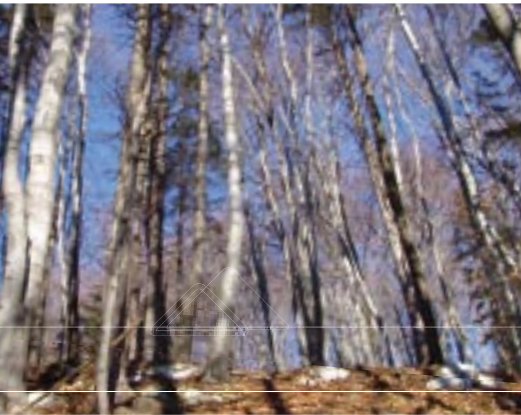


# Summary



## Objectives

The Zasavje Regional Development Program 2007-2013 sets development guidelines of the smallest and once the most industrialised Slovene region. It contains a review of achievements from the former Development Program and SWOT analysis, presents development priorities, foreseen financial sources and indicators for monitoring effectiveness of set goals. It was adopted on 12th of February, 2007.

## ▲ The Zasavje region

The Zasavje region measures 264 square kilometres, which presents 1,3 percent of the Slovene territory, and has 45.311 inhabitants, which is 2,3 percent of the total Slovene population. Due to its strong industrialisation in the past Zasavje used to be the second most densely populated region of Slovenia. Coal-mining deeply marked the region's development for more than 200 years, however, in 1990 the region found itself in a completely new, unfavourable position, due to the process of closing down the coal-mines. Once wealthy and economically strong region with employments in abundance, has become one of the least developed regions tackling high unemployment rate. The economic breakdown caused numerous demographic, social, medical, spatial and environmental changes: the population has been growing old, constant migrations have caused the brain-drain, highly damaged environment and the lack of space have rendered the development flow...

In the middle of the 1990s new development initiatives in many aspects unified and embodied in Regional Development Centre, whose work is based on three major fields of development: economy, human resources, environment and spatial planning.

Negative development trend began to rise on the break of a new century: the business investment activity was successfully promoted, business premises were either renovated or newly set up, new businesses were established, the rate of unemployment began to decrease, the environmental situation improved, a strong network of supporting institutions was developed. Despite that the Index of Development Risk,

which is based on development, risk and development opportunities, is still higher than the Slovene average: the Zasavje region = 113,9, Slovenia = 100.

## ▲ Priorities

Development priorities are divided into five key fields: economic development, development of human resources and supporting institutions, environment and space, development of infrastructure and rural areas. Total value of regional development program, which embraces 75 measures, is 730 million €. 45 percent of this sum are planned to be provided from the European and national funds, 6 percent are to be insured by the municipal budgets, the remaining 49 percent are considered other sources - above all company investments.

The largest budget share, 415 million €, is earmarked for economic transformation amongst which an increase of new companies and employments are the main objectives. The measures include settlement of new business premises, widening the network of business incubators and up-grading incubator services, co-financing of start-up investments, provision of favourable credits and credit guarantees, development of research, technology and innovations as well as other ways to introduce know-how to practice...

Higher quality of life is the main objective in the field of human resources and supporting institutions development. The program foresees 102 million € for this priority. The measures embrace improvement in health care, education, culture and leisure, wider social

The region will attempt to reach the following ambitious goals under the motto

*We create open, modern Zasavje region:*

- ▶ substantial decrease in development arrears of the region
- ▶ development of healthy business hubs and new business fields
- ▶ better quality of life
- ▶ creative, skilful and knowledge based society
- ▶ establishment of modern infrastructure
- ▶ healthy environment and thoughtful use of space
- ▶ strong educational and development organisations
- ▶ maintenance of variety and population in the rural areas

security, promotion of social inclusion, scholarship scheme as well as co-financing of employments for first-job seekers, improved care for the elderly persons and disabled people in need of assistance...

Cleaner and healthier environment is one of the key measures aimed to achieve higher environment protection and rational use of space. Ecological investments of the region's largest pollutants, establishment and management of natural parks, revitalisation of degraded surfaces, renovation of the former miners' settlements and other measures are estimated to cost 31 million €.

The Development Program foresees several measures to improve communal infrastructure that are in total worth more than 158 million €. The main objectives are to raise the quality of life, increase competitiveness of regional economy, maintain the number of inhabitants in rural areas and diminish environmental burdens.

One of the key aims of development program is to link the region to The Third Development and Traffic Axis as well as to provide better road connections within the region, protect water resources, enable supply with natural gas...

The last key field refers to maintenance of rural areas, development of agriculture and forestry. The program budget foresees 20 million € for acceleration of environmental friendly agricultural production, since the hilly regional surface does not allow intensive farming. Next to measures targeting at sustainable rural development, development of new products, preservation of natural resources, biotic diversity and traditional appearance of cultural heritage are one of the most significant projects.

## Key projects

Due to their significance for the future development of the Zasavje region and the demanded financial resources seven of the numerous measures are considered as the key projects:

- ▶ construction of The Third Development Axis will link regional centres of Austria, Slovenia and Croatia, and improve access to the regions and increase their competitiveness
- ▶ the current business incubator will widen its operation from municipality of Zagorje to municipalities of Hrastnik and Trbovlje, and will up-grade the supply of services
- ▶ the project Forcefully to the World of Entrepreneurs is targeted at creation of new businesses, decrease of brain-drain from the region, and strengthening its economic power
- ▶ with the construction of an effective gas power plant the region will preserve the energetic industry and several employments connected with that field of economy
- ▶ revitalisation of areas damaged by the past coal-mining activities will establish new, environment friendly surroundings appropriate for development of various leisure and other activities
- ▶ renovation of former miners' settlements of the so called colonies will result in convenient, up-to-current-time settled dwellings and preservation of cultural heritage
- ▶ construction of a new hospital based on the public-private partnership will keep the medical activity in the region and provide its widening in the future