

*There are several EU funds available to help site managers to finance their projects. One of these funds is the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This fund has three objectives; one of them is European Territorial Cooperation, better known as INTERREG. Eurosité's European Facilitation Service has explored the funding possibilities of this objective for site managers and presents several project examples. In each example a member from the Eurosité network illustrates a project, funded by Interreg, in which they were involved. More project examples and more information on Interreg can be found on [www.eurosite.org](http://www.eurosite.org).*

# AXIOS ECOTOUR

## Promotion of Ecotourism, Protection and Preservation of Cultural Resources of Axios River Delta Area

### Basic information about the project

#### EU Programme

Interreg IIIA/ CARDS Greece-FYROM

#### Programme priority

2: Economic Development and Employment/ 2.1: Development of alternative forms of tourism/ Emergence and promotion of Cultural and Tourist Resources

#### Duration

5 months

#### Project period

01.06.2008 – 31.10.2008

#### Budget

Total budget: € 130 000 / ERDF contribution: € 97 500 (75%)

#### Partnership

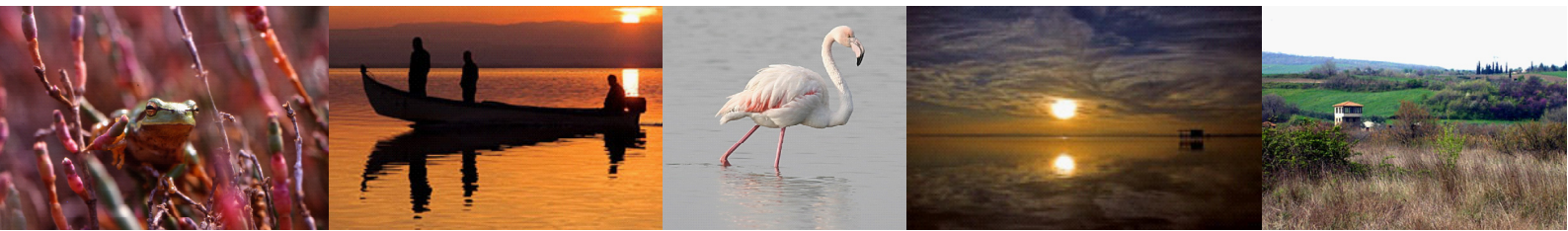
1. Axios-Loudias-Aliakmonas Estuaries - Management Authority (Lead partner; Greece)
2. City of Gefgelis and Krousevoy (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

#### Link to Eurosité

Axios Management Authority is a Eurosité member

#### Project focus

Provide more effective services for monitoring, information, protection and overall development of the cross-border region, taking into account the protected species and habitats in connection with the needs of the local population



## Project example Interreg IIIA: AXIOS ECOTOUR

### Overall objective

Overall objective is to provide more effective services for monitoring, information, protection and overall development of the cross-border region, taking into account the protected species and habitats in connection with the needs of the local population. The objective of the project will be achieved through the implementation of three sub-projects:

- Highlighting new alternative and sustainable forms of ecotourism;
- Strengthening cross-border cooperation in industry;
- Transfer of know-how to environmental agencies.

### Project summary

Promoting new forms of **ecotouristic development** in the wider region of **Axios Delta** is considered of great importance, especially if we bear in mind that the area is protected by international treaties (Ramsar Convention, **Natura 2000** network), which demonstrates the necessity of the planning of **management actions** that are compatible with the protected status of the area.

The Management Authority of Axios-Loudias-Aliakmonas Estuaries and the City of Gefgelis and Krousevoy in FYROM, jointly decided to implement a series of actions which will increase the expertise of **local enterprises** with the creation of the necessary infrastructure in order to promote the area to become a visitor attraction offering a variety of ecotouristic opportunities.

### Project activities

1. Description of the current state: Register of existing services and enterprises in the area that are related to ecotourism and also gather data of the ecotouristic activities they already run.
2. Proposed measures for the development of the area: Depended on the previous activity, the project will propose to the existing enterprises opportunities for further development of their activities in order to enhance ecotourism in the area.
3. Technological equipment: The authority will obtain a GIS platform (and all the necessary hardware equipment) in order to insert all the information on ecotouristic activities in the area which will be accessible to the visitors as well.
4. Creation of eco-portal: Creation of a website that will have all the necessary tools in order to support two-way communication, multi-language facilities, user security etc. It is a portal dedicated to all stakeholders in the region involved in ecotourism and is anticipated to provide information to potential visitors.
5. Dissemination activities: The project aims to inform the local population and potential visitors through concrete actions promoting the objectives of the Authority. The proposed actions aim at promoting ecotourism in the region but also to enable residents of the region to search for business opportunities on ecotourism.

### Achieved outputs and results

Project is still running when publishing this good practice example. Therefore an overview of expected outputs and results is given:

- Eco-portal (website);



## Project example Interreg IIIA: AXIOS ECOTOUR

- Two conferences (ecotourism and environmental education);
- Brochures;
- Photography Contest;
- Participation of the Authority in an international bird fair.

### Relation between project and site management issues

The proposed measures of ecotourism development should be incorporated in the management plan of the area and be in compliance with the obligations under the NATURA 2000 and the Ramsar Convention.

### Project initiative

The project was initiated by Axios Management Authority itself and they prepared the project proposal and made all the necessary contacts with the FYROMian side.

### Follow-up

Project still running at publication date, but opportunities for follow-up will be investigated.

### For more information

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