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Regional strategy of the development of the Goriška region, with the description of the regional church route

Prepared by: Jasna Fakin Bajec

PP9 - Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, Raziskovalna postaja v Novi Gorici – Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Research Station Nova Gorica

Contact: jasna.fakin@zrc-sazu.si

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*THEmatic Transnational
church Route development
with the Involvement of
local Society*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Goriška is a historical and statistical region in the western part of Slovenia with the territory of 2,326 km² and 119,056 inhabitants. It is the 4th biggest region in Slovenia, composed of 13 municipalities, which are organised in four sub-regions (the Upper Soča Valley (Posočje), the territory of Idrijsko and Cerkljansko, the sub-region of Nova Gorica and the Upper Vipava Valley).

The wonders of the Goriška region include the beautiful mountain peaks and valleys of the Triglav National Park, the enchanting winegrowing areas of Goriška Brda and the Vipava Valley, and the hills around Cerklje and Idrija. One of the most distinctive and recognisable sights of the region is the emerald river Soča.

The church route of the Goriška region is dedicated to **Virgin Mary pilgrimage places** and is composed of 14 Roman Catholic churches between the Julian Alps and the Karst. It stretches from the mountain landscape of the Upper Soča Valley and the Julian Alps in the north-western part of the region, along the picturesque Soča Valley to Nova Gorica and its hinterland with the hilly winegrowing region of Brda, and finishes in the fertile Vipava Valley and the Karst Plateau, which lies close to the Adriatic Sea (hinterland of Trieste). The selected churches played an important role in different historical times. Beside art-historical and architectural elements they also embodied important intangible heritage, like memories, legends, poems, Christian customs etc. The surrounding areas of the churches are also rich in famous natural and cultural treasures, which present heterogeneous geographical, historical and ethnographical characteristics of the Goriška region.



The Goriška region.

<http://www.nvoplanota.si/nvoplanota/nvo-goriske/baza-nvo.html>

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Although the Goriška region is famous for its beautiful environment with a specific way of life of its residents, it is also confronted with a lot of social and economic problems which worsen development potentials for the improvement of people's everyday lives. The main challenge of the economic and social development is how to beat the recession, which has been going on since the end of 2008 and has had huge influences on the life of the inhabitants. The main problems of the economy are small numbers of innovation, unsuccessful cooperation and interaction between public and private sectors, in particular among research institutions and economy, and slow and inefficient development of the tourist sector. One of the consequences of this situation is brain drain from the region. Although local identities of sub-regions are strengthened, the sense of belonging to the Goriška region is weak. There are no common elements for collective identification processes. However, the regional SWOT analysis, developed on the basis of the study of regional problematic, the interviews and discussion with stakeholders in regional working group meetings and the bibliography (strategies, development programmes, etc.), has shown strengths and opportunities which could ensure progresses for a better-quality living environment.



The Town of Kanal with River Soča and the famous bridge.

http://www.slovenia.info/en/-ctg-regije/Gori%C5%A1ka-region-Emerald-Route.htm?ctg_regije=22&lng=2

2. MAIN CONTENT OF THE REGIONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

1. Socio-economic context and entrepreneurship

After World War II, different economic activities developed in the Goriška region: a very prosperous electronics industry (Idrija, Solkan, Šempeter pri Gorici, Cerklje na Gori, Tolmin), gambling industry and entertainment (casinos in Nova Gorica and its surroundings), agriculture (sub-Mediterranean fruit growing and viticulture in the Vipava Valley and the picturesque winegrowing region of Goriška Brda, and cattle breeding in the northern part of the region), food processing (Ajdovščina), tourism (cultural tourism, water sports on the Soča River), etc. For years, the regional economy was closely connected with the Italian economy, especially that of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region; however, as both economies are currently in recession, the business connections have been severed. Due to the rigorous economic administration, there is a significant lack of direct foreign investments, a lack of investments in research and development, a deficiency of connections between the private and public sectors, weak links between science and business, a lack of innovations and a deficiency of capital for initial economic investments. The region is losing its human capital, especially the young who can hardly get an opportunity to express their knowledge, creativity, courage, etc.

A major problem is also a lack of coherence among the inhabitants of the region, ineffective regional competitiveness with a bad innovation system and a poor flow of information among researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, public authorities and other stakeholders. Because of that, the unemployment rate is rising, reaching 10.8 % in October 2013.

A better collaboration among Slovenian and Italian municipalities and other institutions could provide important opportunities for sustainable development of the region, as the citizens from both countries have rather similar problems (economic, ecological, urban). In 2012, the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was established. It connects the municipalities of Gorizia (Italy), Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba (Slovenia) in the European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation. Until now, its establishment has not borne fruit yet.

2. Routes and location

The Goriška region has a strategic geographical position. The southern part of the region (the Vipava Valley and the area of Nova Gorica) has good road connections both east to Ljubljana (approximately one-hour drive from Nova Gorica) and west to the neighbouring Venetian area in Italy. In the northern, mountainous part of the region, the road connections are sparse. The main pass to the neighbouring region of the Gorenjska region, leading across the Julian Alps, is closed throughout the colder part of the year. Train and air travel is limited, with no commercial passenger airports in Goriška (only smaller airports for recreation) and one single-track railway line connecting Nova Gorica and the Lower Soča

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Valley with the Gorenjska region. From Nova Gorica, there are good cross-border connections with Italy on the Trieste- Gorizia -Klagenfurt motorway.

The historical sites from World War I and protected landscape areas in the Upper Soča Valley are very important for the development of tourism in the Goriška region. Also water sports and leisure tourism (kayaking, canoeing, rafting, canyoning, skiing, skydiving, etc.) are very popular. The Goriška region has one of the most beautiful European railway track – the Bohinj railway line (Italian: Ferrovia Transalpina, German: Wocheinerbahn), which runs along the picturesque Soča River, was built at the beginning of the 20th century.

Over the years, various cultural and tourist routes which facilitate different types of tourism (active, cultural, rural) have developed. The main regional tourist route is the Emerald Way along the emerald River Soča. The most important remnants and memories from the Isonzo Front are brought together in the Walk of Peace. The Kobarid Historical Trail presents important curiosities in the town's surroundings. In the important archaeological and historical town Most na Soči, there is a cultural and historical trail. The internationally-known Alpe Adria Trail connects cultural, natural and culinary treasures of Austria, Italy and Slovenia. In Brda, there is the famous Gradnik Trail, which leads the visitor through the vineyards to the town of Medana, birthplace of the poet Alojz Gradnik. Another educational trail, named after the poet Simon Gregorčič, is located between the villages Renče and Gradišče near Prvačina.

There are, however, also some weaknesses, such as insufficient, non-connected tourist offer at the regional level and inadequate digital marketing of tourist destinations. This situation is partly resulting from non-cooperation between municipalities and tourist offices. A big problem is also sustainability, particularly maintenance and marketing of the tourist routes after the end of the European or national projects which financed them only for a defined time. The main opportunity for tourist development of the Goriška region is culture and its heritage with many institutions which research, protect, renovate and manage cultural heritage (the regional Goriška Museum, the Kobarid Museum, the Tolmin Museum, the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the Goriška Library, the Regional Archives Nova Gorica, etc.). This could trigger development of cultural tourism, but the problem is an insufficient collaboration between these institutions and tourist offices and the private sector.

3. Heritage and preservation

Stakeholders from public institutions, local associations and private art institutions are involved in the protection, restoration, management and uses of cultural heritage elements. In the Upper Soča Valley, the Triglav National Park Public Institution is responsible for the protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage. It stimulates sustainable development policies and strives to balance the needs of landscape conservation with agriculture, forestry and tourism, etc. in order to maintain the livelihood of local population. There are several other types of internationally and nationally protected areas, which for local people should not symbolise power, but an opportunity for the development of the

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area. Therefore, it is important to base the development of the countryside and the promotion of tourism on the protection of this preserved environment.

Due to the transitional nature of the Goriška region, there is rich and heterogeneous cultural tangible and intangible heritage. The battles which took place during World War I in the Soča Valley, on the so-called Isonzo front, have left many traces in the mountains (forts, tunnels and caverns, numerous graveyards with militarily arranged crosses, etc.). The Isonzo Front is one of the greatest mountain military campaigns in the world. There are numerous important historical monuments, such as picturesque castles, fortresses, ancient manor houses, churches and monasteries of great historical and artistic importance, as well as archaeological and ethnological sites.

The heritage of mercury in the town of Idrija is registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Some monuments of the cultural heritage of the Goriška region are threatened by periodic inundation of the Vipava River in the Vipava Valley and earthquakes in the Upper Soča Valley.

The preservation of the monuments of cultural heritage is subject to the national law and the directives of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, but the experts of the Institute complain about the mistrust of their work and their directives. Sometimes the renovation works in churches are conducted without informing the experts of the Institute in time. The situation is even more difficult because the Institute does not have enough experts to supervise the whole territory. For this reason, it is very recommendable for the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and the local priests or the Commission for Sacral Art of the Diocese of Koper-Capodistria to cooperate in a more efficient way.

It is also problematic to find appropriate contractors for renovation works in churches because they are considered cultural monuments and their protection is therefore tied with the laws regarding the protection of this kind of monuments. However, the state and some municipalities do not approve financing the renovation of the monuments which are not the property of the state or the municipalities. Another problematic issue is the protection of precious inventories of the churches, as there are an increasing number of thefts.

The main opportunity for the preservation of the churches and monasteries is to valorise and include them in the holistic Goriška tourist offer. This would also help acquire financial resources for their preservation.

In the past, the Goriška region had a highly developed handicraft sector, but unfortunately, in the period after World War II, it decreased due to industrialisation. Today there are a lot of initiatives for the revitalisation of the handicraft sector and traditional skills and some of them have been very successful thanks to their connection with the tourist sector (for example, the manufacture of woollen products in the area of Bovec, the traditional cheese-making in the area of Tolmin, etc.).

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4. Local identity and belonging

In the Goriška region, there are various cultural, sport, recreational and other types of associations, which are very popular among adults and the elderly. The young prefer youth centres and student clubs, which could stimulate younger generations to participate in the protection and valorisation of cultural heritage. The increasing number of young people going abroad or moving to other statistical regions represents a threat to local belonging. The civil society is very active but the awareness of the importance of the regional cultural heritage is still insufficient. It is therefore very important to raise awareness of the local community, in particular of the locals who are averse to the Church and immigrants.



Mengore. Photo: Špela Ledinek Lozej, 2013.

3. TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL CURIOSITIES OF GORIŠKA

1. Brief history of the Goriška region

Goriška has always been a very important transitional region, which the history of the region and the preserved cultural heritage objects present and testify for. Many people moved within the region, some just passed through, some stopped, assimilated and built new settlements, changed the ways of life of ancient people or developed new habits. Because of its transitional location, the Goriška region witnessed many battles, plundering raids, migrations of ethnic groups, etc.

The Goriška region was inhabited in the **prehistoric times**, as shown by a number of Bronze Age fortified settlements, such as the St. Paul above Vrtovin, Boršt and Kozmac above Gojače and Malovše, and Gradišče above Ajdovščina. The first settlements were populated in the middle of the second millennium BC. There are also some remains of ancient forts on the outskirts of the Vipava Valley, ranging from Sanabor to St. Catherine on the Kekec hill. The recently discovered prehistoric settlements in the area near Log pri Vipavi and Zemono are probably from the middle to the late Bronze Age.¹ One of the most prominent prehistoric settlements in Europe was the town of Most na Soči in the Municipality of Tolmin, where more than 7,000 grave sites dating from the period of the late Bronze Age to the Roman period have been discovered so far. Most of them originate from an Iron Age community which was named the Sveta Lucija Culture.²

The **Romans**, who penetrated to the east from Aquileia through the Vipava valley, also left a strong stamp on the history of the area. They built a road through the valley and a fortified outpost Fluvius Frigidus (later named Castra). The military fortress was surrounded by walls and towers. In order to defend their empire, the Romans built a strong line of defence since the third century to prevent invasions of people from the east. The result was a fortified defensive wall known as Claustra Alpium Iuliarum, covering a wide area from the Kvarner Gulf to Cividale.

Also in Bovec, the Romans built a road which led up to the Predil Pass and was part of the north-eastern Roman region of Venetia et Histria of the Italian province. It was incorporated into the Carolingian March of Friuli, after Charlemagne had conquered the Italian Kingdom of the Lombards in 774.³

The decay of the Roman society enabled the penetration of new peoples: Huns, Ostrogoths, Lombards and later Slavs, who inhabited the existing settlements and continued to live on the old foundations.

¹ RRA Severne primorske regije. 2014. Vipava valley and Goriška region, the management plan 2014-2020, str. 43.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_na_So%C4%8Di

³ http://www.bovec.si/about_bovec/history/

In the 11th century, the territory was subordinated to the authority of the **Patriarchs of Aquileia** and later to the **Counts of Gorizia**, who reigned until 1500, when the dynasty died out and the Habsburgs acquired the region and renamed it the County of Gorica. Later on, it became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In the 16th and 17th century, the population of the territory was involved in two **wars between the neighbouring Venetian Republic and the Habsburgs**, which damaged or ruined some significant castles and other relevant monuments of cultural heritage.

During World War I, the region and its population as well as numerous monuments of cultural heritage were severely damaged by the bloody **battles of the Isonzo Front**. After disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the area was granted to the Kingdom of Italy, which withdrew during World War II. The Peace Treaty from Paris after the war established the new border and the territory and the population of the former united County of Gorica were divided; one part joined Italy and the other part Yugoslavia. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1992, Slovenia became an independent, democratic state, which joined the European Union in 2004.

Such a varied history has left a number of cultural heritage objects and intangible elements, which are today important symbols for social identities and potentials for quality sustainable development. Given the fact that the region is rich in many natural and cultural curiosities, only cultural heritage of important historical sites will be presented here.

a) TRENTA - TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK⁴

The Triglav National Park (TNP) is the only Slovenian national park. The park is named after **Triglav**, the highest mountain in the heart of the park and the highest summit of Slovenia (2864 m). The mountain is a true **national symbol** and is featured on the national coat of arms.

The Triglav National Park lies in the south-eastern section of the Alps and extends along the Italian border in the west and close to the Austrian border in the north-west of Slovenia. Its territory is nearly identical with that occupied by the Eastern Julian Alps. The park covers 880 km², which represents 3 % of the territory of Slovenia. The principal task of the Triglav National Park Public Institution is the protection of the park, but it also carries out specialist and research tasks.

In this area, agriculture and nature conservation walk hand in hand, preserving the natural habitat of plant and animal species and natural resources needed for the survival of the man. Cultivated fields, meadows, pasturelands, valley villages, typical houses and abundant small hayracks, sheds and homesteads make up the cultural landscape of the Triglav National Park. The most striking feature is its diversity as the typical Bohinj house can be easily recognized and contrasted with a house in the Upper Sava Valley or the Soča Valley.⁵

⁴ http://www.tnp.si/national_park/
⁵ This project is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF.
http://www.tnp.si/get_to_know/C183/

Information on everything which is closely or remotely connected with the area and the events that have shaped the development of the valley throughout the centuries is readily available at the Triglav National Park Information Centre in Trenta, called Dom Trenta (the Trenta Lodge). **Dom Trenta** houses two permanent exhibitions: a presentation of the Triglav National Park and an exhibition of the ethnological heritage of the Trenta Valley. For most visitors, the most interesting part of the museum is the multi-monitor video installation “Secrets of River Soča – a Ballet of Four Seasons” by Andrej Zdravič. The **Trenta Museum** houses one of the oldest ethnological collections in Slovenia. The presentation of the life in the valley starts with Baumbach’s fairy tale of Zlatorog. A final touch of the museum is the reconstructed Trenta house and a typical shepherd’s homestead.⁶

b) BOVEC

Bovec with its surroundings lies in the Bovec Basin of the Upper Soča Valley, below the eastern slopes of Mount Kanin in the Julian Alps, forming the border with Italy. It is a distinctive area in terms of climate, environment, history and language, with all these elements reflected in the character of its people. Because of the scarcity of a good, fertile soil for the development of agriculture, the identity of people is strongly connected with mountains, which explains small sheep husbandry and development of non-agricultural activities, such as mining, door-to-door selling, transport and others.

With the development of a special kind of tourism which is connected with natural resources (the Soča river, mountains) and opportunities that specific way of life can enrich the current tourist offer, local public institutions are in favour of investigations of intangible cultural heritage as an added value for new economic activities. Special attention is given to:

- small cattle husbandry and cheese production in accordance with traditional cheese-making methods,
- beekeeping,
- hunting and fishing,
- mountain guides,
- wood craftsmanship,
- traditional cuisine,
- storytelling.⁷

The most important historical events of Bovec include Napoleon's march across the Predel pass and the events in World War I.

The Isonzo Front, World War I in Bovec and the Soča Valley:

The front line between the Italian and Austro-Hungarian armies crossed the area of Bovec and the Soča Valley. After years of vicious fighting, the areas of Rombon, the Bovec Basin,

⁶ http://www.tnp.si/get_to_know/C189/

⁷ Boyško. Naše kulturno bogastvo/Our cultural wealth. 2012. Vrednotenje nesnovne kulturne dediščine/Cultural Capital Counts, Bovec: LTO

Ravelnik, Slatenik, the Krn mountains and the mountains around the Tolmin Basin and Kobarid were left riddled with fortifications, caverns, fire trenches, the remains of military equipment and cemeteries. Today, these reminders of the War are brought together in the **Walk of Peace**.

Between June 1915 and November 1917, twelve battles took place on the Isonzo Front. The final battle, known as **The Miracle at Kobarid**, started in the Bovec Basin and saw the Austro-Hungarian and German armies launch a poison gas attack, taking the Italian defence by surprise.

Bovec has suffered frequent natural disasters; the most recent ones include three major earthquakes in 1976, 1998 and 2004, and a landslide in Log pod Mangartom in 2000, which thoroughly altered the appearance of the landscape.⁸

c) MOST NA SOČI

The town Most na Soči is located at the confluence of the Soča and Idrijca rivers. In the past, the river beds cut deeply into the rocky slopes, providing the settlement with an adequate protection from intruders. The accumulation lake of the Dobljar Water Power Plant has filled the gorges with water and, stretching below the settlement, it now attracts both fishermen and visitors, who can stroll along not too demanding signposted panoramic paths.

Exceptional archaeological finds – more than 7000 grave sites discovered so far – make the location one of **the most important prehistoric settlements in the world**. The rich finds date from the late Bronze Age to the Roman period, most of them originating from the Iron Age community known as the Sveta Lucija Culture. The finds are on display in the Tolmin Museum and in the museums of Vienna, Trieste and Gorizia. The restored and protected remains of a Roman house are also located in the town. Another monument of the town's long history is the church of St. Maurus, whose first written record dates from 1192. Another interesting site is a monument to the soldiers from World War I at Postaja, i.e. the area around the railway station.

The town Slap ob Idrijci, the birthplace of the writer Ciril Kosmač, is part of the European project Genius Loci, which connects the birthplaces of famous artists: Giotto, Goya, Lorca, Novalis and Kosmač.

The entire cultural overview is represented excellently with the cultural and historical trail Čez most po modrost, which is supported by a special guide book and an information point at the market.⁹

d) KANAL OB SOČI

This mediaeval town with rich cultural heritage lies on the banks of the River Soča, which are linked with a wonderful bridge. Kanal was first mentioned in a document from 1140.

⁸ http://www.bovec.si/about_bovec/history/
⁹ http://soca-info.si/en/most_na_soci/
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Kanal's Bridge

Kanal's Bridge, which was first made of wood, was built in 1580. Throughout the history, it was demolished and reconstructed many times. The French, advancing towards Austria, destroyed it for the first time. The bridge was later reconstructed and then, after the French left, it was destroyed again. Thanks to Valentin Stanič, priest, mountaineer, doctor, typographer and founder of the school in the village of Banjšice, the bridge was reconstructed again in 1816. After that, the war settled the fate of the bridge, when on 25th May 1915, the bridge was blown up. In 1920, the bridge was reconstructed again and as such has been preserved up to this day. The bridge was spared from destruction in World War II.

Kanal's bridge is certainly the **most recognisable symbol of the town of Kanal and as such** worth visiting. The town attracts visitors especially with many traditional summer events, such as popular jumping from the bridge.¹⁰

e) GORIŠKA BRDA



<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a6/Hum-GoriskaBrda.jpg/250px-Hum-GoriskaBrda.jpg>

Goriška Brda is a border region, not only because of the proximity of the national border with Italy, where it comes together with the hilly world beyond the Friulian lowland, but also because of the nationalities of its people. It is divided by the national border, with its smaller part lying in Italy. The Mediterranean climate and favourable conditions for wine and fruit growing have contributed to the development of agriculture, which is an important part of local economy. Densely populated villages are laid out around the hills. The centre of Brda is the town of Dobrovo with a beautiful castle. (look http://www.brda.si/tourist_attractions/cultural_heritage/)

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AG http://www.tic-kanal.si/kanal_and_surroundings/kanal/

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The Dobrovo Castle

In Dobrovo used to be an old castle, which fell to ruins in the course of centuries. In its place a new renaissance building emerged at the beginning of the 17th century. The original castle has been conserved in relatively the same shape and is today one of the nicest in the Goriška region.

The layout of the building shows that the castle is almost a regular square with symmetrically set towers at the corners. The walls were probably built during the Second Venetian War (1615–1617). After the war, the walls were rearranged into the corridor with arcades and one of the towers was changed into a chapel dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua. The chapel houses a permanent exhibition of gothic frescoes – originals and copies taken from other churches in the area of the Northern Primorska region.

On the first floor, the visitors first enter the Hall of Knights, which exhibits the coats of arms of the more important aristocratic families who used to own the castle. Here, a wall painting depicting the scene of the naval attack of the city, which has survived the centuries, can be seen. Today many musical and other events are held in the Hall of Kings. Another point of interest is the Hunter's Room, where wall paintings by the artist Clement Del Neri from 1894 depict the properties of the count. The painter's works of art can also be admired on the staircase.

These pieces of fine art from the past are enriched with the Gallery, which contains graphic works of the distinguished artist Zoran Mušič. Moreover, a part of the collection of paintings by the last owner, count Bagueri, is also on display in the castle. At times, other art exhibitions are held in the Gallery as well as various other cultural events, which are held in the magnificent castle yard from time to time.

On the ground floor of the castle, there is a restaurant where you can try delicious food, and in the cellar, under the stone arches, there is a wine shop where you can taste some marvellous wines from the Brda region.

Šmartno

The fortified village of Šmartno is situated in the geographical centre of Brda. The village on top of the hill, surrounded by defence walls with watchtowers, is first mentioned in 1317. There are no special historical records of the origin of the defence walls, but the walls are believed to be erected on the remains of a Roman bastion at the time of the wars between the Habsburgs and the Venetians between 1507 and 1519.

The houses in the centre of the village are grouped closely together around the Church of St. Martin. This Baroque church prides itself on the frescoes (which were painted) by the Slovene painter Tone Kralj.

f) NOVA GORICA

Nova Gorica, the town on the border with Italy, was founded only after World War II. According to the 6th Paris Peace Conference, the town of Gorica/Gorizia belonged to Italy and in this way a substantial part of the Goriška region, the Soča Valley and the Lower Vipava Valley lost its centre. The population of the extensive surroundings of the present

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day town started many thousands of years ago, proof of which are some significant archaeological sites.

The idea of a new centre of the Goriška region started to become reality in the autumn of 1947 with the help of a special committee led by Minister Ivan Maček. The urban plan for the new town was made by the architect and town planner Edo Ravnikar. The foundation stone for the construction was laid on 13th June 1948. Youth work brigades from all over Yugoslavia started to build the new town. The architect Ravnikar's idea and design of the town was frequently changed during the fast expansion of the town. Only about two hundred species of local and exotic trees and shrubs have been preserved of the initial plan of the »city in a park«, which is without any doubt a noteworthy peculiarity.

At the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century, the Goriška region became also known for the places where certain crafts developed. The trade started to bloom due to the abundance of raw materials necessary for the production and favourable conditions for their extraction. The traditional crafts of the countryside of the Goriška region which contributed to the development of the industry of Nova Gorica after World War II include the joiner's trade in Solkan, the blacksmith's workshops in the area of Čepovan and Lokovec, the brick production in Bilje and the masonry in Renče.¹¹

g) SOLKAN BRIDGE

The Solkan bridge is the most prominent bridge on the Bohinj Railway route between Jesenice and Gorica and one of the most famous bridges in Slovenia. According to data, the bridge has the longest stone arch spanning over a river in the world and the longest stone arch among all railway bridges.

The span of the main arch is 85 m. Rudolf Jausner drew the plans for the bridge and Leopold Orley supervised its construction. The length of the whole structure is 220 m. The bridge was under construction for two years, from the spring of 1904 until December 1905. The work was hindered mainly by the Soča River, which rose several times. For the main arch, 4533 exactly fitted pieces of limestone were needed.

During World War I, the bridge was mined and thus severely damaged by the Austrian army. After the Kobarid breakthrough in October 1917, it was provisionally repaired and in 1918, trains were again crossing the bridge. The Italians repaired it thoroughly and rebuilt the stone arch. The work lasted until 1927. Since then, the bridge has been repaired several times, but it has preserved its original form and significance also after the construction of a new road bridge for the road towards the hills of Goriška Brda.¹²

h) EUROPE SQUARE

The municipal administration of the towns of Gorizia and Nova Gorica decided to honour the entry of Slovenia into the European Union in a very special way, not with a common plaque or monument, but with a new joint square in front of the Nova Gorica Railway Station.

¹¹ http://www.novagorica-turizem.com/nova_gorica_en/Brief_history/
¹² http://www.novagorica-turizem.com/destinations_and_events/culture/2012032010441913/

i) KROMBERK CASTLE (GRAD KROMBERK)

On a hill with a view of Nova Gorica stands a renovated Renaissance fortress. The small, two-storey Renaissance castle was built before the end of the 16th century on the site of the older castle of Henrick Dornberg from the 13th century.

It was named after its owner, Ivan Marija Coronini, who was given the title "von Cronberg" and the power which went along with it in 1609. The manor is a typical Renaissance building with a square ground plan and corner towers. The castle was severely damaged in both World Wars, but was renovated both times. Since 1954, it has housed the Goriča Museum with a rich collection of paintings, cultural and historical collections and rooms for occasional exhibitions. The interior was designed by the architect Janez Suhadolc. The museum also has numerous collections in Dobrovo, Šempeter, Nova Gorica, Kanal, Lipica, Solkan, Štanjel, Vrsno and Tomaj.

A terraced garden around the manor has been partly preserved or reconstructed. It has been renovated according to the data about its state in the 18th century. The ground floor on the north side of the manor has a Baroque design. With a modest stone fountain in its centre, it is divided into four sections. The ground floor used to be surrounded with a low stone wall and decorated with vases. One part of the garden near the ground floor has been skilfully converted into a parking area. In the south wing of the castle, the winter garden and a grotto with a statue of Kronos have been preserved. In the 19th century, more trees were planted in the garden in a landscape style. Here they set up walking paths with benches and tables, a small tower for hawks and a little brook with an artificial waterfall.¹³



<http://www.miren-kostanjevica.si/page/znamenitosti>

j) AJDOVŠČINA

Ajdovščina is the biggest town in the Upper Vipava Valley with an extremely rich and agitated history and its perfect combination of the first Roman buildings and the medieval architectural developments. The eastern part of the town with the restored part of the city wall, the tower and the Renaissance castle arcades, which also form a part of the city wall, are especially interesting.

Ajdovščina was once a Roman settlement, named Castra, which has preserved almost the entire enclosing circular wall with its 14 towers. Around 270 AD, the Romans started building a military settlement which was a part of the defensive system on the east border of the Roman Empire. For centuries, Ajdovščina developed only within this settlement. The Romans left many interesting trails, which help us learn about the Roman way of life and culture.

Social life in Ajdovščina is rich in all aspects due to its highly respected cultural institutions: the Pilon Gallery, the Lavrič Library, the collection in the Museum of Ajdovščina, the Union of Cultural Societies of Slovenia, which unites all societies and individuals who take interest in cultural activities in Ajdovščina. There are many excellent choruses and well-organized sports activities: Sports Centre Ajdovščina and Ajdovščina Summer Swimming Pool, 'Pale' Sports Park with tennis courts and basketball grounds, a bowling alley and a children's playground, the Josip Križaj Aeroclub, which runs the Ajdovščina Airport, Ajdovščina Sports Association, which unites many local sports societies, and Ajdovščina Alpine Association, which maintains mountain footpaths and organizes trips.¹⁴

The Vipava Valley is a wine-growing region with fertile soil, which has always attracted people to come and live there. Historians assume that the valley was inhabited already in the time Before Christ (BC), perhaps even in the Late Stone Age. The archaeological sites show that it reached its full bloom under the Roman Empire.

The valley has a rich cultural legacy, reflected in numerous manors, castles, churches and galleries, abounding in great works of art. The legacy is also shown in the interesting architecture, well-preserved fortresses and/or entire villages considered to be cultural monuments, such as the villages of Vipavski Križ, Šmarje, Šturje, etc. One of the distinctions of the valley is the inhabitants and their tradition. Visitors are welcome to visit the Vipava Wine Road, which boasts many wine cellars, tourist farms and, for a few days in a year, also traditional country feasts "osmica" (the time when wine growers and farmers sell surpluses of wine and other home-grown crop from the previous year as well as delicious home-made treats for eight ('osem') days).

k) VIPAVSKI KRIŽ

In the middle of the Vipava Valley, on a small hill, typical of the valley, lies the village of Vipavski Križ, which is one of the most precious monuments of cultural heritage. The village made history for being the smallest town which made a great impact on a broad geographical area. The Counts of Gorica surrounded the village of Vipavski Križ with a wall

as early as in 1482. In 1507, the village got its market rights and in 1632, it became a town under Emperor Ferdinand. Today, Vipavski Križ is well-known for the Capuchin's monastery, where the famous preacher Janez Svetokriški lived and worked all his life. The village of Vipavski Križ is an ancient settlement with serried rows of houses, surrounded by a wall and located on a small hill at 183 metres above sea level in the middle of the Vipava Valley. The village could be seen from afar and almost all buildings in Vipavski Križ are under monument protection. The village reached its heyday presumably around 1500, as it gained its market rights in 1507 and was proclaimed a town in 1532. The oldest part of the village has narrow streets with two- and three-storey houses which unfortunately did not keep their original Gothic elements as they were all rebuilt and restored because of the frequent fires. Since 1636, a Capuchin Monastery stands in Vipavski Križ, where the famous preacher Janez Svetokriški (1647 – 1714) worked for many years. Primož Trubar, the author of the first two books written in the Slovene language, visited Vipavski Križ in 1563 and preached to the people of Križ.¹⁵

I) VIPAVA

Vipava is also called the Slovene Venice, as it is built at the numerous springs of the Vipava River, which is internationally renowned for its extraordinary location and its water and speleological characteristics.

This wonderful natural heritage is enriched with cultural attractions, especially the castles. The oldest one is Stari grad (Old Castle), which stands on top of a steep hill above the town and dates back to the 12th century. In 1762, the Lanthieris built a Baroque mansion in the present main square.

The Gothic church of St. Stephen was reconstructed in the Baroque style and is an important art-historical monument. The public cemetery contains two original Egyptian sarcophagi, brought from Egypt by the diplomat and Egyptologist Anton Laurin.

This pleasant region is home to excellent wine – autochthonous varieties which form an excellent accompaniment to the tasty local cuisine. You can sample them in hospitable wine cellars, at 'osmica', on farms and at characteristic local cultural events.



http://www.miren-kostanjevica.si/media/znamenitosti/znamenitost_09.jpg

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AS <http://www.tic-ajdovscina.si/?vie=cnt&id=2007071214593793&lng=eng>

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE REGIONAL CHURCH ROUTE FROM THE JULIAN ALPS TO THE KARST

The regional church route dedicated to Virgin Mary pilgrim churches from the Julian Alps to the Karst includes 14 churches from Gothic, baroque and Renaissance periods. The pilgrimage route is named after a well-known Slovene religious song *Marija skoz' življenje voditi srečno znaš* (Mary, you know how to lead us happily through life). In the past, especially in the turbulent times of World War II, this song gave courage to many Christian people. We can thus link past times and cultural heritage with today's insecure social and economic situation. Also today, the life of Virgin Mary and this song, which praises her gracefulness and helpfulness, can encourage us to have more compassion for other people. Besides its tangible and intangible sacral heritage, the route is enriched with various natural values and historical curiosities, which present interesting history and culture of the Goriška region.

The route begins in the northwest of Slovenia, in the village of Trenta, which is also the centre of the Triglav National Park and the Trenta valley with the famous and beautiful source of the River Soča. The baroque church of Virgin Mary of Loreto is situated above the village Trenta and belongs to the parish Soča (managed from the parish Bovec). It is a miners' church, which was erected in 1690 by the Counts of Attems.

The second church, dedicated to Virgin Mary (Church of Virgin Mary), built in the late Gothic style, is located in Bovec, a town in the Soča valley, which is also a centre for active holidays and similar adventures. This small picturesque church dates back to the period around 1500. It is still possible to admire the late Gothic frescoes painted by the valued artist Jernej of Loka (1529), some of the renovated paintings which show the Twelve Apostles, the fresco which depicts the Throne of Mercy and the colourful stained glass window of the local artist Veselka Šorli Puc. The high altar is decorated with the statue of St. Mary which was bought with the hard-earned savings by the girls who used to work as servants in Trieste.

During World War I, the front lines were located close to the church, so the church was damaged heavily. After the post-war reconstruction, it was damaged by some earthquakes. In 1998, the earthquake damaged the most ancient bell tower in the area of Bovec, dating from 1615, but the church was fully restored. Today, thanks to its acoustic properties, the church is used as a venue for a variety of events, including concerts.

The third pilgrim church belongs to the parish of Volče. The Church of the Name of Mary was constructed in the late mediaeval times. It is an old pilgrim centre in the area around the town of Tolmin, known from the 14th century. It is located on top of the hill Mengore, which is surrounded by fortifications from World War I. The name of the hill Mengore means the mountain of Mary. In the history, the church was well visited, especially in really hard times, like Turkish invasions, droughts, earthquakes, WWI invasions and the Nazi period. The church got its contemporary look in 1928 and has become an important pilgrim centre since.

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In the centre of the Soča valley, above the town of Kanal, which is famous for its beautiful bridge, the fourth pilgrim church is located. The Church of the Name of Mary belongs to the parish of Lig.

Where the parish church is situated today, there was originally a small Gothic church dedicated to Saint Zenon. It was first mentioned in the 14th century. When our land was part of the German empire, it was very popular to go on a pilgrimage to Maria Zell, the biggest Central European Mary's church in the Upper Styria. The copy of the statue from the Maria Zell was transferred to the Soča Valley in 1761 and placed on the high altar during a solemn procession on the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary (12 September). This event is still remembered every year on the first Sunday after the festival of the Nativity of Our Lady, when the main feast day of the church is celebrated. The local inhabitants refer to this event as "odpustek" (indulgence). The church fast became a pilgrimage destination and was enlarged and remodelled in 1774. The church got its contemporary look in the second half of the 18th century, when the church was renovated and two bell towers were built. In 1845, the church received a new copy of the venerated Maria statue, which can nowadays be admired on the high altar.

The next pilgrim church is the Church of Virgin Mary of the Snow, a succursal church in the village of Nadavče (above the village Avče). It is one of the most beautiful and the oldest Gothic pilgrim churches in this part of Slovenia. The first data about the sanctuary date back to 1497. According to the legend, the church was built with the stones from the ruins of the castle from the nearby hill. Wrapped in a shroud of mystery is also the construction of the free-standing bell tower, which is supposed to have been built on Roman foundations. Every morning when the builders came to the church, they saw that the part of the tower which was higher than the church had been demolished. The bell tower was also used as a defensive tower in the fortified camp built against the Ottoman incursions.

The sixth pilgrim church dedicated to Virgin Mary is the church in Vrhovlje near Kojsko in the Brda region. Goriška Brda is a hilly winegrowing region in the westernmost part of Slovenia, extending to the border with Italy. This is a baroque church with a beautiful view of the Brda landscape.

In the surroundings of Nova Gorica, there are three very popular historical pilgrim centres. The first pilgrim centre is Sveta Gora, which is an important national sacred place with a rich pilgrimage tradition. It is situated at the junction of the Vipava and Soča Valleys and at the transition of the Gorica Plain into the Friuli Plain. The Basilica of Mary Mother of God at Sveta Gora has always been an important monument of the cultural and historical value. It was a holy place already in the Middle Ages, but the primary church was mysteriously destroyed. The second church was consecrated in 1544 and it was designed as a three-nave church which combined the elements of late Gothic and Renaissance styles. Its building is connected with the legend that Virgin Mary with Jesus appeared to a shepherd-girl Urška Ferligoj and ordered her to build a church on top of the mountain. These visions prompted believers from nearby and distant lands to go on a pilgrimage. On the occasion of the consecration, the Patriarch Marino Grimani of Aquileia donated to the sanctuary a renowned painting of Mother of God.

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During World War I, the church was destroyed and the second, the present basilica was built in 1928. Its greatest artistic artefact is the famous graceful image of the Mother of God at the main altar, which was donated by the Aquileia Patriarch and whose authorship is attributed to the circle of the Venetian painter Palma Vecchio. It was ceremoniously adorned with a precious crown in 1717. There were 133,000 pilgrims at the celebration. It now belongs to the most famous images of Holy Virgin Mary in Slovenia.

Between Nova Gorica (Slovenia) and Gorizia (Italy), there is a hill with the Church of the Annunciation and the Franciscan Monastery. The pilgrimage place is rich in history and treasures of the past. This sacred pilgrimage shrine on "Kapela" (Chapel), as the locals call it, is rich in history and treasures of the past. This site is an oasis of greenery, peace and spirituality.

The first sanctuary was built in the 16th century. Numerous stone memorial plaques prove the belonging of the nobles of the Country of Gorizia to this place. Today it is known as the resting place of the last French king Charles X (1757–1836) and other members of the French royal family of the Bourbons. The site is well-known also for its precious monastery's library, named after Friar Stanislav Škrabec (1844–1918), the greatest Slovenian linguist and grammarian who lived there for more than 40 years, the beautiful garden of ancient Bourbon roses, the Rose Festival in spring and the community for drug addicts Srečanje (Encounter).

On the hill known as Mirenski Grad (the Miren Castle), where the Lazarists have their monastery, stands the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows. The first records of the church on that hill date back to 1350. At that time, the place was called "Our Lady under the Karst." Since the church was very small, a new one was built between 1862 and 1866 with the donations of pilgrims and devoted to Our Lady of Sorrows. During World War I, the church was completely destroyed. Between 1924 and 1931, a new construction was provided, which was designed by the architect Umberto Cuzzi. However, World War II saw it severely damaged once again. The restoration began in 1955 and the church was consecrated in 1986. The church is one of the largest in the Diocese of Koper.

Nowadays, Mirenski grad is a spiritual centre with the Lazarists' monastery, the House of Sisters of Mercy and the Gnidovec Retreat House with a youth centre, the Stations of the Cross and the Holy Stairs with relics.

In the centre of the Vipava valley, there are four pilgrim churches dedicated to Virgin Mary. In Gradišče nad Prvačino, there is the succursal Church of Immaculate Mary, in Vitovlje, the succursal Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary, near the beautiful old village of Goče, on the hill Obelunec, the succursal Church of Virgin Mary of the Snow and in Log, the most famous pilgrimage Church of Virgin Mary of Consolation.

The church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary in Vitovlje was mentioned for the first time in 1361. The remains of the walls of the defensive fort with the entrance tower date back to the time of Ottoman incursions. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the ancient church underwent some reconstructions. During World War II, in 1944, the church was blown up. The local inhabitants showed their belonging to this pilgrimage place with its reconstruction, when

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started in 1966 and finished in 1976. The furnishings which have been preserved from the old church include the Gothic keystones of the arched presbytery, the main altar and the statues of the Coronation of the Virgin Mary (the originals are kept in the regional museum Goriški muzej). In the church, it is possible to admire the statue of St. Anthony the Eremite (made by the local Stanko Hrovatin) and the stained-glass window of Mary Mother of the Church (work of art of Marta Kunaver).

The first records of the Church of Immaculate Virgin Mary in Gradišče nad Privačino date back to the 16th century, but the present edifice was built in the 17th century and later often remodelled. During the Isonzo Front, it was demolished like many other churches. In the 1930s, it was rebuilt. Today, the interior of the church is adorned with the mirrored arched nave. The baroque altar is garnished with the statue of Virgin Mary with Child and with the paintings of Antonio Paroli (1688–1768) and Jožef Tominc (1790–1866).

The first records of the Church of Virgin Mary of the Snow at Obelunec above Goče, patroness against drought, date back to the 17th century. In the church, it is possible to admire two paintings of the artist Clemente Del Neri (1865–1943), the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Joseph with Infant Jesus. The altar from 1926 is decorated with the statues of St. Roch, St. Sebastian and St. George. The wooden statue of Virgin Mary of the Snow (1965) in the altar's niche is a work of art of the illustrious painter Tone Kralj (1900–1975).

Between Ajdovščina and Vipava, in the village of Log, stands the most famous pilgrim centre of the Upper Vipava Valley – the Church of Virgin Mary of Consolation. This church is one of the oldest and biggest pilgrimage churches in the Goriška Region. The church was first mentioned in the historical records in the 15th century. It was built in the Gothic style but was later expanded and got two more naves. Pilgrims could take a rest in a shed, which stood in front of the church and was designed in the 18th century. At the end of the baroque period and at the beginning of the Classicism, the aisles of the church were changed into two chapels. The ceiling and the back part of the presbytery are painted with the motifs of St. Mary.

The legend has it that already in the antiquity, there was a small chapel where the Roman Emperor Theodosius the Great prayed on the eve of the Battle of the Frigid River, which took place in its proximity in 394 AD. It was one of the most important battles of the late Roman Empire. Theodosius' victory against the usurper Flavius Eugenius was seen as the last attempt to contest the Christianization of the Roman Empire and celebrated as the triumph of Christianity.

The pilgrim church route finishes at the Karst Plateau, where the Church of Virgin Mary of Obršljan is beautifully located near the village of Komen. The church grew from the former shrine and over the years it was modified and extended many times. The legend about how the church was built tells us that Virgin Mary with baby Jesus appeared on a beautiful throne clad with ivy, hence the name Virgin Mary of Ivy. As the landscape of the Karst is frequently dry, the pilgrims used to pray to Virgin Mary for rain and it was a common belief that 36 hours after the procession for rain, their prayers would be answered.

In the church, it is still possible to admire the painting of the Assumption of Virgin Mary, the work of the painter Francesco Pittoni (in the presbytery), and the waxed statue of Virgin

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Mary with Jesus from the 19th century, one of the biggest in Slovenia. The side altars from 1736 are dedicated to St. Anna (made by Johanness Michael Lichtenreit) and St. Anthony the Eremite (made by Antonio Paroli). The presbytery and the ceiling are adorned with the frescoes which represent Virgin Mary's Assumption with her Coronation, made by the painter Giulio Quaglia (1668–1751).



Map of the regional church route dedicated to Virgin Mary pilgrimage churches in the Goriška region

5. REASONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL CHURCH ROUTE

The content for the regional church route was developed in three regional working meetings with different stakeholders (director of the Goriška Regional Museum, president of the non-governmental organization Forum za Goriško, priests, Association of Friends of Routes dedicated to St. Jacob in Slovenia, head of Department of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage from Nova Gorica and representatives of tourist offices). First, we wanted to develop a route which would connect to the already existent paths, like Jakobova pot (The Route of St. Jacob), Otmarjeva pot (The Route of Priest Otmar), Pot treh svetišč (The Route of Three Pilgrim Churches), but afterwards we decided to construct a church route which could connect sub-regions of the Goriška region, make the region more recognizable and possibly become a symbol of the regional identity. The church route could also resolve some development problems which the stakeholders pointed out:

- the problem of cooperation among tourist information centres (TICs), parishes, cloisters and local communities;
- the problem of development of local communities;
- the stress on the spiritual aspect of church heritage should be presented in brochures and other presentations (possibly prepared with the help of theologians);
- the problem of low awareness of the importance of church heritage among specific social groups.

For the dissemination of the regional church route, a special booklet was prepared. Besides a detailed description of historical, art-historical and ethnological characteristics of the churches, it also explains the role of pilgrimage in contemporary times.

6. REGIONAL STRATEGY

a) VISION

Connected, united and understanding residents in the sustainably developed and creative communities of the Goriška region, with a deep awareness that cultural heritage enables innovative social and economic potentials.

b) STRATEGIC APPROACH

Innovative development of economic, social, environmental and cultural activities and establishment of public-private networks among local residents with the consciousness that also community's tradition and tangible and intangible cultural heritage can be used as mechanisms to achieve a better quality of life in the future.

c) GOALS OF THE STRATEGY

The development strategy will be implemented in the framework of four equal, interdependent and supplemental thematic fields.

1. Development of public-private networks (partnerships) with the aim to achieve innovative progress of cultural landscapes where locals could obtain the best knowledge in all periods of their lives, express their potentials, needs, ideas and desires creatively, and use cultural and natural resources sustainably will be fostered by:

- a) Carrying out different formal and informal educational activities (workshops, debate evenings, crafts markets, study activities, etc.) in public and private sectors to raise awareness of the roles that each sector has in the region and to find opportunities for public-private partnerships. Activities should be conducted with the understanding that both sides can benefit from private-public partnerships and that benefits can be symmetrical;
- b) Stimulating the development of human resources with different kinds of trainings where citizens could, in all periods of their lives, obtain knowledge about natural, cultural and environmental characteristics of the region, about management, communication and information technologies, and about possibilities/opportunities for development of innovative business ideas;
- c) Establishing different tools to stimulate cooperation between researchers (interdisciplinary cooperation of technology and humanity sciences) and entrepreneurs/business, and increasing knowledge of how to commercialize academic research, i.e. how to transfer academic research results into new social and economic innovative ideas and challenges;
- d) Enabling different opportunities, occasions, events, etc. where citizens can express their potentials, needs, ideas and desires and sustainably use cultural and natural resources.

2. Development of the stimulative environment in which the locals have access to different kinds of transport, undisturbed access to information and communication technologies, and quality jobs, which would, in the long run, prevent emigration and depopulation, of rural areas in particular will be fostered by:

- a) Preparation of clear policies, administrative conditions and financial mechanisms for the growth of high qualitative jobs (exemption from some kinds of taxes, financial stimulation for employment of the young and the elderly, etc.), which would focus on research-and-development oriented enterprises. In research work, special attention must be paid to needs, experiences, traditions and opportunities of cultural landscapes;
- b) Development of tourist destinations of the Goriška region, where different geographical and administrative regions have developed recognized brands (Upper Vipava Valley, Brda, Soča Valley, Triglav National Park, the Bovec region, etc.). However, special focus should be on the development of some common characteristics which are based on traditional and historical bases (World War I, Christianity, pilgrimages and pilgrimage churches, biological agriculture products, castles and/or mediaeval villas from different historical periods, archaeological sites, etc.) and can further identify an inclusive Goriška region brand;
- c) Enabling common tourist transport services (buses, electric vehicles, bicycles) and itineraries (booklets, signposting, audio-guides) for sustainable accessibility and attractiveness of the cultural sites of the Goriška region;
- d) Development of a tourism portal as a new tool to promote the destinations of the Goriška region to residents and visitors and a scientific online knowledge portal with bibliography, relevant links and scientific articles.

3. Sustainable preservation, restoration, management and uses of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which can give opportunities for resolving contemporary social, economic and environmental/climate problems and contribute to the development of a smart, inclusive and sustainable Goriška region will be fostered by:

- a) Historical, ethnologic-anthropological, geographical, art-historical, sociological research of the Goriška region in order to use research outputs in establishing an innovative, knowledge-based economy (eco/bio-agriculture, eco-tourism etc).
- b) Protection, restoration and renovation of material cultural heritage and development of private-public partnerships which could, on the one hand, enable profit of cultural heritage and, on the other hand, provide a cultural element to empower the community and connect local people who live in the Goriška region and potentially alter its culture.
- c) Development of cultural networks among different actors who take an active part in heritage practices in order to sustainably use culture as a driver for creative

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innovation (advertising, architecture, production of crafts, design, publishing, music etc).

- d) Development of different cultural events, exhibitions, book presentations, market of innovative ideas etc. to raise awareness about local cultural heritage.
- e) Development of different tools of how to involve different stakeholders (the young, the elderly, entrepreneurs, experts, etc.)

4. Preservation, fortification and development of local identity and awareness of natural and cultural resources of the environment will be fostered by:

- a) Strengthening of local identities connected to sub-regional areas and fortifying the Goriška regional identity, which could be defined with common heritage elements (World War I, Christianity, pilgrimages and pilgrimage churches, eco-agriculture products, castles and mediaeval villas from different historical periods, archaeological sites, etc.);
- b) Establishment of qualitative and reciprocal connections between urban and rural areas, especially between the town of Nova Gorica and the rural villages of the Goriška region, which could be obtained with the knowledge of natural and cultural characteristics of both areas;
- c) Establishment of qualitative and successful economic and cultural links among residents in the cross-border area.



Happy resident from Goriška region. Foto: Vojko Franetič, 2004.

d) Programme of concrete actions:

FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AMONG PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH DIFFERENT PARTNERSHIPS/NETWORKS

	ACTION	BEARER	STAKEHOLDERS	FINANCIAL RESOURCES	TIME-FRAME	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING
1.	Debate evenings Round tables	Public institutions, local entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs Youth (students) Unemployed Art workers	500 €	2014-2020	Financial resources of different cultural or development organizations, public institutions, schools, municipalities ...
2.	Craft markets	Tourist offices (municipalities)	Craftsmen, members of different local associations, tourists, local residents, small business institutions	500 €.	2014-2020	Financial resources of municipalities.
3.	Thematic cultural events	Public institutions	Local residents, tourists	500 €	2014-2020	Financial resources of municipalities and other public institutions, European Social funds, Cohesion funds, European Regional Development funds

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DIFFERENT TRAININGS TO OBTAIN/IMPROVE NEW KNOWLEDGE FOR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

	ACTION	BEARER	STAKEHOLDERS	FINANCIAL RESOURCES	TIME-FRAME	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING
1.	Study clubs, lectures, thematic workshops, school programmes ...	Adult education centres, Universities, Secondary schools, Research institutions	Youth, the elderly, unemployed, entrepreneurs ...	1,000 €	2014-2020	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, municipalities, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European projects

THE CONSTRUCTION OF RECOGNIZABLE TOURIST DESTINATION OF THE GORIŠKA REGION

	ACTION	BEARER	STAKEHOLDERS	FINANCIAL RESOURCES	TIME-FRAME	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING
1.	Academic research	Research institutions, Universities	Researchers/experts, students, local residents	1,4000€	2015-2018	European projects, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

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2.	New communication and technologic applications/ platforms	Research institutions, universities, IT companies	Researchers/ experts	1,000€	2015-2018	European projects, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology
3.	New tourist programmes and products in order to connect the sub-regions of the Goriška region	Tourist offices, municipalities, research institutions	Local residents, tourists	1,000€	2015-2018	European projects, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
4.	Enrichment of the regional church route dedicated to Virgin Mary pilgrimage churches	Research institutions ZRC SAZU	Local residents, priests, tourists	1,000€	2015-2018	European projects, cross-border projects

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITIVE PRODUCTS BASED ON TRADITION AND INNOVATIONS

	ACTION	BEARER	STAKEHOLDERS	FINANCIAL RESOURCES	TIME-FRAME	POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING
	Identification of different traditional products of local communities and preparation of creative ideas of how to enrich them according to contemporary needs, technological opportunities	Research institutions, creative industry	Local residents, craftsmen, tourists, entrepreneurs	1,000€	2015-2018	European projects

7. CONCLUSION

The regional strategy, based on the regional SWOT analysis of the Goriška region, its tangible and intangible heritage and regional church route, wants to promote connected, united and understanding residents in sustainably developed and creative communities of Goriška region, with awareness that cultural heritage, and especially sacral cultural heritage, incorporated in the regional church route, holds innovative social and economic potentials, which work hand in hand with its preservation.

But it is worth also to stress that the main issue of using culture and its heritage for development purpose is to understand that cultural heritage is not here for its own sake, but that it is something that fills our hearts; it is here to empower us to solve contemporary social and economic problems and achieve our potential for better and healthier lives, work and collaboration. We just need many formal and informal occasions, opportunities and conditions to demonstrate and use its important development potential.