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RCRreferences

The mission of Regional Development Centre is to achieve general development of the Zasavje region. We have prepared three basic development documents:

- **Regional Development Strategy Zasavje 2000+** set up key development guidelines. Due to its applicability and transparency and above all comparability with European data it has become a study case for many other Slovenian regions.
- **Regional Development Plans 2000-2006 and 2007-2013** are fundamental development plans for the Zasavje region. RCR was in charge of its preparation and now co-ordinates its implementation.



We believe knowledge is the most significant development factor and unemployment with poverty the most retarding one, for that reason we prepare several programmes for human resources development.

- **Job Club** was established in 1998 with a mission to reduce the number of unemployed persons in the region. More than 500 unemployed persons were included in the programme so far.

The Zasavje Labour Fund was founded in 1999. Until now more about 1000 unemployed people and permanently redundant workers participated in the programme.

- **Motivation for self-employment** was a **Phare project** for the neighbouring Savinjska region in years 2002 and 2003. The programme promoted entrepreneurship and improved employability of redundant workers from the Savinjska region.

In 2004 and 2005 RCR carried out two Phare projects. The outcome of the first was feasibility study for establishment of training centres for unemployed persons and permanently redundant workers in leather working and textile industry in five Slovene regions. The second Phare project was aimed at setting up specialised development centre for textile industry in the Pomurje, Zasavje and Koroska region.

In the same two years we implemented two educational projects. High schools from the Zasavje region and Finland were connected through **Leonardo da Vinci** project Knowledge for Employment. Both projects tried to promote cooperation among the schools and the companies and increase competitiveness of high and vocational schools in the Zasavje region.

From 2004 to 2007 we will carry out several three-year **EQUAL** projects aimed at development of human resources. RCR acts either as the main coordinator or partner in the following projects: Daily Centre Bridge, Safe Ageing through Coaching, Achieving Gender Equality through Excellence and Cupola.

- To prevent brain drain and to increase the level of knowledge RCR also set up a regional **scholarship scheme** in 2001. In the first year 40 scholarships were granted. Counting the whole period including year 2005/2006, the number of scholarships has increased to 250.

Closing of coal-mines and restructuring of classical industries are the main challenges of the region; Development of entrepreneurship is one of our main priorities:

- In 1997 we established the **Zasavje Guarantee Scheme**, which is aimed at increase of investments in entrepreneurship. Total amount of approved loans with 50% guarantee of Regional Development Centre up to year 2005 was 7.1 million €. **The Guarantee Scheme of the Zagorje Coal-mine in closure** was established in 1999 with a purpose to promote employment of redundant coal-miners. Until the end of 2005 the Scheme earmarked 8.3 million € in loans with 50% guarantee of RCR. Since 1999 RCR provides consultancy to other development institutions in establishing guarantee schemes. In 2001 RCR was selected as a leader of the project **Transfer of Good Practice** to Guarantee Schemes and carried out several trainings for other Slovene development institutions.
- In 1998 **Business Incubator** was established in Trbovlje municipality and the same year five companies entered and started to use its services. Until now more than 20 companies have included in the Business Incubator. The incubator now offers new premises also in Hrastnik and Zagorje municipalities. Its mission is promotion and support for the entrepreneurs.
- Assistance in preparation of business plans since 1998 is provided for individuals on their way to their own business. Entrepreneurs beginners are offered several business trainings from **standard workshops to e-learning**. Programme of Voucher Consultancy started at the end of 2002. The programme provides free or subsidised counselling to existing and potential entrepreneurs from the Zasavje region.
- In 2006 we became one of the Slovene **One-Stop-Shops**, which offers help to entrepreneurs beginners and endeavours to simplify registration and other procedures.
- **The Zasavje Regional Technology Centre** was established in 2001 to connect business companies with scientific institutions in order to initiate development of new technologies, and accelerate development of modern and environment-friendly technologies aimed at economic restructuring of the Zasavje region.
- To improve quality of tourist offer in the Zasavje region, tourism development centre was established in 1998. Its programme is implemented by **Development Centre of the Litija** municipality. They prepare tourist programmes, promote tourism and stimulate entrepreneurs and farmers to launch production of different tourist products.



Above all RCR pays attention to openness, exchange of knowledge and experience, and establishes business, cultural and social bonds with other from Slovenia and elsewhere.

- Since 1995 we have acted either as leaders or partners in several EU funded projects carried out in the field of entrepreneurship promotion, human resources development, unemployment, education, culture.
- We organise **international conferences, business meetings, study tours, and trainings** in our region and abroad. In 2002 the Slovene-Irish business meeting was held in Zagorje, followed by successful international conference about innovative ways of regional co-operation in Europe in year 2003, and business meeting of small, medium sized and large enterprises from Slovenia and Ireland in Limerick in year 2004. In 2005 we organized international conference Effective Financial Initiatives for Development of Entrepreneurship which was held in Zagorje. Already in year 2002 an agreement between two Irish regions, Moy Valley and Shannon, and the Zasavje region was signed. In 2005 similar agreement was signed with French Fondation Sophia Antipolis.
- We try to transfer our knowledge and experience with regional and national development institutions in the countries of South-East Europe. RCR is a partner in many development projects. Within the **Stability Pact Programme** we organised international conference How to promote regional development in the most effective way held in Zagorje municipality in year 2004. In the same year **training for setting up the guarantee schemes** was carried out in Montenegro. In 2005 a project of Voucher system introduction has been launched in Croatia. The same year we started two European projects in Banat and Rasinska region in Serbia, which are aimed at **transfer of good practice** in regional development. In 2000 we signed an agreement of cooperation with Croatian region of Istria and in 2003 with the Rasinska region in Serbia.

Environment and spatial planning

Environment and spatial planning are considered one of the crucial factors for development of the Zasavje region.

- RCR helps to construct **industrial and business zones**, and to restore former industrial buildings for the purposes of new business programmes. For the first time, in year 2004, grants from European structural funds were invested in zones built in Trbovlje and Hrastnik.
- Since **clean environment** and development of the **regional waste water sewage** contribute essentially to a better quality of life, RCR is taking part in establishment of regional system for waste treatment, construction of **water treatment plant** and **collector systems**.



New image

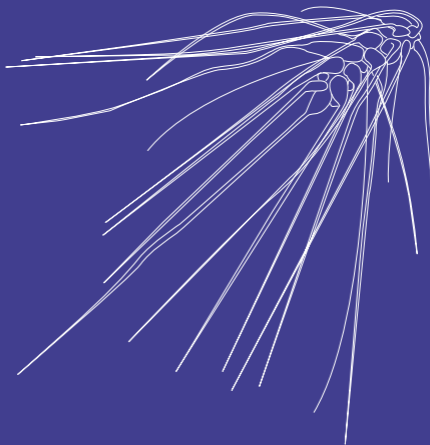
Our most challenging task is to break stereotypes about, around and in the Zasavje region and to present the region worldwide.

- With **social agreement** signed in 2004 we brought together representatives of educational, health system, social activities, culture, employees and employers, and political parties. Through various events, debates and other activities we try to be in constant touch and to develop bonds between all participants.

**breaking stereotypes about
the Zasavje region**

- **Web page** was set up in the year 2000 and has become our main mean of communication. With uploads and up-to-date information it presents the main development information point. Since March 1999 RCR publishes its **newspaper Development (Razvoj)**. The issues cover key regional development efforts of the Zasavje region and activities carried out by RCR. Beside that we publish **brochures and books**. Their goal is to promote region on local, regional and national level.
- In 2004 institution for development of culture named **Mat kultra** was established. Following its main objective it organised first street festival in the Zasavje region, where about twenty cultural institutions from the region took part. In 2005 the 6-day festival hosted more than forty artists and groups from all around Slovenia, in 2006 the 13-day festival also hosted participant from abroad. In 2006 Mat kultra established first **multimedia center** in the Zasavje region, where it offers free access to information technology to cultural and other institutions from the region.
- In the period 2001-2003 three **social evening events** were held in Cankarjev dom, the centre of Slovenian culture. Our aim was to promote our region in Slovenia and abroad.
- Together with partners from Austria, Czech Republic and Finland common strategy for cross-border and international cultural co-operation in Central Europe is being prepared. The three-year **Interreg project is called Stratcult**.
- In year 2004 RCR was **Info point** for the European structural funds covering the Zasavje region. As one of the six Slovene points named **Europe Direct** it will try to shorten the distance between European Union and local communities.





We are co-creating
an **open** and
modern Zasavje,
a region friendly for its dwellers
and attractive for the people
coming from elsewhere.

We are reshaping Zasavje
into a treasury of courageous
development ideas.





regional development documents

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