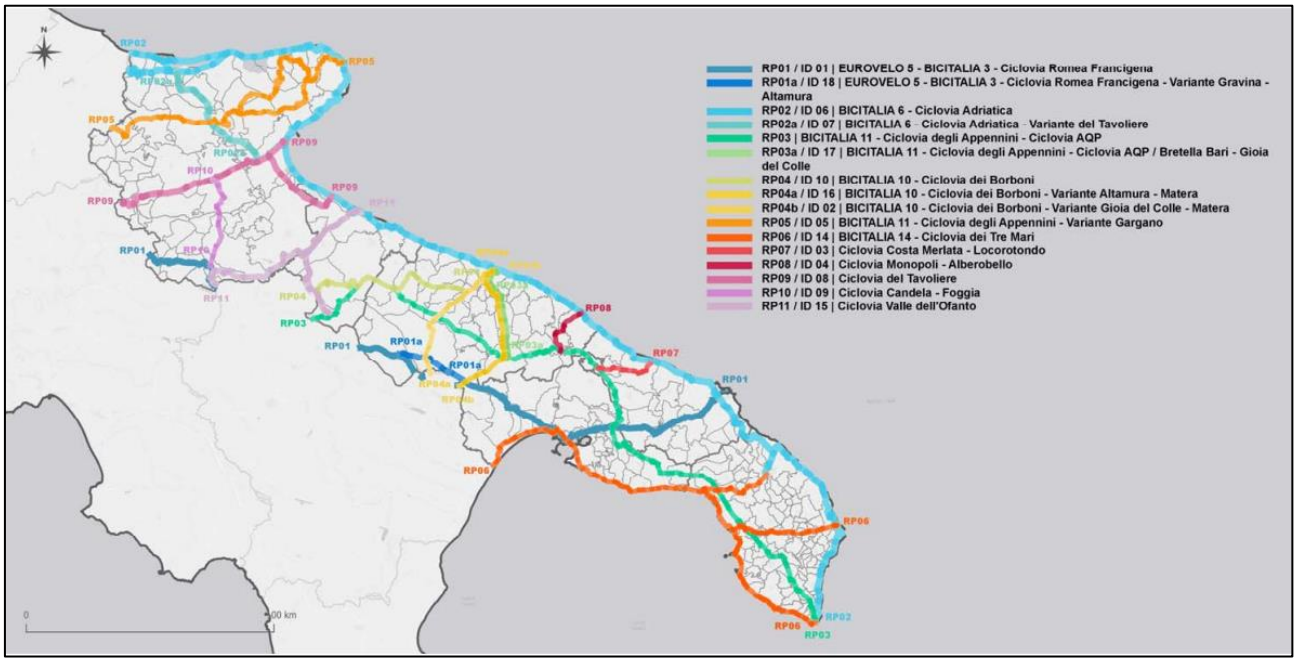


Figure 24 – The planned network of Apulia regional cycle routes. Source: Apulia Regional Plan for Cycling Mobility

In particular, this regional network is integrated with the "Adriatic" and the "Acquedotto Pugliese" national cycle routes, which were previously described and are currently under development. Specifically, the main arc of the Adriatic Ionian Cycle Rote here is represented by the final section of the national Adriatic Cycle Route, which largely corresponds to the Tavoliere variant (shown in sky blue in Figure 24). Continuing south of the Gargano, it follows the Regional Adriatic Cycle Route (shown in light blue in Figure 24) all the way to the southern tip at Santa Maria di Leuca. Afterwards, the route continues along the coastal section of the "Ciclovia dei Tre Mari," represented in orange in Figure 24.

More specifically, with reference to the Adriatic National Cycle Route, Figure 25 shows two sections funded by two different sources of funding (Ministerial Decree 517/201, for the portion represented in blue colour, and PNRR, for the one in red). In total, €22,455,194.89 has been allocated for the construction of approximately 76 km of cycle path along the stretch between Lesina and Manfredonia.

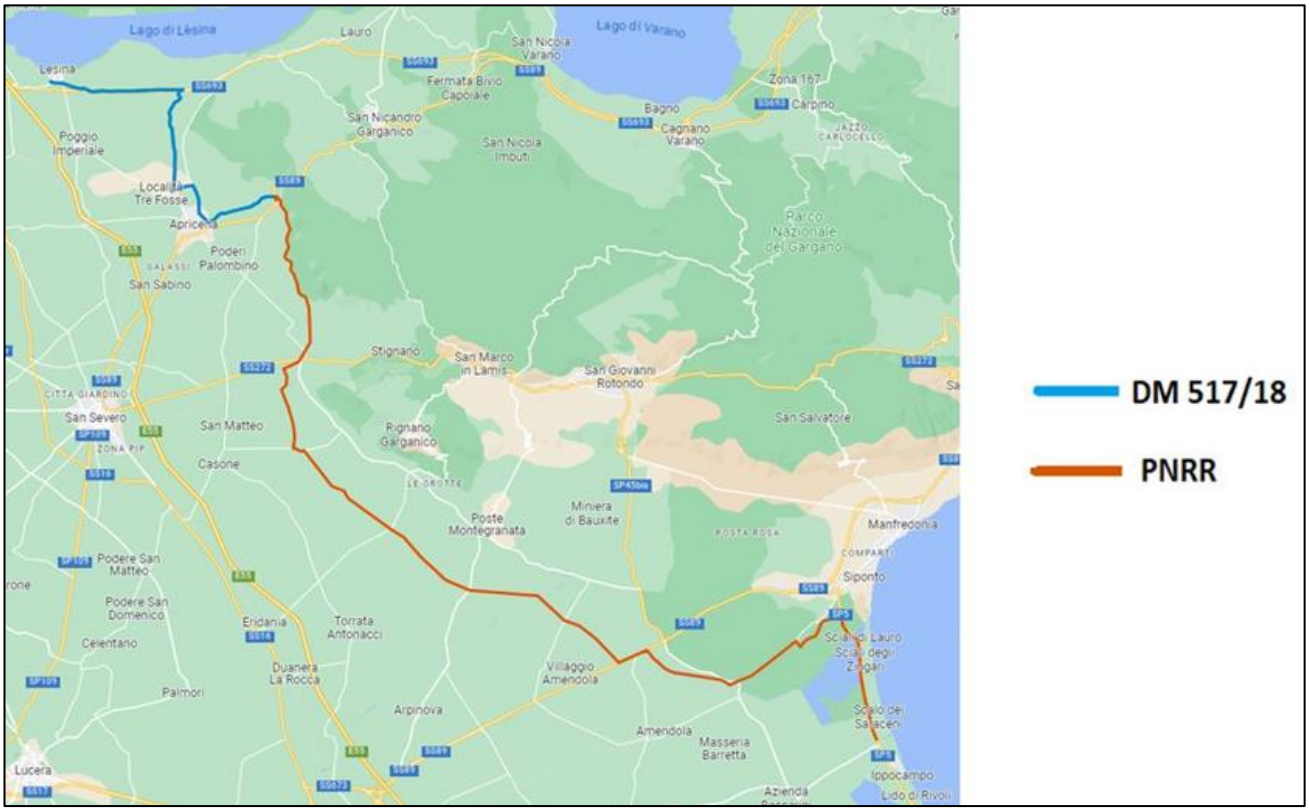


Figure 25 – Two sections of the Adriatic Cycleway under construction, realised through different funding between Lesina and Manfredonia. Source: Apulia Region

The Province of Foggia, identified as the implementing body, approved the executive project last July and started the works, which will end by 30 June 2026 as foreseen by Circ. n. 4/2022. The cycle route runs approximately half on low-traffic provincial roads and the other half on its own. For a stretch of over 9 km the cycle path will be built on the site of the disused Gargano railway.

Among other sections to be developed, it is important to mention the one linking to the north up to the border with the Molise Region. For this section, an option subject to evaluation and further investigation is linked, also in this case, to the reuse of a disused railway section.

5. State-of-play of planning activities in the Croatian Context

In this chapter, a brief overview of the principal planning activities and documents developed at both national and regional levels in Croatia is presented[7]. Recalling the previously discussed governance framework, the focus is on planning processes and documents produced by the National Ministry and the Counties ("županije"), with particular attention to those directly involved in the CYROS partnership. Moreover, the European level is also mentioned, with particular reference to the EUROVELO 8.

5.1. EUROVELO 8 sections and related alternative paths in Croatia

The Croatian part of the EUROVELO 8 (already addressed also in chapter 3), extending approximately 1,116 km through all the seven Adriatic coastal regions of the Country, represents the longest EuroVelo route passing through Croatia. Moreover, together with some alternative paths, it corresponds to the coastal arc of the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route.

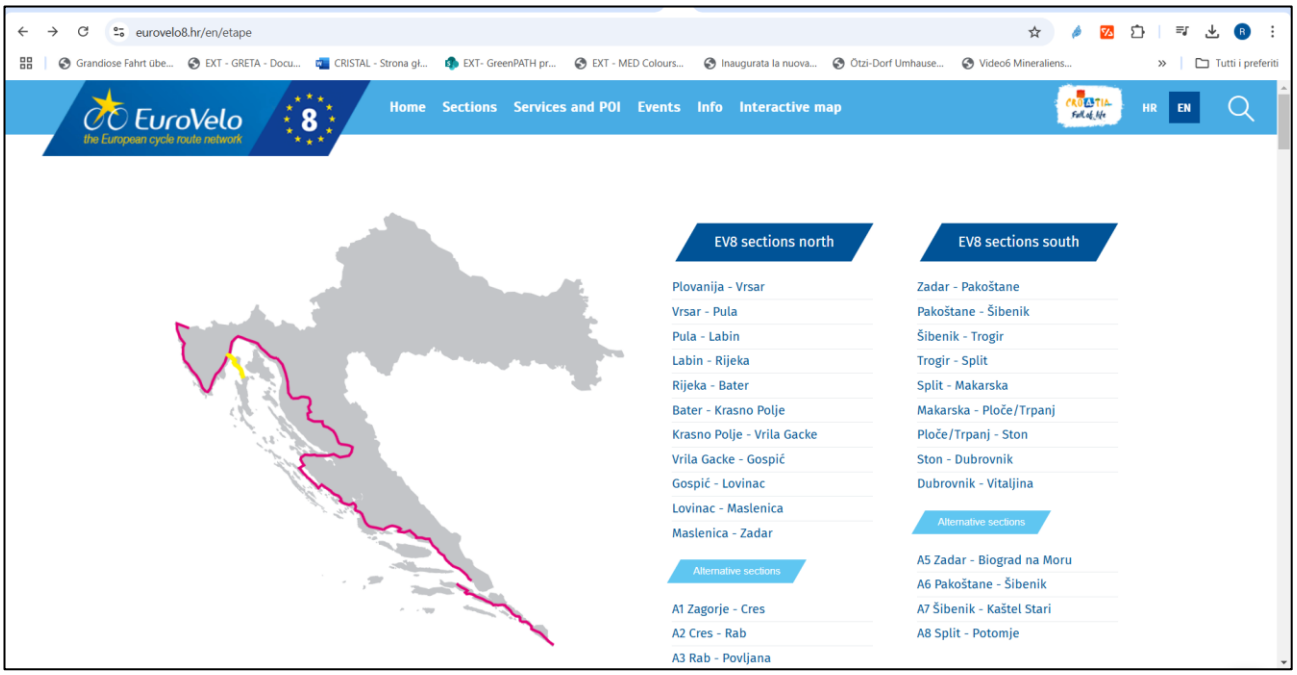


Figure 26 – The webpage with EUROVELO8 sections, including alternative paths. Source: https://eurovelo8.hr/en/etape

[7] Among others, a relevant reference providing an overview for Croatia with detailed information, links and data is available https://cikloturizam.hr.

Further and detailed information about EUROVELO 8 sections, also including relevant alternative paths, is available at https://eurovelo8.hr/en/etape.

5.2. The Croatian national level

Croatia's first National Cycling Development Plan (2023-2027), issued in 2024, establishes a framework for cycling development, focusing on infrastructure, promotion, and safety.

Its genesis stems from the growing awareness of sustainable cycle tourism and the influence of policies and initiatives from the EU to national levels. It provides sectoral implementation of the National Transport Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (2017-2030) (https://mmpi.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/MMPI%20Strategija%20prometnog%20razvoja%20RH%202017.-2030.-final.pdf), aligning with broader transport goals. Inspiration was also drawn from the Danube Cycle Plans project (https://dtp.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danube-cycle-plans).

Other previous key national planning documents were:

- *Action plan for cycle tourism development in the Republic of Croatia as a main sectoral reference document,*
- *The Strategy for Tourism Development in the Republic of Croatia until 2020*

Hence, the National Cycling Development Plan aims to create a comprehensive cycling network, improve intermodal connectivity, and boost cycling tourism.

To this end, an overall network is envisioned according to a hierarchical approach encompassing the following layers:

- *National routes: Connecting major cities and regions, potentially aligning with EuroVelo routes.*
- *Regional routes: Linking local destinations and attractions.*
- *Local routes: Serving daily commuting and recreational needs within communities.*

Concerning National routes, the plan explicitly aims to align the national routes with EuroVelo routes where feasible. This means that some sections of the national network will likely overlap with existing or planned EuroVelo routes passing through Croatia. However, it's important to note that the national routes and EuroVelo routes may not be entirely identical, since they cater to specific domestic needs and priorities. This means both completely different itineraries and limited/local variations of the path. This situation can be due to several reasons, including adapting to local conditions and providing better access (e.g. to connect to local services, accommodations, or points of interest that the main EuroVelo route bypasses).

As anticipated, among the EuroVelo routes crossing Croatia, the following ones are at least partially covering the IT-HR:

- *EuroVelo 8 "Mediterranean Route"*
- *EuroVelo 9 "Baltic Adriatic".*

These main directions are integrated in the national cycle routes system represented in Figure 27[8].

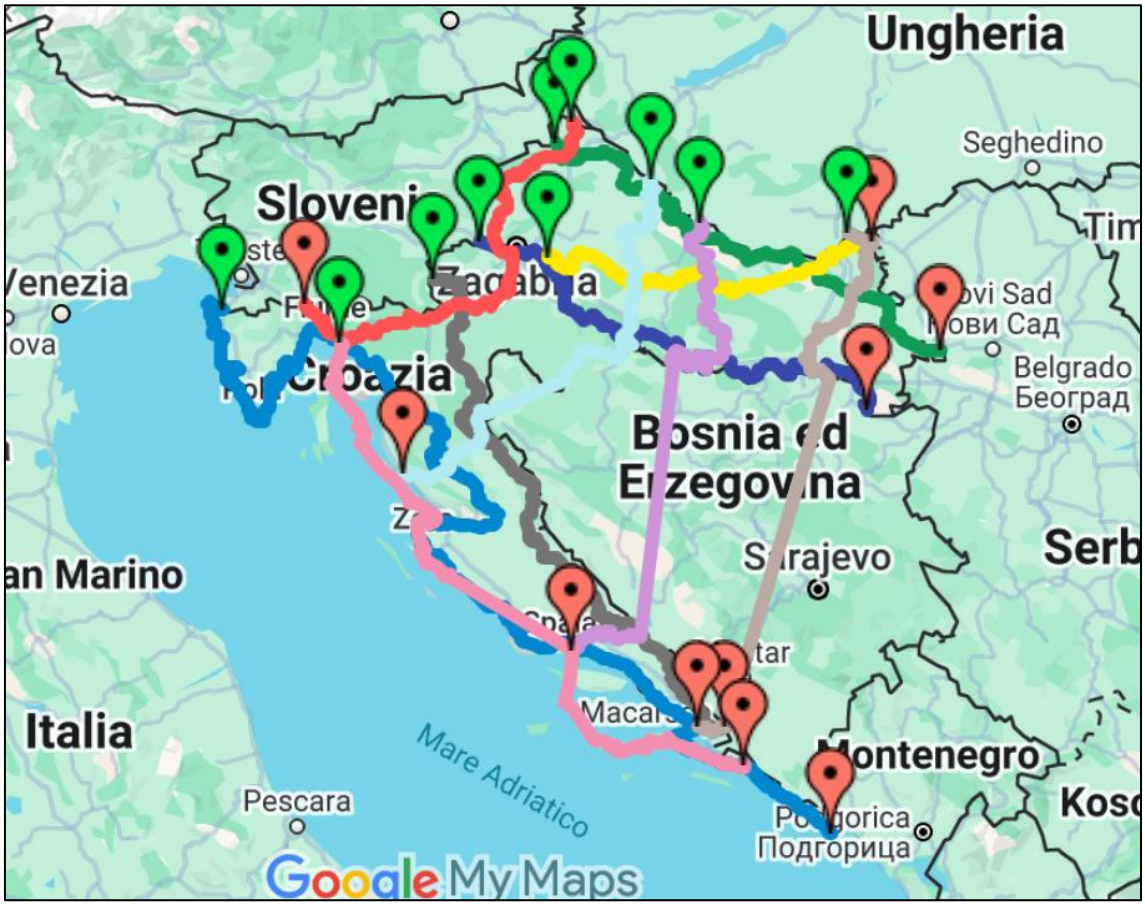
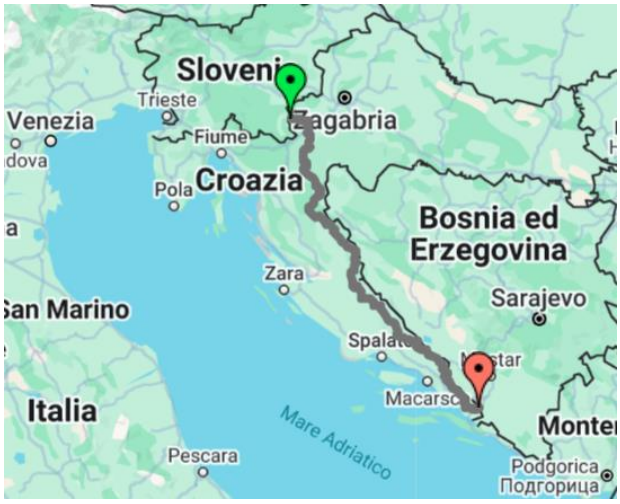


Figure 27 – The national routes in Croatia. Source: Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

As regards to the national routes, out of a total of 10, those 8 listed in the following are at least partially touching the IT-HR area.

[8] See also https://mmpi.gov.hr/infrastruktura/biciklisticka-infrastruktura/biciklisticke-rute-u-hrvatskoj/22604

- *The **D3** Dinaric route ("Dinarska ruta") represents a long inland itinerary (about 538 km long) starting from the border with Slovenia in Karlovac County and extending southward to the Neretva River, progressively approaching the Adriatic coast but not reaching it directly (see Figure 28). As the name suggests, the route crosses the Dinaric Alps, a prominent mountain range in the Western Balkans, reaching a maximum elevation of approximately 1,160 meters above sea level along its path.*
- *The **D4** Adriatic cycling route ("Jadranska ruta") provides a coastal itinerary of approximately 643 km running mainly along the Adriatic coast, with a partial inland section through Lika-Senj County. It starts at the coastal border crossing between Slovenia and Croatia near Plovanija in the northwestern Istrian Peninsula and ends at the border with Montenegro at Karasovići (see Figure 28). The route largely overlaps with the EuroVelo 8 cycling route. Moreover, it follows the Croatian state road D8, known as the Adriatic Highway, connecting major coastal cities including Rijeka, Senj, Zadar, Šibenik, Split, and Dubrovnik. In doing this, it bypasses the short Bosnian coastline at Neum, by means of the Pelješac Bridge, a 2.4-kilometre cable-stayed bridge opened in 2022 that links the mainland near Komarna with the Pelješac Peninsula.*



D3 Dinarska ruta

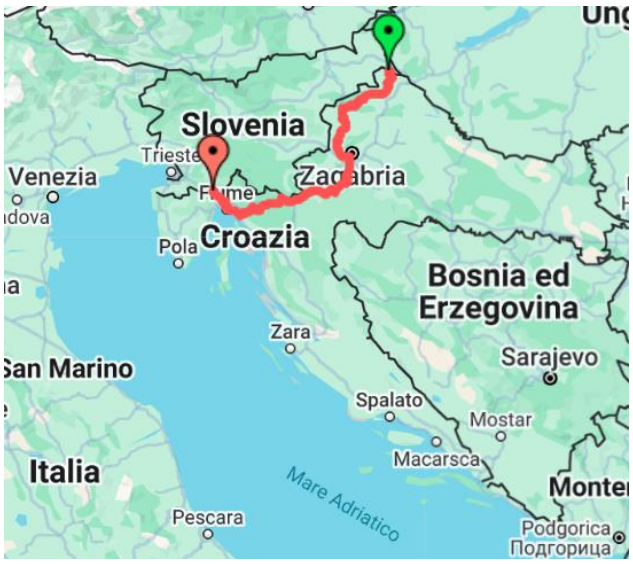
D4 Jadranska ruta

Figure 28 – The D3 and D4 national routes in Croatia. Source: Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

- *The **D6** "Zagorska Karolina" cycling route is an inland itinerary of approximately 384 km, with elevations ranging from about 106 to 999 meters (see Figure 29). It runs through northern Croatia, starting from the Slovenian border near Mursko Središće (in Međimurje County), passing through Hrvatsko Zagorje, Zagreb, and Karlovac, and continuing toward the northern Adriatic coast near Rijeka. From there, it further extends*

to the nearby border crossing with Slovenia near the village of Rupa (Matulji municipality) in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

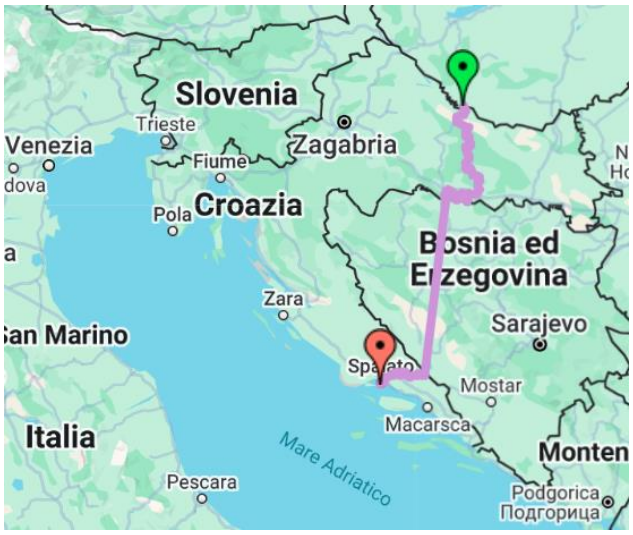
- *The **D7** Jadran - Plitvice - Lonjsko Polje – Balaton cycling route is an approximately 400 km itinerary connecting the northern Adriatic coast of Croatia with the Hungarian border (see Figure 29). The route passes through diverse landscapes and crosses a small portion of Bosnia and Herzegovina near the Bihać region. As from name itself, the route is meant to continues into Hungary, linking with the area of Lake Balaton.*



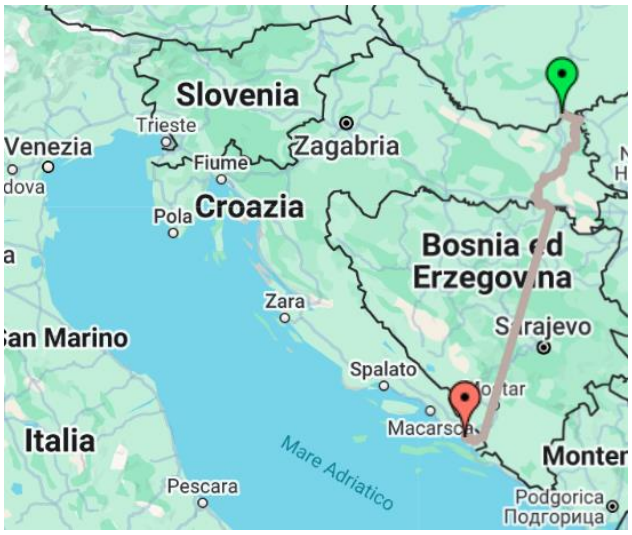
D6 Zagorska - Karolina ruta

D7 Jadran - Plitvice -Lonjsko Polje – Balaton ruta

Figure 29 – The D6 and D7 national routes in Croatia. Source: Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure



D8 Jadran - Drava ruta



D9 Neretva - Slavonija ruta

Figure 30 – The D8 and D9 national routes in Croatia. Source: Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

- *The **D8** Jadran - Drava cycling route corresponds to an approximately 457 km itinerary connecting the Adriatic coast region with the northeastern border of Croatia with Hungary (see Figure 30). Starting from the coast in Split, it proceeds through diverse contexts, including inland plains and river valleys. Hence, the elevation ranges from sea level to a maximum of approximately 731 meters. It crosses a remarkable section of Bosnia and Herzegovina before re-entering Croatia and continues northeast towards the Hungarian border.*
- *The **D9** Neretva - Slavonija cycling route is an approximately 415 km itinerary connecting the Adriatic coast at Ploče, near the estuary of the Neretva River, with the border with Hungary in Osijek-Baranja County (see Figure 30). Along its path, it traverses diverse landscapes including coastal areas, inland plains, and river valleys. The elevation remains relatively low, ranging from sea level up to less than 150 meters. The route crosses a significant section of Bosnia and Herzegovina before re-entering Croatia and continues northeast towards the Hungarian border.*
- *The **D10** Adriatic Islands ("Jadranski otoci") cycling route covers approximately 335 km across several Croatian Adriatic islands, including Krk, Cres, Pag, Dugi Otok, and Korčula (see Figure 31). The route begins on the mainland in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and extends southward through the Dalmatian archipelago and coast up to the Dubrovnik-Neretva region. It features varied terrain with elevations ranging from sea level to a maximum of about 280 meters. The itinerary includes multiple ferry connections between islands, integrating island cycling with maritime transport.*

D10 ruta - Jadranski otoci

Figure 31 – The D10 national route in Croatia. Source: Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

The integration of these different layers offers several benefits:

- *Enhanced connectivity: It allows cyclists to seamlessly travel across borders and explore different countries by bike*
- *Increased visibility: Aligning with EuroVelo enhances the visibility of Croatian cycling routes on the international stage, attracting more cycle tourists.*
- *Shared standards: It promotes the adoption of common standards for route quality, signage, and safety, ensuring a consistent experience for cyclists.*

In order to achieve this ambitious objective, the plan outlines investments regarding:

- *Infrastructure: Construction of new cycling paths, upgrading existing ones, and providing supporting facilities (e.g., parking, rest areas).*
- *Promotion: Campaigns to raise awareness about cycling benefits and encourage cycling as a mode of transport.*
- *Safety: Measures to improve cyclist safety, such as traffic calming, signage, and education programs.*

As regards to Priorities and Timeline, the plan prioritises:

- *Developing national and EuroVelo routes to connect with European networks.*
- *Improving cycling infrastructure in urban areas to promote commuting.*
- *Supporting cycling tourism by developing attractive routes and services.*

The timeline for implementation is spread across the 2023-2027 period, with specific projects and milestones to be defined in annual action plans. The plan emphasises collaboration between government agencies, local authorities, and NGOs to ensure effective implementation and achieve its objectives. It also highlights the importance of monitoring progress and adapting the plan as needed to respond to changing circumstances and needs.

Obviously, the realisation process is supported by adequate investments. In this regard, sources are made available to counties according to a prospect of envisaged investment distributed in the different counties, which is updated indicatively on a yearly basis[9].

More in general, a key source with links to different planning technical documents and financial prospects is provided at a dedicated webpage on the website of the Croatian Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure[10].

5.3. The Croatian regional level (NUTS3)

At the regional level ("županije"), Operational Plans (or Action Plans) translate the broader objectives of the national strategy into concrete actions, often specifying route alignments, timelines, and responsible parties. An important consideration is the relationship between national and regional documents, particularly given the different years in which they were issued. Notably, the regional action plans developed by all counties precede the recently issued 2024 national plan. As a result, they have been developed while having as their main reference a previous national planning document: the Action Plan for the Development of Cycling Tourism issued in 2015[11].

In any case, the following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the existing Operational Plans, along with other relevant observations, for the regions directly involved in the CYROS project partnership.

[9] For more details, see also https://mmpi.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/INFRASTRUKTURA/Infrastruktura%2012_24/MMPI%20ODLUKA%20Dodjela%20sredstava%20ZUC-2024%20BIC-INFR%20gradnja%209-12_24.pdf

[10] https://mmpi.gov.hr/infrastruktura/biciklisticka-infrastruktura/nacionalni-plan-razvoja-biciklistickog-prometa-za-razdoblje-od-2023-do-2027-godine/24099

[11] See also https://mint.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/arhiva/151014_akcijski_cikloturizam.pdf

5.3.1. Istian County

The Istrian County Cycle Tourism Development Operational Plan 2019-2025 is a strategic framework aimed at creating a comprehensive database of development projects for all stakeholders involved in cycling tourism. It has planned investments totalling approximately 35 million Euros, primarily focused on cycling infrastructure, including new and existing road bike lanes and trails, bike parks, and pump tracks. The plan also emphasises developing alternative routes and strengthening the bike & trail cluster by connecting well-maintained cycling and hiking paths with the Parenzana trail and international EuroVelo 8 and 9 routes. Additionally, significant funding is allocated to improving destination management, such as acquiring technical equipment, building electric bike stations, and installing charging points in various cities.

More recently, project activities, including those being carried out in the CYROS project, are providing relevant updates, which can foster the further development of cycle tourism in the Istrian County.

5.3.2. Primorje Gorski Kotar County

The Primorje-Gorski Kotar County Cycling Tourism Development Operational Plan (2019-2020) outlines targeted projects to enhance cycling infrastructure, services, and signage, with a focus on integration with national and international routes. It establishes a framework for coordinated implementation and monitoring to support the sustainable growth of cycling tourism in the region.

Moreover, it is to report some specific remarks and planning activities being carried out by Primorje Gorski Kotar County, relative to the possibility of referring to an alternative path along the islands (Nedešćina - Cres - Rab - Pag) along with the main official EUROVELO 8, currently passing along the coast through Rijeka (Nedešćina - Rijeka - Bater).

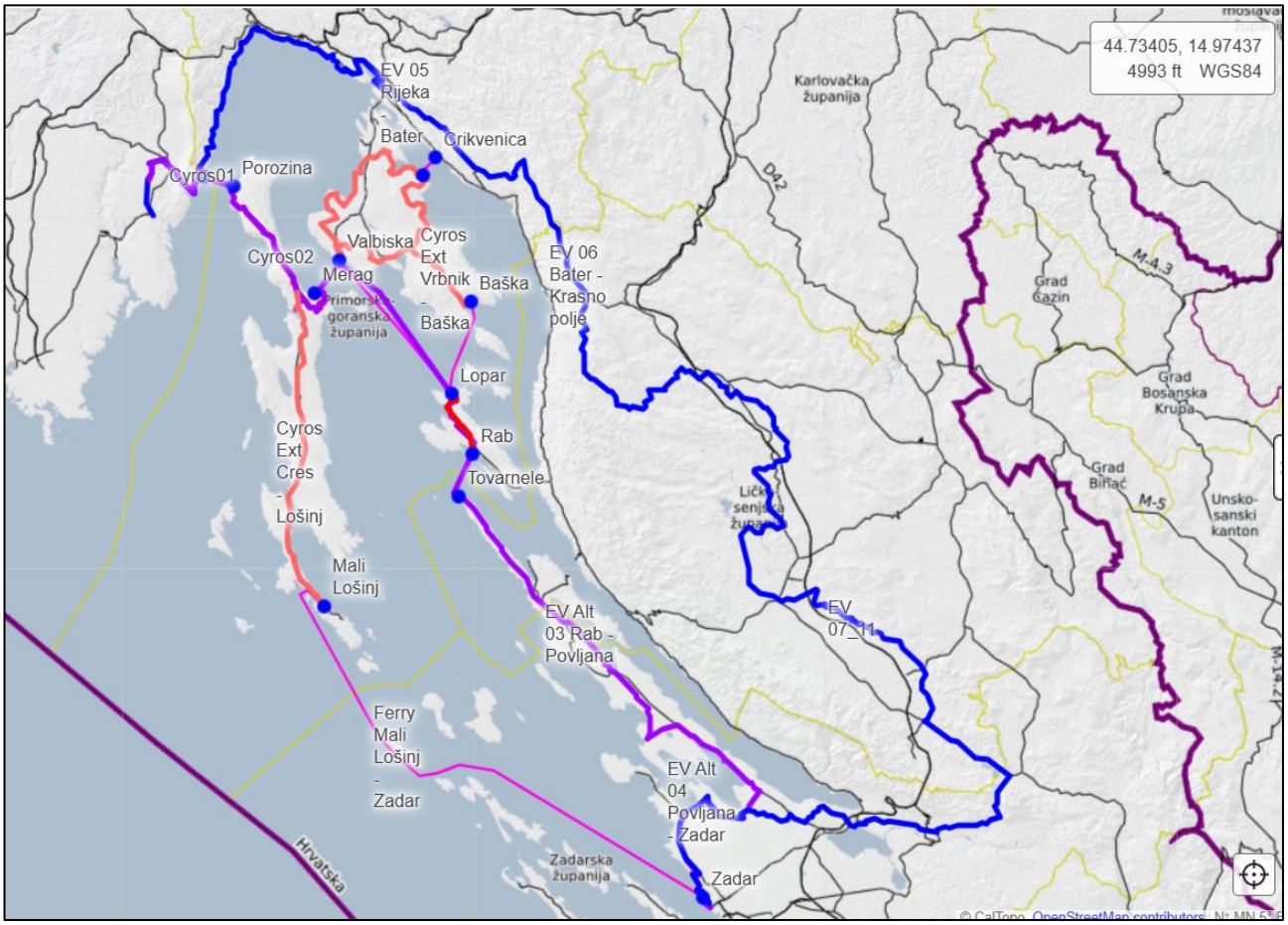


Figure 32 – EV8 and alternative paths in the PGK and neighbouring counties. Source: PGK

The main rationale for alternative routes across the islands is associated with providing better cyclist safety, considering the high level of traffic on the main route (especially through the City of Rijeka).

The different options are shown in the previous figure, where the blue line (EV 04, EV 05, EV 06 and EV 07_11) on the map represents the main Eurovelo 8 route, and the purple line (EV Alt 01, EV Alt 02, EV Alt 03 and EV Alt 04) represents its alternative route across the island. Pink lines represent boat and ferry lines between the islands. Among other things, it is worth noting that this alternative route is aligned with the national route D10 "Jadranski otoci".

The dark red lines show the proposed route in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (following the Eurovelo 8 alternative route), and the light red line presents the additional routes for the promotion of the destination.

These routes and requested implementation steps will be further investigated in other steps of the CYROS project (esp. D.1.1.5).

5.3.3. Dubrovnik-Neretva County

The Operational plan for cycle tourism development of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County is a strategic document providing an overview of resources, current tourism offer and direction of future development of cycle tourism. It was also developed through the funding of the project Maritime and Multimodal Sustainable Passenger Transport Solutions and Services – MIMOSA (Interreg Italy – Croatia 2014 – 2020 Programme).

On the basis of an analysis of the overview of cycle tourism supply and demand in the County, a comprehensive vision and development objectives until 2027 have been developed.

More specifically, the vision is related to the promotion of Dubrovnik-Neretva County as an all-year-round cycling destination, offering its visitors rich natural and cultural heritage and a consolidated offer for each group of visitors. To this end, three strategic goals were identified making reference to three intervention priorities: infrastructures, services and information & knowledge.

Looking at the implementation of specific measures, each strategic goal includes one or more of the following thematic areas:

- *Infrastructural projects (strategic goal 1)*
- *Projects related to law regulations (strategic goals 1 and 3)*
- *Projects related to education (strategic goal 3)*
- *Projects referring to the improvement of cycle tourism offer (strategic goal 2)*
- *Project referring to cycle tourism information system and marketing (strategic goal 3).*

Moreover, in order to create a unified offer and recognisable brand, standards for the development of cycle tourism infrastructure and offer in the county were identified and described.

6. Mapping the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route and linked connections

This chapter addresses the key goal of mapping the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route, which is also the primary objective of this deliverable. As foreseen by the AF description, the mapping focuses mainly on the Adriatic-Ionian cycle route within the Programme Area, including its coastal network and main cycle connections to the hinterland.

To this end, the first paragraph briefly outlines the process of data collection and integration. Then, the second paragraph presents and illustrates the completed mapping, while the final one hints at the linkages with subsequent activities related to this initial achievement.

6.1. The CYROS data collection and integration process

In order to develop a comprehensive mapping of the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route, including the key connections linking to the network of main long-distance cycle routes, a data collection process was carried out with the support of all the CYROS project partners.

This entailed gathering 25 different data sources, which are reported in a dedicated annexe to the present document. This activity was carried out in coordination with the WP2 data collection process (D2.1.1), addressing other different themes requested for backing the development of two relevant ICT tools:

- *The D.2.1.2 webGIS portal*
- *The D.2.1.3 app for the info provision to cyclists.*

The overall data collection has covered a wide and interdisciplinary set of data. Essentially, they can be grouped into the following main themes:

- *Cycle routes*
- *Other routes/itineraries (for hiking, etc.)*
- *Public transport (railway/road/waterborne)*
    - *stops*
    - *services*
- *Other services (to users of cycle routes)*
- *POIs (Points Of Interest) / tourist destinations*

However, within this overall framework, D.1.1.1 focuses on the first point (i.e. cycle routes). In particular, it has targeted specifically the key infrastructures provided by long-distance cycle routes making up the ADRIONCYCLETOUR coastal arc (including some alternative parallel paths) and also relevant connections to the hinterland, thus embracing the whole IT-HR area. The process implied various iterative steps, including cross-checking with the relevant planning documents retrieved and described in the previous chapters.

As a general remark, complete and consistent coverage of key attributes describing the typology of route sections (e.g., paved vs. unpaved) and their development status is currently lacking. Therefore, for updates and follow-up activities, the proposed classification should, at a minimum, distinguish each link according to its status into the following situations.

- *Completed*
- *Under design or construction*
- *To be designed, since it is missing or to be updated because of one of the following situations:*
    - *Rideable with medium or high safety level, but requiring improvements (geometry, surface, etc.)*
    - *Rideable only on dangerous sections, requiring safety upgrades*
    - *Not rideable or non-existent.*

6.2. The resulting map

On the basis of the analysis of the collected data sources together as well as of the key references provided by the planning documents and activities described in the previous chapters, it is possible to draw an overall map representing the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route coastal arc together with relevant connections to the hinterland and alternative paths, as reported in the following figures.

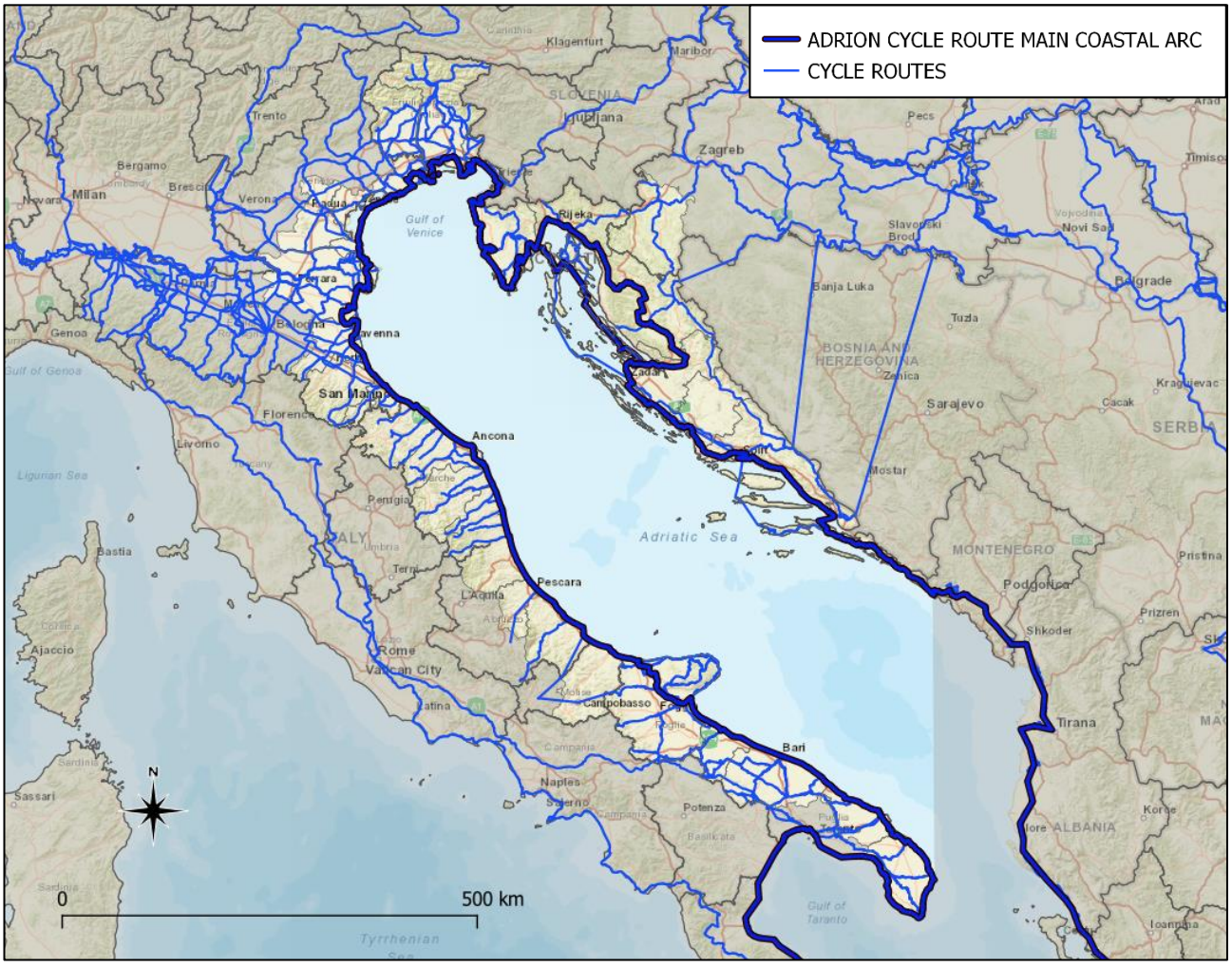


Figure 33 – The Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route and main linked cycle route network. Source: Own Elaborations

Figure 34 – The Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route and main linked cycle route network – zoomed view 1. Source: Own Elaborations

Figure 35 – The Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route and main linked cycle route network – zoomed view 2. Source: Own Elaborations

The representations provided are related to the planning vision, based on the review of planning documents.

Obviously, in order to achieve a successful development process for the ADRIONCYCLETOUR initiative, it is important to address the actual design and realisation process of its different sections, taking into account related timelines, resources and potential challenges. As seen in the previous chapters, with particular reference to the IT-HR area, this process can profit from relevant synergies with other relevant EU and National level initiatives and funding.

Concerning the coastal arc, it is important to recall the state of play of EUROVELO 8, which is classified as completed on the Croatian side. Nonetheless, it is important to consider the importance of specific fine-tuning and, in particular, alternative routes (partly to be developed), which include national-level routes (as described in detail in Chapter 4). On the Italian side, where in general the current level of completeness and overlap with EUROVELO 8 is lower, a relevant boost in the development of missing section is associated with the development of relevant routes being part of the National System of Tourist Cycle Routes (which are supported by relevant funding from the PNRR), presented in detail in Chapter 3.

6.3. Setting the ground for the next steps of the CYROS project

As anticipated, the achieved mapping provides a shared background and a relevant basis for further steps in the CYROS project implementation.

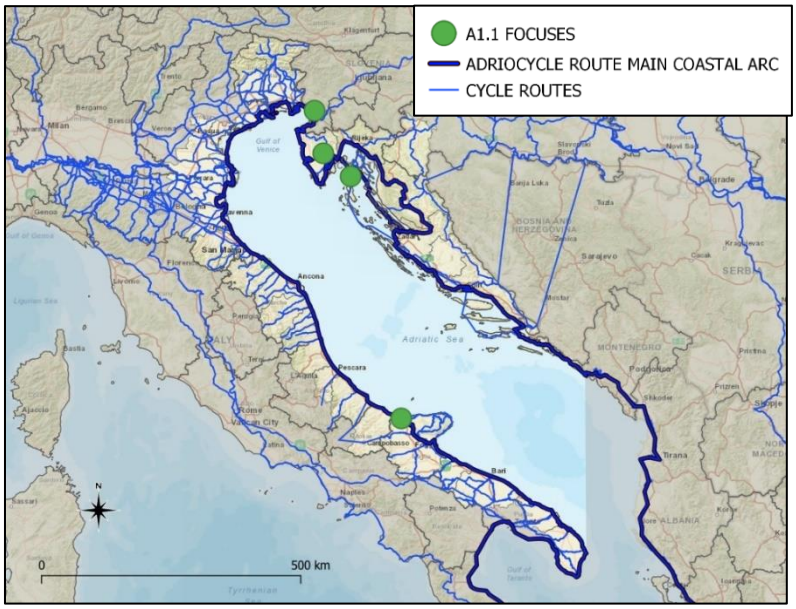


Figure 36 – The WP1 A1.1 focuses within the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route and linked cycle route network – zoomed view 1. Source: Own Elaborations

In this regard, the relevant relationship with the WP2 activities has already been clarified in the first paragraph, and it characterised also the early steps of the implementation process. Obviously, other relevant relationships to be highlighted are those with other WP1 deliverables. In fact, the carried-out mapping covering the whole IT-HR area provides a common background and which each specific intervention or deepening at the regional/local level can be framed.

For instance, the representations in Figure 36 provide a broad overview of the positioning of other A1.1 activities (designing or improving cycle paths) with respect to the achieved mapping of the overall Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route.

7. Conclusions

The present deliverable constitutes the first achievement in the CYROS project WP1, setting the ground and providing the analyses of the overall context in which specific and more focused analyses and pilot activities are taking place.

Additionally, this mapping activity contributes to the comprehensive data collection process being carried out in the WP2 with the aim of providing the dataset needed for developing the envisaged D.2.1.2 webGIS portal and D.2.1.3 app for the information provision to cyclists.

From the methodological point of view, it is important to underline that the mapping process was carried out with the support of project partners who were asked to provide data and feedback with particular reference to their own national/regional contexts. Another important source of information was provided by relevant planning documents and openly available datasets that were cross-checked.

This allowed, through an iterative process, to achieve an overall map representing the Adriatic-Ionian Cycle Route coastal arc together with relevant connections to the hinterland and alternative paths covering the whole IT-HR area.

Hence, the obtained results are meant to provide a first source of information, also providing an overall background to specific activities carried out in each regional context, which is important to be (as much as possible) further updated and integrated in the following steps of the CYROS project implementation.

8. Annexes

Data catalogue of data sources