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SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY OF SLOVENIA

SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF SLOVENIA 2050



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND SPATIAL PLANNING

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Foreword

A more Responsible Attitude Towards Space

In spatial planning especially, it is important to be able to look far ahead and identify common development objectives that are important for the well-being of the community as a whole. The strategic document before you defines the direction of spatial development up to 2050. It has been adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, setting out long-term development objectives and providing a strategic framework for achieving territorial cohesion throughout Slovenia.

The Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia has been in development for several years, and the process of producing the document has involved more than a thousand stakeholders from all levels of spatial management and planning: ministries and government offices, municipalities, development agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, NGOs, and the general public. The strategy is based on expert knowledge and implements commitments made in documents at the international and European levels.

The new strategy aims to establish a more responsible attitude towards space and aims to find multifunctional spatial solutions. It responds to the development problems and challenges posed by both the present and the future. The challenges of climate and demographic change, housing, energy, the transition to sustainable mobility, digitalisation, food security, and integration in the international environment require a different approach to spatial planning. We need to green our cities and towns and strengthen their resilience to climate change. In rural areas, we need to ensure comparable living conditions and access to quality public services. By strengthening the polycentric urban network, with an emphasis on the role of centres in all areas of the country, we ensure the conditions for balanced regional development in Slovenia.

The strategy is planned to be implemented at several levels in accordance with the law. The first step towards achieving the long-term objectives and guidelines of the strategy is the plan for its implementation up to 2030. The guidelines set out in the strategy are the basis for producing spatial planning documents at the national, regional and local levels, to be followed by the drawing up of the line ministries' development documents. The strategy aims to achieve efficient, sustainable and innovative use of resources and a gradual transition to a participatory model of spatial management.

This is simply what we need to do if we are to ensure a clean, healthy and high quality environment and a distinctive territorial identity for future generations. Only if we manage space wisely and protect nature and natural resources will we be able to look our descendants in the eye calmly and proudly.

Uroš Brežan,
Minister of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning

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Introduction

(1) The Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia 2050 (hereinafter: the strategy) is the fundamental strategic spatial planning document of the Republic of Slovenia; on the basis of the Spatial Management Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], Nos 199/21 and 18/23 – ZDU-10; hereinafter: the Act) and in conjunction with the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 and other national development documents and EU development objectives, it defines Slovenia's long-term strategic objectives and guidelines for the development of spatial activities. The strategy sets out the vision for Slovenia's spatial development, long-term objectives and the concept of spatial development with priorities and guidelines for achieving the objectives. The basic guidelines have been drawn up for the long term up to 2050, and a plan will be drawn up to implement the strategy's objectives in the medium term, identifying priorities and responsible authorities for specific areas and activities.

(2) The strategy supports the development paradigm of territorial cohesion, which ensures the balanced, coherent and sustainable development of all areas in the country, taking into account and using their endogenous territorial potential (resources). Territorial cohesion links the three dimensions of space: physical, economic and socio-cultural. It applies a spatial approach at all levels of planning. It emphasises the need for stakeholders and citizens to participate and be actively involved in a participatory spatial planning process in order to enhance territorial efficiency, territorial quality and territorial identity.

(3) A wide range of spatial instruments (action programmes, regional spatial plans) and other instruments for cross-sectoral integration and spatial management are identified for the implementation of the strategy. The success in achieving the objectives of the strategy and implementing the activities and measures will be regularly monitored through a monitoring system with defined target and status indicators. This will serve as a basis for proposals to amend and supplement the strategy.

A Participatory and Informed Approach

(1) The strategy has been developed through consultations and open dialogue with around 850 stakeholders from all levels of planning and spatial management, NGOs, and the general public. The main objective of the ongoing coordination of the strategy with stakeholders and the public is to achieve a greater degree of consensus on the basic content of the document and of shared accountability in its subsequent implementation.

(2) Between 2014 and the end of 2019, 26 different expert bases were produced, 7 public consultations for a wide range of stakeholders were organised, 10 workshops for in-depth discussion within the stakeholder focus groups were held and 25 coordination meetings with line ministries were held.

(3) In parallel with drawing up the strategy, a strategic evaluation of the document and a strategic environmental impact assessment were carried out, including an assessment of the acceptability of the implementation of plans and interventions in the natural environment and protected areas. The environmental report for the draft strategy was finalised in December 2019.

(4) The public debate on the draft strategy and on the Appendix for the assessment of impacts on protected areas for the environmental report for the draft strategy lasted from 15 January 2020 up to and including 27 March 2020. During this period, six public consultations were organised in different parts of Slovenia, with the participation of 273 attendees, representatives of local communities, ministries, professional institutions and organisations, businesses, NGOs, and the general public. Special presentations were also organised for ministries and public services and for associations of municipalities and regional development agencies.

(5) During the public debate, 106 organisations, institutions and interested individuals submitted 1,689 comments, suggestions, criticisms, compliments, reflections and concrete contributions to improve the text of each of the substantive sections of the document.

(6) Comments were received on all sections of the strategy (glossary, background, objectives, vision, concept, guidelines for the regional and local level and sectoral policies, monitoring) and on the environmental report and the appendix on protected areas. The comments made have been considered in the preparation of the proposed strategy.

(7) The environmental report and the appendix on protected areas were finalised in April 2022, when the decision of the competent ministry on the acceptability of the environmental impacts of the implementation of the strategy was also obtained.

Definitions and Use of Terms

(1) The strategy uses terms used in the field of spatial planning as defined by the Act. It also includes terms which are not defined in the Act but which are of key importance for spatial policy and the implementation of the strategy.

(2) A cross-border urban area means a functionally connected catchment area of two or more cities in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia and cities in neighbouring countries.

(3) A functional urban area means a functionally connected area of a centre and its catchment area, where the centre provides access to goods and services of general and general economic interest to the people living in the immediate and more distant hinterland. Functional urban areas may overlap with each other, but they do not homogeneously cover the whole area of Slovenia. A functional urban area is defined as a set of basic territorial units from which a certain percentage of the active working population commutes to work in the centre on a daily basis (according to the OECD and EUROSTAT methodology, this percentage is 15%). A functional urban area is used as an instrument for monitoring spatial trends in a monitoring system.

(4) Intermodal transport means the carriage of freight using two or more modes of transport.

(5) An outstanding landscape means a natural or cultural landscape which has a high scenic value as a reflection of one or more unique or inimitable characteristics – a distinctive structure, a unique land use, a distinctive settlement pattern or outstanding natural features – and as such is recognisable at the national level.

(6) A public area means, as a rule, an open designed space intended for general use, natural or created by construction or other land development, such as a road, street, passage, square, market, atrium, car park, cemetery, park, lawn, children's playground, sports ground, or other area for recreation and leisure; a public area is constructed or green; a public area may be state-owned, municipality-owned or privately owned.

(7) A landscape means a territory as perceived by people and having distinctive natural, cultural or settlement characteristics resulting from activities and interaction between nature and people.

(8) The buffer zone between settlements means a strip of land on which agricultural, forest or water land use is maintained. It prevents the coalescence of settlements and ensures the ecological connectivity of wildlife habitats, a high quality and healthy habitat, and other ecosystem services. The buffer zone is part of the green system of the region or the green system of the settlement.

(9) Mixed land use means an urban planning measure of locating various mutually complementary activities within a closed spatial unit – residential, commercial, service, public (e.g. educational or social) and other (e.g. dry cleaner or pharmacy) activities. This results in a better functional connectivity between the locations of living, working and frequent daily services. This ensures the vitality and attractiveness of the spatial unit, strengthens the local economy, improves conditions for sustainable mobility, reduces the need for daily commuting and strengthens social cohesion.

(10) A settlement means an area of an existing settlement comprising land built up with residential and other buildings and civil engineering works and associated areas necessary for their use, and public areas; a settlement consists of a group of at least ten residential buildings; settlements differ in function and role in the settlement network and in size, urban layout and architecture; settlements are classified as towns, other urban settlements and other settlements.

(11) Net land take means the increase in built-up area in one year, calculated using the following equation: net growth in built-up area = built-up area in year n – built-up area in year $n-1$. Built-up area is defined as the area on the ground comprising building plots of buildings and civil engineering works with associated land.

(12) Areas for restructuring mean areas which, as a result of changed economic conditions and the abandonment of existing economic activities, face negative economic, social or environmental consequences and degradation.

(13) Participatory spatial planning means a process of cooperation between the drafters of spatial planning documents and stakeholders in the area covered by the spatial planning document. It involves mutual informing, identification of issues, integration of local knowledge into spatial solutions and measures, and building competences for participation in spatial development planning.

(14) Territorial identity means the awareness of spatial values. It is shaped by distinctive natural, landscape and built-up structures, which are the result of the interaction of geographical, cultural, historical, social, economic and other factors of development. In spatial development planning, these factors are taken into account as a given for the preservation of quality structures and for new, quality design and spatial planning.

(15) Spatial (territorial) cohesion means a spatial development paradigm that ensures the balanced and sustainable development of areas, taking into account the specificities present in them. The paradigm is based on enhancing territorial efficiency (focusing on the efficient use of resources, improving connectivity and the economic competitiveness of areas), on territorial quality (focusing on the quality of the living and natural environment and the accessibility of services), and on territorial identity (focusing on strengthening and using local knowledge, strengthening community belonging and vision).

(16) Rural areas is a collective designation for areas with similar natural, economic and social characteristics, distinctive territorial identity and resources. Rural areas are characterised by smaller settlements and a lower population density. The landscape is dominated by agricultural and forest land use.

(17) A rural settlement means a settlement with a population of more than 500 and less than 2,000 residents and a proportion of agricultural holdings greater than 7% of the inhabited dwellings in the settlement. Rural settlements are characterised by a lower population density and the predominance of agricultural and forestry land uses. The proportion of the population engaged in agricultural and forestry activities is higher than in urban settlements, but not necessarily predominant.

(18) A polycentric urban system means a hierarchically structured network of settlements with their catchment areas, which are of similar functional importance and size and between which a division of services of general and general economic interest is established.

(19) Soil sealing means the covering of the soil by an impermeable material. In this case, the soil holds its load-bearing function but loses its natural functions as a result of being covered by anthropogenic elements. Fully covered surfaces are surfaces on which buildings have been constructed or which have been developed as hard-surfaced outdoor areas (e.g. paths, car parks, driveways or production land) and which have not been preserved in their natural state.

(20) Spatial distinctiveness means a characteristic of space that is shaped by high-quality built-up and landscape elements and structures. Spatial distinctiveness may be defined as a unique or non-repeatable feature (outstanding landscape) at the national level or as a characteristic structure or pattern at the regional or local level.

(21) Territorial potential means the capacity of a certain territory to develop in relation to its available environmental, economic, anthropogenic, social, human, cultural or institutional resources.

(22) Territorial resilience means the adaptation of space to expected or unexpected environmental, social, economic and other changes, which is recognised and effectively addressed by the competent administrative services in spatial planning procedures.

(23) A degraded area means an area which, as a result of inappropriate or abandoned use, has a reduced economic, social, environmental or visual value or value under cultural heritage protection criteria and is in need of rehabilitation; a degraded area may exhibit different types and degrees of degradation under physical, functional, environmental, social and cultural heritage protection criteria.

(24) A nearly zero-energy building means a building with a very high energy efficiency or a very low amount of energy required for operation, where the energy required is to a very large extent produced from renewable sources, including renewable energy produced on-site or nearby.

(25) A conurbation means a group of interconnected cities, towns and/or other settlements in which activities are distributed according to the principle of complementarity of functions. By interconnecting and distributing functions, settlements strengthen their roles in the urban system.

(26) Stepping stones means landscape elements that provide ecological connectivity in addition to linear elements (corridors). These can be, for example, patches of woodland, individual trees, shrubs or tree hedges, wetlands and water bodies with riparian vegetation, or, in priority agricultural areas, agricultural land in less intensive use.

(27) A centre means an urban settlement with jobs, services of general interest, housing and other services (e.g. retail), and other activities (e.g. cultural institutions) which serve the residents of the settlement and its area of influence or catchment area. The extent of these areas depends on the size and development of the centre and its role in the polycentric urban system.

(28) Services of general and general economic interest are services of general interest and are subject to specific public service obligations. They can be provided either by the public sector (the state and local self-government) or by the private sector. Examples of services of general interest include education, training, sport and recreation, social protection, culture, healthcare, public transport, and postal and banking services. Development projects for the provision of services of general and general economic interest are planned as community infrastructure. The accessibility, proximity, availability and quality of these services are important to achieve a higher quality of life for the population and to support economic development.

(29) A wider urban area means a functionally connected catchment area of one or more centres within which population commuting (e.g. for work or supply activities) takes place on a daily basis, generating large-scale traffic flows. A wider urban area includes at least one level 1 or level 2 centre or several mutually complementing centres of level 3 or 4. It has a population of at least 50,000 and a number of jobs greater than 25,000. Wider urban areas comprise areas up to 35 km from a level 1 centre or 25 km from a level 2 or level 3 centre. Such an area may extend over the territory of several local communities surrounding a municipality with a centre of an appropriate level. Wider urban areas are the core parts of functional urban areas, within which conurbations may develop and operate to support functional links between centres.

(30) Sustainable mobility means moving around in a sustainable way, which includes walking, cycling, using public transport and other forms of mobility (such as car-sharing or carpooling) that are less polluting and ensure efficient and equitable transport accessibility for all. The focus is on reducing private motorised transport and energy consumption, reducing the carbon footprint and pollution, and promoting sustainable travel modes using renewable energy sources.

(31) A village means a settlement with fewer than 500 residents and more than 10 residential buildings. The proportion of the population engaged in agricultural and forestry activities is higher than in urban settlements, but not necessarily predominant.

(32) Multimodality means the possibility of using different travel modes or means of transport on a particular chosen route.

(33) A hub means a part of an urban area in which the transport infrastructure of the Trans-European Transport Network, such as railway stations, airports and ports, including passenger terminals, logistics platforms and freight terminals, is interconnected by various modal interchanges, including rail-road terminals (RRTs), and linked to regional and local transport infrastructure.

(34) An entry point means a part of the territory of a country at or near the national border where a network of rail and road links of the highest order is functionally connected to the European transport network.

(35) An urban settlement means a town, a city or other urban settlement. It has a population of more than 2,000 and provides services of general and general economic interest, jobs, housing and public transport to serve the population in the catchment area.

(36) Urban development means the guiding and planning of development in cities and towns, other urban settlements, and wider urban areas.

(37) Green infrastructure means a strategically designed and managed network of natural and semi-natural areas and the links between them. On land, it includes green and water landscape elements and green spaces in settlements. In the coastal area, it includes the sea and parts of the coast. Green infrastructure ensures the conservation of biodiversity and the achievement of nature conservation objectives, increases the resilience of space to climate change, improves the functioning of ecosystems, provides benefits to the population, especially in terms of health, safety and quality of life, and strengthens territorial identity. Green infrastructure also provides benefits to the economy, particularly in conservation and regeneration of natural resources. Green infrastructure links urban and rural areas and the sea and coast with the hinterland. Green infrastructure is planned at the regional level through green systems of regions and at the local level through green systems of settlements.

(38) A green system means a comprehensively planned system for the protection and development of green areas and other natural and man-made structures in space, which are functionally interconnected and complement each other. It is intended to ensure a quality living environment and to fulfil social, environmental, ecological, climatic, economic, cultural, structural and design functions at the level of settlements, the region and the country.

1 Basic Premises for the Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia 2050

1.1 General Grounds for the Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia 2050

(1) National space is the basis for national development. Development cannot be planned and facilitated without considering long-term territorial potential. In this sense, the strategy responds to and addresses social, economic and environmental challenges in the country and in the European and global context. It takes into account and adopts the principles, guidelines and recommendations of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as the economic, social, environmental and climate baselines defined in sectoral state documents and regulations that have an impact on spatial development in Slovenia.

(2) The strategy is based on the generally accepted values and norms enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. It retrieves from it directly the basic substantive premises that the state, in accordance with the constitutional provisions, should ensure a healthy living environment, guarantee the right to drinking water, protect natural and cultural heritage, create opportunities for citizens to acquire adequate housing, protect land, is responsible for the economic, cultural and social progress of the population in mountainous and hilly areas, and for local self-government.

(3) The strategy follows and implements the basic guidelines and development objectives of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030. The Slovenian Development Strategy (SDS 2030, Government of the Republic of Slovenia, December 2017) has placed the goal of »a quality of life for all« at the centre of development efforts. The development objectives (a healthy and active life, a decent life for all, strengthening national identity, economic stability, a low-carbon circular economy, natural resource management, and a safe and globally responsible Slovenia) are integral basic premises, which are also supported by the spatial development objectives defined in this strategy.

(4) The strategy is based on the country's development objectives and the development objectives of sectoral policies. As an overarching inter-ministerial document for guiding the country's spatial development, it highlights territorial potential and guidelines for maximising spatial synergies with other sectoral development objectives at different spatial levels.

(5) The strategy reiterates a place-based approach. The role of space as a key factor in the development of society was recognised in Slovenia as early as the 1970s, in the system of social planning. The integration of policies with spatial impacts and the comprehensive consideration of all three factors of a country's development – social, economic and spatial – with the inclusion of environmental aspects, were a kind of precursor of sustainable development planning.

(6) The strategy takes into account the 2030 Agenda and the commitment to a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions in the achievement of the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In its objectives and guidelines, the strategy directly or indirectly takes into account several of the global Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in the area of the development of sustainable cities and human settlements (Goal 11).

(7) The strategy supports the implementation of the climate objectives in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change (the Paris Agreement, Paris 2015). Thus an integral part of the strategy is to guide spatial development for optimal climate change mitigation and adaptation.

(8) The strategy builds on the recognised role of towns and cities in spatial development and the urban development policies that have emerged at the global and European levels over the last decade, notably with the adoption of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities and the Pact of Amsterdam on the Urban Agenda for the EU. Taking into account the New Urban Agenda (Habitat III, Quito 2017), the strategy follows the global vision of urban development for the 21st century and the principles of the New Leipzig Charter (Leipzig, 2020) on green, just and productive cities to ensure quality of life in all European towns and cities and their functional areas.

(9) The strategy includes landscape as an integral part of spatial planning. It addresses its protection, management and planning in accordance with the European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000).

(10) The strategy accepts and takes into account international commitments regarding geographical areas with specific characteristics, challenges and potential. Such areas are mountainous areas in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Protection of the Alps and coastal areas with the sea in accordance with the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution and the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean.

(11) The strategy is based on the fundamental European documents, the Lisbon Treaty, which lists economic, social and territorial cohesion, respect for cultural diversity, and the protection and development of Europe's cultural heritage among the fundamental objectives of the EU. As an EU member and as part of the European spatial development processes, Slovenia follows the guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent at the level of the Council of Europe (Conférence Européenne des Ministres Responsables de l'Aménagement du Territoire – CEMAT, Hannover, 2000) and the principles of the European Spatial Development Perspectives (ESDP, Potsdam, 1999).

(12) The strategy takes into account the development, spatial and urban policies of the European Union and builds on EU priorities. The Territorial Agenda 2030 (Leipzig, 2020), which is based on two overarching objectives, a green Europe and a just Europe, building on the European Green Deal, and six priorities, namely the promotion of polycentric and balanced spatial development, functional integration for integrated development in regions, cities and rural areas, territorial cross-border integration, circular economy for strong and sustainable local economies, a healthy environment and climate resilience of cities, towns and regions, and sustainable physical and digital connectivity of places. The new Leipzig Charter (Leipzig, 2020) sets out common European principles for sustainable urban development, recognising the transformative power of cities and towns to respond to today's social, environmental and economic challenges towards just, green and productive cities.

(13) Through its objectives, concept, principles and actions, the strategy contributes to the implementation of the objectives of the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 and other EU strategies, where sustainable spatial planning and spatially coordinated sectoral actions at different levels play an important role, in particular in the area of achieving the zero net land take by 2050.

1.2 Spatial Characteristics and Trends in Spatial Development in Slovenia

(1) Slovenia's spatial development trends in recent decades represent a departure from planned, efficient, rational and high-quality spatial development. Development trends are changing territorial identity and impoverishing its key elements. However, thanks to the relatively good preservation of the quality of environmental components and parts of natural and cultural assets, the proximity to European economic and cultural centres, and the infrastructural links to European transport networks, Slovenian space still offers its residents a relatively high quality of life.

(2) In the decade following Slovenia's accession to the EU and the adoption of the first Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia (2004), many changes have taken place that have impacted Slovenian space. These are the result both of spatial and other sectoral policies and of other external factors. The reports on the spatial development of Slovenia (Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, 2016; Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, 2021), which provide basic findings on the state of spatial development and spatial trends, are accompanying documents to the strategy and an expert basis for developing alternative solutions.

(3) The Slovenian space is extremely diverse and varied. It is shaped by its location at the intersection of four major European natural geographic areas – Adriatic, Alpine, Dinaric and Pannonian – and by the interplay of different geomorphological and climatic features, cultural influences, and the characteristics of historical development.

(4) The Slovenian space is recognisable for its diverse cultural landscape and its settlement, built and other heritage. In Slovenia, due to the natural conditions and methods of spatial management in the past, particularly in the Alpine and Dinaric landscapes, diverse, extensive and contiguous natural systems have been preserved. This is also reflected in the high proportion of protected areas (14%) and areas under protection (40%) (Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, 2019), even by European standards. A characteristic feature of the Slovenian space is the mosaic intertwining of forests and agricultural land and settlements. This is reflected in the landscape diversity, which is also a consequence of the topographic diversity of the area and the land fragmentation and agricultural land use patterns that characterised the area in the past. The abandonment or intensification of agricultural production, the overgrowth of agricultural land and the increase in inhabited areas, and the construction of infrastructure are reducing landscape diversity. Forest covers the largest proportion of the country's land area (62.7% of the land area), arable land covers 11%, meadows and pastures 17.8%, artificial or built-up areas 4.3%, water land and wetlands 1%, and other predominantly natural land 3.2% (LUCAS, 2022, data for 2018).

(5) The settlement pattern in Slovenia is uneven, characterised by a diversity of settlement structures and a large number – over 6,000 – of mainly small settlements. Towns and cities are also small or medium-sized by European standards, with only Ljubljana and Maribor having more than 50,000 residents. The most attractive areas for settlement are the more densely populated areas in the plains, basins and valleys, which also contain most of the good quality agricultural land suitable for intensive farming. In addition to the more densely populated and urbanised areas, there are large areas that are less densely populated or not populated at all – the Alpine area and the Dinaric plateaus in Notranjska and Kočevsko. In terms of urbanisation, Slovenia is the least urbanised country in the EU. The urbanisation rate in Slovenia is around 50%, while the average urbanisation rate in the EU is 72.5%.

(6) The space is constantly changing, due to natural processes, social and economic reasons, and needs reflected through anthropogenic interventions. Spatial development is understood as the change of

space as a result of human activity and the implementation of various public policies. In addition to spatial policy, these include other overarching and sectoral policies (e.g. in transport or agriculture). The effects of public policies on spatial development can be direct (e.g. the construction of transport infrastructure), indirect (e.g. fiscal policy measures), deliberate (e.g. limiting the expansion of urbanisation into at-risk areas) or unintentional (e.g. suburbanisation in a motorway corridor). Their effects on spatial development and spatial policy objectives have not been systematically monitored.

(7) Spatial development trends in recent decades include suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation, dispersed development outside compact settlements, and the degradation of cultural landscapes and settlement heritage. The process of overgrowing of agricultural land, which is prevalent in remote mountainous and border areas, and the construction of transport and energy infrastructure and economic zones are also contributing to the visible transformation of the Slovenian space.

(8) The trend towards suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation is characteristic in particular in the functional areas of larger towns, especially along the motorway network and in areas with major employment centres that are well connected to road infrastructure. The attractiveness of settlements in these areas is enhanced by more favourable land and property prices, a high number of private vehicles per capita and a well-developed road infrastructure.

(9) The lack of affordable housing reflects the low level of residential mobility and encourages self-building. The majority of investors in housing are private individuals, and the predominant type of newly built housing is single dwellings. The population in suburban and peri-urban settlements is younger than the national average, the migration balance is positive and the labour force participation rate is generally higher than in the nearby urban centre. The building stock is old. Due to the fragmentation of ownership and the economic possibilities of the owners, it is often not regularly maintained, as is also the case for cultural heritage buildings. Rather than restoring cultural heritage buildings, the aim is often to remove them and make way for new buildings.

(10) Jobs and services of general and general economic interest are concentrated in urban settlements. Larger towns and cities are demographically stagnating – the population in urban settlements is growing more slowly than the national average.

(11) In addition to the population, supply (mainly commercial) and service activities are also moving to the outskirts of towns and to the hinterland that is well connected by transport links. The last decade has witnessed the construction of many shopping and business centres on the outskirts of cities and towns. This is leading to the degradation of town centres, reducing the level of provision in town centres for their residents, encouraging new traffic flows, particularly by private motor vehicles, and causing traffic growth and congestion and the loss of mainly agricultural land on the edge of settlements.

(12) Remote rural areas, often in border or mountainous areas, are experiencing accelerated demographic depopulation and an ageing population. The registered unemployment rate in these areas is often higher than the national average (e.g. in Pomurje, Koroška and Posočje). Young people in these areas, particularly well-educated young people, are finding it difficult to find jobs appropriate to their education and interests and are therefore moving to urban settlements or their vicinity.

(13) Slovenia has the shortest land routes between the Adriatic Sea as the northernmost bay of the Mediterranean, northern Italy and the Mediterranean part of Western Europe on the one hand and Central Europe and the Balkans on the other. The transitional location offers economic opportunities in transport logistics and transport, but at the same time the increase in transit traffic is causing environmental burdens, congested transport infrastructure and new initiatives for the construction of transport infrastructure and transport logistics.

(14) Transport subsystems have not developed in a coordinated way in the past. The motorway network has been successfully upgraded and some regional traffic routes have been modernised. Investment in rail infrastructure has been insufficient. Only the following investments have been made: the improvement of the Murska Sobota–Hungary border transport link, the upgrading of the Pragersko–Ormož–Hodoš line, the introduction of the digital radio system (GSM-R), the introduction of the European Train Control System (ETCS) on the D corridor, i.e. Sežana/Koper–Ljubljana–Pragersko–Hodoš, the upgrading of the Zidani Most–Celje and Maribor–Šentilj lines, the construction of the second track of the Divača–Koper railway line, the upgrading of the Pragersko railway hub, and the partial renovation of the Gorenjska line. The rail infrastructure is outdated, some lines are still unelectrified, there is insufficient capacity for both freight and passenger transport, and transport times are not competitive with road transport. The issue of the Ljubljana railway hub, a key project for ensuring network capacity and solving the commuter mobility problem in the Ljubljana urban region, remains unresolved. Traffic in the port of Koper is increasing, but the increase in transshipment is hampered by the insufficient capacity of the hinterland rail infrastructure. Public passenger transport – both road and rail – does not meet the needs of passengers, and Slovenia is ranked near the bottom of European countries in terms of the share of passengers carried by public transport. Private passenger transport is the dominant mode of mobility, causing high traffic congestion, the need for additional investment in road infrastructure, high maintenance costs, environmental burdens (pollutant emissions, noise, light pollution), congestion and loss of agricultural land. Mobility costs place an above-average financial burden on Slovenian households (in 2021, according to EUROSTAT, these costs accounted for 16.9% of household expenditure, which is the highest share among all EU countries).

1.3 Key Spatial Development Challenges

(1) Slovenia's development will be significantly influenced by spatial development trends and the spatial development to date, as well as by development challenges and problems, which can reasonably be expected to intensify in the future. The strategy responds to changing international circumstances and to social and economic trends with spatial and regional implications, both at the EU level and in Slovenia.

(2) Demographic change is reflected in space in various ways – from changing settlement patterns, the depopulation of urban centres and in particular of some of the remote mountainous and rural border areas, to the emergence of spatial inequalities, which are reflected in economic development, the reduction of the development capacity of vacated areas, the intensification of processes of overgrowth and abandonment of agriculture, and differences in the quality of life at the level of towns, cities and settlements and within them. The strategy takes into account demographic change as a basic premise for adapting space and its structures to the expected future characteristics of the population (ageing population and population decline after 2030). A decent life for all generations is conditioned by spatial factors such as accessibility to services of general and general economic interest, the quality of the living environment, the availability of affordable and good quality housing for all generations, transport connectivity, and the proximity to and availability of jobs.

(3) The impacts of climate change are increasing the vulnerability of space, biodiversity loss, and threats to people, infrastructure, cultural heritage and activities in space; their consequences are increasingly affecting the quality of life, energy supply, the economy, food production, landscape features and the environment. Slovenia is recognised as an area where the impacts of climate change will be significant in the future, due to its mountainous landscape and coastal location. Among other things, more frequent and intense weather events, changes in precipitation patterns, an increase in the incidence of droughts, a reduction in the depth and duration of snow cover, and more frequent and prolonged

heatwaves in urban areas are expected. Today, spatial development cannot be planned without the inclusion of spatial measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This is why we need reliable climate change projections or scenarios up to the end of the 21st century and need to expand their use to design more effective measures to reduce flood risk and to move settlements away from flood-prone areas, to retain water, for example for irrigation or for supply during droughts, and to mitigate the effects of the emergence of heat islands in urban areas.

(4) Energy supply and the transition to a climate-neutral society are characterised by tendency to reduce energy dependence on fossil fuels by using energy more efficiently, increasing the share of own energy production (renewables and other low-carbon energy sources), reinforcing energy networks, improving sustainable mobility (e.g. public passenger transport, cycling and walking) and restructuring coal regions. The focus on rational and efficient spatial and urban planning and on the comprehensive functional renewal of settlements and coal regions provides an opportunity to create synergies between spatial and sectoral measures to increase energy efficiency and meet climate and environmental objectives.

(5) The globalisation of the economy increases the importance of global centres as transport hubs, centres of global financial systems and decision-making, hosts of development centres, and headquarters of major international organisations. These are, for example, New York and the major Asian cities and, in Europe, London, Paris, Berlin, Milan, the Ruhr conurbation, Istanbul and Moscow. Slovenia is economically integrated into and connected by infrastructure to global flows and development initiatives such as China's New Silk Road, and the Slovenian space (the port of Koper and the hinterland infrastructure) is thus also integrated into these flows. The global integration of the economy and the organisation of supply chains further emphasise the importance of transport and logistics infrastructure, which is reflected in the accumulation of infrastructure and the new needs and initiatives for its further strengthening, resulting in increased pressure on land development and environmental impacts. Entry points are becoming ever more important, due to the concentration and growth of jobs in these areas, which increases the need for housing and accompanying community infrastructure.

(6) Digitalisation and the development of ICTs make many services and activities possible (e.g. teleworking, financial operations, management functions and retail) and also influence a new spatial logic in the distribution of activities – some are being centralised, others decentralised. The availability of e-government and e-services of general interest can support balanced spatial development, offer better business conditions and influence the quality of life. The possibility of e-inclusion and the use of ICT services depends on access to high-speed fixed and mobile communication networks and comprehensive coverage of the territory, as well as on the skills to use them, and it is essential to ensure that such technologies have a low impact on human health and the environment.

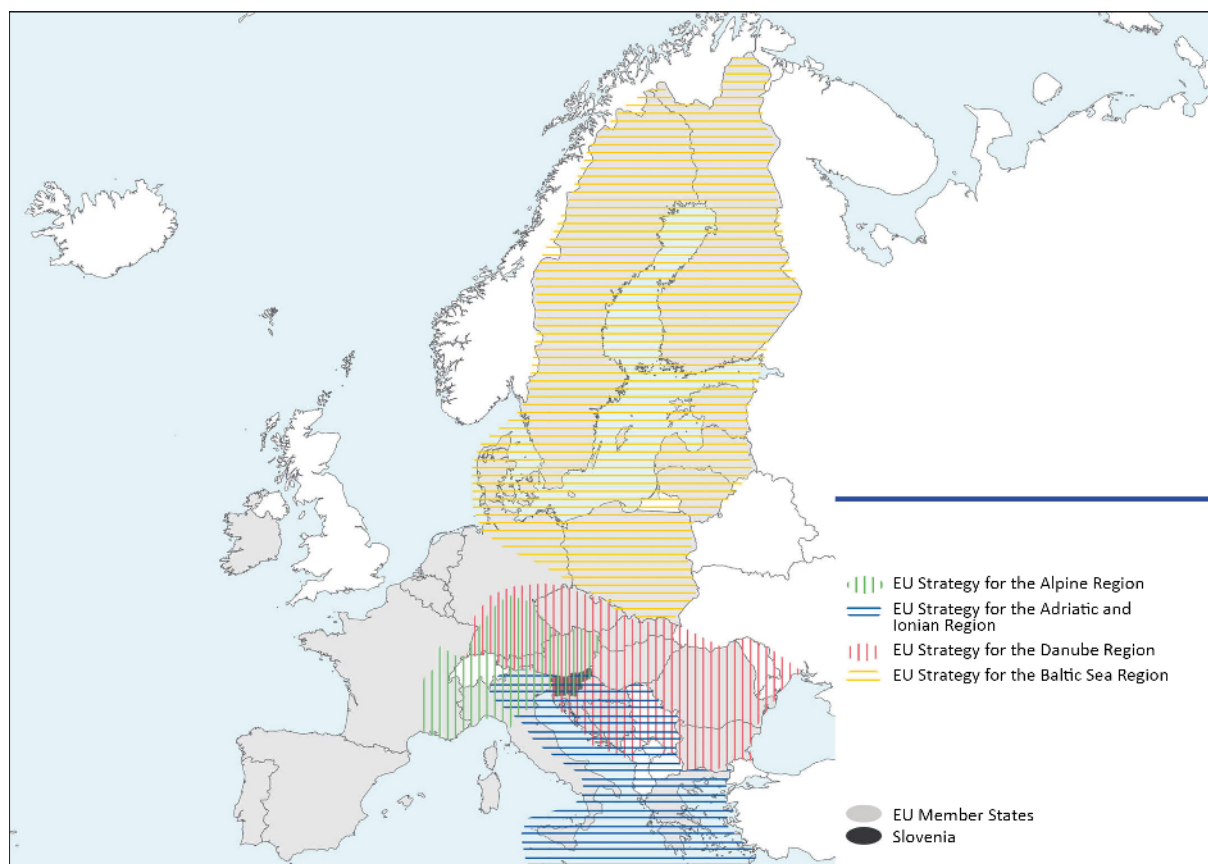
(7) The role of cities and towns, where the management and control functions of an increasingly interconnected global economy are concentrated, is becoming more significant. Cities and towns are expected to play an increasingly important role as they become integrated into transnational urban networks. More than two-thirds of GDP is generated in urban areas in the EU, where jobs and economic, social, telecommunications, scientific research, educational and cultural activities are concentrated. Cities and towns of the future are places of social progress, platforms for democracy and cultural dialogue, centres of green and environmental renewal, and hotbeds of innovation, creativity and economic development. The Slovenian urban system is located on the periphery of Europe's transnational urban systems. Slovenian cities and towns are small compared to European ones. Ljubljana, Maribor and the coastal towns including Koper stand out, as they have a recognised role in the international arena. Some towns (e.g. Koper and Nova Gorica) are linked to towns in neighbouring countries in cross-border urban agglomerations. Slovenian cities and towns are key to a balanced spatial development of the country. They can strengthen their leading role and their position in the wider European area by

interconnecting and coordinating urban development within the wider urban areas and by functional integration with the rural hinterland.

(8) The levels of nature preservation, biodiversity and landscape diversity are declining. Most of Slovenia is made up of natural and cultural landscapes, characterised by an intermingling of forests, watercourses and water land, the area above the tree line, agricultural land, and settlements. The high degree of preservation of natural processes makes it possible to provide the diverse ecosystem services that society needs for a healthy and quality life. Key challenges in this area are to increase the resilience of natural ecosystems to climate change, to maintain and improve the condition of naturally preserved areas, to maintain the extent and productive capacity of agricultural soil, to maintain landscape diversity, to improve the supply of fresh air in urban areas (but also to ensure that it does not deteriorate in rural areas), to protect and conserve water resources, with an emphasis on providing good quality drinking water, and to use natural resources wisely. A particular challenge is protected areas and the capacity of the population in these areas to make more decisive use of natural assets, biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage for sustainable local development. It is also a challenge to prevent further fragmentation of the landscape, particularly in lowland areas and in areas of major infrastructure, in order to strengthen effective ecological connectivity as a basis for environmental ecosystem services, and to preserve landscape features that are important for biodiversity and landscape diversity.

(9) The distinctive character of settlements and landscapes is declining. Slovenia's space is changing at an accelerated pace, particularly in areas of more intensive development in the wider urban areas and areas with good transport accessibility, but also in lowland areas due to the introduction of new farming technologies and the abandonment of agricultural land in remote areas. This is leading to an unstoppable change in Slovenia's territorial identity, often to the point of impoverishing the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes. At the same time, Slovenia's strategic documents highlight the importance of a high quality of life and living and the attractiveness of Slovenia as a prominent green destination. The general public places great value on the opportunity to be in direct contact with the natural environment and attractive landscapes, but at the same time this value is often overlooked in individual decisions and individual interests are put before the common good. Therefore it is a challenge to translate the declarative guidelines for maintaining the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes from strategic spatial planning documents into practice at the local level and into sectoral measures. The challenge is also to strengthen professional work towards achieving a greater spatial culture, supported by the guidelines of the New European Bauhaus, and to raise awareness of the common benefits of maintaining and improving the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes.

(10) The challenge in integrating the cross-border and wider macro-regional space is how to integrate Slovenia's geographical location into the development and spatial policy of the country and of the wider area. The European Union's macro-regional integration involves processes of intergovernmental cooperation in which countries pursue national interests in areas where coordinated action is needed. Slovenia is involved in three EU macro-regional strategies: the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region. It has identified its interests in the areas of economic cooperation and innovation and the circular economy; regional connectivity in transport and energy connectivity and energy security; ecological connectivity; environmental protection and risk management; sustainable tourism; and institutional strengthening and cooperation. Some parts of the country are more open to the neighbourhood, particularly the lowland parts in the west and east of the country along the main transport corridors, where the intensity of connections is already high and more attention will need to be paid to decongesting and improving infrastructure. In the future, integration in the areas of employment opportunities, migration and services should also be supported. In mountainous and remote areas, it will be important to preserve their identity and promote their vitality, in particular by supporting cross-border integration in the areas of sustainable mobility, improved services, risk management and tourism.

Figure 1: Slovenia's involvement in EU macro-regional strategies

Source: Macro-Regional Strategies, https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sl/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies (EU members 2020)

1.4 Basic Principles of Spatial Planning and Management

(1) By adopting the strategy, Slovenia will create the appropriate conditions for putting the principles of sustainable spatial development into practice. The strategy considers the requirement for competitiveness in relation to the rational use of resources – in particular natural, genetic, spatial and energy resources. The effects of development decisions will therefore be examined in spatial management and spatial planning procedures in terms of their impact on increased multifunctionality and spatial optimisation. Priority will be given to building on and developing existing assets without compromising the limited resources in an area.

(2) Territorial cohesion

The strategy follows the development paradigm of territorial cohesion. It emphasises the territorial potential of the country as a whole and the specific territorial potential of its diverse areas (e.g. mountainous, border or coastal areas) as key elements. Taking into account the principles of spatial management, in particular sustainable spatial development, strengthening territorial identity and guiding settlement, territorial cohesion is a framework for achieving territorial efficiency, quality and identity.

(3) Long-term orientation and achievement of objectives by medium-term periods

The strategy defines a long-term strategic framework for the country's spatial development up to 2050 for all development and sectoral policies at the national, regional and local levels, as well as basic premises for integrating spatial considerations to achieve the principles of sustainable spatial development in different areas. A system is in place for monitoring spatial development in the medium and long terms. For the medium term up to 2030, the action programme will set medium-term measurable targets as a step towards achieving the long-term objectives.

(4) Coherence of public policies

In developing the strategy, considerable attention has been paid to creating the right conditions for cooperation between the various stakeholders, to developing a common vision and objectives, to creating synergies between policies, and to working in a spatially coordinated manner. Coordination and development decisions based on spatial considerations will continue to contribute to a better business environment and to the removal of administrative barriers caused by policy incoherence.

(5) Place-based approach

Comprehensively addressing the territorial potential of areas brings greater opportunities for creating synergies between them. The strategy establishes the foundations for such a way of addressing the challenges of spatial development and, together with a participatory mode of action (e.g. territorial dialogue), lays the basis for the coordinated implementation of the vision and long-term spatial objectives at all territorial levels. In doing so, it draws on good experience in integrating spatial planning and regional development, the implementation of the financial instrument to promote urban development in urban municipalities in the 2014–2020 period, and coordination in the framework of the informal coordination group on maritime spatial planning.

(6) The prudent and economical use of resources and space

The continuous increase in the use of natural resources and the expansion of urbanisation are not essential for economic development and the well-being of the population. The inclusion of external costs into individual policies can contribute to changing inappropriate spatial patterns – an example is the irrational organisation of activities in space, which increases the social costs of mobility and energy. The Act has introduced instruments for the strategy to take into account in enforcing the implementation of the internal development of settlements. The strategy further strengthens the plan for efficient spatial organisation supported by sustainable mobility.

(7) Transition to a participatory and communication model of spatial management

The conclusions reached in developing the strategy have shown that the continuation of the normative model with formal forms of bringing sectoral development documents in line with spatial development objectives will not result in the necessary break with undesirable spatial trends. The strategy therefore emphasises participatory and communication mechanisms to bring together conflicting interests and create synergies between sectoral policies at all spatial levels. This model has been used in the strategic evaluation of the strategy and will be further developed in the implementation of the strategy, in particular in the coordination of sectoral policies to achieve spatial development objectives.

2 Vision for Spatial Development

(1) Slovenia will manage its space prudently and provide its citizens with optimal conditions for a safe and healthy environment and a high quality of life. It will base its development on its territorial potential, visibility and identity.

(2) Nature and natural resources will be protected and sustainably managed. Spatial development will be planned and implemented through dialogue between all stakeholders in all phases of spatial policy development and implementation. Slovenian residents will be proud of Slovenia's space and will actively participate in the development and implementation of public spatial planning policy. By strategically addressing challenges and opportunities, we will make spatial development one of the key areas for Slovenia's transition to a climate-neutral society.

(3) We will create a distinctive spatial order through well-thought-out urban, landscape and architectural solutions. We will improve territorial cohesion. We will use territorial potential for complementary functions. We will preserve the identity and diversity of space, enhancing its functionality, effective connectivity, and good integration into the cross-border and wider international space.

(4) We will maintain the human-friendly settlements in the settlement structure, with cities and towns and other settlements working together to address common challenges. A polycentric and spatially balanced system of centres at different levels will allow adequate and equitable access to services of general interest for all residents. In remote and sparsely populated areas, forms of services tailored to local needs will be available and, where appropriate, physical services will be replaced by digital services. Modern information and communication technologies and electronic communications infrastructure will be available in all populated areas, and through their thoughtful development, we will support the development of smart towns and villages.

(5) Centres will be linked by comfortable, efficient and affordable public passenger transport. It will be based on a rail network, complemented by a bus system, and in combination with micro-mobility, it will be linked into a comprehensive, integrated and multimodal network. Centres and surrounding areas will be further connected by high-quality long-distance cycle routes. The negative effects of infrastructure networks will be minimised.

(6) Slovenian settlements will be pleasant to live and work in, prosperous, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral. We will gradually reduce the net land take by 2050. Zero net land take will be achieved after 2050. The process of suburbanisation will be halted. We will regularly renovate degraded areas. Development will be directed towards areas of existing settlements, and the building and heritage stock will be renovated, maintained and functionally adapted.

(7) Urban settlements are centres of knowledge and innovation, where world-class scientific research centres are developed. They will be characterised by distinctive architecture and energy-efficient buildings in a balanced relationship with green areas. Residential use will be intertwined with service activities, and there will be predominantly sustainable mobility modes and well-maintained public places in public areas. Mobility needs will be reduced thanks to the convergence of living and service areas, digitalisation, the proximity of employment centres and the introduction of new forms of work. Increasing the supply of serviced land for housing and public rental housing will improve affordability of housing for all.

(8) Rural areas will retain their distinctive landscape character despite modernisation. Agriculture and forestry will play an important role, and we will further develop the service economy and local entrepreneurship. Production will be based on local resources. Cultivated agricultural land will increase national food self-sufficiency, shorten supply chains and facilitate the preservation of landscape features. We will rehabilitate individual settlement units in terms of design and utilities, thus preserving the traditional settlement pattern. We will abandon settlement construction in areas most at risk from flooding and landslides.

(9) Natural uninhabited areas and green systems will be preserved and interconnected. They will provide habitat for all living beings, improve quality of life, provide opportunities for outdoor socialising and recreation, improve the resilience of space, and contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change. Natural and cultural landscapes, as well as settlement and cultural heritage, will be conserved and well managed. Their capacities will be used to develop different economic activities and tourism and to increase the visibility of Slovenia as a green, healthy and active country.

(10) The sea and the coast as part of Slovenia's national identity will be identified as one of Slovenia's key development opportunities. We will preserve traditional and develop new, sustainable maritime activities.

(11) The energy system will provide a reliable supply of energy to households and economies. We will use energy sparingly, introduce the most energy-efficient technologies, and increase the share of our own energy supply from renewable and low-carbon energy sources.

(12) Centres will be efficiently linked by transport, energy and electronic communications infrastructure. A modern rail network will be integrated with neighbouring countries and connected to the European high-speed rail network. The development of the railway network is also important because in the future rail will take over the bulk of long-distance freight transport. Through the Port of Koper, Slovenia will be connected to international maritime transport flows and, together with modern hinterland infrastructure, will be an important link between the Mediterranean and the Baltic.

3 Slovenia's Spatial Development Objectives

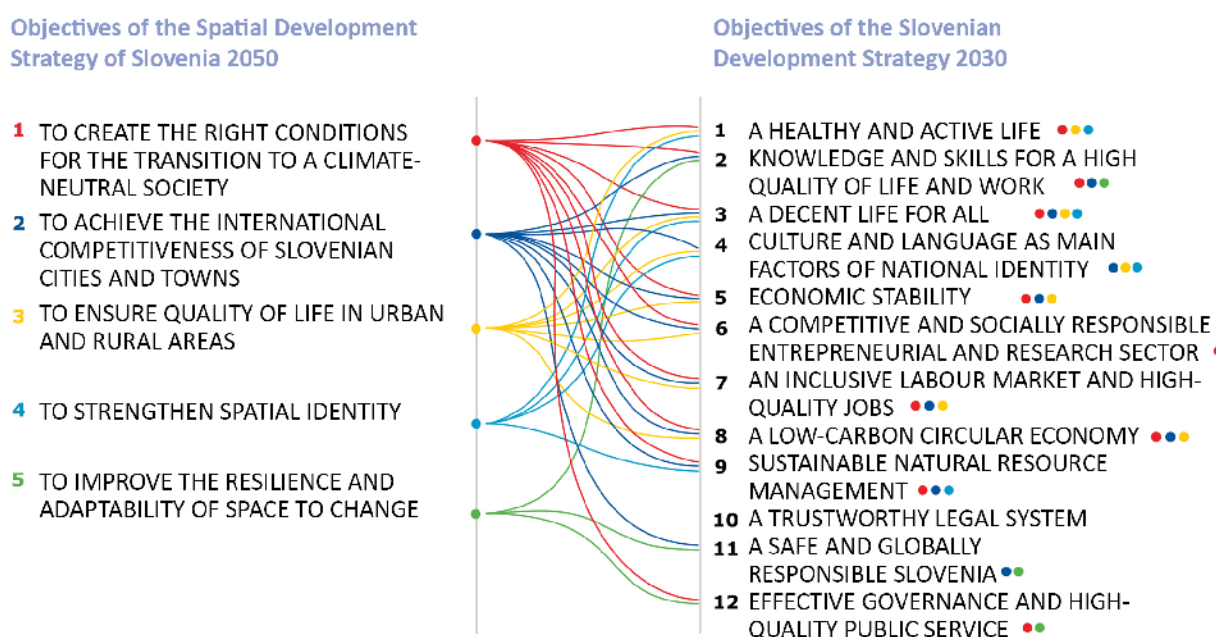
(1) The strategic objectives set the framework conditions for achieving territorial cohesion, for strengthening Slovenia's role in cross-border and international integration processes, and for creating new, multifunctional solutions to the development problems of modern society. They have been defined taking into account the basic premises for spatial development, the key future challenges, the guidelines set out in documents at the global and European levels, and the basic premises for national public policies with identified impacts on spatial development. In this sense, the objectives:

- improve the territorial efficiency of resource use, the connectivity of space (within the country and internationally), the competitiveness of individual areas and balanced regional development;
- improve territorial quality – the quality of the living and natural environment, affordability of housing, accessibility of services – and promote social inclusion;
- strengthen territorial identity by strengthening local knowledge, community belonging and vision and the visibility of Slovenia as a country with high-quality preserved natural and cultural landscape features.

(2) In designing the instruments and measures of sectoral policies, we should pursue spatial development objectives, coordinate interests and seek synergies with other public policies. The coherence of the development documents of the various sectors and activities is determined by assessing the territorial impacts of the policies and measures envisaged (achieving a »cross-cutting logic«).

(3) The implementation of the strategic spatial development objectives contributes to the realisation of the objectives of the Slovenian Development Strategy.

Figure 2: Contribution of the objectives of the spatial development strategy of Slovenia to the implementation of the objectives of the Slovenian development strategy



Objective 1: To Create the Right Conditions for the Transition to a Climate-Neutral Society

(1) In order to achieve spatial justice, territorial cohesion and a climate-neutral society, we must employ a place-based approach, addressing territorial potential in an integral way, use resources economically, create effective connections and organise activities rationally.

(2) PRIORITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE:

P1: To support the development of different types of areas by ensuring the provision and accessibility of services.

P2: To increase the economical and efficient use of space and natural resources.

P3: To rehabilitate degraded urban and landscape areas.

(3) Throughout the territory of Slovenia, in urban, mountainous, border and coastal areas, the even and prudent distribution of centres in a polycentric urban system and their efficient and environmentally sound interconnection ensure adequate access to health, education, social, administrative and cultural services and essential supply services for the population and the economy in catchment areas. In line with spatial justice, more equitable and just access to and use of tangible and intangible resources, public utility infrastructure, and non-economic infrastructure and services are made available in different areas. The rational organisation of activities reduces the need for daily mobility and shortens transport routes, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation. The economical and efficient use of renewable or non-renewable natural resources reduces pressure on them and enables their long-term conservation. The rehabilitation of underused parts of settlements or degraded areas is enhanced, reducing pressure on new building land and contributing to achieving zero net land take after 2050. In wider urban areas, cross-border wider urban areas or development regions, key spatial, environmental, economic and societal development challenges are addressed through integral and interdisciplinary approaches. Balanced regional development, including in cross-border areas, is based on territorial potential and resources which, if used sustainably, support economic, cultural and social development, provide local jobs and prevent emigration, increase resilience to and adaptation to climate change, reduce spatial vulnerability, increase the security of settlements, and strengthen national and regional territorial identity.

Objective 2: To Achieve the International Competitiveness of Slovenian Cities and Towns

(1) We will strengthen the development role of cities and towns, centres in a polycentric urban system, both at the national level and in cross-border integration. This will enable cities and towns to contribute to the economic, social and spatial development of the country.

(2) PRIORITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE:

P4: Okrepiti razvojno vlogo mest, vstopnih točk in funkcionalno povezati mesta znotraj širših mestnih
To strengthen the development role of cities and towns as entry points and functionally link cities and towns within wider urban areas.

P5: To increase the attractiveness of cities and towns for specific activities.

(3) Slovenian cities and towns, located at the crossroads of three European macro-regions – the Alpine, the Danube and the Adriatic-Ionian – are well integrated into European transport corridors. Cities and towns lying at the intersection of these corridors play the role of transport hubs and should be developed as key entry points. They can strengthen their comparative advantage for national development by increasing their critical mass in connecting with other cities, towns and urban settlements in the wider urban areas, while ensuring a high-quality environment and landscape. Entry points are connected to the most important hubs, i.e. major European cities and metropolitan areas. The role of urban areas in the border areas is also being strengthened, in particular through high-quality and diversified functions and infrastructure, enabling them to play an equitable role in spatial development at the cross-border level. Cities, towns and other urban settlements will focus on the development of specific areas deriving from their comparative advantages, such as location and infrastructure, service provision, the presence of management and decision-making functions, the availability of labour and skills, the quality of the living environment and cultural heritage, and the proximity to the rural hinterland. They will build on their role in the country's development through the coordinated and planned urban development of the wider urban areas, particularly in the areas of housing, the provision and accessibility of services, economic activities, sustainable mobility, the high-quality and reliable supply of drinking water, energy and other resources, and green systems. By connecting with and supporting smaller urban settlements, cities and towns will be able to achieve a comparable critical mass in terms of infrastructure and service provision, labour market size, housing, and other key areas important for attracting international business (e.g. international schools).

Objective 3: To Ensure Quality of Life in Urban and Rural Areas

(1) We will create compact, attractive, green, environmentally sound, healthy and safe cities, towns and other settlements. This will limit suburbanisation around major cities and peri-urbanisation of rural areas. We will improve resource management and create the right conditions for sustainable mobility as part of the comprehensive management of cities, towns and other settlements.

(2) PRIORITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE:

P6: To increase the attractiveness of and the quality of life in Slovenian cities and towns.

P7: To encourage the comprehensive renewal of all settlements in the country.

P8: To improve the resilience of settlements to climate change.

(3) Cities and towns will be transformed into places of interaction, innovation, culture and community cohesion, where living, working and leisure spaces are functionally intertwined in relation to their surroundings and landscape. Cities, towns and other settlements will be well managed and will evolve towards smart cities and towns. Increased attention will be paid to ensuring housing affordability, efficient utility infrastructure and resource management based on circular principles. We will increase the compactness of cities, towns and other settlements, focusing on appropriate forms of densification and the preservation of green spaces and natural terrain as important buffers to the effects of climate change, in particular to reduce the effects of heat islands, to manage rainwater runoff, to mitigate noise impacts and to provide fresh air. Particular attention will be paid to the provision of quiet zones in settlements and the reduction of night-time lighting in public areas and residential buildings. We will promote and improve sustainable mobility as a basic concept for comfortable, efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly accessibility in cities and other settlements. Cities and towns are major consumers of energy and natural resources, so we will balance these needs by introducing circular economy solutions and integrating them into comprehensive renewal and sustainable construction, both at the level of buildings and at the level of urban districts and neighbourhoods. We will ensure the safety of settlements from flooding by removing buildings from flood-prone areas, maintaining or creating multifunctional water retention areas within regional and local green systems, and taking measures to reduce flood risk where reasonable. Comprehensive renewal, quality urban solutions and architectural design taking into account quality built, architectural and cultural heritage and high-quality designed and maintained public built and green spaces in conjunction with green systems, cultural heritage and publicly accessible parts of buildings that are well integrated into the life of the community will contribute to the attractiveness of cities, towns and other settlements. In the process of restructuring, rural settlements will identify and reconcile the needs for housing, utility, ICT and electronic communications infrastructures and the development of primary activities and related complementary activities and other economic activities important for strengthening local employment opportunities. The preservation of tradition and cultural heritage and the integration of rural settlements into the mosaic of cultural and natural landscapes will increase the attractiveness of rural areas as an interesting destination for the development of rural tourism and sports programmes.

Objective 4: To Strengthen Territorial Identity

(1) Through spatial development, we will preserve and strengthen the existing territorial identity and create a new territorial identity. By integrating it prudently into economic and social development, we will contribute to increasing the visibility and reputation of Slovenia as an attractive, creative, healthy and green country.

(2) **PRIORITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE:**

P9: To include the territorial identity criterion in all public policies and at all levels of spatial management.

P10: To establish and implement integral instruments to strengthen territorial identity.

P11: To raise the awareness of stakeholders and increase their involvement in strengthening territorial identity.

(3) Territorial identity is created by biodiversity, natural assets, cultural heritage, and landscape, settlement and architectural features that stand out for their distinctive structure, location, cultural, historical or symbolic significance. Slovenia is recognisable for its high proportion of naturally preserved areas, its outstanding natural assets and cultural heritage, its partially preserved architectural identity, and its rich and diverse mosaic of cultural landscapes. The most valuable parts of the space are protected under nature conservation and cultural heritage regulations, but the management of the space and its elements outside the natural and cultural heritage conservation areas is also important for the territorial identity. Conserving them requires a place-based approach based on the status of the protected features and the evaluation of impacts on them. Therefore, in addition to maintaining a distinctive territorial identity in protected natural and cultural heritage areas, we will ensure that territorial identity outside these areas is strengthened and that distinctive elements and areas are integrated into spatial planning documents at all levels. We will integrate territorial identity as a potential for development and creativity into public policies and their documents, programmes and plans. We will strengthen attitudes towards space as an asset through education on territorial identity. At all levels of spatial planning and management, we will strive to respect, preserve and enhance the distinctive character of natural, built and landscape structures which, due to specific natural-geographical, cultural-historical, social, economic and other conditions of development, determine territorial identity.

Objective 5: To Improve the Resilience and Adaptability of Space to Change

(1) We will strengthen the capacity of administrations and decision-makers to identify challenges and opportunities for spatial development in a timely manner, to put in place the necessary resources, to carry out participatory processes, and to take informed decisions and actions.

(2) PRIORITIES FOR ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE:

P12: To improve the resilience of space.

P13: To strengthen capacities to identify challenges and their impacts on space.

P14: To improve professional competence and raise the awareness of stakeholders about the importance of space and the role of spatial planning.

(3) As part of spatial policy, we will support spatial management that will more effectively promote decision-making on spatial development based on spatial evidence and analyses than has been the case to date, thereby reinforcing the integrating role of spatial policy at all levels of decision-making. We will strengthen our capacity to identify problems and challenges that have spatial impacts, evaluate them analytically and ensure timely action, based on a system of monitoring the state of spatial development. We will support relevant basic and applied research and training of spatial planners in all areas where new skills and knowledge are needed as a result of the trends and challenges identified and the objectives set. We will strengthen the role of spatial planning, which is linked to sectoral policies at all territorial levels, promotes the strengthening of spatial synergies and facilitates the achievement of spatial multifunctionality, in particular in those areas where this can contribute to making space more resilient to climate change and other crises and to mitigating the adverse effects of natural disasters. We will take greater care in locating development projects that change spatial relationships and thus affect spatial multifunctionality and in maintaining ecological connectivity. We will improve the implementation of spatial development policy by supporting the development of active citizenship, including in relation to space.

4 The Concept of Spatial Development in Slovenia

(1) The concept of spatial development is the strategic basis for achieving the vision and objectives set out in the strategy. It is based on the integral and synergistic development of four elements of Slovenia's spatial development: i) development corridors and entry points, ii) a polycentric urban system, iii) rural areas, and iv) green infrastructure. Their planning and development should simultaneously take into account the social, economic and environmental aspects of development and the justified needs of the population or the economy in individual areas.

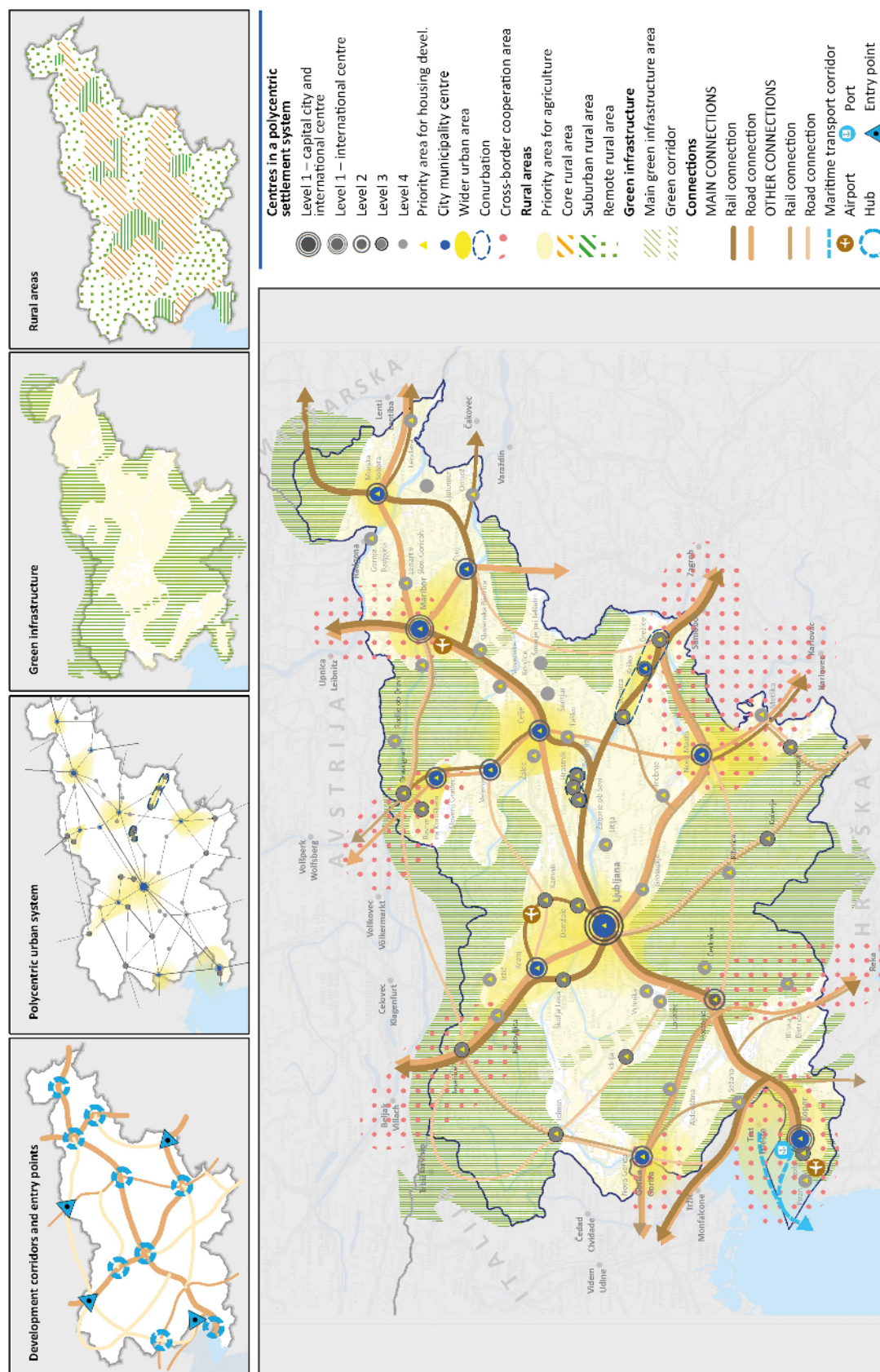
(2) The concept of spatial development follows the principles of polycentric development and the well-thought-out organisation of activities in space, thereby ensuring equitable access to services of general interest and public utility infrastructure throughout the territory of the country. Such spatial development creates comparable conditions for a good quality of living for all residents. By sharing and complementing functions between centres and other settlements (those in the wider urban areas and those in rural areas), the concept avoids duplication of roles and functions and lays the foundations for increasing the efficiency of the use of the resources needed to ensure an adequate level of supply for the population and the economy and a good quality of life. Such spatial development creates the conditions for achieving the objectives of balanced regional development.

(3) The selected approach strengthens the competitive power of centres, while at the same time creating balanced conditions for the development of different areas and for overcoming the negative effects of remoteness – through cooperation and by ensuring functional links and interactions between centres, settlements within the wider urban areas and settlements in rural areas. It pays particular attention to remote areas where altitude or topography limit development opportunities. It encourages local communities to cooperate and complement each other across administrative boundaries and to link the development of their areas more closely to their territorial potential (spatial specialisation).

(4) The concept is designed to support the creation of cross-border urban areas and cooperation with the parts of neighbouring countries where the Slovenian national community resides, as this is of economic, cultural, historical and political importance to Slovenia. It supports the strengthening of the cohesion of border regions and, particularly in less densely populated areas, the cross-border complementarity of services of general and general economic interest.

(5) Ensuring high-quality and efficient internal transport links will be key to improving sustainable mobility of people and goods and strengthening territorial cohesion between centres at the same hierarchical level, between lower-level centres and higher-level ones, within wider urban areas, between urban and rural areas, and between centres of the highest level and centres outside the country.

Figure 3: Spatial development concept of Slovenia



Data sources: Cartographic basis: Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017; Expert basis of Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia, 2017; Population density: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2020

(6) Through planned support for the development of centres in border areas, we will balance the asymmetric impact of larger neighbouring urban agglomerations and ensure the equivalence of Slovenian areas compared to those of neighbouring countries. To increase critical mass in urban border areas and to reduce the asymmetric impact of the border, the concept promotes the networking of cities, towns and other urban settlements into broader cross-border urban areas and other functionally connected areas. Within such areas, the integration of economic and production zones and the strengthening of economic activities are foreseen. The availability of infrastructure and services on one side of the border in urban and rural border areas will contribute to better accessibility and competitiveness of areas on both sides of the border. Services in border areas should therefore also be developed in cooperation with the border areas of neighbouring countries.

(7) A large part of Slovenia comprises remote, mostly mountainous areas, both in the border areas and in the interior of the country. In these areas, we want, in particular, to preserve the population and slow the decline in population numbers and to maintain the areas' vitality and thus also their landscape and settlement character. The concept therefore proposes to strengthen intra-regional connections and connections with the area of Central Slovenia. To improve accessibility to services of general and general economic interest, ensure the quality of living, social security and inclusion of the population, and provide adequate conditions for local employment, we will strengthen Level 4 centres in these areas.

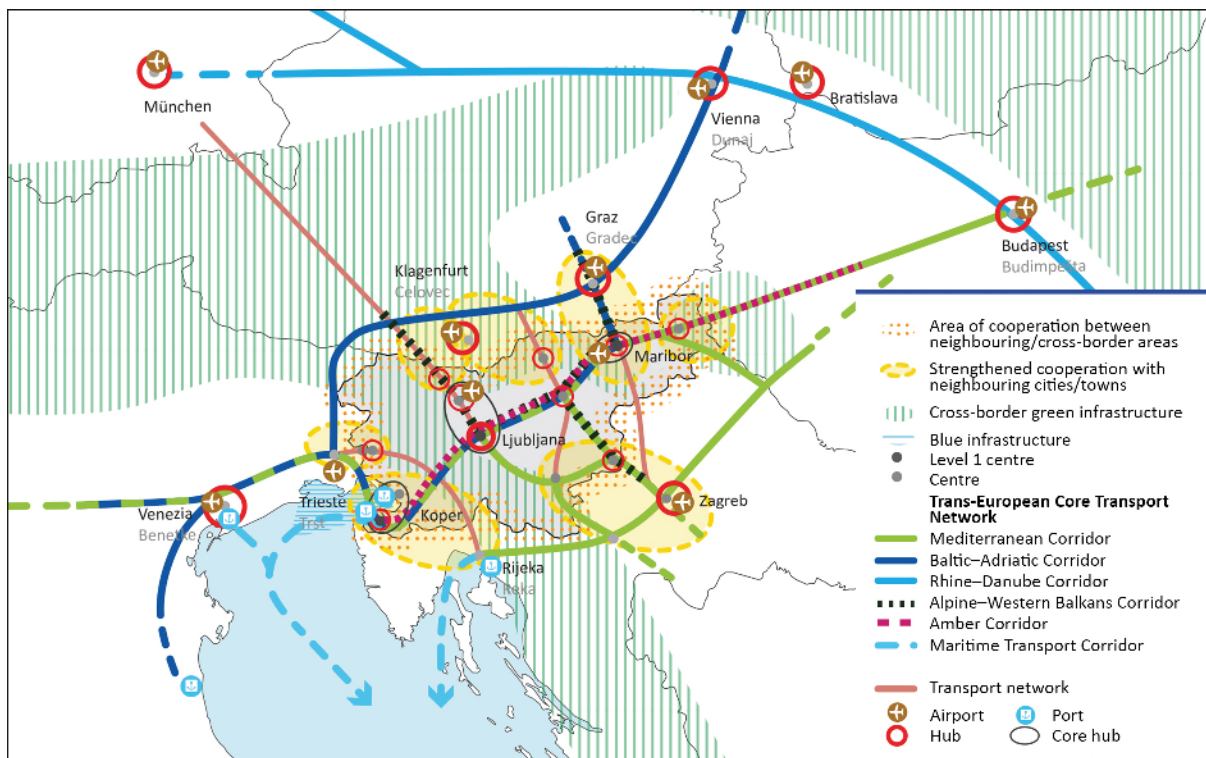
(8) The concept addresses integration into the natural systems of the Alps, the Dinarides, the Danube basin and the Adriatic Sea by linking green infrastructure in Slovenia and in neighbouring countries.

4.1 Development Corridors and Entry Points

(1) Slovenia is connected to territories beyond its national borders through development corridors and entry points; this enables macro-regional and cross-border integration and strengthens the competitiveness of Slovenian cities, towns and space in the European urban network.

(2) Slovenia, as part of the large European geographical regions, is taking an active role in macro-regional and cross-border integration. In doing so, it strengthens its role and works to address common issues, in particular with regard to solving development challenges in hilly and mountainous areas which are demographically and economically stagnating or shrinking. As an equal partner, it will strengthen border towns and other urban settlements and create cross-border urban areas (Maribor–Graz (AT), Nova Gorica–Gorizia (IT), Koper–Trieste (IT), Novo Mesto–Krško–Brežice–Samobor (HR)–Zagreb (HR), Ilirska Bistrica–Rijeka (HR), Gornja Radgona–Bad Radkersburg (AT), Jesenice–Villach (AT)/Tarvisio (IT)). It will thus increase the cross-border impact of Slovenian border areas, while balancing the asymmetric impact of neighbouring cities and towns at the cross-border level. It will support the creation of joint development programmes and projects to address common cross-border problems and development challenges. Priority will be given to supporting the establishment of those cross-border associations that implement the spatial objectives and priorities set out in the strategy.

(3) In accordance with the spatial development concept, Slovenia will ensure that its public utility infrastructure is effectively integrated into European infrastructure networks. By developing transport and other public utility infrastructure, it will create opportunities for the realisation of the comparative advantages of Slovenian space.

Figure 4: International integration

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/map/maps.html>

(4) Public utility infrastructure is considered as part of the European infrastructure networks, part of the TEN-T core and comprehensive network, the European transport corridors (the Mediterranean Corridor and the Baltic-Adriatic Corridor) and the competitive freight corridors – RFCs (the Alpine-Western Balkan rail freight corridor and the Amber rail freight corridor). In addition to the multimodal transport axes, the Ljubljana urban hub and the Ljubljana multimodal logistics platform, the core port of Koper (with links to maritime transport connections), the core airports for international air transport, and Ljubljana Jože Pučnik Airport are also part of the TEN-T core network. The Ljubljana-Jesenice railway and motorway section, Maribor Edvard Rusjan Airport and Portorož Airport, the Ptuj-Gruškovje motorway link, the Pivka-Ilirska Bistrica railway section, the Postojna-Ilirska Bistrica-Jelšane motorway section, and the Ormož-Središče ob Dravi railway and road sections are also linked to the extended TEN-T core network.

(5) In the field of energy infrastructure, the concept envisages comprehensive integration with the systems of neighbouring countries, taking strategic advantage of the country's favourable location. It thus fulfils the conditions for reliability and flexibility of supply, integration into the EU single energy market, and competitive supply for users in Slovenia.

(6) In the field of electronic communications infrastructure, in particular 5G networks, the concept envisages integration with the systems of neighbouring countries, thus enabling integration into the EU single market.

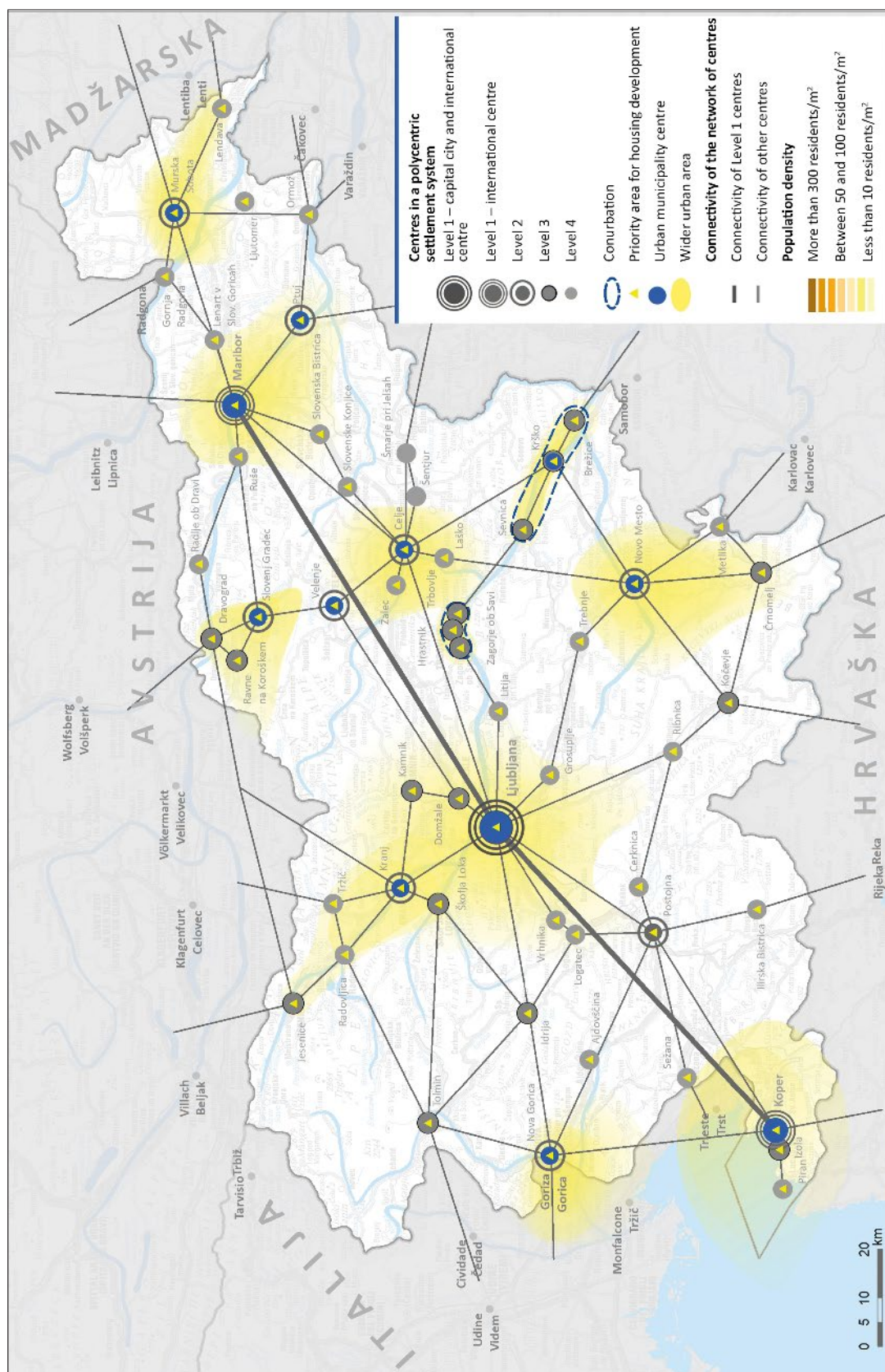
4.2 A Polycentric Urban System

(1) A polycentric urban system supports rational and efficient spatial development through the thoughtful organisation of activities of general public and economic interest. It thus makes it possible to improve the attractiveness and quality of life in urban settlements.

(2) In a polycentric urban system, urban settlements (centres) are networked, which enhances their role and competitiveness in the international arena. As a consequence, this reduces the pressures of built-up and (auto)mobility on the extent and quality of resources and allows for a more orderly spatial structure. In line with the concept of spatial development, green systems of cities and towns and regions will improve quality of life in urban areas and ensure that settlements are rounded and separated with buffer zones between them. One of the key guiding principles in spatial development planning will be to create a territorial identity that respects the natural and culturally determined components of space and contributes to a coherent exterior and interior images of urban and rural settlements and landscapes. A higher quality of life in rural areas will be achieved through an appropriate spatial distribution of centres to ensure equitable accessibility to services of general interest in remote areas, and through the introduction of a minimum standard of accessibility through appropriate infrastructure links to the Central Slovenian and cross-border areas. A network of transport links (rail, road, maritime and cycling) will connect urban centres into a single polycentric network and develop in coordination with it. It will be functionally linked externally to the European transport network.

(3) Equitable coverage of the entire territory of the country will be ensured by the distribution of centres in the settlement system: 80% of the population will reside within 25 km (by road) of a centre of at least Level 2; 90% of the population will reside within 25 km (by road) of a centre of at least Level 3. Centres will ensure supply to catchment areas within a reasonable accessibility radius and will be interconnected by a high-quality and safe transport infrastructure of a higher level.

Figure 5: Slovenia's polycentric urban system



Sources: Expert bases of Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia, 2017; Population density: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2020; Cartographic basis: Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017

4.2.1 Centres in a Polycentric Urban System

(1) The building blocks of a polycentric urban system are centres at different levels. The positioning of centres in a hierarchically arranged and structured polycentric urban system is of key importance to achieving balanced spatial development. It allows for a more balanced development of the network of services of general interest (education, health, public administration, culture, etc.), thus contributing to their accessibility and to balanced regional development. It promotes the coordinated planning and implementation of projects on organising and operating networks of services of general interest, public services and the economy at the national, regional and local levels.

(2) Centres are included in the polycentric urban system network according to their role and location, while meeting the target criteria (Table 1). The centres in this strategy meet the target criteria on their own or through functional integration and complementarity within the wider urban areas. Strengthening existing functions and activities (Table 2) or restructuring cities and towns to provide new activities in line with specific strengths (location, skills, infrastructure, workforce, distinctive character, cultural heritage) will also increase the competitiveness of cities and towns, strengthen their role in the international arena, and maintain their residential attractiveness for the population. Improved quality of life and adequate housing supply will reduce population pressure in suburbanised and rural parts of the wider urban areas. Into the centres of a polycentric urban system, according to recognized development needs, the settlement development will be steered, and ensuring an adequate supply of serviced land for residential development and housing. Outside the centres, measures are aimed at preserving the vitality of existing settlements and activating the building stock through renewal and functional modernisation.

Table 1: Levels of centres in terms of population, economic and transport potential

Centre level	Number of residents in the settlement	Number of residents in the municipality	Number of residents in the wider urban area	Number of jobs (municipality)	Transport hub (international, national, regional)	Location – road infrastructure (motorway; motorway/highway)	Location – international rail infrastructure (YES)	Additional criteria
1	90.000	100.000	200.000	50.000	International	AC	YES	Extensive conurbation
2	15.000	20.000	50.000	10.000	National	AC/HC	YES	Border area, extensive rural hinterland, distance from other centres of the same or higher level, seat of a city-municipality, formed wider urban area with at least 50,000 residents
3	5.000	10.000	50.000	3.000	Regional	–	–	Border area, extensive rural hinterland, distance from other centres of the same or higher level, important transport hub
4	3.000	5.000	–	2.000	–	–	–	Border area, extensive rural hinterland, distance from other centres of the same or higher level, low population density in the hinterland

Table 2: Adequate provision of services of general interest in centres

Centre level	Healthcare	Education	Public administration	Judiciary	Culture
1	Activities of clinics, clinical institutes/departments; specialist outpatient clinics and hospitals; primary healthcare and pharmacies	Seat of a public university, research institution	Government offices, diplomatic representations, ministries	Supreme court, higher court	University library, national theatre, museums and galleries
2	Specialist outpatient clinics and hospitals; primary healthcare and pharmacies	Seat of an institution of higher education, faculty, academy	Ministries, branch of a ministry or institute	Higher court	People's theatre, provincial museum, general library
3	Specialist outpatient clinics and hospitals; primary healthcare and pharmacies	Seat of a short-cycle college, seat of an upper secondary school	Branch of a ministry or institute	District court, local court	Museum, gallery, general library
4	Primary healthcare and pharmacies	Seat of an upper secondary school	Territorial organisation (de-concentration) of state administration	Local court	Museum, gallery, general library

(3) Level 1 centres are urban settlements with a population of at least 90,000 and a wider urban area with a population of at least 200,000, which are situated along European transport corridors and are transport hubs of international importance. These settlements allow for the further development of top-level public services in the fields of science and education (such as the seat of a university, university library or research institute), healthcare (university medical centre), culture (national theatres, museums), the judiciary (constitutional court, high court), and administration (ministries, diplomatic representations) and attract representative offices or headquarters of prominent international organisations and companies. The criteria for a Level 1 centre are fulfilled by Ljubljana (as the capital city and a centre of international importance) and Maribor (as a centre of international importance). As Koper plays the role of an international transport hub and is also included in the coastal and cross-border urban area, it is also considered a Level 1 centre and a centre of international importance in the strategy.

(4) Level 2 centres are urban settlements with a population of at least 15,000, but also with the capacity to develop services of general and general economic interest, to develop multimodal transport hubs and urban and suburban public passenger transport, and to make an important contribution to serving the population in rural hinterlands. Celje, Kranj, Novo Mesto, Nova Gorica, Murska Sobota, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec and Velenje meet the criteria for a Level 2 centre. Postojna, as a supply centre in the Primorska-Notranjska region, is identified as a Level 2 centre. Functionally connected and complementary centres, conurbations in the Posavje (Brežice–Krško–Sevnica) and Zasavje (Hrastnik–Trbovlje–Zagorje ob Savi) wider urban areas, are also considered to be Level 2 centres. Centres in all the wider urban areas will (depending on the distribution of population, activities and natural characteristics of the area) link up with lower-level centres and thus develop as functionally interconnected urban settlements within which services of general interest are integrated and complement each other.

(5) Level 3 centres are urban settlements which are suitable locations for secondary and primary levels of healthcare, higher education, judicial and administrative institutions, specialised social assistance, and public research institutions. Services, supply and other activities (services of general and general economic interest) are developed in these centres to serve these centres and their hinterlands, which are often rural, border, remote or mountainous areas and are situated away from major transport corridors. The range of services adapted to regional conditions and the needs of the population and the economy will be defined in more detail in the regional spatial plans. The criteria for a Level 3 centre are met by Črnomelj, Domžale, Dravograd, Idrija, Izola, Jesenice, Kamnik, Kočevje, Ravne na Koroškem, Škofja Loka and Tolmin.

(6) Level 4 centres in spatial development are urban settlements which provide at least a community health centre or medical care at the primary level and the territorial organisation of the state administration, and in the case of Level 4 centres that are more distant from higher-level centres, also an upper secondary school and a district court. The criteria for a Level 4 centre are met by Ajdovščina, Cerknica, Gornja Radgona, Grosuplje, Ilirska Bistrica, Laško, Lenart in Slovenske Gorice, Lendava, Litija, Ljutomer, Logatec, Metlika, Ormož, Piran, Radlje ob Dravi, Radovljica, Ribnica, Ruše, Sežana, Slovenska Bistrica, Slovenske Konjice, Šentjur, Šmarje pri Jelšah, Trebnje, Tržič, Vrhnika and Žalec.

(7) Other settlements of importance for the development of the region are settlements that have a population of at least 1,500, are the seat of a municipality with a population of at least 2,000, have a full primary school, provide primary healthcare services (community health post) and are of economic importance (labour migration index >96 – moderately labour-intensive municipality). Settlements in priority areas for the development of specific activities which are more than 15 km from higher-level centres (from Level 1 to Level 4) by road, have a rural hinterland and are important in terms of the provision of services of general interest to the population of these areas may be identified as such. The possible identification of other settlements of importance for the development of the region will be agreed between the state and the municipalities in the regional spatial plan, taking into account the development objectives of the region, the priority areas identified for the development of specific activities, and the proposed design of the community and public utility infrastructure networks.

4.2.2 Wider Urban Area

(1) Core settlement areas, which are also the most urbanised areas in Slovenia, are considered to be wider urban areas. These generally comprise the narrower hinterlands of urban municipalities, within which residential areas are linked by efficient public transport, jobs, services and public services, and built structures are integrated with green infrastructure through green systems of regions, cities and towns, and other settlements.

(2) Wider urban areas are an extension of a polycentric urban system with urban development cores that support the competitiveness of Slovenia. Depending on their characteristics, wider urban areas may have one major centre or compact areas around a larger number of centres. The development of such an area will be managed through coordinated or joint regional and spatial planning; housing, public transport, jobs, public services and facilities, and green systems will be developed through co-operation and agreement on the implementation of the strategy.

(3) Wider urban areas are areas of intensive functional integration. This means addressing common development challenges through enhanced cooperation (municipalities, regional stakeholders and the state) and coordinated planning and implementation of development projects. Due to the close functional connection of the hinterland with the centre or centres (usually a Level 1 or Level 2 centre), urban development in these areas will be driven by the urban municipalities, the formed conurbations and the functionally connected urban settlements. Green infrastructure is a key factor in preserving landscape elements, enhancing territorial identity, providing opportunities for recreation in the natural environment, and protecting the environment, nature, water and soil and is linked to the green systems of cities, towns and other urban settlements. Wider urban areas are also areas of integrated public passenger transport, with public passenger transport hubs linking centres to their functional hinterland and centres to each other. Sustainable forms of mobility are developed, based on multimodality, integrating rail and road public passenger transport, cycling, and private motor transport. Priority will be given to the development of rail infrastructure, and other modes of transport will be developed primarily to facilitate the first and last kilometre of multimodal trips. In the wider urban area, coherence between transport and spatial planning is ensured, particularly in the case of the expansion and renewal of settlements or the location of major traffic generators (such as a business zone, shopping centre or hospital).

(4) Broader urban areas in the more densely urbanised areas of Posavje and Zasavje, where smaller but functionally interconnected and complementary centres of a polycentric urban system are located, include areas of functionally interconnected municipalities with a population of at least 30,000 people. Within these areas, the regional spatial plan supports the coordinated development of housing, public passenger transport, jobs, community infrastructure, the provision of services of general and general economic interest, and green systems. Within these wider urban areas, adequate accessibility to services of general and general economic interest is ensured, in particular, through the cooperation and agreement of local communities.

(5) Depending on its location and links to international corridors, the wider urban area has a national, cross-border or international role.

(6) The following wider urban areas of national importance, which also have the function of a wider urban area of regional importance, have been identified in accordance with the development strategy:

- the wider urban area of Central Slovenia,
- the wider urban area of the Podravje region,
- the wider urban area of Slovenian Istria.

(7) The following wider urban areas of regional importance have been identified in accordance with the strategy:

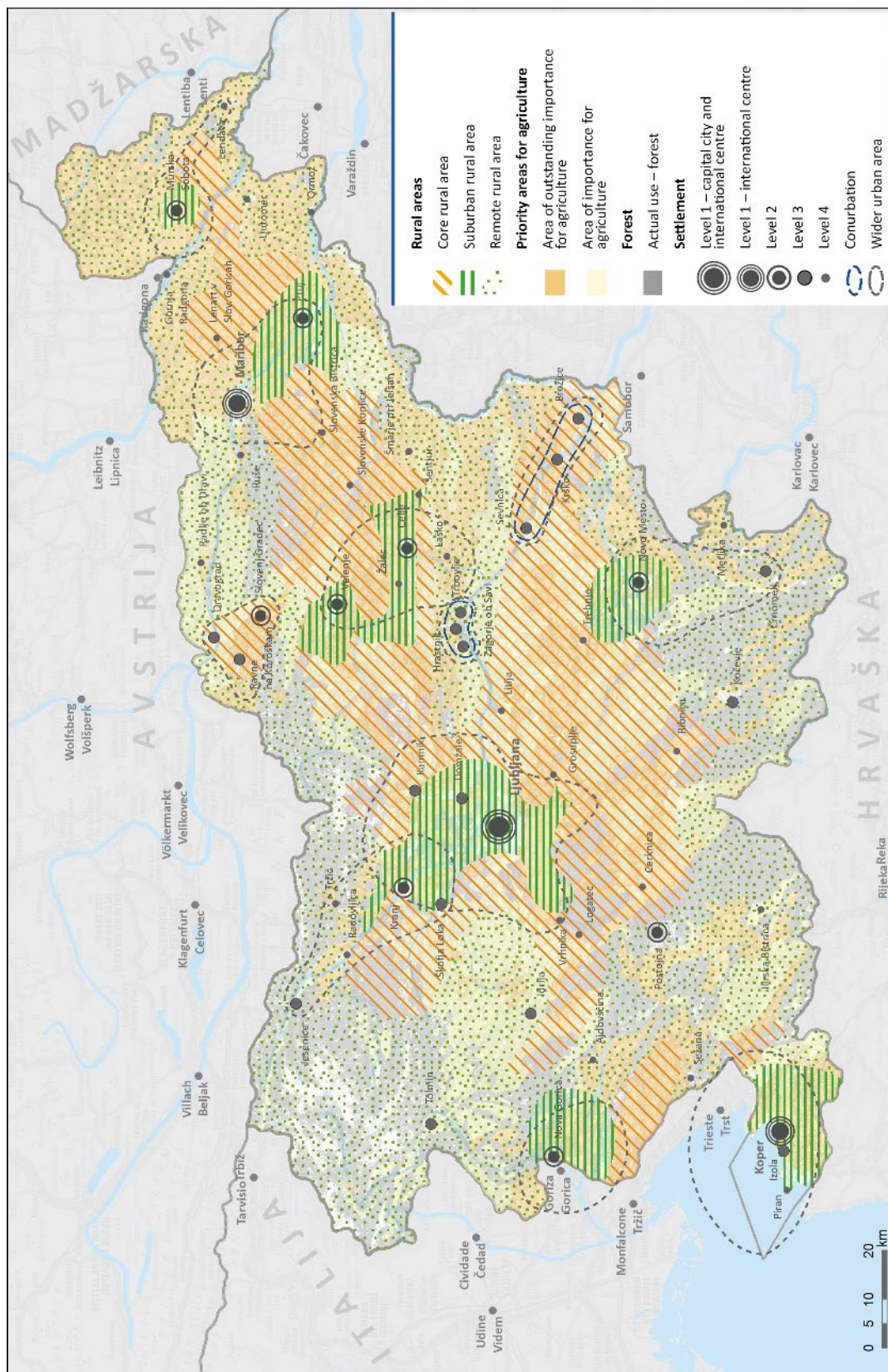
- the wider urban area of the Savinja Valley and the Šalek Valley,
- the wider urban area of the Dolenjska and Bela Krajina regions,
- the wider urban area of the Gorenjska region,
- the wider urban area of the Pomurje region,
- the wider urban area of the Goriška region,
- the wider urban area of the Koroška region,
- the wider urban area of the Posavje region,
- the wider urban area of the Zasavje region.

4.3 Rural Areas

(1) Rural areas are diverse areas, influenced by their geographical location, natural conditions, past economic, demographic and social development, and the connectivity and accessibility of centres (Figure 6). In terms of directing and planning spatial development, several types of rural areas can be distinguished:

- core rural areas, which are vital areas for development, although in some places they are characterised by limiting factors for the development of primary activities (e.g. topography, altitude, slope), shrinkage due to demographic change, particularly ageing, and remoteness from centres;
- suburban rural areas, characterised by high levels of consumption, including of space, and economic and spatial restructuring in connection with a wide range of activities, not only agriculture;
- remote rural areas, which, due to their geographical location, are far from major centres and are most affected by processes of shrinkage, both demographically and economically; often this is due to a combination of border location and mountainous terrain.

Figure 6: Rural areas



Sources: Expert bases of Spatial Development Strategy of Slovenia, Rural areas and green infrastructure and Mountainous and border areas, 2017; Cartographic basis: National general map, Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017

(2) The development of rural areas will be directed towards reversing the negative trends of shrinking economic activities and services in remote rural areas towards preserving the vitality of the core rural areas and restructuring rural areas in relation to the needs of urban areas, while preserving the role of primary activities. We will ensure that rural areas are adequately connected to the centres of the polycentric urban system, that services are adequately provided and accessible, and that the specific endogenous potential of these areas is strengthened and used in a sustainable way. This will improve the economic base and local employment, improve quality of life, limit negative demographic trends, and preserve settlement and landscape characteristics.

(3) In the rural areas adjacent to the border, we will seek and develop common solutions in the cross-border area that equitably improve quality of life and strengthen the vitality of rural areas on both sides of the border.

4.4 Green Infrastructure

(1) The concept envisages a strategic role for green infrastructure – as a planned system of functionally connected and diverse landscape areas, including the most important nature conservation areas, which will enable natural processes for a healthy, safe, attractive, climate-resilient and multifunctional space in the long term.

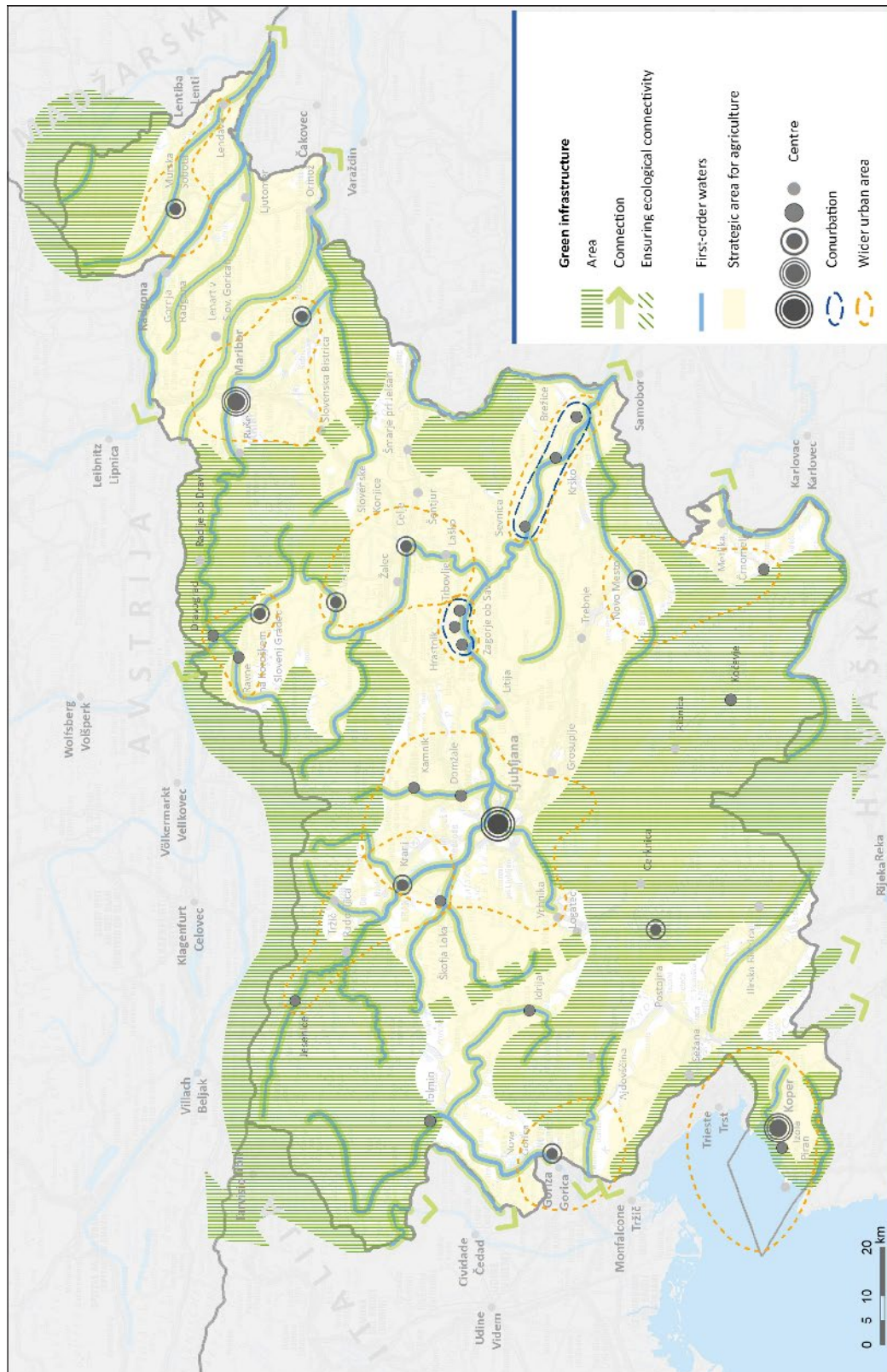
(2) Green infrastructure primarily provides an ecological function (in particular the preservation of the natural environment, ecological connectivity and the reduction of landscape fragmentation due to land interventions), an environmental function (in particular the preservation and improvement of water quality, the preservation of available water resources for natural processes and for the population, and the regulation of rainwater in cities and towns), a climate function (in particular in regulating heatwaves and preventing heat island effects in urban areas and to reduce the vulnerability of space to natural disasters, in particular floods and landslides), an economic function (in particular sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity and the associated opportunities for economic diversification at the regional and local levels), and a social and cultural function (in particular in ensuring the quality of life, health and safety of the population and an attractive and distinctive landscape that strengthens territorial identity and understanding of the interdependence of social and spatial development).

(3) In the context of spatial planning procedures, the development of green infrastructure will be planned through green systems of regions, green systems of areas and green systems of settlements. Green infrastructure will link rural areas with urban areas to improve quality of life.

(4) At the national level, green infrastructure includes larger forest complexes, which are mainly Natura 2000 sites, the mountain ranges of the Alps and the Dinarides, protected areas, first-order waters and associated permanent or temporary lake formations or water retention areas, and the sea and naturally preserved coastline. Through these areas, green infrastructure is connected with natural areas in neighbouring countries. Nationally important landscape character areas will also be included in the national green infrastructure system. Connectivity between these core green infrastructure areas will be ensured by natural linear (e.g. rivers) and point (stepping stones) landscape elements or by establishing or restoring such links where necessary.

(5) At the international level, we will aim in particular to ensure the ecological function of green infrastructure, which is achieved by linking ecologically important landscape elements across national borders, removing barriers to ecological connectivity and improving the condition of natural ecosystems (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Concept of green infrastructure at the national level



Sources: Natura 2000: Slovenian Environment Agency, 2020; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; Cartographic basis: Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, 2020

5 Strategic Spatial Development Guidelines

5.1 General Guidelines

5.1.1 Settlement Planning and Development

- (1) Settlements are planned and developed in accordance with their role in a polycentric urban system – cities, towns and other urban settlements that serve a wider (catchment) area are defined as centres on the basis of the criteria set out in the strategy (Section 4.2).
- (2) Other settlements important for the development of the region are identified in the regional spatial plan, taking into account the criteria set out in the strategy.
- (3) Areas for long-term development are designated for the centres of the polycentric urban system (or other settlements important for the development of the region) in the regional spatial plan to fulfil their development role and the role of balanced regional development.
- (4) Settlements are comprehensively renewed – special attention is paid to the functional aspects of renewal, to the earthquake-resistant reconstruction of buildings, to the improvement of material and energy efficiency, to public transport and sustainable mobility, to the reduction of the proportion of covered areas, to the quality of open space and green areas, and to the incorporation of cultural heritage in the renewal. Particular attention is paid to the distribution of activities and their complementarity. This contributes to improving quality of life, reducing the carbon footprint of buildings, neighbourhoods and settlements, increasing resilience to climate change, and reducing the need for urban expansion.
- (5) The change of planned use of buildings is conditional upon the provision of adequate public utilities.
- (6) Vulnerability of settlements and infrastructure is systematically reduced – by removing buildings and infrastructure from areas at risk, such as flood-, erosion- and landslide-prone areas and snow-avalanche-prone areas, and by creating natural buffers to extreme weather events and heat islands (e.g. by preserving and creating water retention areas and increasing the proportion of well-managed and maintained green areas as part of the green system of the region or the green systems of cities and towns).
- (7) The quality of life in settlements is improved – by improving accessibility to services of general and general economic interest, affordability of housing and jobs through sustainable mobility modes and reducing mobility needs (improving opportunities for working from home and promoting compatible mixed land uses); reducing the cost of living in cities and towns, in particular through improved housing affordability, energy-efficient renovation and, in the case of new buildings, energy-saving buildings (nearly zero-energy houses), cascade utilisation of energy at the level of buildings or settlements, and the use of systems for the re-use of resources, for example water; improving the possibilities for green spaces and areas for sport and outdoor recreation to be within a 5-minute walking distance; reducing noise levels in settlements – for example by encouraging the use of less noisy means of transport and by taking measures to reduce noise emissions from industrial sources; reducing night-time lighting, particularly along roads outside conurbations or in close proximity to housing, hospitals and social services and in landscape character areas, outstanding landscapes, and wider protected and cultural

heritage areas; improving air quality in settlements by reducing emissions from combustion installations and transport; and establishing green systems and improving the composition, type, extent and maintenance of green spaces, which buffer against emissions from settlements or areas adjacent to settlements or improve air quality and buffer against heat islands in settlements.

(8) A distinctive regional and local territorial identity is preserved. The preservation of the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes is determined by more detailed spatial planning rules. Local authorities identify the distinctive features of settlements and landscapes and take them into account in the preparation of spatial planning documents and ordinances on the visual appearance of settlements and landscapes and in the orientation of new development projects.

(9) Buffer zones between settlements are created to improve the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes and to ensure ecological connectivity between green systems. Buffer zones may include forests, aquatic and riparian environments, agricultural land, nature areas under protection, and outstanding landscapes. The width of buffer zones is determined according to the role of the buffer zone in preventing the coalescence of settlements, its role in ecological connectivity (wildlife migration routes), its recreational, climatic and social role (average wind speed, a high-quality and healthy living environment), and the landscape character; however, buffer zones should not be narrower than 200 metres. Activities that manage natural resources, in particular agriculture and forestry and water management, are maintained in buffer zones between settlements.

(10) To mitigate the possible negative effects of the use of pesticides and herbicides in agriculture, appropriate measures are coordinated according to the local climatic conditions, allowing for the preservation and protection of the health of the population.

(11) Priority is given to the renewal and internal development of rural settlements, together with the renewal of mobility and the supply of energy and other resources. Emphasis is placed on the maintenance and renovation of the existing quality building stock and the densification of the settlement structure, which is adapted functionally and technologically to the needs of the population, taking into account expected demographic changes. This takes into account the preservation of quality settlement nuclei and distinctive silhouettes and the guidelines for the protection of cultural heritage and the environment and the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes.

(12) The spread of individual settlement units is restricted – individual settlement units may be retained, except in areas at risk of natural disasters. In the context of individual settlement units in rural areas, the existing building stock may be retained and, exceptionally, supplemented by individual new buildings, taking into account the guidelines for the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes and for the protection of nature and resources, provided that this is the modernisation of an existing activity, particularly a primary activity (agriculture, forestry), or a related complementary activity on a viable agricultural holding.

(13) In rural settlements where tourism is developed, the distinctive character of the rural areas is maintained and created – the traditional structure is preserved and infrastructure and sustainable mobility services are improved. In modernising agricultural activity, particular attention is paid to the complementarity of agricultural and tourism activity so as to avoid potential conflicts in advance and integrate agricultural products into the tourism products and services. In accordance with the guidelines set out in the strategy and the regional spatial plans, the local community identifies rural settlements where tourism can be developed in conjunction with primary activities, taking into account cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscape.

(14) Access to modern information and communication technologies – in urban and rural settlements, the modernisation of information and communication infrastructure ensures access to quality modern information and communication technologies and services.

(15) Efficient energy supply is developed in a planned manner – in wider urban areas and in settlements with higher population density, district heating and cooling systems for buildings using renewable or synthetic and other low-carbon gases are being planned as a priority, with the aim of reducing costs and improving air quality in settlements. The construction of district heating systems using heat from cogeneration of heat and electricity, preferentially from renewable and low-carbon energy sources, is encouraged. Priority is given to areas of dense population (more than 20 residents/ha), areas with a higher density of consumers (schools, apartment buildings, residence halls for upper secondary students, homes for the elderly, shopping centres, etc.) and areas of economic zones with guaranteed heat offtake. In areas that are connected to the gas network or can still be connected with reasonable investment, energy supply, including renewable gases and synthetic and other low-carbon gases, can be based on these networks.

(16) In the case of a change of planned land use, a land management plan is drawn up as part of an active land policy in order to achieve an efficient use of land.

5.1.2 Housing

(1) In the centres of a polycentric urban system, a sufficient number of dwellings and areas for housing development is provided – preferentially through the rehabilitation of degraded areas or the renewal of existing low density population residential areas. Larger areas for public rental housing are located in centres up to Level 4. Priority areas for housing development are planned in the regional spatial plan in areas that have the best access to the public passenger transport system, in the vicinity of transport nodes and interchange points of public passenger transport and, in particular, railway lines, in coordination with the integrated transport strategy, taking into account regional demographic projections. Residential areas are designed taking into account the proximity to a variety of jobs and the provision of services of general and general economic interest.

(2) Care is taken to prevent social segregation, gentrification and ghettoisation – a variety of housing types is provided in residential areas to allow for a mixed social and age composition of the residents. The design, renewal and construction of residential areas takes into account the principles of a high-quality and safe living environment, which is ensured by the appropriate density of built-up areas, the architectural design of the whole residential area and of individual buildings, and the appropriate area, accessibility and design of public open and green spaces.

(3) High-quality residential development is developed – forms of residential development, layout and spatial distribution of buildings are planned and developed to encourage social interaction between residents and to ensure an appropriate higher density of residential development, while also providing sufficient public open and green spaces. In the residential area, all necessary daily services are accessible on foot. Interventions within the existing urban fabric should be based on a comprehensive expert assessment.

(4) In residential areas, adequate provision of services of general and general economic interest and the necessary provision of community infrastructure is ensured – primary education and healthcare activities, social protection activities, activities for the elderly, childcare activities, commercial, business and craft activities, catering services, administrative, intellectual and cultural services, and other activities which are necessary for the daily care of the residents, do not impair the quality of the living environment, and contribute to a more rational use of land and utility and transport networks and to the overall functioning of the settlement may be carried out or provided in residential areas.

(5) Good accessibility from residential areas to areas with community infrastructure and areas where jobs are ensured via sustainable mobility and the promotion of mixed land use.

5.1.3 Community Infrastructure of Higher Importance

Equitable access to services of general and general economic interest is ensured – community infrastructure of higher importance is defined in regional spatial plans based on the required level of service provision in the centres of a polycentric urban system. Public utility and community infrastructures are spatial arrangements intended for the provision of services of general and general economic interest, in particular in the fields of healthcare (primary, secondary and tertiary), social care (homes for the elderly, mobile services for the elderly), justice, education (primary, secondary, tertiary), childcare (day care, kindergarten), public administration (services), sport and recreation, security (police, military, civil protection and disaster relief), culture (libraries, theatres, museums, galleries, archives), research, transport (roads, railways, ports, airports, inter-city and suburban transport, cycling and walking routes), postal services, electronic communications (fixed and mobile telephone service, broadband internet), broadcasting (television, radio), energy (provision of electricity, gas, heat), drinking water supply, drainage and treatment of wastewater from precipitation and municipal wastewater, and waste collection, treatment and disposal (including in waste disposal sites and thermal treatment of municipal waste).

5.1.4 Priority Areas for Economic Development

(1) Spatial criteria must be taken into account when developing economic zones, which may include logistics centres – in addition to the socio-economic situation, the capital provided, the high-tech skills and the skills of the workforce in the catchment area, spatial criteria must be taken into account (the role of the centre in the urban system, the availability of housing and access to the locations of the economic zones by sustainable transport modes; optimal connection to the transport and energy infrastructure network – preferentially rail and other public utility infrastructure; access to electronic communications infrastructure; the distance and size of existing economic zones and transport terminals and hubs; spatial possibilities and constraints arising from the state or characteristics of the area and the environment, climate change and the natural and cultural landscape, and the potential for rehabilitation of existing degraded land).

(2) Economic zones, which may include logistics centres, are situated at hub locations so that they are well connected by public passenger transport to all areas of the region and neighbouring regions – when selecting a location, the possibilities for renewal and rehabilitation of abandoned and degraded areas are examined. Areas for economic development should, as far as is possible, as a whole and in their individual parts, demonstrate environmental sustainability, i.e. material, energy and territorial efficiency, and should operate according to the principle of industrial symbioses and have an appropriate proportion of green spaces as an element of good working conditions, adaptation to climate change, and mitigation of visual or environmental impacts (e.g. noise). Former industrial areas that meet the spatial, environmental, infrastructural and other conditions of modern production parks are preserved and developed for economic purposes in the long term. A single planning and management model is developed for economic activity areas or zones in which public funds are invested, whereby the land remains in public ownership (and the company, for example, acquires the building right) even after the closure or sale of the company. This balances the demand for new building land.

(3) Priority areas for the concentration of economic, production or other business activities are identified within the wider urban areas in Level 1 or Level 2 centres – exceptionally also in Level 3 and Level 4 centres which already have larger contiguous industrial or production areas (20 hectares). Priority areas for economic development are identified, preferentially in the context of the internal development of urban settlements, in particular in the context of the restructuring, renewal and densification of

degraded areas or areas of existing economic and business zones. Areas for economic activities where rational transport distances between the raw material base and users are important, such as in the processing of timber or mineral resources, may also be located in Level 4 centres or in other settlements of regional importance, provided that priority is given to transport by rail.

(4) Priority areas for economic development are identified in regional spatial plans in accordance with the guidelines set out in the strategy.

5.1.5 Essential Supply Services and Shopping Centres

(1) The daily provision of services to residents in urban and rural settlements is ensured in residential areas – the capacity of services is sized according to the pedestrian accessibility for direct daily users in these areas.

(2) Shopping centres are strategically located – as a rule, shopping centres larger than 5,000 m² may be located as part of multimodal passenger transport hubs in the Level 1 and Level 2 centres of polycentric urban systems, connected by at least public rail and bus transport. Access by public transport is encouraged. New shopping centres may be developed only in degraded areas within an urban settlement or on land which can be used for this purpose in the inner development of settlements as part of the functional reorganisation or urban renewal of the settlement or part thereof. Shopping centres with a surface area of more than 5,000 m² are not located in predominantly residential areas, but in mixed land-use areas with the possibility of cascade utilisation of energy. The upper limit of the total per capita floor area of shopping centres is 1.6 m² gross per resident of the settlement. Centres where shopping centres of more than 5,000 m² are envisaged are identified in regional spatial plans.

(3) When restructuring existing shopping areas, priority should be given to accessibility by sustainable transport modes, sustainable construction, and green spaces or links to the green system of the settlement – the restructuring is defined in accordance with the development vision in the regional spatial plan and the development vision for the wider urban area.

5.1.6 Traffic Areas and Multimodal Transport Hubs

(1) The development of transport systems is planned in a coordinated manner and in parallel with spatial and urban development planning – the mobility needs of the population are met through good transport connectivity and organisation of transport both at the settlement level and at the regional level and within the wider urban areas, supported by appropriate charging infrastructure (e-charging stations and hydrogen). In planning transport systems, priority is given to rail infrastructure, which must be of an adequate standard, in accordance with the TEN-T Regulation; the road system complements rail infrastructure and is adapted to it.

(2) Urban structures are concentrated in the vicinity of transport hubs and public passenger transport terminals and stops – 20% to 30% of the area of the transport hub is devoted to public open built-up spaces and at least 15% of the area to public green spaces. Service and other commercial activities are also located in and in the immediate vicinity of public passenger transport hubs.

(3) In designing urban traffic areas, priority is given to pedestrian areas, mixed traffic areas and the development of the cycle network and public passenger transport – pedestrian and cycle areas are linked to the urban green system. At the level of urban settlements, the problem of stationary traffic is comprehensively considered and addressed; urban parking policy actively influences the travel habits of the population towards sustainable mobility modes and prevents the conversion of open public built and green spaces into car parking areas.

5.1.7 Identification of Areas for Long-Term Development

Areas for long-term development are designated— in cities, towns and other urban settlements defined in the strategy as centres up to and including Level 4 and in other settlements important for the development of the region, areas for long-term development may be designated in accordance with the law to fulfil their development role and function. An area for long-term development is designated in a centre where the growing needs for housing and associated service activities such as kindergartens, schools and the like cannot be met through the rehabilitation of degraded land or the densification of the settlement, taking into account population growth over the last 10 years and a 15-year projection of population growth and job creation. Areas for long-term development must not increase the spatial vulnerability of the wider settlement area, i.e. increase flood risk or interfere with natural water retention areas or other areas at risk of natural disasters arising from current or potential vulnerability, taking into account the expected effects of climate change. The strategy's guidelines for maintaining and enhancing the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes also need to be taken into account.

5.2 Urban Development

(1) Cities, towns and other urban settlements contribute to improving the economic, social and environmental performance of a country – they develop as centres of employment, development, innovation and quality living space.

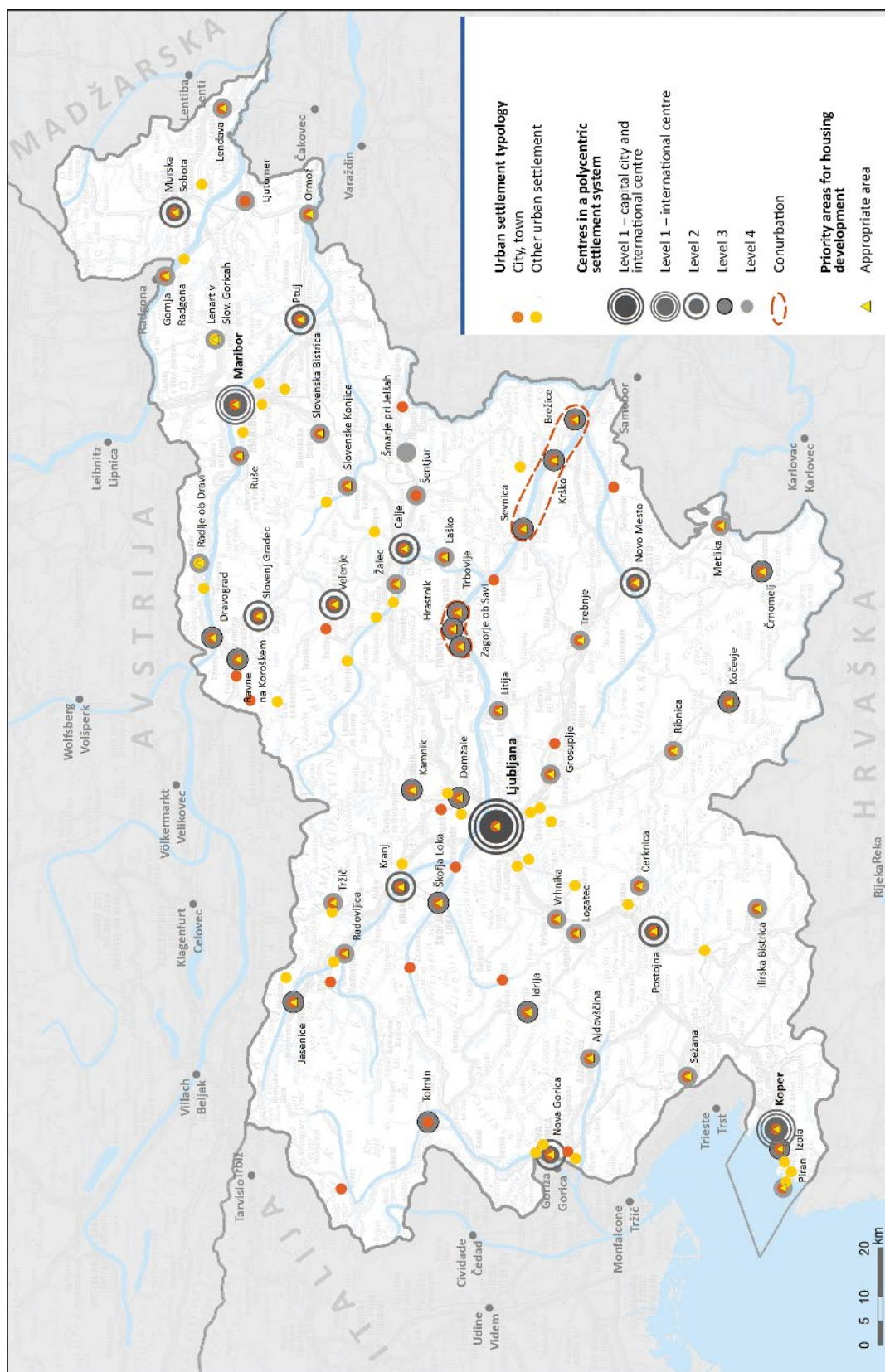
(2) Urban development ensures that activities, community infrastructure, housing and public utility infrastructure are located in urban settlements in a thoughtful way and that serviced land for housing, production, supply and services and areas for outdoor recreation and leisure are provided in appropriate locations.

(3) The development of urban settlements is planned in an integrated manner, on the basis of a long-term development vision, the aim of which is to achieve synergies based on cross-cutting logic between spatial competitiveness, identity and quality, thus contributing to the implementation of the Slovenian Development Strategy. The development vision should take into account the capacity for economic development and the role and function of each city, town or other urban settlement as a centre in a polycentric urban system from Level 1 to Level 4. Particular attention should be paid to creating the right conditions for urban innovation in all areas, in particular to improve the attractiveness of cities and towns as hubs of ideas and knowledge, centres of circular economy, comprehensive renewal and use of cultural heritage, local and global connectivity, and quality living space for different population groups and the strengthening of social cohesion.

(4) The development of wider urban areas strengthens the role of centres or formed conurbations and their functional areas – in the wider European and cross-border area (management of functionally connected areas that go beyond the borders of individual municipalities), it enhances the competitiveness of the Slovenian space, maintains the polycentric concept of the network of centres, distributes services of general interest in the area (urban centre amenities) and ensures access to services of general interest for the entire population of the country within reasonable time frames (less than 45-minute accessibility); public passenger transport is improved by strengthening line connections within the wider urban areas and linking adjacent less densely populated rural areas by alternative modes of public passenger transport (e.g. on-call transport services) to interchanges or hubs at the edge of the wider urban areas.

(5) The development of cross-border urban areas and cross-border linked settlement and economic systems is supported – in the wider urban areas in the border area, the economic, research, educational and cultural role of the individual centres is enhanced in relation to the neighbouring cross-border centres, with a view to strengthening their role in the cross-border functional urban area. This strengthens the joint competitive advantages in the wider cross-border functional area, in particular the achievement of a critical mass to improve innovation capacity and a more rational use of infrastructure capacity.

Figure 8: Cities, towns and other urban settlements in a polycentric system of centres



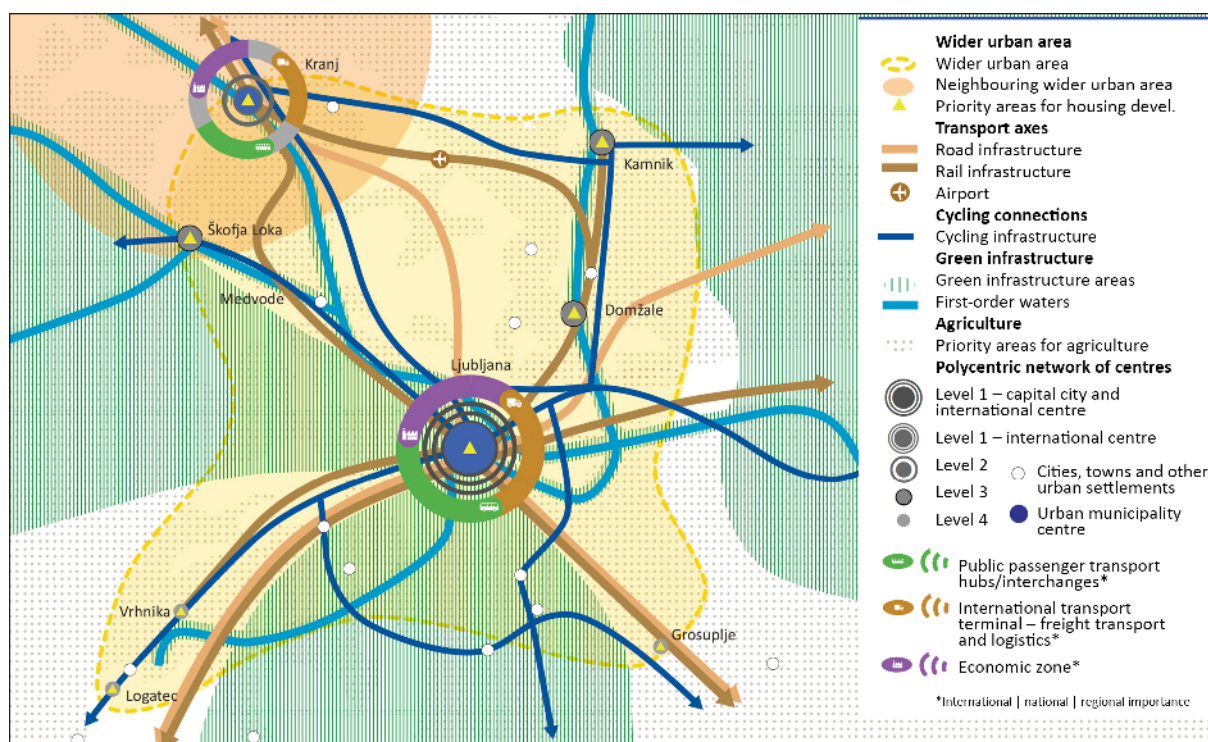
Sources: Priority areas for housing development, 2017; Decision granting the status of town to settlements in the Republic of Slovenia (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], No 121/05); Cartographic basis: National general map, Surveying and Mapping Authority of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017

5.2.1 Level 1 Centres

(1) Ljubljana is developing as a centre of international importance, as an important university, research, culture and employment centre, where administrative functions of the highest level are maintained and developed. Ljubljana is developed as an important international transport hub, which also includes an airport for international air traffic. The area of Ljubljana is strengthened as an urban hub by linking rail, air and road public passenger transport. A rail-road freight terminal is also developed at the intersection of the Mediterranean and the Baltic–Adriatic corridors, linking rail and maritime transport at the pPort of Koper. Priority is given to the Ljubljana rail hub to ensure adequate track capacity to increase both passenger and freight traffic flow and to improve the quality of life of the population by reducing noise and other emissions into the environment. Ljubljana is the employment centre of the wider urban area and its attractiveness for EU institutions and the headquarters of international companies and their branches in Central and South-Eastern Europe is strengthened. The attractiveness of the city centre and the wider urban area is being improved by strengthening public passenger transport within the wider urban area; priority is given to improving regional rail transport, facilitating traffic flow, and strengthening transport links, particularly air and rail transport links, to European centres and access to electronic communications infrastructure. The quality of health services, cultural programmes and sports infrastructure, the restoration of cultural heritage buildings and areas, and the quality of international education programmes are also being strengthened to increase the attractiveness of the centre. The quality of living and the affordability of housing are being improved. Ljubljana's spatial attractiveness is strengthened by its recognised identity, rich cultural heritage, and good opportunities for recreation and quality leisure time.

(2) Ljubljana, in cooperation with Domžale, Kamnik, Kranj and Škofja Loka, forms the wider urban area of Central Slovenia, which is also a central entry point at the intersection of EU transport corridors. This wider urban area also includes the centres of Logatec, Vrhnika and Grosuplje.

Figure 9: Wider urban area of Central Slovenia

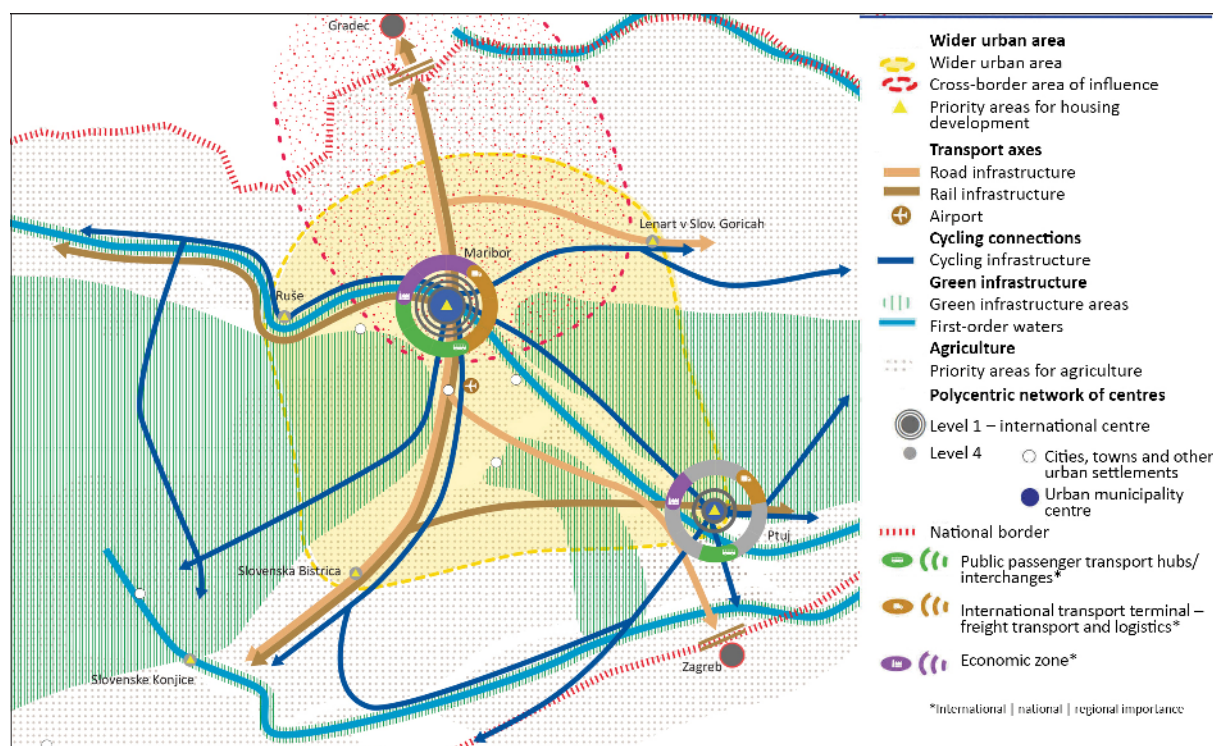


Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

(3) Maribor is developing as a centre of international importance and the centre of the eastern part of the country – it is developing as an important university, cultural, sports and employment centre and as a core transport hub of the TEN-T network with the capacity for the development of a rail-road terminal for multimodal passenger transport. At the international level, the link between international rail and air transport and public road passenger transport is established and strengthened in the wider urban area and catchment area of Maribor, in the area between two important centres of neighbouring countries (Graz (AT) and Zagreb (HR)), and in the transport corridor with a link to Hungary. The economic, research, cultural and educational role of Maribor is strengthened both within the national area, particularly in relation to Ptuj, and in the cross-border functional area in relation to Graz (AT) as a major industrial centre in Central Europe and a university centre. Access to electronic communications infrastructure is ensured. Health services of the highest level are developed (university medical centre) and the integration of science and research with the development of economic activities is promoted.

(4) Maribor, in cooperation with Lenart in Slovenske Gorice, Ptuj, Ruše, Slovenska Bistrica and Slovenske Konjice, forms a highly populous and economically strong wider urban area of the Podravje region, which successfully balances the impact of and exploits the economic synergies with the cross-border urban areas of Graz and the Zagreb agglomeration. Ptuj strengthens its role in its wider urban area as a cultural centre in an area of outstanding cultural heritage (archaeological, settlement, intangible) and its role in the integration of the Lower Podravje region and in serving the rural catchment area of Haloze and the southern part of Slovenske Gorice.

Figure 10: Wider urban area of the Podravje region

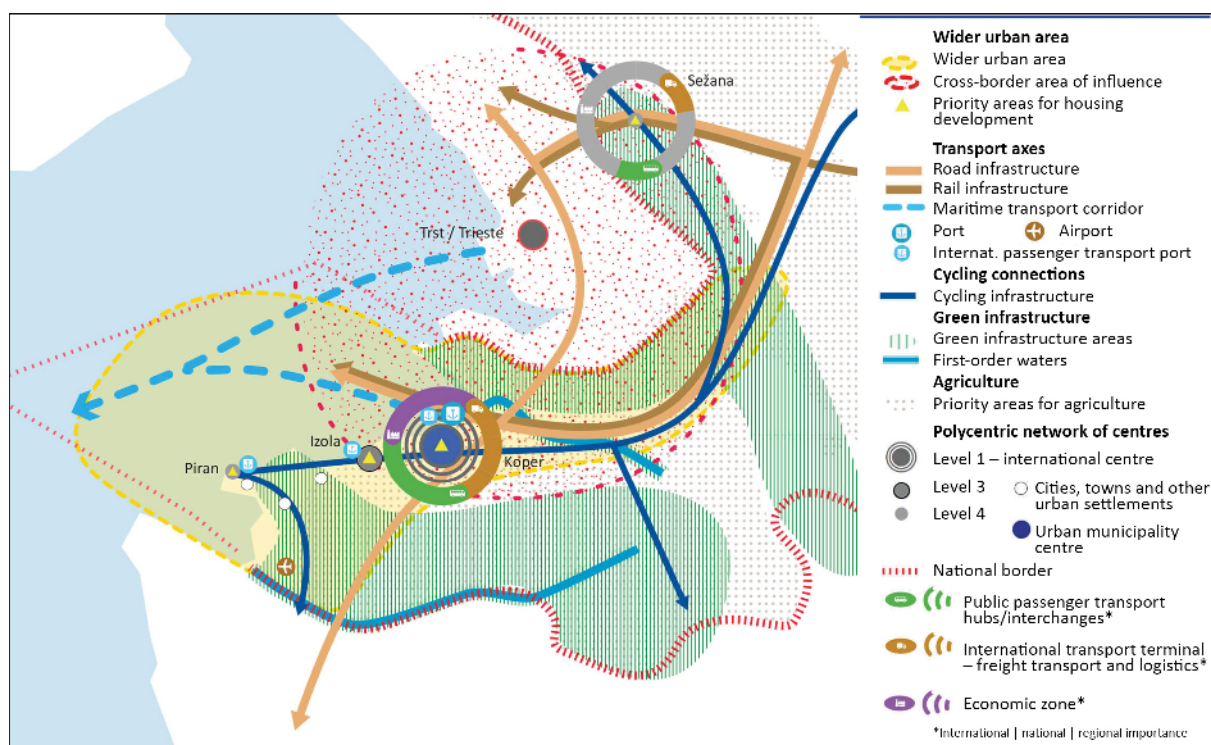


Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycle connections, 2018

(5) Koper is developing as an employment, education, sports, cultural, logistics and tourism centre, a transport hub of international importance, a freight port of entry and exit on the Trans-European network, and a port for international passenger traffic. Koper is connected to international transport corridors and other international and national transport hubs in Slovenia and Europe by adequate and efficient rail links. Access to electronic communications infrastructure is ensured.

(6) Koper, together with the towns of Izola and Piran and the Karst hinterland, forms the wider urban area of Slovenian Istria. Within the wider urban area, functional interconnections are strengthened, in particular in the field of public transport and services. Coastal towns and hinterland areas are linked by an integrated, multimodal sustainable transport system which, in addition to land-based forms of public transport, also allows for the development of maritime public passenger transport. At the cross-border level, it connects with the neighbouring regions of Italy and Croatia, forming the North Adriatic Mobility Corridor. The wider urban area is developing its competitiveness in logistics and tourism, with a greater emphasis on the development of export-oriented activities, which are developing more intensively alongside port activities, and a rich cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscape diversity. Particular emphasis is placed on developing the drinking water supply in the area. In the cross-border area, particular attention will be paid to cooperation with the Slovenian minority in the Trieste region in resolving common spatial development issues in the cross-border area.

Figure 11: Wider urban area of Slovenian Istria



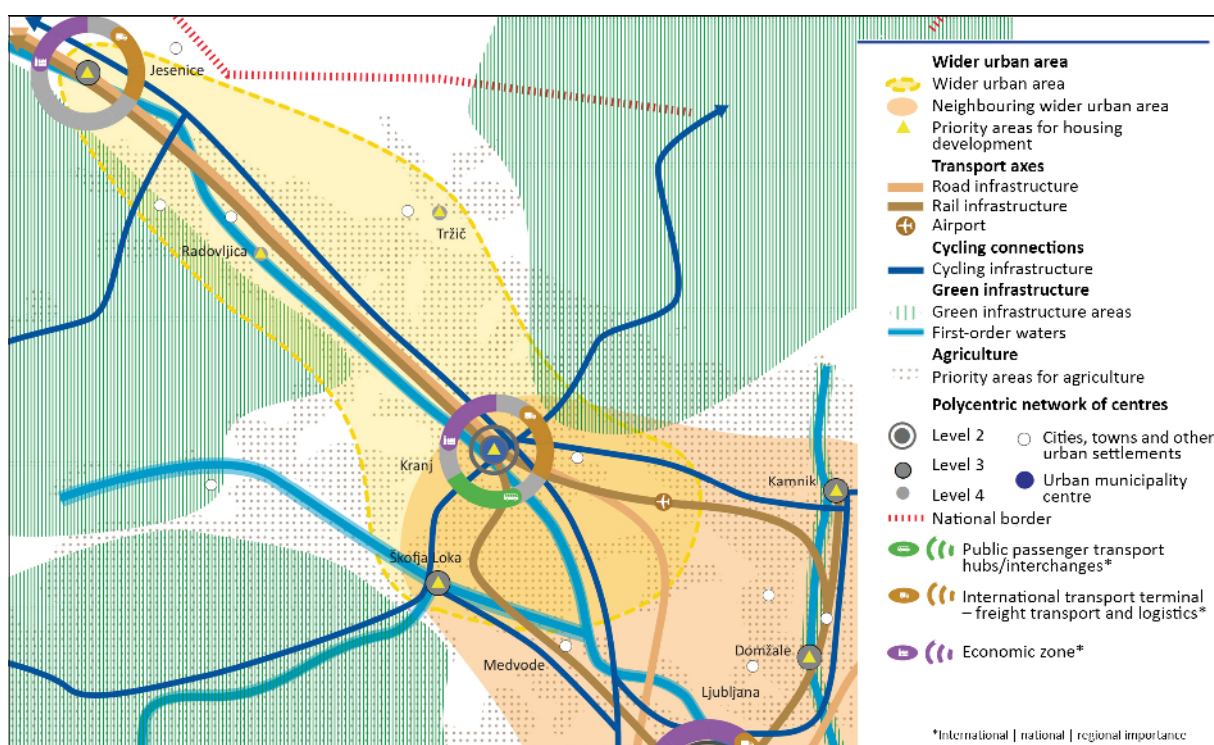
Source: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycle connections, 2018

5.2.2 Level 2 Centres

(1) Level 2 centres in the wider urban areas are linked to lower-level centres based on the distribution of the population and activities and on the natural characteristics of the area – they are developed as functionally interconnected urban settlements on the basis of the integration and complementarity of services of general interest within the identified wider urban areas. Access to electronic communications infrastructure is ensured.

(2) The wider urban area of the Gorenjska region is formed in cooperation with Kranj, Škofja Loka and the centres and urban settlements of the Upper Gorenjska region – Jesenice, Radovljica and Tržič. Kranj is developing as an educational, sports and cultural centre in the Gorenjska development region and as an employment and export-oriented economic centre. As an important regional transport hub, Kranj exploits the development potential offered by the international airport, the linking of international rail passenger and freight transport, and the development of regional (passenger) rail transport in the Gorenjska region and the wider urban area of Central Slovenia. Škofja Loka maintain its role as an important employment, educational and cultural centre with an extensive rural hinterland; Jesenice maintains its role as an entry point (by rail) and is an important economic, educational, health and services centre in the Upper Gorenjska region, where administrative, judicial and service activities are complemented by those of Radovljica.

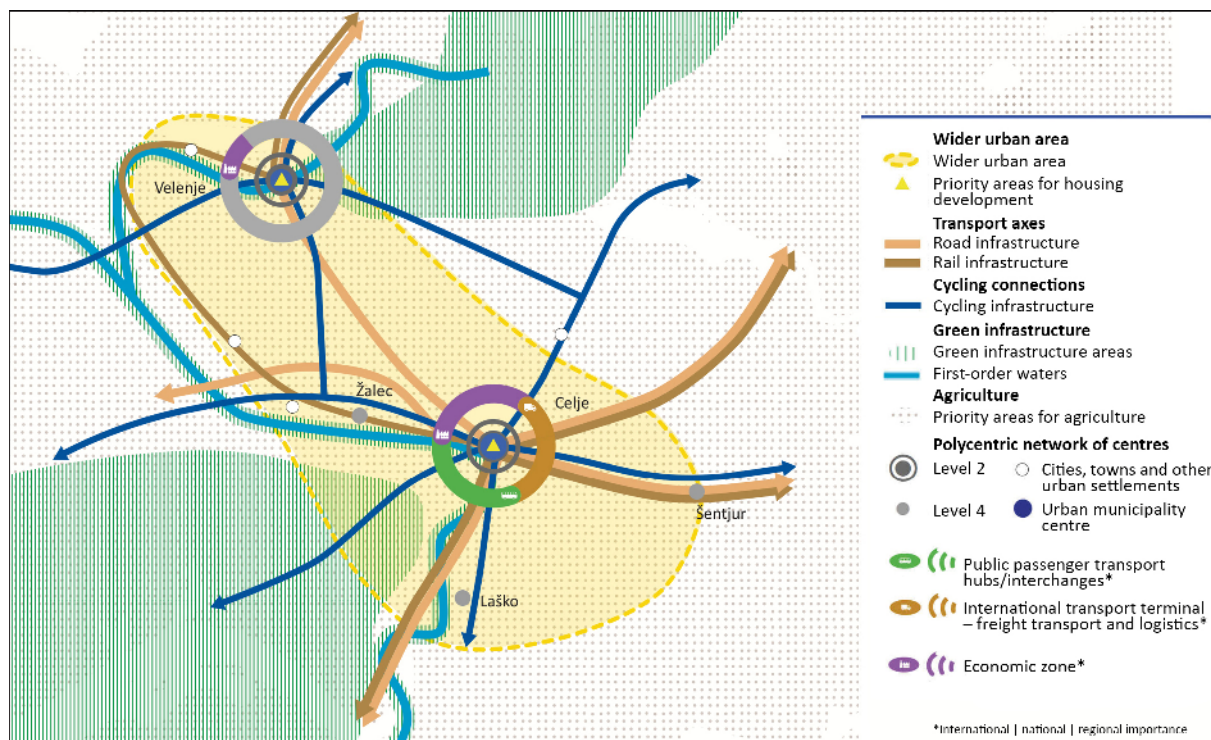
Figure 12: Wider urban area of the Gorenjska region



Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

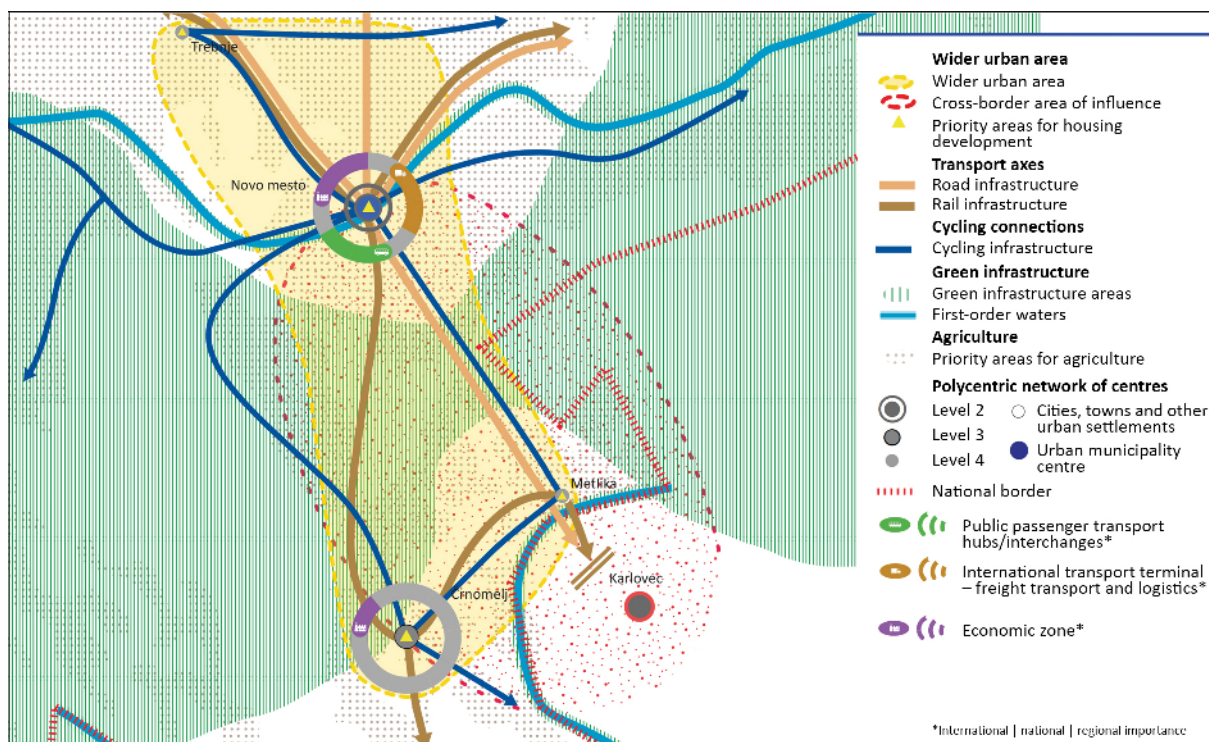
(3) Celje, in cooperation with Laško, Šentjur, nearby Velenje and Žalec, forms the wider urban area of the Savinja Valley and the Šalek Valley. Celje is developing as an important employment, services, supply and cultural centre in the Savinja development region. Celje is an important regional transport hub at the intersection of the rail link and the motorway network in the European transport corridor and the third development axis, and its transport role is increasing thanks to the construction of the latter. The integration and complementarity of the functions of the centres in the wider urban area of the Savinja Valley and the Šalek Valley along the third development axis, namely Celje, nearby Velenje, Žalec and Laško, are being strengthened. Velenje is developing as an important employment and services centre. Particular attention is paid to the restructuring of the area for the purposes of green transition and decarbonisation and to the abandonment of lignite mining and its use in the energy sector. The rehabilitation of abandoned areas for mining and energy use is encouraged.

Figure 13: Wider urban area of the Savinja Valley and the Šalek Valley



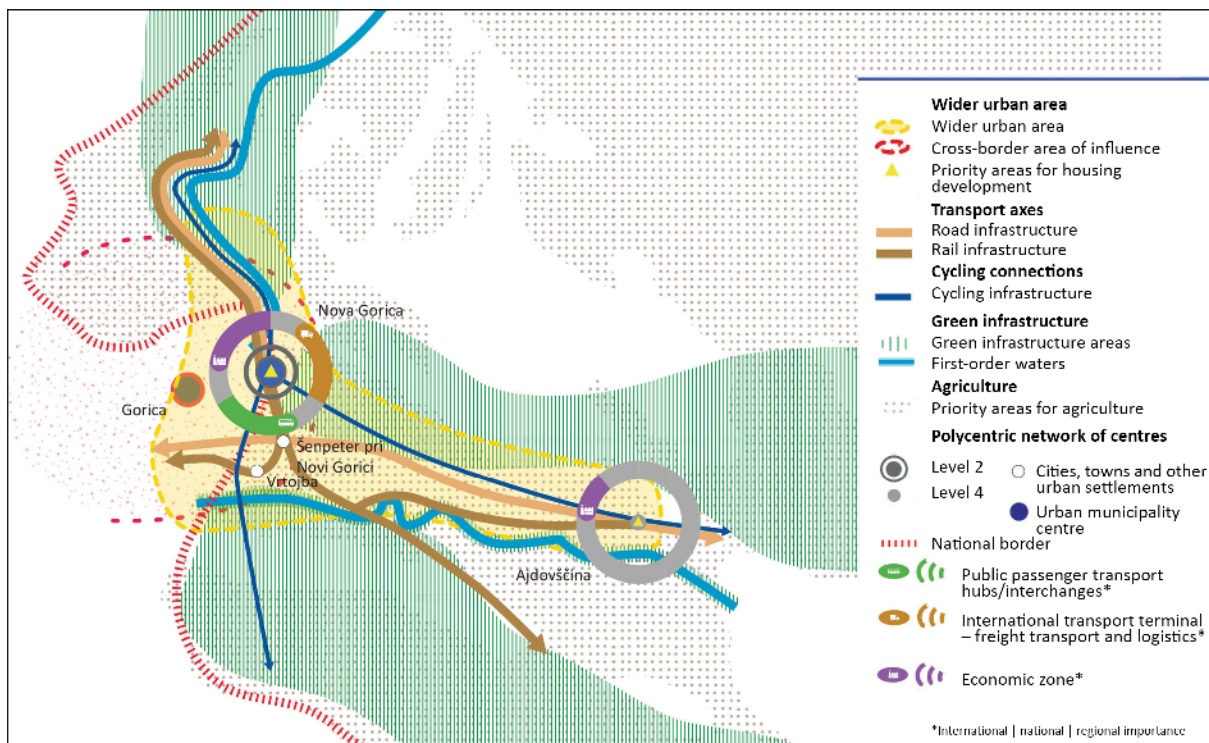
Sources: Expert basis, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

(4) Novo Mesto, in cooperation with Črnomelj and Metlika in the Bela Krajina region and Trebnje, forms the wider urban area of the Dolenjska and Bela Krajina regions. Novo Mesto is developing as an important services, economic and innovation centre and is strongly export-oriented. Its position as a regional transport hub along the European (international) transport corridor is further strengthened by its location on the third development axis, which, once built, will strengthen the connection towards Karlovac (HR) and Bihać (BIH). Novo Mesto provides health, education, cultural and other services of general interest in south-eastern Slovenia. Within the wider urban area, a regional labour market is established, which also strengthens the competitiveness of the centre in the cross-border area. To strengthen the internal connectivity of the wider urban area, the transport connectivity of Bela Krajina is to be improved by upgrading the road infrastructure and modernising the rail infrastructure. Due to its location in the border area, the area plays an important role in connecting Central Slovenia with neighbouring Croatia, i.e. through Bela Krajina with the Karlovac area and through the wider urban area of the Posavje region, which is being strengthened as a regionally important transport hub and economic area, with nearby Zagreb. The proximity of the Zagreb agglomeration of one million people allows for cross-border cooperation and integration.

Figure 14: Wider urban area of the Dolenjska and Bela Krajina regions

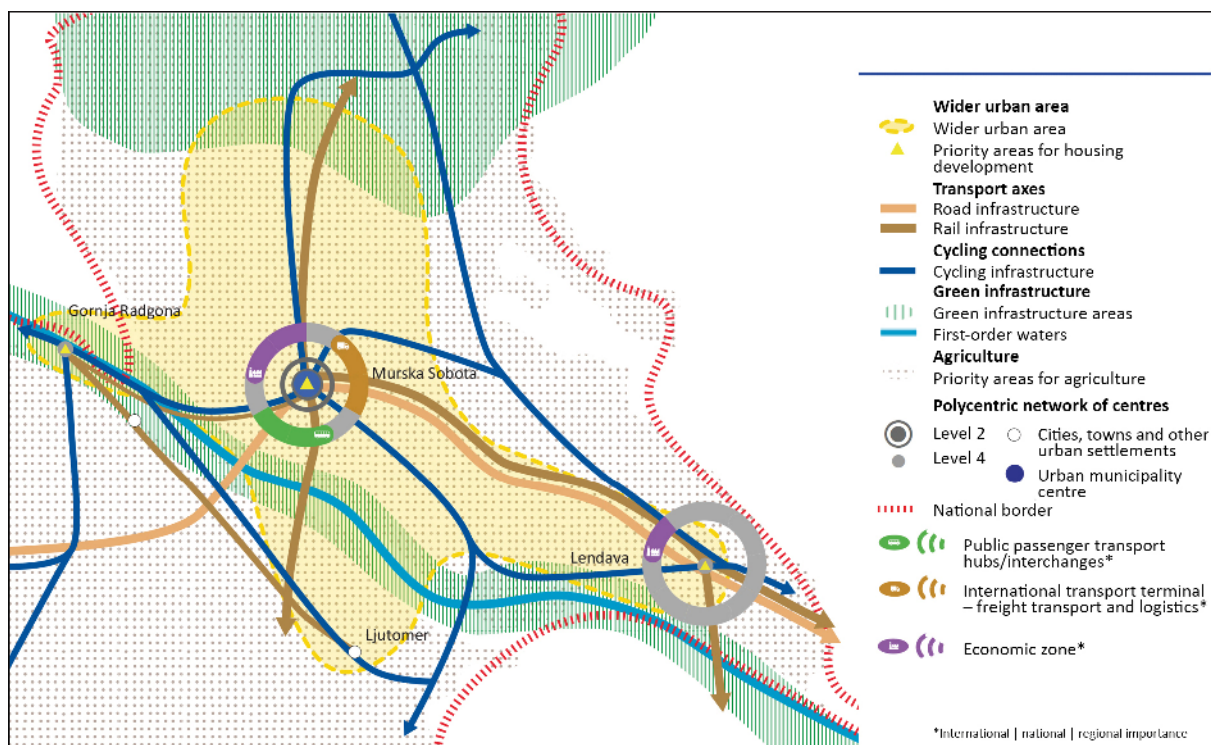
Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

(5) The wider urban area of the Goriška region is formed by Nova Gorica (with the contiguous settlements of Šempeter pri Gorici and Vrtojba) and Ajdovščina. Nova Gorica is developing as a centre with an important role in the cross-border area, where, together with Gorizia, it forms a cross-border urban area with more than 70,000 residents. Nova Gorica is developing as an administrative, services, cultural and educational centre, providing services to the large hinterland of northern Primorska. In the cross-border urban area of Nova Gorica and Gorizia, an equitable and competitive role of Nova Gorica and its functions is ensured. In the wider urban area, in cross-border cooperation with Gorizia, in the area of the Lower Vipava Valley and with Ajdovščina, the development and integration of functions of public interest and the strengthening of infrastructure links (freight and passenger transport) and public passenger transport services are supported to complement and strengthen the functions of the wider cross-border urban area as a whole. As a densely populated area with a related multifunctional economic orientation on both sides of the border, it will be a symmetrical and efficient cross-border urban area. Particular attention will be paid to cooperation with the Slovenian minority in the Goriška region in resolving common spatial development issues in the cross-border area.

Figure 15: Wider urban area of the Goriška region

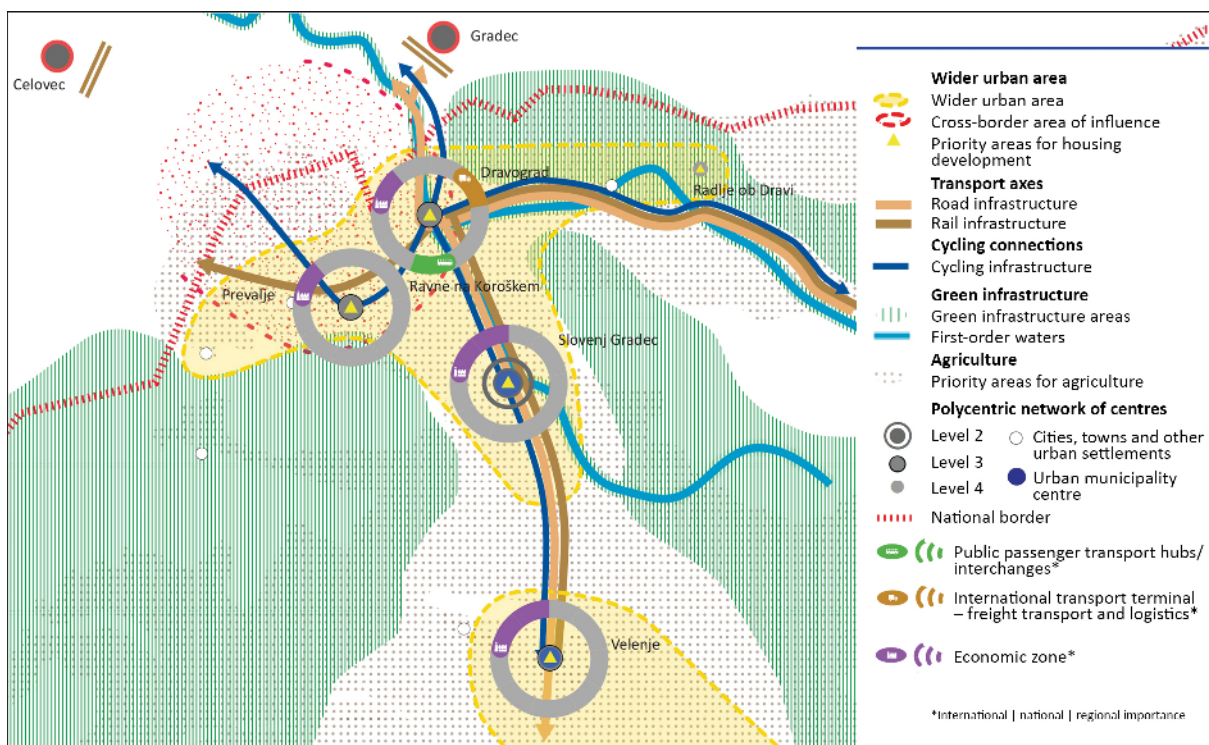
Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

(6) Murska Sobota, together with the urban centres of Lendava, Gornja Radgona and Ljutomer, forms a functionally connected wider urban area of the Pomurje region. Murska Sobota is rapidly developing as a supply and services centre and as an important transport hub of the Pomurje development region. The role of Murska Sobota as an employment centre is strengthened and the development of activities linked to the capacities of the wider agrarian hinterland is promoted. The area has great potential for the use of geothermal energy and other renewable energy sources, both in agriculture and in the development of tourism and other activities. Due to its favourable natural conditions, it has good potential for the development of competitive agriculture, based on the principles of sustainable development. The development of tourism activities in relation to the thermal waters and the naturally preserved areas along the River Mura and in the Goričko region and of tourism linked to the area's agricultural and wine-growing traditions and its rich tangible and intangible heritage should be encouraged. Functional links between border urban centres are strengthened and cooperation between organisations and minorities in the cross-border area is promoted. In the cross-border area, particular attention will be paid to cooperation with the Slovenian minority in the Porabje region in resolving common spatial development issues in the cross-border area.

Figure 16: Wider urban area of the Pomurje region

Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

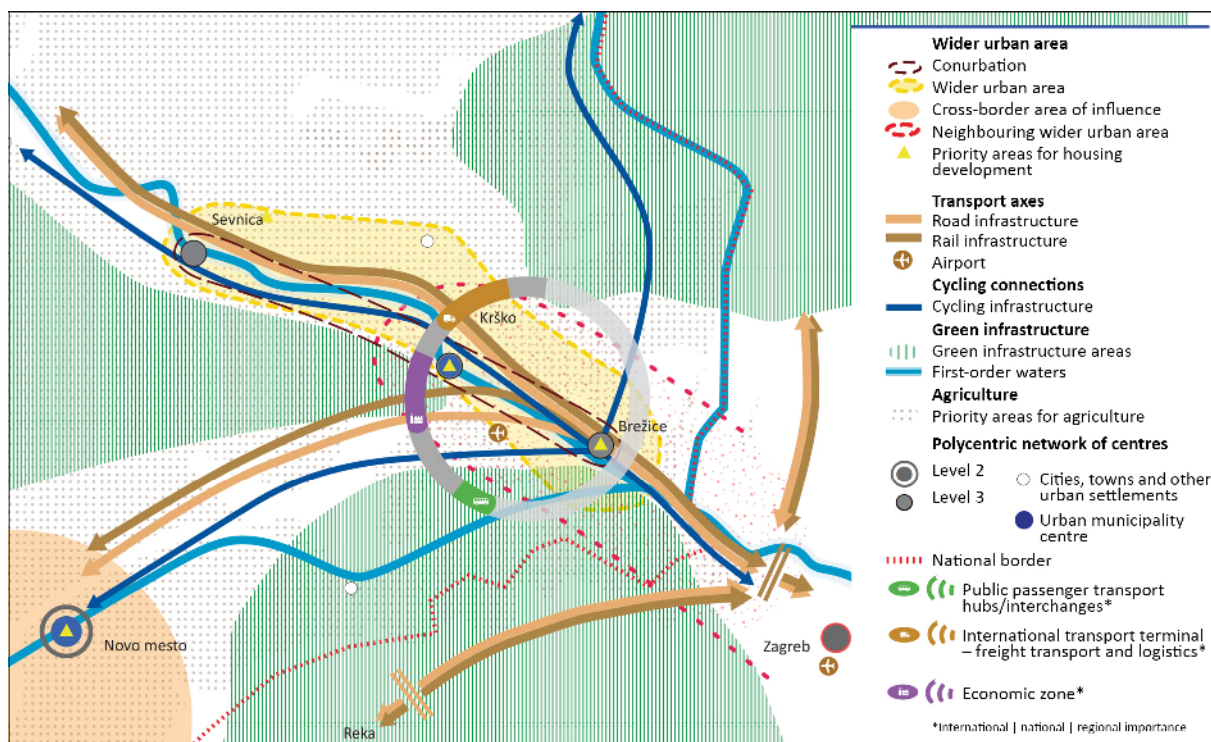
(7) Dravograd and Ravne na Koroškem, together with Prevalje and Slovenj Gradec, form the wider urban area of the Koroška region, where industry plays a strong role. The centres of the wider urban area of the Koroška region are developing on the basis of a division of functions of public interest. Adequate infrastructure connections with the area of Central Slovenia will be ensured by building and modernising transport infrastructure connections with the centres in the wider urban area of the Savinja Valley and the Šalek Valley and by strengthening electricity connections. The administrative, health, cultural and educational role of Slovenj Gradec and the economic role of the centres of the wider urban area are strengthened and their competitiveness in the cross-border area is promoted. Due to its favourable transport and central location within the development region, Dravograd is also developing as an intermodal passenger and freight transport hub. In the wider border area, the Slovenian area is more densely populated and industrialised than the cross-border Carinthian area, and there is a considerable degree of cross-border cooperation and cooperation with representatives of the Slovenian minority in Jauntal.

Figure 17: Wider urban area of the Koroška region

Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

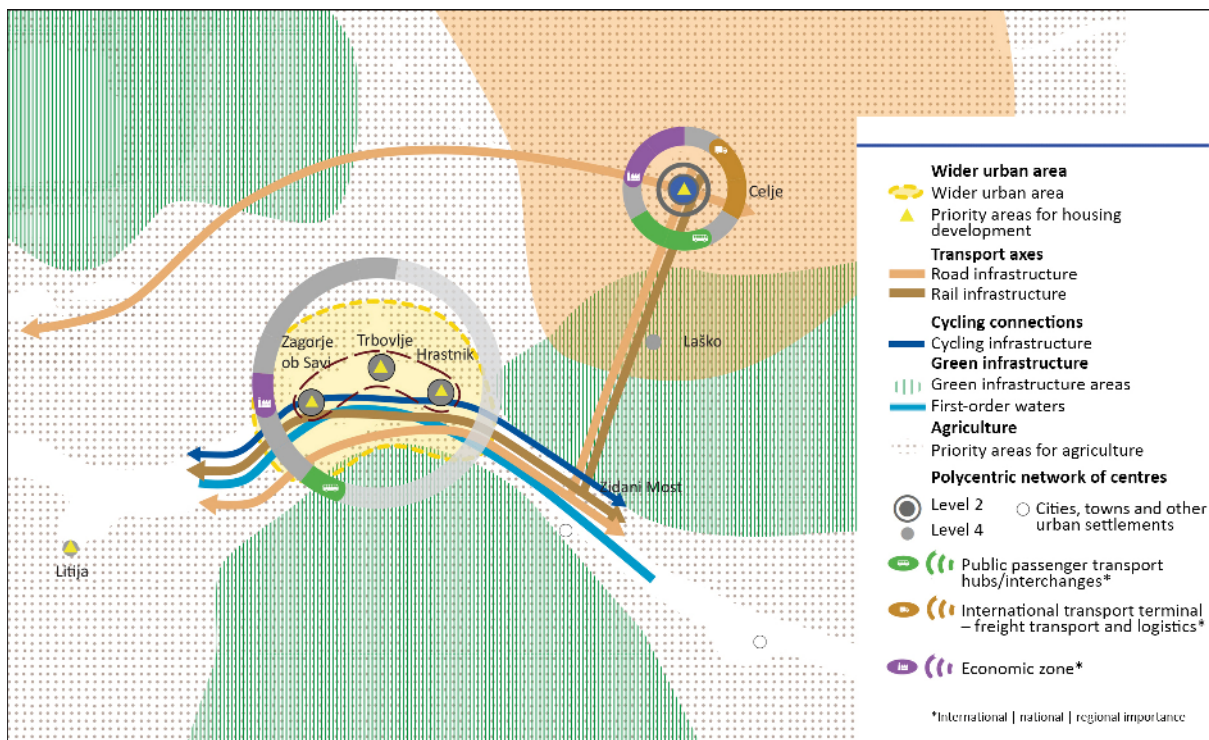
(8) Postojna is developing as a supply centre in the Primorska-Notranjska development region. Due to its location, it plays an important transport and connecting role in the Mediterranean and Adriatic–Ionian transport corridors. The wider area in the Primorska-Notranjska development region is oriented towards the development of tourism, based on the natural preservation of the area, the preserved cultural heritage, landscape character and biodiversity.

(9) The wider urban area of the Posavje region is developing based on cooperation between the urban centres of the conurbation of Brežice, Krško and Sevnica. Within this area, a regional labour market will be established, which will strengthen the competitiveness of the area. This area is economically strong and oriented towards the energy sector, successfully balancing the impact of and exploiting the economic synergies with the cross-border urban area of the Zagreb agglomeration. The centres of the wider urban area of the Posavje region are developing as a conurbation on the basis of the division of functions of public interest; administrative, health, educational, sports and tourism functions complement each other and are distributed between the centres. The cultural and economic role of the centres of the wider urban area are strengthened and their competitiveness in the cross-border area is promoted. In modernising the rail infrastructure, establishing an efficient public passenger transport system within the wider urban area, and improving the connectivity of the rural hinterland with the centres in the wider urban area by public passenger transport and the connectivity of the wider urban area with the centres of the neighbouring wider urban areas (the wider urban areas of the Dolenjska and Bela Krajina regions and of the Savinja Valley and the Šalek Valley) and the Zagreb metropolitan area, priority is given to the use of rail transport capacities.

Figure 18: Wider urban area of the Posavje region

Sources: Expert basis, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

(10) The wider urban area of the Zasavje region is developing on the basis of the division of functions of public interest between the urban centres of the conurbation of Hrastnik, Zagorje ob Savi and Trbovlje; administrative, health, educational and sports functions complement each other and are distributed between the centres in the Zasavje development region. The economic role and competitiveness of the centres of the wider urban area are promoted, thus increasing the employment of the population within the region and reducing the need for labour migration to neighbouring areas. In public passenger transport, rail infrastructure is used and developed to improve accessibility to the centres of neighbouring wider urban areas and to improve the connectivity of the rural hinterland with the centres of the wider urban area. The rehabilitation of degraded areas will improve the living environment and enhance spatial distinctiveness in harmony with the existing qualities of the area.

Figure 19: Wider urban area of the Zasavje region

Sources: Expert bases, 2017; First-order waters: Slovenian Water Agency; Strategic areas for agriculture: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, 2020; National cycling connections, 2018

5.3 Guidelines for Rural Development

(1) The residents of rural areas, particularly in remote areas (such as mountainous or border areas), are provided with comparable living conditions – adequate and equivalent access to services of general and general economic interest, in particular education, health, social, cultural, administrative, telecommunications and postal services and basic daily supply of goods and services. In the rural areas in the urban hinterland, accessibility to services is achieved through the strengthening of Level 3 centres, and in core rural areas and remote rural areas through the strengthening of Level 4 centres or other settlements of importance for the development of the region in accordance with the regional spatial plan.

(2) The development of jobs and activities in Level 3 and Level 4 centres is encouraged – employment opportunities for the residents of the catchment areas of these centres and access to these jobs are improved through sustainable mobility measures. Public and administrative services jobs are also considered to be among the jobs that can contribute to maintaining the population in remote rural areas, particularly high-skilled workforce.

(3) In settlements which are not centres, facilities are provided for the day-to-day provision of essential supply services to the population. Settlements in rural areas are typologically diverse, ranging from rural hamlets and villages to towns and other urban settlements. Among them, those that can provide daily supply of goods and services to the population in the catchment area are selected.

(4) An adequate level of transport connectivity is ensured between rural settlements and the centres of the polycentric urban system, and accessibility is improved through sustainable mobility. Rural areas are fully supported by modern information and communications infrastructure and electronic communications infrastructure, which enables residents to have equal access to the internet, to meet the conditions for working from home, to develop services to serve the rural area and to support rural economic activities. Good connectivity to public passenger transport interchanges is ensured and multimodal travel is facilitated. In addition to strengthening agriculture and forestry, adequate conditions are provided for other economic activities in rural areas, thus strengthening local employment and reducing the need for the active working population to commute to employment centres. To strengthen economic activity in rural areas, support is given in particular to measures and activities to make sustainable use of the endogenous potential of the area.

(5) Cross-sectoral measures and support for alternative forms of provision of services of general and general economic interest are developed to overcome a poor economics of business – in particular adjusted sectoral norms for specific activities (e.g. for primary and branch primary schools, kindergartens, and community health centres) and the integration or bundling of services (e.g. postal services and the supply of goods), support for the development of mobile and e-services (commercial, library, postal, health and administrative services), promoting different forms of economy (in particular social entrepreneurship and small businesses, creative industries, and cooperatives), developing alternative forms of public transport (e.g. public transport on demand) and improving sustainable forms of mobility, drawing up coordinated spatial development visions (strategies, programmes and joint projects of functionally linked border municipalities based on the comparative advantages of the border areas and allowing for better functional and physical connectivity in the cross-border area and empowering local stakeholders to implement the strategies), and ensuring efficient links to higher-level economic centres. In remote rural areas, both border and mountainous, the provision of services of public interest is ensured in the context of functional cross-border links, in particular where the needs and appropriate conditions exist.

(6) In the context of the preparation of regional spatial plans, agriculture in the wider urban areas is oriented towards supplying quality and locally produced food to the population. Rural areas with a higher proportion of managed forest are oriented towards the development of forest-wood chains in support of sustainable construction and the development of integrated and high-quality wood products, supported by green public procurement.

(7) The development of agricultural and forestry activities, particularly in remote rural areas, is linked to development opportunities in protected nature areas and cultural heritage areas.

(8) In remote rural areas, a socially acceptable balance is struck between wildlife conservation and settlement, in particular with regard to the quality of living and the performance of primary activities, agriculture and forestry.

5.3.1 Improvement and Development of Rural Settlements, Villages and Landscapes

(1) Land interventions in rural areas are adapted to regional and local identity, the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes, and the maintenance of ecological connectivity. Settlements and road infrastructure are adapted to the characteristics of settlements and villages in such a way as to preserve the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes. The preservation of the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes is determined in more detail by a decree containing spatial management rules. In accordance with the spatial planning documents, the change of the planned use of buildings in settlement development areas may be permitted, as provided for in the building regulations, provided that adequate public utility services are provided. The night-time lighting of infrastructure is limited to the minimum necessary lighting in villages and rural settlements, i.e. it is reduced or technologically

and technically adapted to the minimum necessary level of lighting. The type and design of lighting are adapted to the territorial identity of the settlements and the landscape. In the long term, in order to minimise social costs and potential human casualties, existing buildings are removed from areas at risk (areas of high and medium flood risk, landslide-prone areas) and existing undeveloped building land in areas at risk is excluded from planned land use as provided by the spatial planning document.

(2) The diversification of economic activities related to agriculture and forestry is encouraged, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are facilitated, and an adequate level of transport connectivity and accessibility is ensured. The development of rural settlements and villages takes into account development trends, natural and man-made features of the area, and development trends aimed at the modernisation of agriculture and forestry, the use of natural resources, and new activities which build on the comparative advantages of the area and are linked to the primary land use of the area. In addition to agriculture and forestry, secondary and tertiary activities such as tourism, technologically advanced industry, services and logistics centres are also present in rural areas, particularly in the vicinity of centres. New activities in rural areas should contribute to the multifunctionality of space, reducing the vulnerability and threats to spatial structures and the population, improving the environment and the quality of life of the population, integrating cultural heritage more fully into the life of rural communities, and preserving the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes.

(3) Rural settlements and villages are subject to the general guidelines for individual wider urban areas (Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). Rural settlements that are oriented towards agriculture or have food production capacity are redeveloped in order to ensure appropriate conditions for farming and complementary activities related to the supply of food and local products to local markets and tourism providers. Rural settlements in the wider urban areas are linked to the public passenger transport system and sustainable mobility. Rural settlements and villages without agricultural holdings are gradually transformed into settlement/residential areas through internal development, provided that time- and cost-efficient access to public services in nearby centres can be ensured. Particular attention is given to the renewal of old settlement nuclei (settlement heritage), to the management of open spaces in rural settlements, and to the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes.

(4) Spatial possibilities for the development of agricultural holdings are sought primarily within existing rural settlements and villages, for example by extending development to abandoned farms or other building land. Exceptionally, the relocation of an agricultural holding to a new site is considered as a solution. It is most appropriate to comprehensively examine the need, long-term viability and spatial possibilities for the relocation of agricultural holdings in a strategic spatial document.

(5) Agricultural production facilities which are subject to an environmental impact assessment and which could have negative impacts on human health or quality of life are located or planned within the areas of the planned land use as areas with facilities for agricultural production within the building land.

(6) Agricultural production facilities where the method of production is not directly linked to agricultural land (e.g. built greenhouses) are primarily located on degraded land in settlements, in particular near roads, which is unsuitable for the construction of dwellings or business premises because of noise, or in environmentally degraded areas, provided that these areas do not present a health risk when carrying out such activities.

(7) Locating a wide range of activities and infrastructure in the natural and cultural landscape which for various reasons cannot be located in settlements is comprehensively addressed through spatial planning instruments – they are designed to provide several complementary functions to serve the rural area at the same time, while preserving the integrity of green systems at the level of regions or settlements and their ecological connectivity.

5.3.2 Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Development of Rural Activities

Natural resource management is adapted to the potential for natural regeneration, measures to ensure resilience to climate change and constraints to ensure sustainable use – these vary according to the resource (air, soil, forest, water) or species within each resource or its location. Resource use aims at synergistic and multifunctional use of resources in space. To improve air quality in settlements, the proportion of green areas is increased, the role of green systems in settlements is strengthened and green systems are properly integrated into the green systems of the regions; the share of fossil fuel-powered transport is reduced and the use of sustainable forms of mobility and their energy efficiency are promoted and increased; in the open landscape, care is taken to preserve landscape features that contribute to the protection of soil and land against erosion. The productive capacity of agricultural land and soil and forest functions, including their carbon sink capacity, are maintained and improved.

5.3.2.1 Sustainable Use and Protection of Agricultural Land

(1) Agricultural land is regarded as a key natural resource for agriculture and food production. Agricultural land, which is of strategic importance for the country because of its natural characteristics for production, its surface area and territorial completeness, is preserved as a matter of priority and used in such a way as to maintain its long-term sustainable fertility for food production. The economic and social role of agriculture in ensuring the vitality of rural areas and in preserving the landscape is promoted.

(2) The management of agricultural land is carried out in an integrated manner, taking into account the conditions for the different types of agricultural production and the guidelines for maintaining water quality, ecological connectivity, habitat protection and the distinctive character of landscapes. Agriculture has a significant impact on the image of the cultural landscape, its biodiversity and its visual value and plays a multifunctional role in this respect. It helps sustain the landscape and create new landscape patterns and new spatial identities resulting from new food production technologies and new agricultural crops, as well as from adaptation to climate change and the use of renewable energy sources.

(3) In the areas of planned agricultural land use, it is possible to adapt agricultural production to modern practices of agricultural production while preserving the most important elements of the distinctive character of cultural landscape. In areas of planned agricultural land use where there is an expressed interest in farming, measures to remove overgrowth and other vegetation to increase the amount of cultivated agricultural land are permissible.

(4) In environmentally sensitive areas and areas of natural and cultural heritage under protection and in the immediate vicinity of settlements, sustainable farming practices and the implementation of agri-environmental measures are encouraged.

(5) Overgrowth is prevented and the productivity of agricultural land is maintained. On plains, patches of woodland and other landscape elements important for climate change mitigation, ecological connectivity and wildlife passage, for biodiversity, or as landscape elements of structural value are preserved.

(6) In order to adapt to climate change in agriculture, opportunities are sought, inter alia, for sharing water resources and energy recovery, taking into account the restrictions imposed due to various other conservation considerations.

(7) Agricultural land with high production potential within wider urban areas or close to centres, cities, towns or settlements are prioritised for food production to supply cities and towns and to create short local supply chains and reduce transport costs and environmental pollution, supported by a green public procurement system.

5.3.2.2 Sustainable Use and Protection of Forests

(1) The multifunctional role of forests in space – ecological (protection of forest land and stands, hydrological, biodiversity conservation and climate functions), social (protection, recreational, tourism, educational, research, hygiene and health functions, protection of natural assets, protection of cultural heritage, defence and aesthetic functions) and productive functions are strengthened and sustainable and nature-friendly management is ensured.

(2) Forests are integrated into the green systems of regions, cities and towns – to provide ecological corridors, to protect drinking water sources, to regulate rainwater runoff, for recreational use, as buffers against temperature extremes and as carbon sinks. Within the wider urban areas and in the immediate hinterland of centres, the ecological and social functions of forests are strengthened, and incompatible forms of recreation (e.g. use of motorised means of transport for recreational purposes) are restricted or moved from sensitive areas.

(3) Forest areas on plains are preserved as a priority and integrated into the green systems of the regions. On agricultural plains, forest is an important landscape element, providing stepping stones for forest species between adjacent forest complexes. It also significantly contributes to the quality of surface water or rainwater or to the purification of water from agricultural land, to mitigating the effects of the use of pesticides and herbicides on agricultural land, and to reducing the exposure of agricultural land to wind erosion. Forest management in these areas is also adapted to these functions.

(4) Contiguous forest complexes are maintained throughout the country to protect erosion-prone slopes or other areas at risk.

(5) In remote and core rural areas, the productive functions of forest are strengthened while ensuring all other forest functions. Forestry is an important economic activity, particularly for mountain farms.

(6) In order to ensure the success of the forest-wood chain, the spatial possibilities for the location of wood-processing plants are examined, taking into account the efficiency of spatial usage or proximity of the timber source, the possibility of using degraded areas for the location of plants, and the accessibility of the plants and major logistics centres, along with the environmental impact of such activity.

(7) Activities that do not alter the condition of the forest or the quality of the natural resource and do not interfere with forest management may be permitted in forests, subject to other restrictions and guidelines.

5.3.2.3 Sustainable Use and Protection of Water

(1) Ecological functions and water for use are provided by the Danube river basin, which includes the Drava, Mura and Sava river basins, by the Adriatic Sea river basin, which includes the Soča river basin and the basin of the Adriatic rivers with the associated groundwater, and by the sea.

(2) The specific use of water for the supply of drinking water takes precedence over the use of water for other purposes. In using water, an emphasis is placed on replenishing the quantity and quality of water in groundwater aquifers and their long-term protection, which is the responsibility of the state. The rational use of drinking water is encouraged.

(3) In order to ensure a quality and continuous supply of drinking water, existing water resources and the quality of drinking water are protected, additional and reserve water resources are provided, and water supply systems are interconnected.

(4) The use of water for other purposes – agriculture, electricity generation, the economy, recreation, tourism and transport – is facilitated in such a way as to preserve the ecosystem services of water and their structural role in the landscape.

(5) In karst areas, local communities are supported in designing and implementing appropriate and statutory solutions for drinking water supply and wastewater discharge, in particular to support rural development. To resolve conflicts between uses in water protection areas, priority is given to seeking opportunities for complementary uses or to using water in such a way as to maintain the quality of the protected water resource.

(6) The development of new activities and the expansion of existing activities are planned where the adequate supply of drinking water to users can be provided by using or upgrading the existing infrastructure, without major land interventions. When planning spatial development, the impact of the envisaged new development (e.g. tourism or manufacturing industry) on the cost of providing the mandatory public utility services is examined beforehand. Cross-sectoral cooperation is strengthened to seek synergies between different uses in a financially and spatially rational and efficient manner, in particular between agriculture, energy supply and flood protection (e.g. provision of water retention areas to absorb floodwater).

(7) Cross-sectoral cooperation is strengthened to seek synergies between different uses in a financially and spatially rational and efficient manner, in particular between agriculture, energy supply, water transport and flood protection (such as the provision of water retention areas to retain floodwater and water collection to mitigate droughts or water scarcity), along with measures to mitigate the adverse effects of floodwater (e.g. monitoring of the quality of agricultural land in water retention areas, replacement of agricultural land in the event of erosion).

(8) Crossing over surface waters is provided in such a way as to not increase flood risk. Water management development projects should, as a rule, follow nature-based solutions with natural and available materials in the vicinity. Water infrastructure is located taking into account the natural morphological features, using, as a rule, materials that minimise the negative visual impact. Water infrastructure is located in such a way that, in the event of its destruction, the impact area does not pose a significant threat to human beings or their material assets.

(9) Appropriate measures are taken to improve the hydro-morphological status of regulated surface waters – to facilitate restoring the landscape-ecological and structural roles of water in the landscape, provided that this is not incompatible with reducing flood risk.

5.3.2.4 Sustainable Use of Mineral Resources

(1) Mineral resources are managed in such a way as to ensure a balanced supply and to preserve their availability for future generations. A balanced supply is based on the reconciliation between environmental, economic and social considerations and includes the spatially rational organisation of activities in relation to market and spatial needs, the reduction of surface mining of mineral resources, and the increase in the use of recycled waste or secondary raw materials that can be used to replace mineral resources. The use of non-renewable mineral resources is reduced and allocated in accordance with the projected long-term needs at the national level, taking into account sectoral legislation. Priority is given to the use of secondary resources, recycling and the recovery of construction waste. Energy mineral resources are protected in the long term, even if they are not in use or their use is being reduced in favour of carbon-free energy sources. Removal of river deposits is carried out in accordance with nature and water conservation restrictions.

(2) Mineral exploitation is aimed at optimising extraction and gradually closing small extraction sites and rehabilitating illegal mines. Priority is given to the rehabilitation of extraction sites which have a negative impact on the environment or on the quality of life and to extraction sites located in landscape character areas, nature conservation areas or cultural heritage areas. The method of rehabilitation also takes into account the location or characteristics of the site: in nature conservation areas, extraction sites are, as a rule, restored to their natural state or to a secondary biotope; in areas of priority use of natural resources, to land intended for primary activities; in urban areas, to areas of urban use; and in areas where territorial identity is important, to a form that is optimal in terms of ensuring the distinctive character of settlements and the landscape.

(3) At the regional level of spatial planning, mineral resources are protected for future generations and other activities in these areas are limited. The locations of strategic, economically important and indigenous, common or other mineral resources are defined. New facilities are only opened if national needs significantly increase and cannot be met by existing facilities within an economic transport distance or by using recycled secondary resources. Extraction sites for the extraction of rare and unique mineral resources (e.g. granite, tonalite and marble) may be permitted in areas under protection, provided that the extraction is occasional and is carried out for the purpose of restoration of cultural heritage buildings and does not adversely affect the distinctive character of the landscape and protected natural or cultural heritage assets.

5.4 Planning Green Infrastructure at the Regional and Local Levels

(1) The green system of the region is planned in the context of the regional spatial plan. The green system of the region ensures the multifunctionality of space, in particular ecological and environmental functions and compatible land uses, the maintenance or improvement of the favourable condition of habitats in Natura 2000 sites, adaptation to climate change, in particular through the preservation of water retention areas, the natural regeneration of natural ecosystems, soil and forests, the distinctive character of landscapes, and recreation in the landscape.

(2) The regional green system is linked to other (neighbouring) green systems of regions and to the green systems of settlements. Where necessary, ecological corridors for model animal species are identified to ensure the ecological connectivity of ecosystems, and the conditions for their conservation and the guidelines to address missing connectivity are defined. Woodland, agricultural or water areas and other open space (e.g. areas at risk, conservation areas or areas under protection, such as flood-prone areas/water retention areas, water protection areas and protected areas) may be included in the green system of the region and can contribute to the multifunctional role of the green system. In land use planning, priority is given to activities that can provide synergies with others or are compatible and mutually supportive in terms of ensuring the multifunctionality of space.

(3) The planning of infrastructure or development projects is adapted to the requirements of maintaining ecological connectivity, in particular in ecological corridors for model animal species, including through technical measures if there is no other way to do so. To improve ecological connectivity, corridors are established for passage over or under public utility infrastructure.

(4) The green system of the region is linked to the green systems of settlements, which constitute green infrastructure at the local level. Green systems of settlements include landscape elements, green spaces and individual parts of the open space within the territory of a settlement which are intrinsically linked to the settlement's structure and functioning, image and identity, to the quality of the living envi-

ronment, and to climate change adaptation (e.g. parks, children's playgrounds, neighbourhood greenery, urban woodland, special purpose forests, tree avenues, water and riparian areas and vegetation, lawns, individual trees); as a whole, they respond to the different needs of the population in terms of the use and experience of green and other open spaces in cities, towns and other settlements and their health-promoting effects. They may also include buffer zones between settlements and along infrastructure.

5.5 Guidelines for Specific Areas

5.5.1 Development of the Sea and Slovenian Istria

(1) To implement the vision of Slovenia as a maritime country, maritime-oriented transport, economic, development, regional and spatial policies are pursued, based on the development of the entry point – the port of Koper – and the hinterland infrastructure, which connects land and maritime passenger and freight transport to the Baltic–Adriatic Corridor and the Mediterranean Corridor, and thus also to the majority of the wider urban areas and development regions and to the more remote hinterland areas.

(2) Spatial development builds on the comparative advantages of the coastal area. In addition to having a leading and nationally important transport function, the area has favourable conditions for increasing self-sufficiency in vegetables and fruit; it is recognisable for its natural areas (Natura 2000 sites, protected nature areas), coastal towns and cultural landscape, salt pans, and the airport; the revival of the Istrian hinterland can offer many opportunities (e.g. the restoration of agricultural land, cultural heritage and settlements). In the coastal area and its hinterland, activities that have a positive impact on the preservation of the vital residential function in coastal towns are strengthened in accordance with the territorial potential. Agriculture and fisheries are developed in connection with tourism, the development of gastronomy and local supplies. Tourism focuses on quality and environmental sustainability, with particular emphasis on the integration and interpretation of cultural heritage and on access to destinations, the development of sport as part of tourism products and services, and improving the conditions for the population to engage in sport. The tourism function of the coastal area and the sea must not overshadow the vital functions of coastal towns, such as the residential function, supply of services to the hinterland, education and agriculture. The outstanding cultural landscape with its special architectural features is preserved. Urban development planning takes into account nature areas under protection and protected nature areas, cultural heritage areas, and the distinctive character of the landscape.

(3) The limitations of the potential of the coastal area and the sea are overcome by seeking synergies and multifunctional links between functions and activities. Taking into account the specific territorial potential of the sea and the coastal area, priority is given to activities which are exclusively linked to the sea or to the sea–land interaction and which cannot therefore take place elsewhere: fisheries, mariculture, ports with maritime transport and navigation safety facilities, salt production, including traditional salt panning, research and conservation of underwater cultural heritage, bathing and recreational water activities, which should be balanced spatially and in terms of their extent so as to preserve, in the long term, the coastal and marine nature areas that are important in terms of nature protection, the productive sea, and the contact with the natural sea. In the coastal belt, it is necessary to restrict areas for activities which, although linked to the sea, affect the environmental (discharges of untreated wastewater, flushing of oils, lubricants, chemicals and other pollutants), spatial (alteration of the natural coastline or shoreline, blocking of direct access to the sea) or visual (obscuring of the view of the sea directly from the coastal belt) quality of the area. For activities that can be carried out elsewhere than at the sea or in the coastal belt (such as sports facilities and commercial activities not related to the sea), alternative solutions are provided on land or in the hinterland of the coastal area.

(4) The area of Slovenian Istria is connected to the border urban areas in Croatia and Italy. The coastal area is multifunctional and is of significant importance in terms of traffic and transport; it is linked to areas across borders by maritime passenger transport lines and cooperation between ports and in the field of tourism. It makes sense to consider and connect the cities of Koper and Trieste as a cross-border urban area and to strengthen cross-border public passenger connections to improve functional links.

(5) The necessary energy infrastructure for the transition to renewable energy sources, including the transmission network for natural gas and renewable and CO₂-neutral gases, is to be upgraded and provided. This will improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure the supply of cleaner and low-carbon energy sources to the port of Koper. Energy networks and facilities are developed in a spatially and functionally coordinated manner, including cross-border connections.

(6) The interface between the sea, the coast and the hinterland is ensured as a matter of priority through natural connections and sustainable development between them. Networks of protected nature areas and nature areas under protection on land and at sea are integrated, and cross-border cooperation is required in the identification of marine protected areas.

(7) Development strategies and spatial planning documents should place emphasis on climate change adaptation activities, in particular in the development and management of settlements and green infrastructure, port activities, and natural resource management activities. Solutions should address, in an integrated manner, the adaptation of settlements to sea-level rise, an increase in droughts, shortages of drinking and process water, heat islands, and seasonal pressures from tourism, including relieving pressures on utility services and other services of general interest.

(8) A coastal belt is established along the coast where construction is not allowed. In accordance with the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean, the coastal belt is intended for the protection of nature, the preservation of natural habitats, cultural heritage and landscape, natural resources, and ecosystems, ecological connections between the hinterland and the sea, adaptation to climate change, and improvement of the quality of life in the coastal area. The coastal belt is part of the country's green infrastructure system and should therefore be integrated into the green systems of coastal towns and other settlements and into the green system of the region. The guidelines for the designation of the coastal belt and the guidelines and conditions for the types of permitted use in it are laid down in more detail in the Maritime Spatial Plan of Slovenia and are implemented through municipal spatial plans. Construction is allowed in accordance with the exceptions set out in the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean.

5.5.2 Tourist Areas

(1) Tourism development is planned at the strategic level and is adapted to the capacity and natural regeneration of the area and to the social acceptability in each area. Tourism development, whether through infrastructure or through visits, must not compromise or irreversibly alter the resources on which tourism products are based or the quality of these resources; in particular, care must be taken to ensure the natural regeneration of ecosystems, preserve cultural heritage, and maintain the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes. Tourism may serve as an excellent tool for the promotion of complementary activities and Slovenian sustainable practices in the field of spatial management, linking, for example, agriculture, food production, culinary products and cultural landscape, forestry, wood products and the culture of living, or the quality of water resources, drinking water and natural assets.

(2) Sustainable tourism development is supported and based on the integration of nature conservation, the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes, cultural heritage, culture, creative industries, the prudent use of environmental resources and their long-term conservation, and the promotion and

implementation of sustainable mobility. Unbuilt open space is preserved to the greatest extent possible. In terms of space, the development of tourism infrastructure should focus on areas where key tourism and sports infrastructure is already provided, with further development focusing on decongesting, renovating and modernising existing tourism facilities to improve the quality of accommodation, services and programmes, reduce water use and waste, and improve infrastructure and services for sustainable mobility for the last mile.

(3) In areas under protection, protected areas and cultural heritage areas, tourism programmes and tourism development are aligned with the conservation objectives of each area. Forests are an extensive natural system that is becoming increasingly attractive for tourism. In principle, forests are used only for limited tourist activities such as hiking, photo tourism, visits to forest nature trails, forest roads and marked forest trails and other trails, and non-motorised cycling and horse-riding, provided that this does not conflict with the provision of quiet zones.

(4) In remote rural areas, tourism is oriented towards hiking and nature and cultural heritage observation (e.g. mountain villages). Accommodation possibilities are improved through the renovation of buildings (e.g. providing accommodation by using or renovating the existing building stock), the development of local culinary products or innovative solutions towards self-sufficiency of buildings, taking into account the conditions for the protection of cultural heritage, with priority being given to projects that ensure accessibility through sustainable mobility options.

(5) In the high mountains, no practices, activities or interventions are carried out which would have a negative impact on the natural environment, the landscape and the low-lying areas. Mountain huts are an important infrastructure, supporting hiking and mountain nature observation and the experience of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, but their number is not increasing. The management and rules of operation of mountain huts are adapted to the sensitivity of the area; sustainable and self-sufficient solutions are sought, with priority being given to solutions that do not require additional infrastructure.

(6) The tourism potential and constraints of rivers and lakes are defined and coordinated in the framework of the regional spatial plan. The upper Soča river, the upper parts of the Sava, Krka, Kolpa, Ljubljanica, Savinja, Mura and Reka rivers, and other smaller rivers, as well as Lake Bohinj, Lake Bled, Lake Cerknica and lakes of anthropogenic origin, such as those created by damming (the Drava river, the middle and lower Sava river, and the Soča river) or by mining (mining lakes and gravel pits) are of interest for various tourist purposes, particularly for recreational use of rowing boats and non-motorised craft. In designing artificial lakes or reservoirs, the potential for multiple uses needs to be examined, including management and maintenance, for example for tourism and recreation, taking into account the constraints that such reservoirs have due to their primary purpose (energy use, retention basin) or secondary purpose (e.g. nature conservation).

(7) The extent of tourism in towns and other settlements is limited to a level which does not jeopardise the affordability of housing for the local population or the preservation of the residential function of town centres and other tourist centres. Increased use of natural resources or services in cities and towns (water supply, drainage, waste, food, passenger transport) must not adversely affect the price of these services for the population. In principle, all Slovenian towns and cities are suitable for boosting urban tourism, as they are diverse and interesting in terms of the characteristics of their geographical areas and have a building stock that can be renovated for tourism purposes.

(8) The action programme for the implementation of the strategy should identify specific areas for tourism, which will serve as a basis for strategic definitions in spatial plans at the regional level and in spatial plans at the local level.

5.5.3 Preserving and Improving the Distinctive Character of Settlements and Landscapes

(1) For the purposes of spatial planning at the regional and local levels, the elements of distinctiveness to be preserved and those to be improved are specifically identified in the expert bases. Distinctive landscape and settlement areas and outstanding landscapes are specifically identified. Guidelines are developed for them. The distinctive character of the landscape is shaped by the visual and experiential quality of the landscape area, the landforms and directions of the space, the way in which the morphological and typological characteristics of the landscape and the use of the land are matched, the composition, complexity and heritage value of the landscape structure, the quality of the siting of built or created structures, and the historical or symbolic significance of the individual parts or the whole, both natural and cultural. The distinctive character of the landscape is adversely affected, in particular, by unmanaged anthropogenic interventions such as surface mining of mineral resources on the plains or slope, exposed surfaces and altered watercourses, prominently exposed buildings or built structures that are inappropriately designed, are in an inappropriate state or are inappropriately located, and their inappropriate use on the edges of settlements, public lighting of inappropriate dimensions and scale outside (and within) settlements and its inappropriate use on the edges of settlements, or neglected areas, for example due to illegal dumping or disposing of excavated material in the environment.

(2) The distinctive character of settlements is ensured at the level of the entire settlement and at the level of individual functional units or parts of the settlement. In the planning of settlements, care must be taken to protect their appearance, scale and landscape context, rehabilitate visually degraded areas, and create a new architectural distinctive character in harmony with the existing qualities of the area. In this process, the characteristics of the area and the inherited cultural and natural assets are respected, the design values of the settlement are emphasised, height proportions are adapted to the existing structure, dominant views and other views are protected, the interface between settlements and the open landscape is carefully addressed, and the unbuilt open space between settlements is preserved (e.g. by defining separation zones between settlements). Historic settlements or parts thereof, particularly those that constitute settlement heritage, are preserved through planned renewal. The development of settlements is adapted to the geometry of landforms, the network of watercourses, the direction of communications and regulation, and the direction and configuration of built development.

(3) The distinctive character of settlements is achieved through planned development and renewal, taking into account the regional urban and architectural characteristics of individual areas, the preserved and distinctive architectural culture of past periods, and characteristic architectural creations of high testimonial value, striking a balance between modern technological and design approaches and existing assets.

(4) In the siting of development projects, the location of individual activities, land operations, or the management of agricultural, forest or water space, distinctive landscape elements are preserved or re-established. In urban areas, particular care is taken to preserve the morphological elements of distinctiveness and structural order, while in remote and mountainous areas, agricultural areas are preserved as an important element of the distinctive character of open, bright space in the landscape.

(5) The landscape, architectural and urban characteristics of the Alpine, Pre-Alpine, Sub-Pannonian, Karst or Primorska landscape regions, which are reflected in typical or unique landscape patterns, and the characteristics of the areas of the architectural regions – the Soča-Vipava, Karst-Primorska, Idrija-Trnovo, Notranjska-Brkini, Gorenjska, Ljubljana, Ribnica-Kočevje, Bela Krajina, Dolenjska, Zasavje, Savinja-Kozjansko, Koroška, Drava and Pomurje regions – are taken into account in the planning of development projects.

(6) The distinctive character of settlements and landscapes is also preserved in the wider protected nature areas and areas of heritage cultural landscapes – they are shaped by outstanding landscapes or scenes, natural assets, and cultural heritage, in particular settlement, built and landscape heritage, depending on the wider landscape and architectural regions in which they are located.

(7) Regionally specific distinctive features are recognised and preserved in the context of spatial planning and sectoral policies. More detailed guidelines for preserving the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes are drawn up as part of planning at the regional and local levels. At the regional level, distinctive character areas are also identified, including in wider protected areas; they are considered in an integrated way, and their preservation and development are ensured in the spatial planning acts and development programmes of ministries.

(8) The action programme for the implementation of the strategy should identify settlement and landscape character areas at the national level, including outstanding landscapes.

5.5.4 Protected Nature Areas and Nature Areas Under Protection and Cultural Heritage Areas

(1) Protected nature areas, nature areas under protection and cultural heritage areas are a resource for regional and local development, in particular the ecosystem services and benefits they provide (e.g. preserving plant and animal habitats, replenishing water resources, providing clean air, and enabling people to relax physically and mentally in the natural environment). They contribute to enhancing the distinctive character of the landscape, improving the quality of the living environment, including improving accessibility to cultural assets, and developing brands, skills and competences for the integrated conservation of nature and cultural heritage, to creating new jobs, developing new tourism products, and promoting coordinated mechanisms to support people and local development.

(2) The more active use of cultural heritage as a development resource and the strengthening of the development potential of cultural heritage are encouraged. Cultural heritage is assets inherited from the past, which are protected for their heritage value and their role in the development of communities in both urban and rural areas. Cultural heritage areas are an important and integral part of the space and heritage of the Republic of Slovenia and its regions; they complement the quality of the living environment and are invaluable for the distinctive character of landscapes and settlements, and therefore their active use is encouraged for their development potential.

(3) The implementation of activities and development in protected nature areas and nature areas under protection are planned in accordance with the conservation objectives and purposes of these areas and in balance with the cultural heritage protection objectives.

(4) Wider protected nature areas and cultural heritage areas are developed as integral spatial categories. Appropriate expert bases may be produced for them to ensure spatial coordination between the implementation of nature conservation objectives and cultural heritage protection objectives and local development needs and other activities.

5.5.5 Areas for Restructuring

(1) Planning in areas for restructuring is conducted in accordance with the principles of sustainable spatial development. Priority is given to the development of economic activities that are based on the endogenous territorial potential of the area. The development of economic activities that, through the application of advanced technologies, principles and techniques of the circular economy, enable the transition to a climate-neutral society, create quality jobs and introduce measures to strengthen social cohesion is encouraged. New activities or the expansion of existing activities are located in such a way as to encourage the rehabilitation of degraded environments and the rehabilitation of degraded land. Particular care is taken to create and maintain a quality living environment. In the restructuring of areas, the guidelines set out in the regional spatial plan and the guidelines set out in expert bases for landscape and urban development are taken into account.

(2) A programme for restructuring will be drawn up for areas where coal use is to be phased out – the transition of the economy will be carried out in accordance with the principles of just transition with simultaneous spatial and socio-economic restructuring of the area.

(3) Settlements or areas where land use has been abandoned are allocated for new activities in accordance with the comprehensive restructuring programme and their new use is coordinated with the development of the rural hinterland. In this process, a balance is ensured between built and green areas within the settlement and links with the open landscape. In establishing new uses on degraded land, priority is given to the possibility of restoring the existing situation, including the protection of cultural heritage and the activation of the spatial and other potential of existing buildings or land.

(4) In the process of establishing new uses on degraded land, a new architectural identity is created in harmony with the existing qualities of the area. The characteristics of the area and the inherited and natural assets are respected, the design values of the settlement are emphasised, and dominant views are protected. Morphological characteristics which enhance the distinctive character of settlements are recognised and preserved, correspondingly with the landscape in which they are set. The continuity of development and the integrity of quality structures are ensured.

(5) In the process of restructuring areas, the cooperation and the coordination of the interests of all stakeholders involved are ensured, in particular property owners, investors, spatial planners, other spatial planning stakeholders, the local community and civil society.

6 Policy Development Guidelines

(1) Public policies in specific areas are developed synergistically at specific spatial levels and in such a way as to contribute to the achievement of spatial policy objectives and the implementation of the concept of the country's spatial development. The spatial effects of all policies, whether implemented through development projects and operations or through non-spatial measures, are evaluated in the process of public policymaking.

(2) Public policies in the field of the provision of services of general interest take into account the defined polycentric urban system in defining or adapting networks of public services of general interest (e.g. in the fields of health, education, administration and social protection).

(3) In planning development projects or operations, the various development challenges in the area under consideration must be addressed in an integrated manner as far as is possible, with the aim of achieving multifunctional solutions benefiting several public policies at the same time, in particular to ensure a comparable quality of life and provision of services to the population, a healthy environment, and the quality and quantity of natural resources, reduce flood risks, preserve nature and maintain ecological connectivity, protect the cultural heritage, and maintain the distinctive character of landscapes and settlements.

(4) In planning public utility infrastructure, the spatial possibilities and constraints are examined in more detail and coordinated in the spatial planning documents, taking into account this strategy and the guidelines and conditions relating to all relevant areas – cultural heritage, nature conservation, agricultural land and natural resources, the living environment, and the distinctive character of landscapes and settlements. Technical measures and spatial planning procedures are also envisaged and implemented to ensure that the planned development projects are environmentally sound and socially acceptable.

6.1 Guidelines to Ensure Spatial Possibilities for a Climate-Neutral Society

(1) Increased energy and material efficiency in the development and renewal of urban and rural settlements and villages, transport, industry and the economy, tourism, agriculture, public administration, and households are promoted. Energy-efficient urban planning, which is supported by sustainable mobility and compatibility of activities in the context of planned use, sustainable renewal, architectural design and smart energy systems, is aimed at reducing resource and energy consumption and ensuring efficient and economical use and storage. The guidelines set out in this strategy for settlements and urban development are also taken into account.

(2) The use of renewable energy sources is promoted with a view to increasing their share in the primary energy balance of the country in relation to the overarching national energy and climate change documents. Fossil fuels are replaced by the use of the technologically and economically exploitable potential of renewable and low-carbon sources. The use of renewable gases in the gas network is promoted.

(3) Energy supply is included in energy plans for regions, cities and local communities as expert bases for regional and municipal spatial plans. In addition to the possibilities for local self-sufficiency in energy from renewable sources, including the necessary capacities of distribution and smart networks, the energy plans for regions, cities, towns and local communities also set out potential energy savings and opportunities for improving energy efficiency. Local business models for renewable energy production (e.g. energy communities) that contribute to local supply, especially in mountainous and remote areas, are supported. In areas with sufficiently high demand, the construction of new combined heat and power generation units and district heating systems, which use heat from cogeneration, is encouraged.

(4) Areas for the production of renewable and other low-carbon energy sources are designated where the exploitable resources can be optimally exploited using the best available technology (BAT), this in relation to the protection of species and their habitats and habitat types, protected areas, areas under protection, natural assets, cultural heritage and ecological connectivity, and the distinctive features of settlements and landscapes and taking into account acceptability in the local environment, in particular in terms of impacts on health and quality of life. In this context, multi-purpose projects are promoted which, in addition to the production of energy from renewable and other low-carbon sources, adequately meet water management objectives and facilitate the development of agriculture, tourism or recreation.

6.2 Guidelines for Transport Infrastructure Development

(1) Transport infrastructure and services should be developed to support the development of a polycentric urban system and the integration of the country into international transport flows.

(2) The transport system is planned in a comprehensive manner and in accordance with the planned spatial development. The planning, renewal and upgrading of the transport system should respond to the needs of the particular area, primarily through measures to improve accessibility to jobs and services by public transport or other forms of sustainable mobility. Prior to new land interventions in an area with transport infrastructure, all opportunities for the renewal of the transport system through the renewal, upgrading and modernisation of existing infrastructure need to be exploited as a matter of priority.

(3) Links between major centres and international transport systems and internal links between centres are strengthened to achieve an adequate level of accessibility and connectivity between regions and the network of centres. The aim is to replace air transport by rail transport for international transport distances of less than 500–600 km and to upgrade rail infrastructure to ensure shorter journey times than those of road transport, so as to make rail transport attractive and competitive compared to road transport.

(4) In the long term, rail develops into the backbone of the national transport system. Rail infrastructure is modernised, renewed and upgraded so as to increase the share of transit passenger and freight transport and passenger transport by rail within the wider urban areas. The issue of bottlenecks on the rail network at the intersection of European transport corridors in the area of the Ljubljana urban hub and the Ljubljana multimodal logistics platform is addressed at an accelerated pace. In combination with road transport, through multi-modal passenger transport hubs, individual regions and areas are connected by public passenger transport and other sustainable mobility modes. To reduce the external costs of transport (air quality, noise, accidents, congestion, etc.), sustainable mobility modes and mobility services are strengthened and modern technical and information solutions are introduced. In mountainous and remote rural areas, tailored mobility services are provided to enable efficient connectivity and sustainable mobility. In tourist areas, sustainable mobility solutions are integrated as part of tourism services.

(5) Public transport infrastructure is adapted to the typology and characteristics of the area. This will preserve the distinctive character of settlements and landscape, prevent spatial fragmentation, protect agricultural land, maintain and improve ecological connectivity, and reduce the negative impacts of transport on public health, the environment, natural resources and cultural heritage, for example by moving infrastructure away from settlements and by providing buffer zones alongside transport infrastructure. The external costs of transport, including noise, are reduced by improving public passenger transport systems and services, by technological measures (such as the introduction of more environmentally friendly and less noisy means of transport), and by spatial and planning measures (such as the separation of rail freight transport from passenger transport in urban settlements or centres of the highest level).

(6) In the construction and reconstruction of transport infrastructure, priority is given to the use of excavated materials (including mineral raw materials) which are used in their original state and without processing for construction on the site where they were excavated, recycled or otherwise processed waste that can replace primary resources, and certified construction materials from secondary sources.

6.2.1 Corridors and Entry Points

The network of rail and road links, which is functionally linked to the European transport network, is developed in line with the polycentric urban system in Slovenia. To increase the efficiency of traffic flow and accessibility, intermodal transport links and the development of the rail network, which should take over the bulk of long-distance freight traffic, are promoted. Particular attention is paid to the development of core hubs located at the intersections of EU transport corridors (Ljubljana, Koper, Maribor) and entry points that are centres in a polycentric urban system (Nova Gorica, Sežana, Jesenice, Dravograd, Brežice, Murska Sobota). In the area of hubs and entry points, intermodal infrastructure is modernised and upgraded and conditions are created for the development of logistics activities.

6.2.2 Sustainable Mobility, Public Passenger Transport and Public Passenger Transport Hubs

(1) The mobility needs of residents and visitors are met through sustainable mobility measures. Sustainable mobility includes walking, cycling and use of public transport. In the context of planning, sustainable mobility measures are developed by integrating spatial (urban) and transport planning at all levels of planning and by promoting »mobility as a service«.

(2) Public passenger transport is developed into an integrated and efficient transport system, combining rail, road, air and maritime/water transport, with an emphasis on public passenger transport by rail. A system of multi-modal passenger terminals is developed in centres, linking stops of different public passenger transport systems. Areas close to public passenger transport terminals are transformed into mixed land-use areas in order to improve access to jobs and to facilitate walking and cycling mobility. Public passenger transport by rail is developed primarily between centres in a polycentric urban system, where opportunities already exist, and by upgrading rail infrastructure. The aim of upgrading rail infrastructure and services is to achieve journey times that are competitive with those of the long-distance road network.

6.2.3 Cycle Networks

(1) The cycle network is designed to consist of a network of national long-distance cycle routes – the network connects urban centres and tourist settlements and is linked to the long-distance European cycle route through Slovenia.

(2) In the areas of cities, towns and other urban settlements and in the wider urban areas, a cycle network for day-to-day mobility is built – the network is linked to residential areas, areas of generators of day-to-day mobility (e.g. kindergartens, schools, major employment areas and shopping centres), and public passenger transport stops and motor vehicle parking areas.

6.2.4 Footpath Network

The footpath network comprises mountain and thematic footpaths in urban and rural areas – the footpaths are linked to form a comprehensive network of footpaths and include links to the E6 and E7 European long-distance paths and cultural trails that run through Slovenia. The footpath network is developed in tourist areas and is linked to the cycle network. The footpaths link attractive landscape areas and are located so as to take into account the safety of pedestrians or hikers.

6.2.5 Transport Hubs, Freight Terminals and Transport Logistics

Regional multimodal hubs are linked to Level 1 and Level 2 centres or centres in wider urban areas – railway stations are transformed into modern multimodal hubs at interchanges in centres where traffic flows are highest. Transport terminals within ports and airports are linked in a coordinated way to the rail system and to the highest-level roads to support logistics services.

6.2.6 Transport Infrastructure

(1) Transport infrastructure is designed in an integrated manner – the issues of accessibility, connectivity and fuel supply are addressed in a comprehensive manner, and combinations of transport subsystems are selected that enable safe, affordable, environmentally neutral forms of mobility and connectivity/ accessibility between housing, jobs and services. Solutions are tailored to the issues of accessibility and connectivity according to the characteristics and needs of a diverse range of areas – in wider urban and rural areas, including remote and mountainous areas.

(2) Key rail infrastructure consists of existing main and regional railway lines and multimodal transport hubs. The rail network will be upgraded by 2050 to make public passenger transport journey times competitive with private passenger transport journey times, to provide a tactical timetable and to provide transport capacity for freight transport, allowing an increase in the share of freight transport by rail. The existing rail network is upgraded (ensuring compliance with TEN-T standards, electrification and double-tracking); measures to separate freight and passenger traffic are implemented, including the key measure of the restructuring of the Ljubljana rail hub; and new rail links are planned and established, connecting the highest level centres and the national rail network with the rail networks of neighbouring countries, including high-speed lines. Regional rail links within wider urban areas are upgraded.

(3) Key road infrastructure consists of road infrastructure of the highest level and its regional links to centres in a polycentric urban system.

(4) International airports in Slovenia and in the immediate vicinity are preferentially linked to the rail network. The continuous development of airport infrastructure and air traffic management infrastructure and the provision of air navigation services are ensured. Airports for domestic and internal air transport are developed in such a way as to support the network of transport links already in place and to ensure that transport is environmentally sound.

(5) The international port of Koper as an entry/exit port of the comprehensive European network for freight and passenger transport, the urban ports of Ankaran, Koper, Izola and Piran, intended for domestic and international public passenger transport, with ports for special purposes (local, tourist,

commercial), including facilities for the management and control of maritime transport, are developed and modernised, with the possibility of accommodating berths for Slovenian Armed Forces' military vessels alongside the international port of Koper.

(6) Water transport is facilitated – sustainable navigation of tourist and other motorised emission-free passenger vessels, as well as river ports and entry/exit points, may be facilitated on major first-order watercourses or reservoir lakes within the limits of the natural conditions, taking into account the implemented and planned development projects related to the operation of hydropower facilities.

(7) The conditions for the development of inland navigation are created and river ports for international passenger and freight transport are established on the Sava river between Brežice and Obrežje, taking into account the implemented and planned development projects related to the operation of hydropower facilities, following the establishment of an international navigation route on the Sava river between Obrežje in Slovenia and Sisak in Croatia in the appropriate navigation category (II–IV).

(8) Cableway transport is developed, in the context of an integrated transport system, where other transport subsystems cannot function technologically due to the terrain or where the use of other transport subsystems may be temporarily prevented or disrupted due to weather and other conditions. Passenger and freight mobility to mountain tourist centres of national importance is facilitated, taking into account the needs of industry, mining, forestry and other activities.

(9) In towns and between towns where conditions are suitable, inland and sea waterways are used as environmentally friendly routes for urban and inter-urban logistics.

6.3 Guidelines for the Development of Energy Infrastructure

The state ensures a reliable and fair-priced energy supply. Energy production is based on renewable and other low-carbon energy sources. In spatial development planning, the use of renewable and low-carbon energy sources has priority over fossil fuel energy sources.

6.3.1 Renewable Energy Sources

(1) The potential for the use of renewable energy sources is identified in regional and local energy concepts as an expert basis for spatial planning documents at the regional and local levels. Renewable energy sources include water potential, biomass, wind energy, geothermal energy, solar energy, ambient heat, biogas, biomethane, hydrogen (derived from renewable energy sources), synthetic fuels from wood biomass and waste heat, and the energy released from the incineration of combustible residues of non-recyclable treated municipal waste.

(2) The share of renewable energy sources in the total energy balance is increasing. In order to increase the share of renewable energy sources, priority is given to the possibilities offered by the technological modernisation of existing installations using renewable energy sources and the improvement of energy efficiency; the construction of new installations using renewable energy sources, appropriate transmission infrastructure and energy storage systems is planned to increase the share of energy production from renewable energy sources, using first the spatial possibilities offered by existing public utility infrastructure, built public areas, buildings and degraded areas.

(3) Possible priority areas for the siting of renewable energy facilities of national importance with connecting infrastructure are identified in the action programme for the implementation of the strategy.

6.3.1.1 Hydropower

(1) To use the hydropower potential of rivers, new hydropower plants are constructed and the existing hydropower plants are renovated and technologically upgraded. The hydropower potential of rivers is exploited both on the larger rivers (Drava, Sava) and on the smaller rivers (Kamniška Bistrica, Savinja); the renovation and technological upgrading of existing hydropower plants takes precedence over the construction of new plants.

(2) Priority areas are identified for the construction of new hydropower plants with a capacity of more than 10 MW, subject to examination of the hydropower potential and in accordance with the requirements for the protection of aquatic and riparian habitats, waters, and ecological connectivity.

(3) The hydropower potential of the Mura river will not be exploited for electricity generation.

(4) Small hydropower plants can enable the sustainable use of a renewable energy source in the context of regional energy supply. The possibilities for hydropower generation by small hydropower plants on individual watercourses or parts thereof for local/regional needs are comprehensively examined in regional or municipal spatial planning documents, taking into account the exploitable hydropower potential, the spatial possibilities for the use of existing dams, the requirements for the protection of aquatic and riparian habitats, the protection of water, ecological connectivity, and the preservation of the distinctive character of the landscape.

(5) The aim is to achieve multifunctional hydropower use. As part of examining the possibilities for hydropower water use, hydropower water use is optimised to allow for other functions and types of use besides energy use, such as tourism, agriculture, transport, mineral extraction, protection against natural disasters, adaptation to climate change, maintenance of favourable habitat conditions and ecological connectivity, and preservation of cultural heritage.

6.3.1.2 Wind Power

(1) Pri postavitvi vetrnih elektrarn se upošteva načelo možne so-rabe prostora. Prostorske možnosti izraThe principle of multiple use of space is taken into account in the siting of wind farms. The spatial possibilities for the use of wind power are examined in accordance with the regulations in the context of procedures for drawing up spatial planning documents.

(2) The spatial possibilities and constraints for the installation of wind installations are examined taking into account the wind potential and the conditions and restrictions in the fields of nature protection, cultural heritage, forest and agricultural land, water, health, the living environment, and landscape visibility and are defined in the spatial planning documents. In the siting of wind farms on forest or agricultural land, the criteria of low production potential, proximity to existing transport and energy infrastructure, and the possibility of maintaining the use of agricultural and forest land for agricultural or forestry activities are taken into account as far as possible.

(3) The best available technology is used to exploit the wind potential with the least impact on the environment, nature, the landscape, and the health and quality of life of the population.

(4) The deployment of renewable energy sources is strengthened – an action programme for the implementation of the renewable energy strategy is developed, identifying areas and conditions for more detailed planning on the basis of more detailed examinations.

6.3.1.3 Geothermal Energy and Ambient Heat

(1) Priority areas for the cogeneration of heat and energy in the vicinity of major settlements and economic zones are, in particular, the geothermal system area in north-eastern Slovenia – between Šentilj and Šalovci and between Ptuj and Lendava – and the Paleozoic geothermal system area near Benedikt in Slovenske Gorice. Areas alongside geothermal system areas are also priority areas for cascade utilisation of energy, including for agricultural purposes, taking into account other spatial constraints.

(2) When geothermal energy is used, reinjection of water must be ensured in accordance with the guidelines for water protection and management.

(3) Most of Slovenia is suitable for the use of ambient heat by means of ground-to-water and water-to-water heat pumps, except for the narrowest and narrow water protection areas and other regulated areas, especially areas where moist soil with a high mineral content and few pores predominates and where there is heat accumulation in the soil (clay, loam soil). All building land is priority land for the use of heat pumps, subject to prior verification of the adequacy of the electricity supply. Heat pumps that extract heat using electricity must have a heat storage device that allows them to operate in this way. The use of water surfaces for this purpose is only possible if it is environmentally sound. More detailed verifications are provided in regional and local energy concepts as an expert basis for spatial planning documents at the regional and local levels.

6.3.1.4 Biomass and Cogeneration Systems

(1) The use of biomass is promoted in district energy systems – in wider urban areas, in larger settlements with a relatively high population density (more than 20 residents/ha) for the purpose of district heating and in areas of economic zones with a guaranteed heat offtake, while ensuring adequate filters for air protection. Decentralised individual wood biomass systems may be planned in areas of smaller settlements with low population density and outside areas at risk from PM10 pollution or areas with lower wind speeds, in areas of economic zones, and in production areas for own heat supply.

(2) Cogeneration systems fuelled by biogas are preferentially planned in areas intended for agricultural and food production and in areas of utility infrastructure that can be connected directly to users. Systems for the thermal treatment of waste are planned in areas where the use of heat in district energy systems is possible. The capacity of the systems is designed on the basis of projections of the amount of waste suitable for thermal treatment in the territory of Slovenia over the facility's operational life. The potential impacts of the operation of such facilities on the quality of life are taken into account in the selection of the sites. The possibility of connecting biogas and biomethane production infrastructure to nearby gas networks is also considered.

6.3.1.5 Solar Energy

(1) Priority areas and facilities for solar energy use are existing and new buildings on building land (excluding green areas), civil engineering structures, and degraded areas in the context of their renewal (e.g. abandoned mineral extraction sites and under certain conditions also closed waste disposal sites), subject to the guidelines set out in Section 5.3.2.4. In identifying priority areas for the use of solar energy on building land, the guidelines for the protection of cultural heritage, architectural distinctiveness, and the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes are taken into account. The principle of compatibility with other activities is also taken into account.

(2) The actual spatial possibilities and constraints for the use of solar energy are examined in detail and identified in the spatial planning documents, taking into account the conditions and restrictions in the fields of cultural heritage, nature protection, the living environment and the distinctive character of the landscape.

6.3.2 Nuclear Energy

(1) The Krško Nuclear Power Plant remains in operation. The power plant is modernised and revitalised to maintain its safe operation and create conditions for extending its lifetime, while ensuring the safe disposal of low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste and the safe interim storage of spent fuel, in conjunction with the provisions of Section 6.12.2 of this strategy.

(2) In the context of a comprehensive examination of the possibilities for long-term nuclear energy use, including the economic, social and environmental aspects of the use of nuclear energy for energy purposes, the spatial possibilities for nuclear energy generation are examined.

6.3.3 Carbon-Neutral Synthetic Gases

In the context of examining the possibility of building carbon-neutral synthetic gas power plants, the spatial possibilities for the siting of new gas-to-steam units on existing energy and industrial sites are examined.

6.4 Energy Networks

Energy networks are preferentially located within existing infrastructure corridors.

6.4.1 The Electricity System

In order to move towards a climate-neutral society, the transmission and distribution network and associated nodes, energy conversion and storage facilities, and smart grid services are developed in line with the increase of the share of renewable energy sources in the energy balance, taking into account the needs of the different regions.

6.4.2 The Gas Network

Spatial conditions are ensured for the modernisation and upgrading of the gas transmission network and the expansion thereof, taking into account the guidelines for the transition towards a low-carbon society, whereby natural gas as a fossil fuel is gradually replaced by renewable energy sources. The integration of renewable, synthetic and other low-carbon gases into gas networks and their use as a storage medium for surplus energy is promoted, taking into account regional and local needs and the guidelines in the strategic development documents for the energy sector. The gas network is extended to regions not yet covered by the gas network. An international gas transmission link with Hungary is made possible.

6.5 Transition to a Digital Society

(1) The even integration of all parts of Slovenia into a single Slovenian and European digital space is ensured through the establishment of an appropriate digital infrastructure and the availability of information and communication technologies. Accessible ICT infrastructure throughout the country enables balanced spatial development, reduces development disparities between areas and increases everyone's participation in contemporary social trends.

(2) The accelerated development of ICT infrastructure is targeted at areas (urban and rural) which are lagging behind (including) due to the inadequate availability of such infrastructure and digital services, as well as at areas where ICT networks are overloaded, which was particularly problematic in the period of teleworking and distance learning during the COVID-19 epidemics in 2020.

(3) Digitalisation is taking place at an accelerated pace to support the development of smart cities, towns and other communities, turning cities, towns, urban areas and rural communities into hubs for efficient resource management and for supporting the population with digital services.

(4) ICT infrastructure is preferentially located along existing infrastructure corridors.

6.6 Supply of Mineral Resources

(1) The basis for planning processes at the national, regional and local levels is established – the locations of strategic, economically important and indigenous mineral resources and the locations of common mineral resources are identified, taking into account the guidelines for the sustainable use of mineral resources.

(2) Indigenous mineral resources are exploited for the purpose of obtaining traditional building materials – these are important for the restoration of cultural heritage and the preservation of the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes; possible locations for such exploitation are identified in cooperation between the sectors concerned, provided that it does not adversely affect landscape features or the protection of nature or cultural heritage.

(3) Sites of extraction of other (common) mineral resources are sites of extraction of minerals for the construction sector (crushed stone), for the building materials and products sector, and for the manufacturing sector. Based on the guideline on the preferential use of recycled construction waste for construction purposes, reduced pressure for the opening of new mineral extraction sites for construction purposes is expected. However, if the opening of such sites is necessary, the following criteria are to be applied: equitable access to mineral resources at the regional level, the possibility of restoring the natural features of the area and social acceptability, taking into account the conservation of nature and cultural heritage. River alluvial deposits may be exploited for fine sand, gravel and sand, but only where it is determined that the aquatic ecosystem, water quality, the geohydrological characteristics of the river upstream and downstream, and the scenic potential of the water and riparian landscapes have low vulnerability.

6.7 Rural Development, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

(1) Measures for the development of rural areas, agriculture, forestry and fisheries also take into account the guidelines set out in the chapters on the development of rural areas and rural settlements, villages and landscapes, the sustainable use and management of natural resources and the development of rural activities, the protection of agricultural land, the use and protection of forests, water, the sea and the coast, mineral resources, the planning of green infrastructure at the regional and local levels, the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes, protected nature areas and cultural heritage areas, and tourist areas.

(2) To maintain the vitality of rural areas and preserve their varied and diverse landscape features, adequate support is provided for the long-term conservation of forest and agricultural land.

(3) Measures to improve the conditions for farming and to adapt to climate change are planned as integrated development projects, in particular agricultural land operations and irrigation systems. Planning takes into account natural conditions and features, ecological connectivity, the conservation of biodiversity, natural assets and cultural heritage, and the distinctive character of the landscape.

6.8 Nature Conservation Guidelines

(1) The conservation of species habitats, the protection of ecosystems and natural habitats, the conservation of landscape features, the protection of natural assets, and the management of protected areas are ensured as part of spatial development. The preserved natural environment and healthy living environment in Slovenia provide a good quality of life for present and future generations; the sector therefore ensures that the objectives of biodiversity conservation and the protection of natural assets are integrated into the policies of key sectors and promotes the protection of nature as a value in itself in the context of planning spatial systems and in developing individual activities in space.

(2) Protected areas and areas under protection are among the key instruments of nature conservation. In addition to ensuring the coordinated implementation of conservation objectives and development guidelines in existing protected areas and their possible conversion, new protected areas are established in areas which are most sensitive in terms of nature protection and which need regimes and coordinated management, taking into account the proposals of local communities.

(3) In implementing nature conservation objectives, nature conservation is integrated into, coordinated with and shapes joint synergies with other sectors, in particular agriculture and forestry, water protection and management, cultural heritage protection, tourism, and rural development, in particular in the context of protected areas.

(4) In the siting of development projects, in addition to the impact on nature conservation objectives and ecological connectivity, it is necessary to assess whether the development projects have a positive impact on the achievement of climate change objectives and the transition to a climate-neutral society. The proportion of Natura 2000 sites in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia is the highest among the EU Member States, which means that protection is very demanding, as are the planning and implementation of development projects, particularly in the fields of transport and energy infrastructure.

6.9 Cultural Heritage Conservation

(1) The conservation of cultural heritage and the preservation of cultural landscape features are ensured as part of spatial development. Cultural heritage is an important and indivisible part of identity, contributes to the quality of the living environment, and, through its diversity and distribution, is a key resource and opportunity for the balanced development of regions and the country; the sector therefore ensures that the objectives of cultural heritage conservation are integrated into the policies of key sectors and promotes the conservation of cultural heritage as a value in itself in the context of planning spatial systems and developing individual activities in space.

(2) In implementing the objectives of the cultural heritage strategy, the protection of cultural heritage is integrated into, coordinated with and shapes joint synergies with other sectors, in particular spatial planning, spatial renewal and management, nature conservation (particularly in the context of protected areas), agriculture, tourism, and rural development.

(3) The sustainable use of heritage is a resource for the development of any society. Taking into account the principles and methods of cultural heritage impact assessment to improve spatial development documents at all levels, a more active use of heritage as a development resource is promoted and the development potential of heritage is strengthened, while respecting its values.

(4) Monitoring the state of or threats to cultural heritage is currently insufficient, and it is therefore appropriate to strengthen the possibilities for carrying out this activity; this also includes new challenges such as adapting cultural heritage conservation to climate change, risk prevention and building resilience to disasters (floods, earthquakes).

6.10 Guidelines for the Development of Tourism

(1) For the macro-regions defined in the national tourism development strategy, the guidelines for tourist areas are taken into account in drawing up development documents and action plans to establish and align development objectives for the development of tourism, with the identification of investments in accommodation, infrastructure and attractions for the macro-regions of Mediterranean and Karst Slovenia, Alpine Slovenia, Thermal Pannonian Slovenia, and Central Slovenia and Ljubljana.

(2) In drawing up the guidelines for the development of tourism in regional spatial plans, the guidelines referred to in the preceding paragraph are taken into account and cross-border integration of tourism products is examined and included.

6.11 Guidelines for Defence Purposes

(1) Space is an important factor in the defence of a country. For the development of the defence system, adequate military infrastructure and its spatial distribution are ensured to enable successful defence in the event of aggression or attack against the Republic of Slovenia.

(2) Defence activities are carried out in defence areas, which comprise areas of exclusive use for defence purposes intended for defence activities and protection regimes in space – areas of possible exclusive use for defence purposes in certain cases and areas of restricted and controlled use for security or technical reasons.

(3) The development of defence activities is directed as a matter of priority to defence areas that are already used for defence purposes. Areas for defence activities in urban areas are gradually reduced. Key areas for meeting defence needs are identified as promising areas in the long term, while areas which are not suitable for the development of defence capabilities due to spatial conditions are abandoned or allocated to other land uses. The development of defence activities involves adapting the existing military infrastructure to new needs, in particular the reorganisation of the defence system linked to the integration of the Republic of Slovenia into the Euro-Atlantic structures and the EU.

(4) When planning replacement and new infrastructure for defence activities, special attention is paid to appropriate location, minimising environmental impacts and ensuring the necessary safety setbacks from residential areas, economic and service activities, cultural heritage, and areas important in terms of nature protection.

6.12 Protection Against Natural and Other Disasters

(1) In the field of spatial development planning, activities and land interventions and uses are planned outside regulated areas (such as flood-, erosion- and landslide-prone areas, water protection areas, and bathing water areas) with the aim of preventing the occurrence of natural and other disasters or material damage or human casualties, and existing areas at risk are rehabilitated. To ensure protection against natural and other disasters, preventive practices and measures are encouraged, in particular, in spatial planning, water management, forest management, transport of hazardous substances and construction of buildings.

(2) The seismic risk to buildings is reduced by earthquake-resistant construction and by earthquake-resistant reconstruction of existing buildings. Earthquake-resistant measures are included in the renewal of settlements and urban renewal.

(3) In areas that have already been affected by natural disasters, activities and uses that could suffer major damage again are no longer conducted; however, activities for which the recurrence of natural disasters is not problematic are allowed, or such areas are left to natural dynamics, provided that this does not endanger neighbouring areas. In areas at risk from a possible breaking of high barriers, activities are designed to ensure that any breaking does not have serious spatial and material consequences. Settlements are planned out of the reach of flood waters and existing settlements are protected from flood waters by appropriate measures.

(4) To ensure the successful performance of protection and disaster relief tasks, the areas intended for the operation of the system of protection against natural and other disasters are planned and used, and opportunities for the development of these areas are provided.

6.12.1 Waste Management

(1) In the context of waste prevention, priority is given to ensuring the reuse and prolonging the lifetime of products and reducing their adverse impact on the environment and human health (when they become waste) and reducing hazardous substance content.

(2) Waste management ensures the reuse and reduction of waste and reduces hazardous potential at source. The waste management hierarchy should be followed and priority should be given to preparation for reuse, recycling, other recovery processes (e.g. energy recovery) and only exceptionally to disposal (e.g. waste disposal in waste disposal sites). Special attention is given to the remediation of sites where waste has been illegally dumped or left in the environment and to other old burdens (e.g. areas that have been contaminated in the past as a result of waste disposal). Waste disposal is ensured in a spatially rational manner, taking into account environmental protection requirements and the social acceptability of the site.

(3) Municipal waste management is provided at three levels, namely at the local, regional or inter-municipal, and national levels. The following are provided as part of mandatory public utility services in the field of environmental protection:

- at the local level – separate collection of municipal waste; depending on natural, spatial, transport-logistical and other conditions, subsequent sorting may also be carried out; the submission of waste for further treatment, preferably recycling; the reuse of certain separately collected waste fractions; the marketing of secondary raw materials; and the recovery of biodegradable waste;
- at the regional or inter-municipal level – the collected waste is subsequently sorted, waste treatment and recovery are ensured; recycling and reuse of separately collected waste fractions; the marketing of secondary raw materials; in municipal waste management centres, mechanical biolo-

gical treatment is ensured for collected mixed municipal waste, non-recyclable waste is delivered, waste is prepared for thermal treatment and residues from the treatment of municipal waste are disposed of in waste disposal sites;

- at the national level – the incineration of non-recyclable municipal waste treatment residues is ensured and new facilities are planned for the energy recovery of combustible non-recyclable municipal waste treatment residues in up to four plants for municipal waste energy recovery with efficient cogeneration of heat and electricity for district heating and cooling with low life-cycle emissions, so as to ensure the coverage and self-sufficiency of Slovenia.

(4) For development projects for the thermal treatment of waste, connection to the existing energy networks, i.e. the electricity and gas supply systems, and the possibility to use thermal energy for district heating or for commercial purposes are ensured. Development projects for the thermal treatment of waste are planned as commercial facilities in areas with a possible connection to the rail transport network and with the provision of space for the disposal of residues from the thermal treatment of waste.

(5) Development projects for the thermal treatment of waste are planned outside permanently protected agricultural land, areas under protection and areas of natural assets, protected areas and cultural heritage buildings, and areas of outstanding landscapes and landscape areas with distinctive features at the national level.

(6) The construction of excess capacity is avoided and priority is given to the use of existing suitable infrastructure in one of the nearest suitable facilities where the self-sufficiency of the facilities for the provision of public utility services in the field of waste management is already ensured.

(7) The location criteria defined in the Operational Plan for Waste Management are used for the siting of the infrastructure necessary for the provision of public utility services in the field of waste management.

6.12.2 Radioactive Waste Management

(1) A permanent radioactive waste disposal site is established at the Vrbina site for the disposal of low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste generated at the Krško Nuclear Power Plant (during operation and decommissioning) and radioactive waste generated in the medical, research and industrial sectors in Slovenia. The site is maintained and upgraded while implementing all safety measures in the fields of protection against ionising radiation and nuclear safety and international conventions and treaties to which the Republic of Slovenia is a signatory.

(2) Solutions for the permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste are sought in cooperation with the wider international community. The possible areas for a site for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste are assessed on the basis of the results of an expert evaluation of the area in terms of its suitability and on the basis of criteria for the safety of the disposal site. Alternative sites within the possible areas are assessed, in accordance with international guidelines, as part of the assessment and evaluation of alternative solutions in terms of environmental impacts, impacts on regional and urban development, economic viability, functional and technical adequacy, and social acceptability. Site selection is carried out through a combined process involving expert and professional assessment and local tenders for the site, ensuring a high degree of public participation.

(3) The selection of a possible site for a disposal facility for high-level radioactive waste should avoid areas under protection and cultural heritage areas.

7 Implementation of the Strategy

All systems – spatial, economic, social and environmental – work closely together to implement the strategy. Synergistic and cross-cutting spatial results at the national, regional or local level are achieved through integration between sectors and their actions and through active inter-governmental coordination of development policies.

7.1 Spatial Instruments

(1) Activities to promote and achieve territorial cohesion:

- building on existing spatial instruments and developing a set of measures that further strengthen the use of the territorial approach;
- extending the range of instruments to include economic, development, participatory and communication instruments (e.g. education, training, awareness-raising, information and promotion) and management instruments to coordinate conflicting spatial interests;
- exploring and realising all possibilities for achieving spatial objectives and priorities through measures by other line ministries;
- establishing and implementing an integrated assessment of the spatial impacts of public policies, including environmental impact assessment and adaptation to climate change;
- linking the implementation of the strategy to European programmes relevant to spatial development;
- developing integrated governance at the cross-border level in line with spatial objectives (e.g. an European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)).

(2) The use of spatial planning instruments:

- the spatial planning guidelines;
- the strategy implementation plan;
- thematic action programmes;
- the regional spatial plan with landscape and urban development plans in conjunction with the regional development programme of each development region;
- the maritime spatial plan in conjunction with the Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean and the sea management plan;
- the national spatial plan;
- the decree on the optimal variant.
- the decree on the national spatial development plan;
- the municipal spatial plan with landscape and urban development plans;
- the municipal spatial plan with landscape and urban development plans;
- the detailed municipal spatial plan;
- the ordinance on the appearance of settlements and landscape.

(3) Drawing up action programmes as a matter of priority – in accordance with the law, the subject areas which are within the competence of the state and which are important for its spatial development are comprehensively planned in action programmes, in particular action programmes for:

- the identification of areas which, in terms of space, are more suitable for the use of renewable energy sources (as a basis for further planning at the national or local level);
- settlement and landscape character areas at the national level, including outstanding landscapes;
- areas for tourism, which serve as a basis for strategic definitions in spatial plans at the regional level and in spatial plans at the local level.

(4) More detailed rules under the National Spatial Order – spatial planning rules, general guidelines and recommendations for spatial planning, preparation and implementation of land policy measures, and implementation of other spatial management tasks, including examples of good practice:

- detailed rules and criteria for the siting of renewable energy facilities;
- detailed content and method of illustrating multiple use in spatial planning documents (e.g. spatial status and guidelines for spatial planning units (SPUs)), such as planned land use for energy purposes along with agricultural or residential purposes or central activities;
- detailed rules or recommendations for planning green infrastructure in conjunction with the green systems of the region and settlements, including buffer zones between settlements;
- detailed rules for defining elements of territorial identity and preserving the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes;
- recommendations to promote the densification of settlements in a balanced ratio between built and public built and green areas of the settlement, taking into account the needs to adapt to climate change;
- recommendations on the development of endogenous territorial potential in the context of the restructuring of areas;
- recommendations for the comprehensive rehabilitation of degraded land;
- detailed rules for the development of a land management plan and the preparation of land for new investments;
- detailed rules and criteria for the lighting of public utility infrastructure and settlements.

(5) Regional spatial plans and regional development programmes for the areas of the development regions are prepared in accordance with the objectives and guidelines set out in the strategy.

(6) For transport infrastructure, energy infrastructure and energy networks, guidelines, methodology and procedures are developed for collecting information on extreme weather events and for the planning and implementation of the following measures:

- measures to improve the resilience of the road network and energy infrastructure to floods,
- measures to improve the resilience of the road and energy networks to snow, and
- measures to improve the resilience of the rail and energy networks to glaze ice.

(7) For the use of geothermal energy sources, technical conditions are laid down to avoid permanent impacts on the hydrological conditions of aquifers (to determine the most appropriate location of the geothermal energy source, to identify the sensitivity of the aquifer to adverse impacts, the method of reinjection of the medium in the case of low-enthalpy geothermal sources, the method of heat extraction from shallow aquifers and other techniques to reduce pressures on the existing state of the aquatic environment in the area of influence of the geothermal heat source).

(8) The institution of resolution of conflict of public interest – the Government uses this as a last resort in cases when, despite coordination between the state institutions responsible for spatial planning, it is not possible to formulate a professionally acceptable and feasible solution in the process of drawing up spatial planning documents. It is carried out in accordance with a procedure and criteria adopted by the Government on the basis of a law.

(9) The public interest in the field of spatial planning is defined on the basis of the spatial planning objectives which are in the public interest as defined by law – to draw up, adopt and implement spatial planning documents; to protect space as a finite resource; to ensure the rational use of space and preserve spatial capacities for present and future generations; to achieve a spatially coherent and mutually complementary and multi-functional distribution of various activities in space; to create quality living conditions and a healthy living environment; to create and preserve distinctive features and cultural identity in space; to maintain the diversity, distinctiveness and quality of landscapes; to enable polycentric development of settlements, urban development of cities, towns and wider urban areas, and universal access to community and public utility infrastructures and public spaces; to create, protect and develop quality cities, towns and other settlements; and to facilitate adaptation to climate change, the transition to a climate-neutral society, the prevention of natural and other disasters, environmental protection, nature conservation, the protection of cultural heritage and agricultural land, and national defence.

(10) Other spatial instruments are also used, upgraded or developed:

- detailed spatial instruments for specific areas, for example mixed land use, sustainable construction and renovation of buildings;
- integrated joint management tools for cross-border agglomerations or cross-border coherent urban fabric, based on the experience of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation;
- instruments to promote urban development, such as functional integration and planning in wider urban areas in the fields of mobility, housing, jobs, climate change and green systems of regions (preparation of joint development strategies); planning and establishing separate multimodal transport hubs for passenger and freight transport and related sustainable mobility systems; providing quality and affordable housing for different population groups; urban and landscape development plans (in the context of the preparation of regional spatial plans); integrated functional renewal of settlements, revitalisation and reurbanisation; competitions (urban design, architectural, landscape-architectural) to improve development proposals; and the application of European quality principles to development affecting cultural heritage;
- an instrument to achieve zero net land take;
- an active land policy and a decree on the servicing of building land;
- the assessment of the initiative to draw up a spatial planning document for national spatial development;
- the spatial information system (e-space, e-plan, e-building, e-MOP);
- specific measures to reduce spatial vulnerability, including measures to reduce the effects of climate change and the consequences of natural and other disasters (e.g. in flood-prone and landslide-prone areas);
- instruments to establish and manage a green infrastructure system at different levels and to ensure ecological connectivity and reduce exposure to natural disasters and heat islands in urban areas: green systems of regions, green systems of settlements, buffer zones between settlements to maintain the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes and between settlements and areas of intensive agricultural production, and links between nature areas under protection and protected nature areas;
- adopting and implementing landscape policies (e.g. the creation of an atlas of outstanding landscapes, the identification of areas with distinctive landscape features, and the promotion of rehabilitation or new use of degraded areas in the landscape);
- urban development plans as part of regional and municipal spatial planning;
- landscape development plans as part of the preparation of regional and municipal spatial plans and municipal spatial plans for the consistency of landscape or for areas with specific spatial challenges;
- additional spatial instruments that may prove necessary, such as the definition of open space and its use in spatial planning;

- digital transformation and the further development of technological innovations (e.g. digital twins, artificial intelligence and augmented reality) and the use of digital services are key pre-requisites for achieving spatial development objectives.

7.2 Management Instruments

(1) Management measures are used, improved and put in place, including the systematic provision of funding, staffing, research and information support for monitoring:

- improving cross-sectoral cooperation and promoting the drawing up of integrated development documents, e.g. strengthening integrated spatial and transport development planning; promoting the identification of territorial identity and its inclusion in sectoral development documents;
- improving cross-sectoral and multi-level cooperation for the implementation of measures, such as ensuring an adequate level of amenities in centres in a polycentric urban system;
- creating the conditions for the management and implementation of territorial dialogue between stakeholders;
- promoting interdisciplinary and integrated urban planning and management (integrating economic, social, cultural, design, technical, technological and environmental aspects);
- introducing the principles of the circular economy, industrial symbiosis and other innovative methods into the management and development of cities and towns in accordance with spatial objectives;
- building a coordinated response to strategic urban development challenges in the context of wider urban areas;
- creating cross-sectoral action in the design of measures for the integrated preservation of territorial identity in landscape character areas and areas under protection; achieving energy efficiency at the level of buildings, neighbourhoods and settlements in the context of comprehensive (functional) renewal, while taking into account the vulnerability of cultural heritage;
- promoting interdisciplinary and integrated planning and management of areas under protection – nature, cultural heritage and landscape (integrating economic, social, cultural, design, technical, technological and environmental aspects);
- developing tools for cross-border integration of spatial systems and establishing cross-border coordinated spatial management;
- training for spatial planners for spatial planning in border areas;
- strengthening species and habitat monitoring as an expert basis for decision-making on further measures in special protection areas;
- developing tailored development models for remote and mountainous areas to maintain their long-term viability, for example ensuring adequate infrastructure connectivity and an appropriate standard of accessibility to services of general and general economic interest;
- establishing coordination between agricultural land protection and local partnerships to ensure food supply to urban and rural areas;
- amending and harmonising domestic regulations to i) reduce the vulnerability of infrastructure and settlements to climate change, ii) maintain agricultural production on agricultural land in water retention areas to prevent flood risk, and iii) rehabilitate soils in areas historically contaminated by waste;
- amending internal regulations and harmonising them with EU rules on emissions of air and water pollutants from waste thermal treatment facilities.

(2) Coordinated urban development is implemented within wider urban areas – it is agreed by the local communities in the wider urban area in the areas of housing supply, taking into account the spatial development concept and the priority areas for housing development, economic activities, organisation and accessibility by public transport, and the supporting elements of green infrastructure to which the green systems of cities and regions are linked. Municipalities and local communities may also agree on other elements if there are good reasons to do so, such as common energy supply and the distribution of services of general interest. The harmonised content is taken into account in the drawing up of regional spatial plans.

(3) Remote and mountainous areas are addressed in a targeted way – their natural-geographical, social and economic characteristics require special consideration of the development challenges of the areas and the search for synergies through a coordinated set of development measures and instruments in various fields, in particular in the spatial, agricultural, regional development, educational, health, social and employment fields. The particularities of spatial development in remote and mountainous areas are taken into account in the drawing up of regional spatial plans. Tailored development models are sought for remote and mountainous areas, based on a territorial dialogue between regional and local spatial management stakeholders and the relevant sectors. The purpose of the tailored development models is to maintain the long-term viability of remote and mountainous areas.

(4) The guidelines set out in the strategy are integrated as a spatial aspect into:

- developing sectoral policies, strategies and programmes;
- drawing up programming documents under cohesion and other EU policies;
- developing projects and initiatives as part of macro-regional integration;
- drawing up programming documents under transnational, interregional and cross-border programmes;
- developing regional and local energy plans;
- designing community energy supply schemes;
- developing comprehensive transport strategies;
- developing and implementing transport policy measures;
- developing alternative forms of public transport and improving sustainable forms of mobility;
- implementing the Resolution on the National Housing Programme for the provision of priority areas for housing development;
- developing and implementing measures for balanced regional development, in particular in relation to mountainous and remote areas and the development of programmes for the restructuring of areas;
- developing adapted sectoral norms for specific activities (e.g. primary schools, kindergartens and community health centres) according to the identified regional/local particularities of the area;
- developing integrated instruments and methods of action (e.g. in the context of protected nature areas and protected cultural heritage areas in cities and towns).

(5) In the context of cross-sectoral integration, synergies are sought that strengthen the implementation of spatial and sectoral policies. Policies that should strengthen spatial synergies are in particular: architectural and cultural; transport, energy and environmental; agricultural, environmental and nature conservation; and housing, economic and environmental.

(6) The statutory provision that development documents pertaining to individual sectors and activities must not be in conflict with the strategy is complied with:

- for all development documents pertaining to individual sectors and activities, on the basis of an assessment of the spatial impacts of public policies;
- for all regional spatial plans and sectoral programme documents at the regional level;
- for all local spatial documents.

Compliance with the provision where it refers to the first and second indents above is verified in the context of the spatial development commission and, where necessary, on the basis of a prior opinion of the spatial council. Compliance with the provision where it refers to the third indent above is verified by the ministry responsible for spatial planning.

(7) The following measures are taken to strengthen the professional qualifications of stakeholders to implement the strategy:

- training for public administration employees to identify the challenges of diverse areas and to innovatively link strategic planning to the development of appropriate measures and the monitoring of impacts;
- training local stakeholders to formulate and implement policies;
- training to promote different forms (business models) of support for the development of the local economy and to connect with the economy outside these areas (e.g. small businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives);
- training on territorial identity and on how to integrate territorial identity into spatial development;
- raising awareness of space and spatial management;
- sensitising the public media to territorial identity issues;
- professional development and training in strategic planning;
- promoting good practices (for example those that strengthen territorial identity);
- training for active citizenship in the field of space/spatial management;
- supporting research and studies such as research and methodologies in the fields of urban development, housing, analytical support for decision-making on spatial development, the planning of green infrastructure and green systems of regions, the integration of ecological connectivity in spatial planning documents, and updating expert bases in the field of the distinctive character of settlements and landscapes;
- training in monitoring spatial development;
- training in assessing spatial impacts;
- strengthening expertise and harmonisation of spatial principles and methods in the wider area through participation in interregional and transnational European territorial cooperation programmes, in particular ESPON and URBACT;
- promoting coordinated spatial methods in cross-border activities through participation in cross-border European territorial cooperation programmes.

(8) Statutory stakeholders – the spatial council, the government commission for spatial development, the development council of the region, inter-ministerial working groups (e.g. for sustainable mobility, for adaptation to climate change, for the drawing up of the national energy and climate plan, and for the implementation of the Alpine Convention), the Council for Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection, the council of ministries responsible for natural resources, spatial planning, the environment, climate and energy, and the council for cooperation with NGOs – are actively involved in the implementation of the strategy.

8 Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Strategy

(1) The effectiveness of the implementation of the activities and measures and the achievement of the objectives of the strategy are monitored by means of the spatial development monitoring system. The monitoring is carried out by the ministry responsible for spatial planning, including an analysis of the implementation of the strategy in spatial development reports. The spatial development reports may contain proposals for amendments to the strategy and to other state regulations relating to spatial management.

(2) The achievement of the spatial development objectives and the implementation of the activities defined in the action programme for the implementation of the strategy are monitored as part of monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategy.

(3) The achievement of spatial development objectives is monitored using the indicators defined in the strategy (Annex 1). Quantitative indicators are selected on the basis of the following characteristics: measurable, achievable, relevant, clear and reliable. The indicators are therefore based as far as possible on data collected, processed and published by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. The set also includes indicators in the area of land use, for which data are expected to be available after 2025, as well as indicators that still need to be developed or adapted (indicators: green areas, public open and green spaces, space/night-time lighting, land use, flood-prone areas and landslide-prone areas).

(4) In addition to the indicators defined in the strategy, indicators which are included in the spatial information system of the ministry responsible for spatial planning, indicators with spatial data which are included in the information systems of other state authorities, and other expert material and studies in scientific fields related to spatial development are followed. The set of indicators defined in the Resolution on the National Housing Programme is used to assess housing development.

(5) The implementation of the activities is monitored on an ongoing basis to determine the performance of projects. Projects, activities, the responsible authority (the organisation responsible for implementing the activity) and the deadline for implementation are defined in the action programme. Additional indicators and performance criteria are established to monitor the performance of the projects and activities defined in the action programme.

(6) The monitoring of the implementation of the strategy and of the objectives and measures defined therein is carried out through the use of indicators, i.e. indicators for objectives (with defined target values) and status indicators.

Annex 1: Indicators for monitoring achievements of spatial development goals

Objective	Field	Indicator/desired trend
Objective 1: to create the conditions for the transition to a climate-neutral society	Population trends and population density	Population density in urban settlements Desired trend: increase
	Area of municipalities included in the functional urban area	Area of municipalities included in the functional urban area of centres (up to and including Level 3) – extent of the functional urban area of each centre Desired trend: decrease
	Provision of services of general interest in centres	Proportion of the population within the radius of accessibility by the road network to the centre of the selected level Desired trend: to maintain the achieved proportion
	Land use	Per capita area of building land in the municipality Desired trend: decrease
Objective 2: to achieve the international competitiveness of Slovenian cities and towns	Provision of services of general interest in centres	Number of centres with adequate amenities (services of general economic interest) – up to Level 4 Objective: adequate level of amenities in all centres up to Level 4
	International integration of Slovenia	Number of international institutions, international schools and headquarters of international companies in centres (up to Level 1) Desired trend: growth
	Housing supply	Housing affordability (number of units or proportion of public rental housing) Desired trend: to increase the proportion of public rental housing
	Availability of land for construction	Availability of serviced land for construction Objective: to increase the proportion of serviced land
Objective 3: a good quality of life in urban and rural areas	Green spaces	Accessibility to public (publicly accessible) green spaces (for urban settlements): 5-minute walk (300 m) to a public green space of more than 0.5 hectares of a compact and territorially complete area or 15-minute walk (900 m) to a public green space of more than 1 hectare of a compact and territorially complete area Objective: adequate accessibility to green spaces for all residents
	Public open and green spaces	Proportion of public open and green spaces in the settlement (for urban settlements) Objective: at least 40% of the settlement development area
	Sustainable mobility	Proportion of population within 1-km radius of a public passenger transport stop with sufficient and adequate frequency of service Desired trend: growth
	Sustainable mobility	Trends in the number of private vehicles per 100 residents in the municipality Desired trend: decrease
	Spatial lighting/night-time lighting	Identification of an appropriate indicator or inclusion of an indicator in monitoring when appropriate data or methodology for indicator development is available Objective/trend: based on indicator
Objective 4: to strengthen territorial identity	Degraded areas	Proportion of degraded areas by settlement Desired trend: decrease
	Land use	Net land take Desired trend: to reduce annual net land take to 0% by 2050
	Ecological connectivity	Green systems of regions identified in the regional spatial plan Objective: green systems of regions identified in all regional spatial plans
	Cultural heritage	Status of cultural heritage (registering cultural heritage units in the cultural heritage register) Objective: cultural heritage is preserved and integrated into spatial development
Objective 5: to improve the resilience and adaptability of space to change	Conducting studies, availability of good practices	Number of studies and their application, number of models developed (management); number of good practices (implementation) Desired trend: to increase the implementation
	Conducting studies, availability of good practices	Number of landscape development plans for landscape character areas and outstanding landscapes Objective: to develop landscape development plans for all areas
	Flood-prone areas	Number and proportion of people living in flood-prone areas Desired trend: decrease in the population
	Landslide-prone areas	Number and proportion of people at risk in landslide-prone areas Desired trend: decrease in the population

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