

FRANCE

Diversify the rural economy

Location

Longpré-les-Corps-Saints
and Oisemont

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 3

Measure

M313 - Encouragement of
tourism activities

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1 248 075

EAFRD 496 857

National/regional 499 130

Other 252 088

Project duration

2011 - 2012

Project promoter

Syndicat Mixte
d'Aménagement de
l'Ancienne Voie Ferrée
Longpré-les-Corps-Saints -
Airaines - Oisemont

Contact

François ROUILLARD
Francois.rouillard@mairie-airaines.fr

tel. +33 322 29 40 84

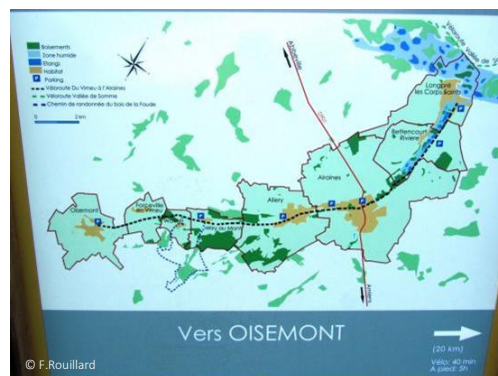
Website

n/a

Three French municipalities used EAFRD support to transform a former railway line into a leisure path for walking, cycling and horse riding.

Summary

A group of northern French towns launched a project to transform an old train route into a leisure path for walking, cycling and horse riding. The project renovated 21.4 km of the former track, providing tourism and leisure opportunities. The three French municipalities used EAFRD support to convert the former railway line into a path made from a synthetic sand/fibre mix for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Quad bikes, motorbikes and cars are not allowed.



Results

The leisure path provides an opportunity to rediscover specific local landscapes, particularly wetlands.

The path represents a tourism and leisure asset for the local community.

Innovative techniques are used to maintain the path.

Lessons & Recommendations

Soft mobility is nowadays an important strand of the regional schemes for ecological coherence, whereby each region designs its green and blue belt strategy. Overall, it is an essential land management tool to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Context

Encouraging soft mobility for leisure and tourism is the motto of a national scheme adopted in France back in 1998 and revised in 2010. Since the turn of the century, the scheme is also endorsed at regional level. In Picardy, a regional scheme for cycling paths and green lanes was adopted in 2006, guaranteeing soft mobility continuity at several levels:

- European level (Roscoff / Kiev – Santiago de Compostela / Moscow)
- National level (North/South – coastal line – etc.)
- Regional level, linking up urban and rural areas
- Local level, linking up with upper levels.

Objectives

The project aimed to provide local inhabitants and tourists with new opportunities for leisure and to contribute to economic development of the local area, connecting and promoting local tourist sites.

Activities

The 19th century railway track was connecting the city of Arras with the coast (Tréport). The first part of the lane

crosses marshes and ponds. The landscape then becomes more hilly and wooded before reaching the plateau of green Vimeu. The railway line was abandoned in 1969 and officially decommissioned in 1993 due to its poor condition. Finally, the tracks were removed in 2005.

The municipalities along the old railway track launched together a project for transforming the old train route into a leisure path. The project was not new as the first feasibility studies were carried out in the late 1980s. The intervening years saw the development of a project in line with green tourism concepts and values.

The green lane project was co-financed by 3 municipality groups (20% each) and the remaining 80% received support from the Somme Départemental Council, the Picardy Region and EAFRD

The leisure path was officially inaugurated in September 2013.

In total, 22km of the ancient railway track were renovated into a path for walking, cycling and riding.

The lane is made of synthetic sand/fibre mix and is not allowed to quads, motorbikes or cars. The local police squad of each municipality is responsible for the security of the walkers on its own section.



Additional sources of information

www.europedirect-picardie.eu/images_webzine/ART_1224/plaquette_2015-6.pdf

www.oisetourisme-pro.com/var/picardie/storage/original/application/e2365e269f85de1fdea8bfedec8e0dda.pdf

www.linformateur-leclaireur.fr/la-voie-verte-inauguree_8455/