

Good Practice template

1. General information	
Title of the practice	<i>Ice Express – seasonal train connection</i>
Location of the practice	Country <i>Slovak Republic</i>
	NUTS 1 <i>Slovak Republic</i>
	NUTS 2 <i>Eastern Slovakia (SK04, Východné Slovensko)</i>
	NUTS 3 <i>SK042, Košický kraj</i>
2. Detailed description	
Detailed information on the practice	<p><i>One of the main reasons for the introduction of Ice Express was the effort to increase the attractiveness of the southern part of the Slovak Paradise national park, which is less visited than the northern part and also sparsely populated. However, in 2018, during the weekends (apart from the night trains), there was only one connection on Saturday mornings and two connections on Saturdays and Sundays in the direction to Margecany. There was no direct connection with the city of Košice.</i></p> <p><i>Ice Express represents a direct connection between the city of Košice and the municipality of Mlynky with a travel time of 1:42, which represents a time saving of 1:32 compared to using both a train and a bus with a transfer in Spišská Nová Ves.</i></p> <p><i>Until 2018 only individual trips were organized by rail to the Slovak Paradise. Since 2019 seasonal tourist trains have been operated by the NGO Košice Children's Heritage Railway in cooperation with DMO the Košice Region Tourism (KRT).</i></p> <p><i>In an effort to improve quality of service and security during Covid 19 since 2020 seasonal tourist trains have been operated by Railway Company of Slovakia in cooperation with DMO the KRT. During the summer season DMO contracted 11 train connections from Košice to The Slovak Paradise and back.</i></p> <p><i>Since the timetable for 2020/2021, the seasonal train has been added to the timetable of Railway Company of Slovakia cofounded by the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the SR.</i></p>
Timescale (start/end date)	<i>July 2019/ongoing under different operator</i>
Resources needed	<i>Approximately € 10,000 for promotions and commercials paid from the KRT budget. The operation of the train was provided by the NGO Košice Children's Heritage Railway- costs covered by the revenues from tickets. The fees for the use of the railway itself were waived by the Railways of the SR.</i>
Evidence of success (results achieved, benefits)	<p><i>During the summer of 2020 the number of passengers decreased only by 4,8% on Ice Express while it decreased by 39,7% in other rail transport in Slovakia.</i></p> <p><i>Since 2021 Ice Express has been operated by the Railway Company of Slovakia, the number of connections has doubled and the number of passengers increased by 245%.</i></p> <p><i>Based on this example, new irregular summer seasonal trains operated by Košice Children's Heritage Railway with the support of DMO KRT to other tourist destinations in KSR were set up.</i></p>
Difficulties encountered / barriers	<p><i>Operators (outside NGOs) have to pay a fee for the use of the railway. Municipalities usually do not have enough funds in the budget for rail connections and prefer regular bus connections.</i></p> <p><i>Low line speed on some parts of the rail road ŽSR 173: Červená Skala – Margecany. causes longer travel time.</i></p>
Potential for learning or transfer / Lessons learned	<i>Initiated by the DMO KRT and NGO, a pilot activity was carried out, during which the public interest in this type of services was verified. Later, the interest among domestic tourists did not decrease and even during the Covid crisis the offer was expanded. Based on the demand data obtained, the National Ministry of Transport and Construction of the SR took the initiative of funding the Ice Express and the Railway Company of SR its operation, doubling the number of connections and increasing the number of passengers by more than 245% in 2021.</i>
What exactly did trigger the choice of the selected measure	<i>DMO KRT continues to verify the interest and send out trains to other potentially attractive destinations. In case of sufficient interest, it will be possible to increase the pressure on stakeholders and create additional seasonal connections. This example can thus be</i>

understood as an activity that allows, at a relatively low cost, to increase the interest of the public and stakeholders in flexible transport systems and their expansion.

3. References and contacts

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Pictures:

