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# ACTION PLAN

for Sustainable Tourism for Attractivity of  
Riverside Cities for

**Ljubljana Urban Region**

until May 2023

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The STAR Cities project encompasses the entire tourism ecosystem existing along rivers in European cities or in the suburban areas. Riversides offer exceptional natural, cultural, and industrial heritage, both tangible and intangible. They give the opportunity to combine traditional tourism visits such as monuments and museums, with more natural and original places. On the other hand, it also enables directing tourist flows from urban centres to the suburbs and hinterland. The main objectives of the STAR Cities project are to improve regional policies on natural, cultural heritage and tourism development as well as to raise awareness among policy makers to consider the development of a riverside environment of European cities as a new tourism offer by focusing on sustainable development as the major issue. To tackle these issues, seven partners from six countries (Val-de-Marne Tourism Board /FR, NECSTouR /BE, Lazio Region /IT, Municipality IX EUR Rome /IT, Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg/DE, Public Institution “Kaunas 2022” /LT, Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region /SI) have shared their experiences and good practices in sustainable tourism along the rivers by organising 5 Interregional Learning Sessions (ILS) on the following themes:

- ILS-1: State of Play and definition of the thematic programme (Rome, 16 – 29 July 2019),
- ILS-2: Locals and Communities (Kaunas, 11 – 13 September 2019),
- ILS-3: Tourism Products and Marketing (Hamburg virtual session, 20 – 22 October 2020),
- ILS-4: Governance and Cooperation (Val-de-Marne virtual session, 9 – 12 February 2021),
- ILS-5: Environment and Sustainability (Ljubljana virtual session, 20 – 22 April 2021).

For each ILS project partners prepared their “Contribution to the topic” with presentation of the “state of play” of the topic in partner’s territory, also describing strengths and weaknesses and the main challenges in the topic and how was the topic linked to the targeted policy instrument. The selection and description of local/regional good practices from the above themes was also prepared and later a study visit was organised (in Kaunas), while study tours were not possible in 2020 and part of 2021 due to the pandemic. Therefore, three partners organised virtual ILS: 2-day-long webinars and a workshop about the topic of the ILS on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. After each ILS Conclusion Reports were prepared with identification of the main lessons learned, proposal of good practices (GPs) to be presented in the Good Practice Guide, identifying the GPs that could be included in project partners Action Plans and at the end partners evaluate the ILS. In October 2021 we organised Study visit in Ljubljana and study visit in Hamburg is planned for May 2022.

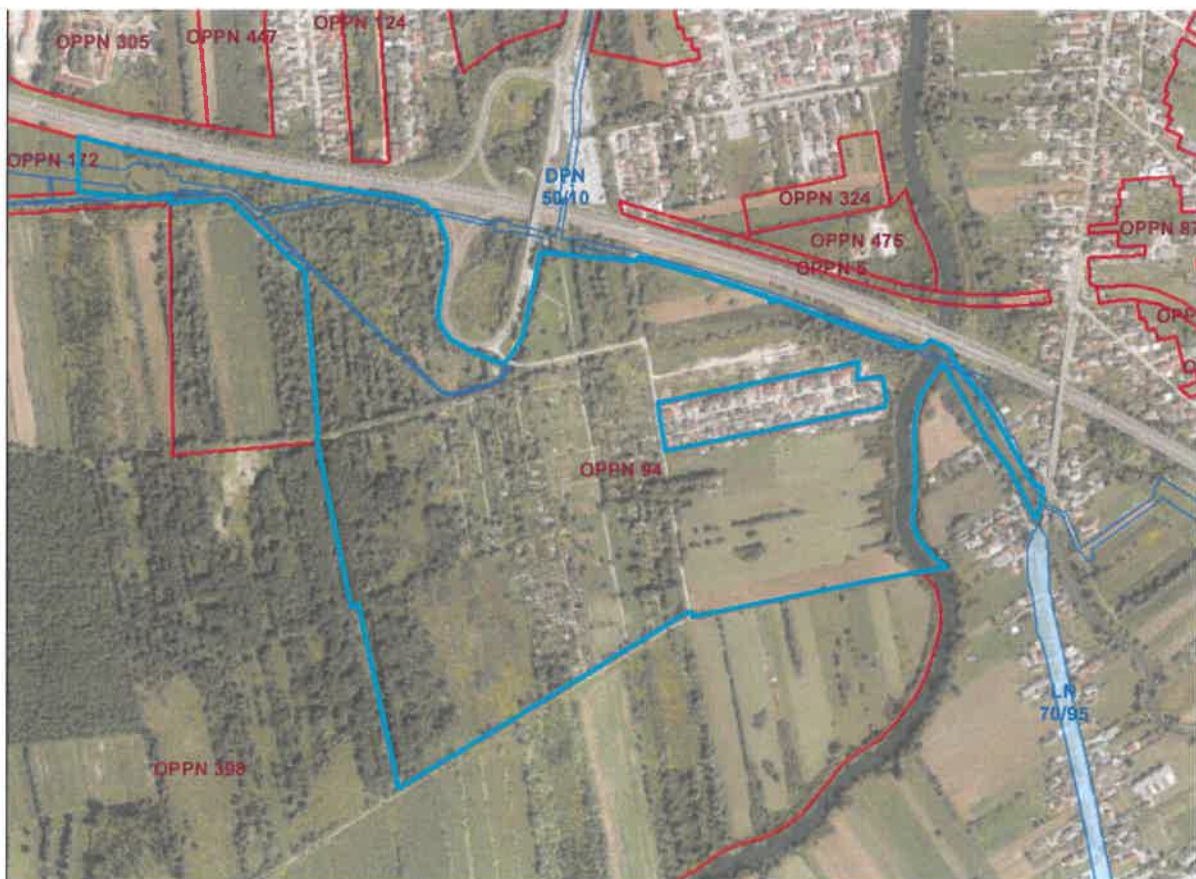


Photo 1 and 2: Study visit Ljubljana, RRA LUR archive

Although study tours, visiting GPs on the spot and live meetings with partners and (selected) stakeholders do not bring the same experiences as virtual sessions, virtual sessions were giving the opportunity to each partner to invite its local/regional stakeholders, so they could hear experiences and good practices from other cities and regions. Results were shared also after the ILS, as all webinars were recorded, but also at regional stakeholders' meetings.

Based on the study of the selected good practices in the framework of the project's activities, as well as considering the information gathered during the virtual Interregional Events (webinars and workshops), the Action Plan proposed below aims to identify some strategic and operational lines of intervention that can facilitate:

(1) Preparation of contents and necessary documentation for a project assignment for the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan competition for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park (Action 1). This is a short-term intervention, therefore of immediate feasibility, while the interpretation centre with its exhibition space and other facilities will be built afterwards in the Southern part of the City of Ljubljana, thus it represents the middle-term activity. The main entry point (Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan - OPPN 94) is thematically related to the planned river port Ljubljanica (OPPN 475). The uniqueness of the main entry point is that it is possible to access from here to the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park by boat - that we can observe the Ljubljana Marshes from the river, which allows a very direct experience of this area. Both entry points are connected. There is only 700 m of walking distance along the new interpretive path that has been under construction.



Map 1: The area of OPPN 94 (light blue boarded) and the area of OPPN 475 (red boarded).

source: City of Ljubljana, Department of Urban Planning, 2021

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(2) The overlooked and/or underdeveloped role of rivers in tourism strategies – rivers are not considered as tourist brands. Our aim is to include river tourism management and marketing in the new tourism strategy for the region for the period 2023-2027 (Action 2).

Using the framework of the STAR Cities project this Action Plan addresses the following **objectives**:

**Ad 1) Action 1: Preparation of contents and necessary documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park**

- To establish the main entry point to the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park in the capital, which will connect the whole network of entry and info points in the park (on land and river).
- To improve the quality and sustainability of the facilities in the park (the new entry point will enable this), which will also enable the sustainable tourism in NATURA 2000 site.

**Ad 2) Action 2: Inclusion of the river tourism management and marketing in the new tourism strategy for the region (2023 – 2027)**

- To give riverside tourism in the Ljubljana Urban Region a more visible role – to include it in the strategy.
- Consequently, to adopt an innovative approach to the creation of riverside tourism experiences and their promotion.



## 2. BACKGROUND

**Ljubljana** is one of the smallest capitals in Europe. As an economic and cultural hub of Slovenia, it has plenty to offer to locals and visitors alike, as evidenced by the high growth of tourism in recent years. The river **Ljubljanica**, with its picturesque bridges and old town embankments, is one of the most notable landmarks of Ljubljana. Before reaching the city, it runs across **Ljubljansko barje Nature Park** (Ljubljana Marsh), a protected wetland, and a Natura 2000 site. Swampy plains are characterized by endless meadows, fields, water trenches and rich biodiversity.



Map 2: Focus area

The above map illustrates the focus area – the river Ljubljanica from its spring in Vrhnika to the river barrier at Ambrož Square in Ljubljana (blue colour). The wider study area of nearly 280 km<sup>2</sup> also covers the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, the inner area of the Ljubljana highway ring, the area of Vrhnika and the area of Krim (red colour). It is administrated by seven municipalities: Borovnica, Brezovica, Ig, Ljubljana, Log – Dragomer, Škofljica and Vrhnika (green colour). The whole territory is directly or indirectly connected with the river. In 2019, about **350.000 people** lived in these seven municipalities (85 % of them in the City of Ljubljana).

Ljubljanica and Ljubljana Marshes are of particular interest from a historical and archaeological point of view. The Marshes have been populated as early as in the Neolithic, when the pioneering farmers of Europe built settlements in **pile dwellings**, whereas Ljubljanica is known as an archaeological treasure. It represented the main **trade route** of the region all the way from the Ancient Roman times until the construction of railway between Vienna and Trieste in the middle of the 19th century. Its naturally winding riverbed was first adjusted by the Romans, who needed a quicker connection between the quarry at Podpeč and the construction sites of Emona – former Ljubljana.



Photo 3: Prehistoric pile dwellings, Picture: Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park

Regarding leisure activities, the middle of the 20th century was the river's golden age characterised by popular bathing areas and numerous water sports competitions. Today, the riverbanks of Ljubljanica present a lively **social place** with numerous outdoor cafes, bars, and restaurants, while tourist boats, kayaks and SUP boards make up the typical river fleet.

The potentials of riverside tourism are very well exploited in the strict centre of Ljubljana; however, other riverside areas are developing at a much slower pace and mainly serve as **recreational spaces** for local inhabitants. In the Ljubljana centre, the riverbanks are **artificial (urbanised)**, while in other, rural parts of the study area, especially within the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, the river landscape is mostly **natural**, as shown on the photos below. The lack of riverside infrastructure outside the city centre opens the opportunities for a wide scale of new, **innovative tourism initiatives**, while further developed areas invite for implementation of more **sustainable practices**.



Photo 4: Ljubljanica river in the city centre, Andrej Tarfila



Photo 5: Ljubljanica river in the Ljubljana Marshes, Karel Dolenc

There are different bodies entitled to manage rivers and riverbanks and other for tourism development and promotion.

**Ljubljanica river and its banks** are managed on the national and local level.



Photo 6: Špica, Tourism Ljubljana



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**National level:**

Slovene waters, including the Ljubljanica river, are managed and monitored by two agencies - Slovenian Environment Agency, Slovenian Water Agency - and the Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia, all of them operating under the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning. Additionally, the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for civil protection and disaster relief, operating under the Ministry of Defence, is responsible for protection against natural and other disasters, also the ones related to rivers.

**Regional level:**

Although Slovenia officially does not have the regional level of governance (with administrative and financial power), it has 12 statistical regions and each of them has a regional development agency, which performs general development tasks in the region. So, RRA LUR has managed several joint projects of 25 municipalities in the Ljubljana urban region. In 2012, RRA LUR led the project for preparation of the Expert basis for the navigability of the Ljubljanica river. Four (the above-mentioned) municipalities were involved in the project.

**Local level:**

On the local level there are four municipalities - Borovnica, Brezovica, Ljubljana and Vrhnika – responsible for management of the Ljubljanica riverbanks. A large part of the study area (a bit less than 60%) lies within the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, thus a special park regime is in force.



Photo 7: Centre of Ljubljana, Blaž Pogačnik, Tourism Ljubljana



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When preparing the Regional Assessment for RRA LUR with the focus on the study area of Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, some weak points related to the governance were identified:

- Lack of a joint strategy of Ljubljana riverside tourism development.
- Most strategic documents do not directly address riverside tourism development.
- Insufficient economic resources allocated to the river management and control.

Navigationable area of Ljubljana extends from Vrhnika to the sluice gate at the Ambrož square in Ljubljana, measuring **26,1 km** in total. Motorized vessels are officially allowed to navigate only between Ambrož Square and the highway bridge in Črna vas (approx. 5 km), but this is expected to change. The maximum speed permitted is 8 km/h for public vessels and 5 km/h for private ones. Further rules apply to navigation within the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, so that vessels do not disturb the animals or harm the natural environment. There are two ports in the study area – at Špica in Ljubljana and in Vrhnika, and one leisure port – Marina Livada, which is located south of Ljubljana centre.

**Tourism offer** of the study area is also developed and promoted on different levels.

#### **National level:**

On the national level there is the Tourism Directorate, which operates under the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology (MEDT), administrates the main processes of tourism development in the country. It drafts legislation and implements policies concerning tourism and hospitality sector. The implementing institution of the MEDT for tourism promotion is the Slovenian Tourist Board.

#### **Regional level:**

Ljubljana Tourism functions as a local and regional destination organization (RDO - tourist board). As a RDO (= DMO – Destination Management Organisation) it is responsible for promoting and supporting the development of tourism in the wider Ljubljana region, consisting of 25 municipalities, including the ones in the study area. Each of 25 municipalities in the region and RRA LUR has a representative in the RDO Forum. Good cooperation and communication on regular basis are crucial for preparation of strategies, implementation of its main goals and measures agreed on, for development of new products etc. Ljubljana Tourism has appointed a RDO coordinator only for activities of the RDO.

Projects that are overseen by the RDO of the Ljubljana Region cover the development of active and green tourism products within the region, promotional activities, and coaching for local communities on the development and marketing of the local tourism offer.

In addition, RRA LUR has had very good collaboration with the public institute Ljubljansko barje Nature Park. In 2011 RRA LUR prepared a successful application, including prehistoric pile dwellings in the UNESCO World Heritage List (in the Municipality of Ig, which lies within the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park). This project was included in the Regional Development Programme of the Ljubljana Urban Region 2007-2013.

#### **Local level:**

Ljubljana Tourism as a local tourism organization established by the City of Ljubljana fosters development and undertakes promotion of tourism in Ljubljana. Among the municipalities of the study area, Vrhnika also has a local tourist organization – the Ivan Cankar Institute of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Promotion of tourism for the region and the City of Ljubljana is undertaken by the Ljubljana Tourism.

**Tourist accommodation** facilities are concentrated in the centre of Ljubljana and include a wide variety of accommodation types, categories, and prices. This is also the part of the study area with the highest density of buildings protected as **cultural heritage**, as well as of galleries, museums, other cultural venues, and events.

**Buses** are the key mean of public transport in Ljubljana with 42 urban lines and 30 interurban lines, while **railway** passenger transport is less developed. In Ljubljana city centre, which is closed for motorised traffic, free transport is offered by electric-powered vehicles called **Kavalirs**. Passenger boats are currently only used for tourism purposes, however, the first public **transport line on the river** is planned to be established in the near future. The City of Ljubljana has about 300 km of maintained **biking routes** as well as abundant hiking paths. Within the city, locals and visitors can use the **BicikeLJ bicycle-sharing system**, which consists of 72 docking stations.



Photo 8: Electric vehicle Kavalir, Dunja Wedam



Photo 9: BicikeLJ, RRA LUR

The City of Ljubljana boasts 542 m<sup>2</sup> of **public green space** per capita. A vast green area closest to the river is the Ljubljana Castle hill. Ljubljana is subjected to different **nature protection regimes**, those of Protected areas, Natura 2000, Ecologically important areas, and Natural values. Additionally, a large part of the study area is protected by the Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park. Green spaces are very popular for recreational activities, including various **water sports** on Ljubljana. The latter do not include swimming or bathing, because the quality of water is not sufficient.

There are **three tourist information centres** in the study area, all situated near the river. While two of them - Slovenian Tourist Information Centre and Ljubljana Tourist Information Centre - are located in the city centre of Ljubljana, the third one is in Vrhnika. In Ljubljana city centre, tourist offer by the river is very well presented, since the old town and most **tourist attractions** are situated right next to Ljubljana. Ljubljana Tourism promotes the riversides through the main sights, riverside culinary offer, organized tours, and activities such as cycling, kayaking, boat tours, stand-up paddle, fishing etc. In Vrhnika, riverside tourist offer is mostly connected to the **Ljubljana springs**. In other parts of the study area, the riverside tourist offer is under-presented or absent.

Except for 2020, which was impacted by the global pandemic, the study area has been recording an **increasing number of tourists** in the last decade. Most foreign visitors came from Italy, Germany, Asia, US, UK, and France. Their main points of interest included Ljubljana riverbanks, but only in the centre of Ljubljana. The dominant type of visitors of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park are domestic visitors, who visit the park mainly for recreation, daily trips, and education.

### **The role of the Action Plan for the changes in the Ljubljana Urban Region**

The main objective of the STAR Cities project is to improve regional policies on natural, cultural heritage valorisation and tourism development. It aims also at making policy makers considering the development of the

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riverside environment of European cities as a new tourism offer by focusing on sustainable development as the major issue.

All the above was considered by RRA LUR when preparing and discussing the topic during stakeholders' meetings with the key local/regional institutions – 7 municipalities, public institute Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, Ljubljana Tourism as the Regional Destination Organization (DMO for the Ljubljana Region), and with a wider range of stakeholders, e.g., Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia – Regional Unit Ljubljana, the research organisation Geographical Institute of Anton Melik (dealing with natural and cultural heritage as well), University of Ljubljana / Biotechnical Faculty - Department For Landscape Architecture, public company Ljubljana Parkings and Markets (it takes care of all traffic related to the river navigation regime as well as in the port of Špica and for embankments along the river) and several NGOs (Association of River Captains Ljubljana and hunters among others) interested in sustainable development of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.

Even more intensive collaboration of the key stakeholders in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park has been encouraged due to activities of the STAR Cities project - Interregional Learning Sessions and local stakeholders' meetings. It was confirmed that some strategic actions would be needed for better management and development of the whole territory.

Action 1:

There are several entry and information points in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park, but only one is suitable for being the main entry point because of its location – it connects urban and natural environment, already existing necessary supporting infrastructure for easier access for visitors (inhabitants and tourists) and close connection with a new marina to be built on the Ljubljanica river. The main entry point will enable the access by boat to discover the Ljubljana Marshes from the river. Thanks to the STAR Cities activities seven municipalities agreed in March 2021 about the Southern part of Ljubljana as the main entry point in the Nature Park. At the stakeholders meeting it was agreed that the entry point should serve many purposes (the primary ones are education, awareness raising and information), and offer abundant content, but it should still direct visitors outside, where they would explore nature. When developing content, it should be thought about visitors using all senses, so that the experience would be interactive, digital and children friendly. With the main entry point the territory will be able to establish (and control) the entire network of entry and information points in the Nature Park, as we want that they complement each other rather than offer the same content.



Photo 10: Ljubljana Marshes, Karel Dolenc, Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park



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## Action 2:

Including the riverside tourism management and marketing in the new regional tourism strategy is the first crucial step forward, if we want to (further) develop river(side) tourism in the region – not only in the city centre, but on the outskirts as well. With this action rivers in the Ljubljana Urban Region can get better position in the RDO strategy, which may lead to rivers becoming tourist brands.

Furthermore, the Action Plan will enable:

- Better tourist flow management in the nature park and along Ljubljanica river and help to direct visitors away from the sensitive areas, resulting in an overall more sustainable visitation (Actions 1).
- Decentralisation of tourist visits: from the Ljubljana city centre to the interested points of visits at the outskirts of Ljubljana (e.g., to the planned main entry points on land in the Southern part of Ljubljana, and on river Ljubljanica; Action 1) and to the natural environment of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.
- Development and implementation of new sustainable practices in developed areas along the river. E.g., in the Ljubljana city centre the riverbanks are urbanised, and potentials of riverside tourism are well exploited, therefore further development should consider and implement new sustainable tourist offer (Action 2).
- Development of new innovative tourism offer in the Nature Park including river(side) tourism management and marketing in the new tourism strategy for the region (Action 2).

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### 3. ACTIONS

Produced by each region, the **action plan** is a document providing details on **how** the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within that region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs (if any) and funding sources (if any). If the same policy instrument is addressed by several partners, only one action plan is required.

#### Part I – General information

Project: **STAR Cities - Sustainable Tourism for Attractivity of Riverside Cities**

Partner organisation: **PP07 - Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region**

Other partner organisations involved (if relevant):

Country: **Slovenia**

NUTS2 region: **Zahodna Slovenija (SI04 Western Slovenia)**

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## Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact:	Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
	European Territorial Cooperation programme
X	Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed:

**Regional Development Programme of the Ljubljana Urban Region 2014-2020** (RDP LUR 2014-2020), stated in the Application Form (AF), is no longer valid, as we have entered the new programming period during the STAR Cities project, so it can no longer be addressed, as no changes of contents could be done. Therefore, we suggest addressing the new policy instrument **Regional Development Programme of the Ljubljana Urban Region 2021-2027** (RDP LUR 2021-2027), the main strategic document for the Ljubljana Urban Region for the current programming and financial period. The new RDP LUR 2021-2027 should be finalised by 30 June 2022. Then there will be a 2-phase process to adopt the document: Phase 1 – by the Development Council of the Ljubljana Urban Region (stated also in the AF) and Phase 2 - by the Regional Council (Council of 25 Mayors in the region). The new RDP LUR 2021-2027 is addressed with Action 1.

- Responsible for preparation of RDP LUR 2021-2027: Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (PP7).
- Responsible body for this policy instrument (decision-making body): Development Council of the Ljubljana Urban Region - consists of 65 members (representatives of LUR municipalities, business sector, NGO's) and the final approval by the Regional Council (Council of 25 Mayors in the region).

With Action 2 also this strategic document was addressed:

### **Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Region of Central Slovenia 2023-2027**

- Responsible for preparation the Strategy: Ljubljana Tourism (as the Regional Destination Organisation for Ljubljana Urban Region).
- Responsible body for this policy instrument (decision-making body): Council of the Ljubljana Urban Region (25 Mayors).

Both documents, Regional Development Programme of the Ljubljana Urban Region 2021-2027 and Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Region of Central Slovenia 2023-2027 are regional documents, they share same expert bases and starting points, both documents are finally approved by the Regional Council (Council of 25 Mayors in the region) and in both documents all 25 municipalities in the region are involved in their preparation. Regional Development Programme of the Ljubljana Urban Region for each financing period is a basic programmatic, strategic, and implementation document at the regional level designed to harmonise the region's development objectives, determine the relevant instruments, and assess the funds needed for their realisation - a general document which also generally covers tourism in region, while Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Region of Central Slovenia will be a specialized regional document only for the area of Tourism Development and Marketing.

### **Background:**

Formal approval of our RDP LUR 2021-2027 and its contents is linked to the Operation Programme of Slovenia for the European Cohesion Policy 2021- 2027, but none of the Slovene regions and their regional development agencies has been informed about it (aware of the OP contents). At the moment of preparation of this Action Plan the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the RDP LUR 2021 – 2021 was sent to Ministry.

Based on Interregional Events (webinars and workshops), sharing of project partners Good Practices and knowledge, as well as based on needs of the stakeholders of our chosen territory, RRA LUR:



- 1) Included new projects for the chosen territory - Ljubljansko barje (Ljubljana Marshes) - in the Regional Development Programme of the Ljubljana Urban Region 2021-2027 on the list of "Priority regional projects for the period 2021-2027": Development of Sustainable Tourism at Barje (Marshes; RDP LUR 2021- 2027, table 17, project no. 29) and Holistic Development of Ljubljansko barje Nature Park (RDP LUR 2021-2027, table 17, project no. 30).

Besides, the contents - sustainable (river) tourism, natural and cultural heritage - of the above projects (and Actions 1 and 2) are included in two priorities of RDP LUR 2021-2027:

- Priority 1: Creative Region of Opportunities, Programme 1.1: Development of sustainable innovative and knowledge-based economy, Measure 1.1.2: Building tourism infrastructure and designing innovative tourism services.
- Priority 3: Green Region of Sustainable Solutions, Programme 3.4: Development and Management of Green Infrastructure, Measure 3.4.2: Preservation of a high level of biodiversity and the quality of natural areas.

**Preparation of contents and necessary documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park (Action 2)** is included in the above listed measures and projects. All seven municipalities in the area agreed in March 2021 that the main entry point to the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park should be in Ljubljana. Some steps forward were encouraged by the STAR Cities project activities (also stakeholders' meetings in the period January – April 2021). The new entry point will be located in walking distance from a new thematic trail, P&R area and the Ljubljanica river, where a new dock and a new marina are planned to be built. The new marina will be the entry point on the Ljubljanica river to go up the stream to the Nature Park. The main entry point on the land will also encourage sustainable visitation of the park – it will educate visitors, raise awareness, and direct them away from sensitive or overcrowded areas.

- 2) Addressed a new development policy instrument in the field of tourism, which would be prepared by Ljubljana Tourism in collaboration with 25 municipalities of the Ljubljana Urban Region (Central Slovenia is the name of the statistical region): *Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Region of Central Slovenia 2023-2027*. There is no joint strategy for Ljubljanica riverside tourism development (or other rivers in LUR) and most of the valid strategic documents in the region do not address the issue of river tourism directly; the river is mentioned as an investment plan "Active River" in the new strategy for Ljubljana 2021 – 2027. Moreover, economic resources allocated to river management and control are insufficient. As cooperation and good governance are vital to successful touristic development, management and marketing of the river offer, the river tourism should be incorporated in the new regional tourism strategy 2023 – 2027. The main objective is to improve the quality and sustainability of the riverside tourism offer and services. The preparation of the strategy is foreseen for 2022, as well as its adoption by the Regional Council (Council of 25 Mayors).

## Part III – Details of the actions envisaged

### ACTION 1:

#### **Preparation of contents and necessary documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park**

- **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

In March 2021 seven municipalities of the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park agreed that Rakova jelša in the Southern part of Ljubljana would be the main entry point in the Nature Park.

The new entry point to the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park at the Southern part of Ljubljana will, besides other functions, also encourage sustainable visitation of the park – it will educate visitors, raise awareness, and direct them away from sensitive or overcrowded areas. The first step towards a new entry point is the preparation of contents and necessary documentation needed for a project assignment of the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan competition. The new entry point will be the main entry point to the park. It will be located in walking distance from a new thematic trail, P&R area and the Ljubljanica river, where a new dock and a new marina are planned to be built.

We got inspiration for this action from three good practices (GPs) of other project partners presented during three online Interregional Learning Sessions organised by Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (ILS-3, October 2020), Val-de-Marne Tourism Board (ILS-4, February 2021) and Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (ILS-5, April 2021). Certain elements of the following GPs were taken into consideration: Water Museum Venice (ILS-4), Kurs Elbe Joint Strategy (ILS-4) and the Haute-Île Nature Park (ILS-5).

- **ILS-4: Water Museum Venice**, partner: partner NECSTour /BE

We can apply the heritage preservation and digitalisation techniques in the Water Museum Venice to the new entry point, as it will also include an exhibition / interpretation centre. This museum also combines heritage interpretation with itineraries for cyclists, hikers, canoeists etc., which will be needed at the new entry point as well. Storytelling about the unique natural habitats and cultural heritage through videos and other digital channels will be one of the key pillars of interpretation.

- **ILS-4: Kurs Elbe Joint Strategy**, partner: Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg /DE

Another good practice that will help us design the program of the entry point (and the infrastructure needed for such program) is the Kurs Elbe Joint Strategy – a system of audio points along the Elbe River for self-guided exploration. This would be a great way to encourage park visitors to explore the natural environment and the river in a sustainable way. Audio points can already start at the entry point or at the new marina on Ljubljanica river.

- **ILS-5: Haute-Île Nature Park**, partner: Val-de-Marne Tourism Board /FR

From the case of the Haute-Île Nature Park we have learnt that tourist flows and visitation of the nature park must be monitored closely and that good infrastructure in the park can help to direct visitors to the desired areas. It also gave us some ideas about modern observatory infrastructure (for example the acoustic cone), which could be transferred to the Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park, possibly close to the entry point.

Already at this phase all the above-mentioned contents need to be thought of and included in the documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.

- **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

As all municipalities in the targeted area and the public institute Ljubljansko barje Nature Park agreed on having the main entry point in the Nature Park at the Southern part of Ljubljana, where the largest number of domestic and foreign visits has been expected, several actions have been and would be needed to come to a consensus about the contents and infrastructure needed for the entry point.

Preparation of the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park will have several very technical phases of the planning cycle.

- Initiative phase: Investor takes an initiative.
- Draft phase: Preparation and implementation of the competition; OPPN 94 draft to be published online.
- Amended draft: preparation of the amended draft of OPPN 94, public disclosure.
- Preparation of OPPN proposal
- Presentation of OPPN at the meeting of the Ljubljana City Council, approval, and adoption at the meeting of the Ljubljana City Council.

The following actions to be implemented:

Previous internal activities of the City of Ljubljana (a. and b.):

- Selection of an external expert team who will prepare a public competition material** (by the City of Ljubljana)
- Preparation of basic expert materials for (A) the competition and for (B) the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan (OPPN 94)**
- (A) Preparation of the competition:**
- Call for tenders for the competition**
- Preparation of competition studies**
- Closing of the competition**
- (B) Initiative for the preparation of the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan (OPPN 94)**
- A Draft OPPN 94 to be published online**
- Approval and adoption of the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan (OPPN 94) by the Ljubljana City Council**

#### **Good practices transfer**

It is a fact that this whole action was inspired and pushed forward by STAR cities project, good practises and learning activities. The learning from good practices spotted above will be mainly used in preparation of basic expert materials (action 2.2).

Planned actions to ensure this transfer :

- Staff exchange

We have applied for a staff exchange with Val-de-Marne as we see Haute-Île Nature Park a very good example and a good practise we can learn from. They have well-defined entry points and various contents which we would like to see and know more about, as we are establishing the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park. The option of staff exchange and seeing a good



practise of Haute-Île Nature Park can give us new knowledge and increase capacity of players involved with preparation of our content and help us with establishing a better main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.

The estimated duration for this staff exchange is 2 days. The experience from the staff exchange will be used in preparation of contents and necessary documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park.

- **Online meetings**

Online meetings will be organised to have more detailed info about the good practices selected: Water Museum Venice (partner NECSTour /BE) and Kurs Elbe Joint Strategy (Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg /DE).

- **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)
- The City of Ljubljana - Department of Spatial Planning as the investor is the main institution involved in the whole process for a project assignment of the Municipal Detailed Spatial Plan competition and obtaining the OPPN 94 – from the beginning to the end (in all phases). It communicates with all actors involved in the competition:
  - i. Competition administrator
  - ii. Evaluation committee
  - iii. Rapporteur of the evaluation committee
  - iv. Experts from the field of cultural heritage, nature conservation, water protection, etc.
  - v. Contestants

- **Timeframe**

Preparation of contents and necessary documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park will be prepared by the end of April 2023.

Investment project identification document is in preparation (January 2022), which will give us more information and detailed breakdown about timeframe of the action.

- **Costs** (if relevant)

The estimated costs are 200,000.00 EUR.

- **Funding sources** (if relevant):

Preparation of contents and necessary documentation for the establishment of the main entry point in the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park will be funded from the funds of the City of Ljubljana.

Date: 14.12.2022

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]



Stamp of the organisation (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACTION 2:**

### **Inclusion of the river tourism management and marketing in the new tourism strategy for the region (2023-2027)**

#### **1. The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

Ljubljanica river, as all other rivers in Slovenia, is managed and monitored by two national agencies, whereas the four municipalities which Ljubljanica flows through are responsible for management of its banks. A large part of the river is covered by the Ljubljansko barje Nature Park (Ljubljana Marshes) and is as such subjected to additional nature protection regimes. Regarding the tourism development, management, and promotion of Ljubljanica below the national level, the Regional Destination Organization of Ljubljana Region (regional DMO), as well as two local DMOs are in charge.

There is no joint strategy for Ljubljanica riverside tourism development (or other rivers in LUR) and most of the valid strategic documents in the region do not address the issue of river tourism directly; the river is mentioned as an investment plan "Active River" in the new strategy for Ljubljana 2021 – 2027. Moreover, economic resources allocated to river management and control are insufficient. As cooperation and good governance are vital to successful touristic development, management and marketing of the river offer, river tourism should be incorporated in the new regional tourism strategy 2023 – 2027.

We got inspired about this action during the (virtual) *ILS-4 on Governance and Cooperation*, held on 9 and 10 February 2021 in organisation of Val-de-Marne Tourism Board. Through presentations of good practices, we learned that having a **joint river tourism strategy** within the regional tourism strategy is the first crucial step forward, if we want to (further) develop river tourism in the region – not only in the city centre, but on the outskirts as well. A role of DMOs is very important here, as it calls for a coalition of many organizations and interests working towards a common goal, ultimately being the assurance of the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism destination. From a traditionally marketing and promotion focus the regional DMO has changed to the leading tourism organization in the region with a broader mandate which includes strategic planning, coordination, and management of activities within an adequate governance structure with the integration of different stakeholders operating in the destination under the common goal. When talking about river destination management – this involves previously mentioned functions of DMO, for a geographical area of the river and product focused on sustainable valorization of the river.

No project partner had a tourism strategy for its river, so there was no directly related good practice to learn from, however this action has been influenced by the following good practices:

- **ILS-4: Joint Action Plan implemented by Marne River DMOs**, partner: Val-de-Marne Tourism Board /FR  
The Joint Action Plan implemented by Marne River DMOs showed us that DMOs and institutions along Ljubljanica or any other river in the region should work together, share costs, and meet regularly. It is also very important they all adopt a unified communication strategy of the river offer. Like on the Marne, a special map of river tourism offer could be designed to attract visitors. Further, water sports clubs on the river could be used to extend tourism offer on Ljubljanica. This could be transferred and beneficial, especially when Ljubljanica becomes navigable in the Ljubljana Marsh Nature Park. Another inspirational practice from the Marne River is the responsibility of private landowners (in our case public) along the river to maintain riverbanks (on regular basis) for public recreational use.
- **ILS-4: The Vltava, a river full of experiences**, partner NECSTour /BE  
The second good practice which helped us with this action was the Vltava River strategy. It showed us how important it is for local DMOs, the regional one and other stakeholders to

work together and represent the Ljubljanica or any other river in the region, e.g., Sava, Kamniška Bistrica, as its own tourist destination with one brand (and not only as a part of several different destinations). Additionally, we learned that when developing tourism offer on the river, we must include its hinterland in order to develop attractive tourism products, cycling & hiking routes etc.

**2. Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

The following actions to be implemented:

**2.1 Preparation of a public invitation (public procurement) and selection of an external expert**

**2.2 Preparation of detailed process plan**

- Defining the process and key milestones
- Establishing Strategic work group (see number 3 – which players need to be involved in the process)

**2.3 On-line questionnaire**

- The first on-line questionnaire is aimed at Municipalities and DMOs: to gather insights into the challenges, opportunities and vision on river tourism management and marketing of individual stakeholders.
- The second on-line questionnaire is aimed at a wide cope of tourist stakeholders and businesses in individual municipalities: to gather their insights into the challenges, opportunities, and vision of how the river can be developed and marketed as a tourist product, in a sustainable way. In this way we get a wider picture and address a wider base of stakeholders.

**2.4 Interviews with individual key stakeholders**

Aim: individual one-to one interviews to gain more in-depth insight into the challenges, state of play and possible measures

**2.5 Workshop 01 with stakeholders (RDO Forum)**

- Presentation of the challenges (as identified from questionnaires and interviews)
- Workshop to define measures needed to manage river tourism in a sustainable way and as a part of the regional tourism strategy

**2.6 Preparation of the strategic framework for river tourism management in the new tourism strategy for the region (2023-2027)**

**2.7 Workshop 02 with stakeholders (RDO Forum)**

Aim: presentation of the draft Plan and discussion, to finalize it

**2.8 Approval and adoption of the document by the Regional Council (Council of 25 Mayors)**

**3 Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- Ljubljana Tourism: The Regional Destination Organization (RDO) and a contracting authority on behalf of members of the Forum RDO – 25 municipalities of the region. Since 2011 Ljubljana Tourism has been successfully leading and implementing 4 activities for the RDO of Ljubljana Region: development, operational, promotional and distribution activities. RDO of Ljubljana region is an indicator of cohesion and successful cooperation of 25 municipalities in our region. It is a model example of a well-organized and active organization that has succeeded in positioning the region as a geographically rounded area with connected products. Since 2017 the





municipalities agreed to employ a RDO coordinator and since then 25 new joint products have been developed and promoted, training sessions have been introduced (on average 3-5 per year) and the number of journalists visiting the region increased (more than 90).

- **Forum RDO:** including representatives of 25 municipalities of the Ljubljana Urban Region (1 person per municipality) and 1 representative of the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region
- Local DMOs, Tourist businesses and Municipalities in the region: all relevant and key stakeholders in the region will be involved in the preparation of Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Region of Central Slovenia 2023-2027 through workshops, questionnaire... to share their vision, wishes and development plans.

#### 4 Timeframe

The new tourism strategy for the region, replacing the current Tourism Development and Marketing Strategy in the Region of Central Slovenia 2017-2022, will be prepared by the end of 2022.

Strategy preparation time plan:

March - April 2022: state of play analysis

May – July 2022: strategic workshops

September 2022: finalisation of strategy

October - November 2022: public presentations

December 2022: final approval by the Regional Council


#### 5 Costs (if relevant)

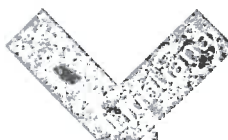
An estimated cost of 25.000 EUR is foreseen, as a public procurement process for choosing an external expert team will be prepared and launched.

#### 6 Funding sources (if relevant):

Preparation of the new tourism strategy for the region will be funded from the funds of 25 municipalities in the Ljubljana Urban Region.

Date: 14. 2. 2022

Signature: 



Stamp of the organisation (if available): 