

ECO-CICLE Good Practice – Cycling through the Trees

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Author contact information	
Name	James Armstrong
Email	j.armstrong@ecf.com
Telephone (including country code)	003228809279
Your organisation	
Country	Belgium
Region	Brussels Capital Region
City	Brussels

Organisation in charge of the good practice		
Organisation in charge of this good practice	Visit Limburg, Universiteitslaan 3, 3500 Hasselt, Belgium	
Location of the organisation in charge:	Country	Belgium
	Region	Limburg
	City	Hasselt

Good practice general information	
Title of the practice	Cycling through the Trees [100 characters]
Does this practice come from an Interreg Europe Project?	No
If yes, what is the name of that project?	

Category of the practice	Please select the category of the practice (you can mark the category in bold):	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infrastructure 2. Advanced services 3. Cycle tourism in natural areas 4. Promotion 5. Financing 6. Planning & management 7. Intermodality 	
Geographical scope of the practice	Select National/ Regional /Local	
Location of the practice	Country	Belgium
	Region	Flanders
	City	Hechtel-Eksel

Detailed description	
Short summary of the practice	<i>Cyclists ride along a double circle cycle path to a height of 10 metres, giving cyclists and walkers a sensational 360° experience of the Bosland forest.</i>
Detailed information on the practice	<p><i>The Pijnven forest by Hechtel-Eksel, Limburg, has been turned into an cycling experience by installing an elevated cycle path. The circular path rises to a height of 10 m and is 700 m long, with a diameter of 100 m. The corten steel pillars were installed at varying intervals of one, two and three metres apart, symbolising the straight trunks of the pine trees and ensuring that the structure fits well into the environment.</i></p> <p><i>By unlocking the Bosland forest, the largest uninterrupted forest area in Flanders, visitors can experience this natural world in a very special way. Moreover, Bosland received a new landmark that will help attract cyclists and tourists. As a part of the Cycling through the Trees project, Bosland is improving the Pijnven forest management with a woodland management plan.</i></p> <p><i>Cycling through the Trees is a project by Visit Limburg with financial support from LSM, the municipality of Hechtel-Eksel, VISITFLANDERS and the province of Limburg, and developed in close co-operation with Bosland and the Agency for Nature and Forests.</i></p> <p><i>Visitors exploring the forest, the town of Hechtel-Eksel, bordering towns, and SMEs in the area have benefitted from the new installation.</i></p> <p><i>The construction is circular, but similar linear constructions serve as a good way of combining cycle paths that fit harmoniously into the natural environment. A good example is Cycling through Water in Bokrijk (Flanders – Belgium), another project of Visit Limburg.</i></p>
Resources needed	<p><i>Cycling through the Trees' is a project by Visit Limburg with financial support from LSM, the municipality of Hechtel-Eksel, VISITFLANDERS and the province of Limburg, and developed in close co-operation with Bosland and the Agency for Nature and Forests.</i></p> <p><i>Building cost: 3,103,792 EUR</i></p>
Timescale (start/end date)	<p><i>Design: 2016-2017</i></p> <p><i>Construction: 2018-2019</i></p> <p><i>Open since: June 2019</i></p>
Evidence of success (results achieved)	<i>The opening of the cycle path was a huge success, receiving a lot of attention in Belgian and international media, as well as being covered in numerous architecture and design magazines/websites. In Flanders, Cycling Through the Trees is already very popular: winning an Iconic Award in 2019, gold at the 2020 International Design Awards and having over 200,000 cyclists visit. The cycling paradise remains one of the biggest attractions and one of the main reasons to come to Limburg.</i>
Challenges encountered	<i>The construction had to be done with full respect to the forest, requiring an innovative way of working as interventions could not affect the natural environment in the short or long term. The designer (BuroLandschap) therefore had to develop processes including forest management from the beginning.</i>
Potential for learning or transfer	<p><i>This type of intervention amplifies a visitor's enjoyment of the landscape without devaluing it. Limburg has very varied terrain and a strong image as a cycling destination. This unique combination led Visit Limburg to create cycling projects in harmony with the natural environment, which ensure more interaction with the landscape while cycling.</i></p> <p><i>All this gave way to the idea of a cycle path through water, through the trees, and underground, all at strategic places in Limburg of iconic value themselves, but where there is potential to create an even greater interaction. In this way, Visit Limburg is building the cycle route network of the future.</i></p> <p><i>With 2,000 km of cycling paths Limburg one of the cycling paradises of Flanders and Europe. Every year the region receives an average of three million cyclists. The aim of Limburg is to strengthen its position as a market leader in cycle tourism, by adding an extra layer of unique cycling experiences to the Limburg bicycle route network.</i></p>
Further information	<i>https://www.visitlimburg.be/en/cyclingthroughthetrees</i>
Keywords related to your practice	<i>Cycling experience, cycle tourism</i>

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