



The network of waterways in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps

Raising awareness about conserving drinking water and preserving natural resources.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Slovenia and Austria

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 – Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 – LEADER CLLD

Funding:	Total budget	217 058.91 (EUR)
	EAFRD	134 778.61 (EUR)
	National/Regional	33 694.65 (EUR)
	Private/Own funds	48 585.65 (EUR)

Timeframe: 2020 to 2022

Project promoter: LAG Srce Slovenije

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The project analysed 54 springs in the area of KSA and 15 springs in the area of the Heart of Slovenia LAG, while also raising awareness among residents about the importance of conserving drinking water. Activities included the organisation of ten drinking water festivals throughout the KSA area and two contests for local elementary school students. Exchanges of experience and transfers of good practices took place between areas. There was also training for water-testers along with workshops and round tables.

Project results

- Preserving and improving the quality of the springs included in the network of waterways (54 springs), their biotic diversity and landscape diversity in KSA and Local Action Group (LAG) areas.
- Water quality monitoring carried out at springs, relevant institutions kept informed.
- A variety of approaches and ways to raise awareness about the importance of water resources and their great vulnerability.
- 14 events held promoting environmental messages: drinking water festivals, workshops and round tables, competitions and excursions.
- Diversification of tourist activities – comprehensive water tourism products developed, organisation of water events.
- Promotional / communications material made available in local tourist information offices, including a trilingual map.
- Many stakeholders involved, all actively participated.

Summary

The water route around the Kamnik-Savinja Alps (KSA) is a new hiking trail that is 190 kilometres long and divided into 11 stages. The waterway passes four rivers, three lakes, over 100 springs and 100 streams, and several waterfalls. It is included in the hiking application of the Mountaineering Association of Slovenia and on the Kamnik-Savinjske Alpe website.



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Key lessons and recommendations

- A bottom-up approach is very effective when implementing projects. Participating LAGs involved municipalities in the preparation and implementation of all activities and their proposals, wishes and ideas were considered and implemented as far as possible.
- Recommend implementation of similar project to anyone, as it connects people and municipalities and lays foundations for development based on local resources (water).



- > With different organisations, professionals and individuals working towards common goals, results can be very inspiring
- > The project also encouraged individual municipalities to carry out activities that had stagnated.

Context

The water route around the Kamnik-Savinja Alps (KSA) is a new hiking trail that is 190 kilometres long and divided into 11 stages. The waterway passes four rivers, three lakes, over 100 springs and 100 streams, and several waterfalls. It is included in the hiking application of the Mountaineering Association of Slovenia and on the Kamnik-Savinja Alps website.

Objectives

As well as maintaining clean drinking water, the main aims of the project were twofold: creating awareness about KSA's water wealth and concern for its preservation and the creation of green jobs in the KSA area in the form of local guides and water 'sommeliers' among others. The long-term goal is to create 30 jobs in total.

The aim was also to have all stakeholders participate fully in the various activities, both to interconnect them and to aid the development of the region. This involved encouraging them to look at projects that had been gathering dust and which could fit in with the initiative and promote cooperation.



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Activities

The activities were equally distributed among the stakeholders (over 12 of them), primarily local municipalities but also clubs and associations from the region.

The main priority was to analyse the water sources and quality

monitoring. The project analysed 54 springs in the area of KSA and 15 springs in the area of the Heart of Slovenia LAG. Metal pots were placed next to the springs with drinking water and the quality of the water in the various springs could be checked via a QR code on the pot.

At the same time, a focus of the project was to raise awareness among residents about the importance of preserving drinking water as well as to strengthen people's positive attitudes towards the resource. The project organised no fewer than ten drinking water festivals and held two contests for local elementary school students (an art / comics competition and a literary competition). In addition, two professional excursions were organised, with a focus on exchanges of experience, the acquisition of knowledge and the transfer of good practice between areas – primarily Carinthia (Austria) and Gorenjska.

Education and training events were also organised for water testers and for people interested in becoming 'water sommeliers'.

The Heart of Slovenia LAG also designed a network of its waterways, featuring 30 springs, and was involved in a round table discussion on the healing properties of water and a number of workshops on people's relation to water and how it has evolved.

Meanwhile, the ZSŠD LAG held a themed event in conjunction with a drinking water festival in Solčava, designed a two-day tourism product entitled 'Hiking the KSA Waterways', and renovated the main fountain while constructing a new drinking fountain in the centre of Luče.

The Gorenjska košarica LAG held a creative workshop, designed and tested a new holistic tourist product entitled 'Natural waters in KSA and the Old Slavic', and was involved in the production of thematic educational and promotional films about the waterways in KSA.

Main results

Through its implementation, the project brought different approaches and ways to raise awareness about the importance of water resources and their considerable vulnerability. It achieved its goals through drinking water festivals, workshops and round tables, competitions and excursions.

The main environmental information disseminated by the project is the importance of conservation and the high level of vulnerability of water resources throughout the area. Via the analysis of water sources, those involved were able to show the quality of



water at individual springs and the human influence on the quality of water at springs. The project organised 14 events promoting these environmental messages.

The project focused on preserving and improving the quality of the springs included in the network of waterways (54 springs), the biotic diversity of these springs and the landscape diversity in the area of Kamnik-Savinja Alps and the participating LAGs. To monitor the situation, water quality tracking was carried out at the springs, and in the event of a perceived worsening of the situation, the team was able to inform the relevant institutions.

They also helped to diversify tourist activities and encouraged the connection between water sources and natural and cultural heritage in the area in a sustainable way (e.g. comprehensive water tourism products, organisation of water events). Promotional and communications material, including a trilingual Slovenian, English and German map, was made available in local tourist information offices.



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Key lessons and recommendations

Experience shows that a bottom-up approach is very effective when implementing projects. Participating LAGs involved municipalities in the preparation and implementation of all activities: the municipalities submitted their proposals, wishes and ideas, which the team did its best to include and implement. Many stakeholders were involved and all actively participated.

We would recommend the implementation of a similar project to anyone as it connects people and municipalities and lays the foundations for the development of the area based on local resources, namely water. With different organisations, professionals and individuals working towards common goals, the results can be very inspiring.

The project also encouraged individual municipalities to carry out activities that had been stagnating for a long time. Preddvor and Jezersko joined forces to reestablish an old freight route along the beautiful hillsides of the Kokra Valley, enabling the KSA Water Route to run there rather than a new paved road.

Additional information:

Network of Waterways in the Kamnik-Savinja Alps website:

<https://www.ksalps.com/vodne-poti>

Hiking trail map: <https://mapzs.pzs.si/path/119045>