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## Rural-Urban Governance Arrangements and Planning Instruments

### KAMNIŠKA BISTRICA - Green axis of the region

Ljubljana Urban Region, Slovenia

#### 1. Overview

The project *Kamniška Bistrica* (green axis of the region) was originally developed by the Domžale municipality and is focused on daily migration to work and recreational use of the area around the largest river in the north part of the region. There are around 30,000 people living and working in the near vicinity of the river. The area is well preserved and is a natural axis of the area, which includes attractive settlements, social/living infrastructure (schools, kindergartens) and major public utilities (i.e., waste water treatment). In the past, industry was mostly located in the territory of the river.

Before the project was implemented, river banks were not maintained and there was no infrastructure enabling transportation and recreation along the river. Today the project connects the two municipal centres (with intent to connect a third one) and rural areas with a broad green belt and footpaths to the outflow of Slovenia's largest river, Sava.

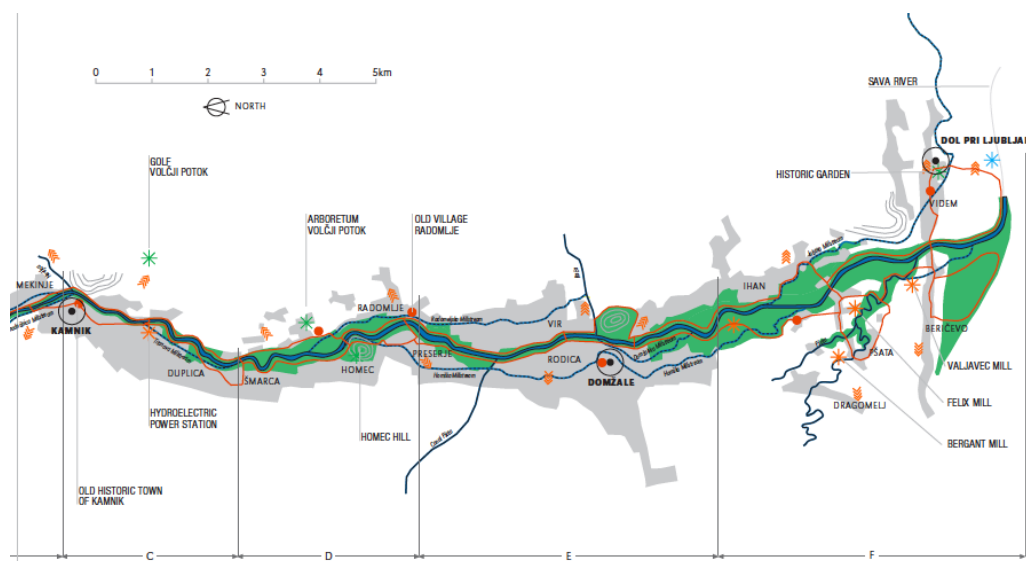


Figure 1: Lower part of the river system from The Kamniška Bistrica River: Visions for Establishment and Utilization of a Green Buffer Zone Along the River, Municipalities: Domžale, Kamnik, and Dol pri Ljubljani, Slovenia

## 2. Main Challenges

### > Multi-level and multi-stakeholder coordination

The management of the river is divided among national and municipal level authorities: river management, flood protection and nature conservation are of national importance, while the spatial planning, public services and the management of the local infrastructure remains at the local level.

### > Protection vs development

The river had poor water quality and river banks degradation. After the shutdown and relation of industry to business zones, the quality of water and area in general improved. This enabled large building projects to start being prepared, but, fortunately, this trend was stopped, and the area was protected as a recreation and natural space in the heart of an inhabited territory.

### > Presentation of nature and cultural heritage

The river was a key local resource for local business development. As the river was in a very bad state from intense industrial use in the past, people forgot about the river and the question was: how to get their interest and motivation?

A 500 year old system of mill streams of Kamniška Bistrica is an incredible technical heritage monument connected to the river and to the history of industrialization of the region, which is one of the first and most intensely industrialised areas in Slovenia. The river is a tributary of the Sava River, which is a right tributary of the Danube River. The catchment offers possibilities for creating various interest points on cultural, industrial and other topics, which provides an opportunity to learn.

### > Population and use of the axis

Not a lot of people were using the river axis (banks) for recreation and commuting, the key challenge was how to improve communication about the river, develop recreational infrastructure and facilities, and to safely maintain the river banks.

The key obstacle for the recreational use of the river noticed was the lack of connection over the river. As there were no pedestrian bridges (apart from bridges for the main roads), connections along the river were difficult. After developing the first bridge, the frequency and the use of the axis improved very quickly. All future plans on building bridges are planned in view of a more effective use of the river and its facilities.

Purpose of use. The number of people using the infrastructure is growing, and the connectivity among villages and towns needs to be further developed. Currently the axis is mostly used for recreational purposes while daily commuting is still in its

beginning. The axis needs to further develop connections and services along the axis in order to motivate and enable safe and time-effective mobility along the river.

The river axis will further develop into a daily commuter route to work, for social events and for other needs. To do so, the municipalities are further developing signalisation and links to/from the centres of villages and towns with necessary cultural, sport and administrative services.

### 3. Main Insights

#### 3.1. Insights related to the broad area of “network governance”

The Municipality of Domžale developed the first idea on the project in order to develop additional transport and recreation axis of the municipality along the river where most people are located. This led to coordination with the neighbour municipality of Kamnik and application of the project to the regional level. The regional level was planned to help in coordination of the project with the national level, which proved wrong. As the regional project the mechanism received some financial support from the European Regional Development Fund, but the municipalities needed to coordinate and negotiate the use and the management of the river with central authorities.

#### 3.2. Insights related to mechanisms of cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation

National level stakeholders on river management are authorities responsible for nature conservation, water and spatial planning (in part), floods management, minerals, and fisheries. Apart from authorities there are also national services providers with their stake in the process (electro distribution company and similar).

Local level stakeholders include:

- > municipalities for spatial, planning, public services, local infrastructure;
- > associations of fishermen, retired, youth, and local public utility services companies for sports and public services;
- > local schools and kindergartens who have a large stake in the use of the river;
- > land owners who have a crucial role in the development of paths and other infrastructure.

All these stakeholders and their interests need to be managed for the further development of the projects and coordination of activities mostly in the development of the local infrastructure necessary for the functioning of the axis.

### 3.3. Insights related to the role of (actual, potential) social, organizational, institutional innovations

The innovation is in the actual idea of renaturation and reuse of the area: water in the river was of low quality, river banks were overgrown with vegetation of all kinds, some parts of the riverbanks were in very bad shape in terms of stability, there were illegal landfills, and the land ownership was divided among thousands of landowners. Some parts of the river banks are industrialised. The river practically did not have any communication between the banks (bridges) and the recreational infrastructure on river banks was non-existent.

The innovation also lies in coordination of a such project among several municipalities, two of them in the beginning. Currently the process goes on by developing small infrastructure focused on niche needs of users (children, young, elders); there are new approaches to develop use in different water conditions.

## 4. Effectiveness Indicators

The weakest part of the current operation is the divided daily operations and management of the river and the riverbanks. This is divided among different municipalities, which is somewhat inefficient. No joint daily management also means no joint monitoring of use and forecasting of needs and no joint preparation of the infrastructure closely linked to the needs of users.

The axis is improving the rural-urban interactions and functional integrations as it connects different parts of the territory into one. The axis connects villages and towns and makes migration easy. To further improve the effectiveness of the axis, further development of side infrastructure links (to cultural, sports and administrative services) and connections of the axis to main public transport services is needed.

More use and more activities in the axis will in the future call for some regulation of the traffic and possible change of the current solutions (safety, signalisation, smaller adjustments of bridges, further installations of equipment).

## 5. Illustration and further information

Main site of the axis: <http://www.zelena-os.si/>

Brochure in English: <http://www.zelena-os.si/pdf/KamnBistr-2001%20ponatis%202006.pdf>

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